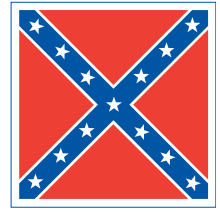


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXXII, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June 2012



712th REGULAR MEETING

Dennis Frye
on
“September Suspense:
Lincoln’s Union in Peril”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, June 8

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$45 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée: Sliced Roast Sirloin,
Baked Salmon
Vegetarian Plate or
Fruit Plate*

Please Note:

Make your reservations by Wednesday, June 6, by emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, or calling 630 460-1865 with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please email us at dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org and/or call us at 630-460-1865.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$12 with a validated parking sticker.

Dennis Frye on “September Suspense: Lincoln’s Union in Peril”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

By September, 1862, the United States had entered the 18th month of its Civil War. General Robert E. Lee’s Confederate army had invaded the north, the Union cause seemed at a standstill, and many observers wondered whether the north would begin to question if the bloodshed was worth the cause.

In Dennis Frye’s new book September Suspense, he examines just how fragile the national bond had become in the autumn of 1862. Frye’s June talk to the CWRT will be based on that book.

Dennis E. Frye is the Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Dennis served as an Associate Producer for the Civil War movie *Gods and Generals*, during which he recruited and coordinated nearly 3,000 re-enactors for the film. Dennis also is one of the nation’s leading Civil War battlefield preservationists. He is co-founder and first president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and he is co-founder and a former president



Dennis Frye

of today’s Civil War Preservation Trust, where he helped save battlefields in twelve states. Dennis is a tour guide in demand, leading tours for organizations such as the Smithsonian, National Geographic, numerous colleges and universities, and Civil War Round Tables.

Dennis also is a well-known author, with 77 articles and six books. His latest books are September

Suspense, Antietam Revealed and Harpers Ferry Under Fire. Dennis has written for prestigious Civil War magazines such as *Civil War*

Times Illustrated, *America’s Civil War*, *Blue & Gray Magazine*, *North and South Magazine*, and *Hallowed Ground*, and is a guest contributor to the *Washington Post*.

Dennis grew up near Antietam. He currently resides near the battlefield in Maryland, and he and his wife Sylvia have restored the home that was used by General Burnside as his post-Antietam headquarters.



Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

Virginia Helps CW Trust to Finance Middleburg Land Buy

By Scott C. Boyd

MIDDLEBURG, Va. — “It’s more than about just preserving five acres today, it’s about the history and what we can learn as a people as we move forward,” Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell said on May 9 as he announced a \$432,000 grant to help the Civil War Trust purchase and preserve Mount Defiance near Middleburg.

“The significance of this ground to the Gettysburg Campaign is enormous,” historian Clark B. “Bud” Hall said at the news conference. “Mount Defiance is properly understood as one of the inaugural actions of the war’s threshold campaign – Gettysburg.”

The Trust is paying \$540,000, with the deal set to close on May 31, according to Policy and Communications Director Jim Campi. The funding comes from the state grant, \$54,000 the Trust is applying for from the American Battlefield Protection Program’s Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program, and \$54,000 to be raised by The Trust.

The Trust got an early start on its share of the funding when Middleburg philanthropist and Mosby Heritage Area Association President Childs Burden and his wife Elaine contributed \$10,000.

The plan is for the Trust to purchase the property, which is on Route 50, place a permanent conservation easement on it and eventually give it to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA).

The NVRPA is a regional organization that has preserved more than 10,000 acres. It administers 35 parks and related facilities, including Ball’s Bluff Battlefield Regional Park, Mt. Zion Historic Park and Aldie Mill Historic Park.

“Mount Defiance is going to be a wonderful addition to our inventory of historic properties,” NVRPA Executive Director Paul Gilbert said.

The five acres straddle two counties – 2.8 acres, assessed at \$580,100, are in Fauquier County while 2.2 acres, assessed at \$39,300, are in Loudoun County. The Trust said the landscape is largely undisturbed. An antebellum manor house turned into a tavern, a blacksmith’s cottage and blacksmith’s shop where hand-to-hand combat took place are on the tract. ...

A host of state and local officials attended the news conference at the National Sporting Library and Museum in Middleburg.

Virginia Director of Historic Resources Kathleen Kilpatrick acknowledged the preservation groups present, including Journey Through Hallowed Ground, Preservation Virginia, Piedmont Environmental Council, Land Trust of Virginia, Mosby Heritage Area Association, Oatlands Plantation, Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association and the Bull Run Civil War Round Table.

Kilpatrick’s boss, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Doug Domenech, listed his three “E’s,” the three reasons he likes to talk about historic preservation: the education benefit of people seeing and feeling history; the environmental benefit of saving open space; and the economic advantage of heritage tourism, which brings in visitors who tend to stay longer and spend twice as much as other tourists.

Governor McDonnell said, “We publicly commit ourselves to protecting these battlefields as a permanent legacy to the Sesquicentennial.”

The preservation tools he cited included the Virginia Civil War Sites Preservation Fund, the only such state fund in the country, and the federal transportation enhancement grants program, which provides matching grants of \$1.5 million per year for Virginia land acquisition to encourage tourism.

As a national organization, the Civil War Trust has preserved over 32,000 acres on 115 sites across 20 states, Trust President Jim Lighthizer said.

He called McDonnell “the leader, when it comes to battlefield preser-

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The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or editor@chicagocwrt.org.

vation, of all the governors that I’ve worked with in the United States,” joking, “I’m from Maryland, so it pains me to say that.”

Effectively, the Gettysburg Campaign began on June 9, 1863, at the Battle of Brandy Station, Hall explained, as Confederate cavalry screened the movement of Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia behind the Blue Ridge Mountains through the Shenandoah Valley into Maryland and Pennsylvania.

North of Brandy Station, at Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville, Confederate cavalry sought to prevent Union cavalry from penetrating the nearby gap and learning of Lee’s movement northward. Battles were fought from June 17 to June 21 along Ashby Gap Turnpike in Loudoun County, the modern U.S. Route 50.

The June 19 Battle of Middleburg saw two brigades of Confederate Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart’s cavalry fight a delaying action to hold off Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasanton’s cavalry along the turnpike at Mount Defiance.

Although Stuart’s men withdrew after their flank was turned, “J.E.B. Stuart did his job magnificently,” Hall said – they kept the Union cavalry in the dark about Lee’s movements..

From June 2012 *Civil War News*

May Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

On May 18th **Brian Holden Reid** spoke to the 711th regular meeting of the Chicago Civil War Round Table on “Strategy.” Reid took as his guiding point Liddell Hart’s definition of that term: the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy. Those who ask why it took so long to defeat the confederacy do not appreciate the geographic scope and intensity of a conflict wherein there were 149 general engagements and 2,002 lesser battles, and that although the north had overwhelming financial, industrial, and economic resources and a greater population, its victory was not predestined. For the north, the structure of government was in jeopardy; success in the conduct of the war became a political issue and therefore matter of strategy. The Confederacy sought foreign involvement, whereas the government sought to exclude such intervention.

The “bedrock” of northern grand strategy was the blockade. In contrast to those who feel that the blockade was ineffective, Reid held argued that it was crucial. While not totally successful, the blockade set the conditions for eventual union victory. The blockade and amphibious operations on the southern coast, the capture of New Orleans and the navy’s advance up the Mississippi Valley all brought great benefit to the north. Although an implicit recognition of the southern confederacy, Great Britain acknowledged the blockade’s legitimacy. The blockade caused hyperinflation and a severe decline in foreign trade—ten per cent in 1864 of what it had been in 1860—and investment. Luxury items made their way to southern

ports, but the south was unable to increase its war economy.

The political coalition forged in the north was elemental to northern strategy. The many Democratic ‘war generals’ fought to preserve the union, not for emancipation. This prompted the ‘one thrust’ concept that sent union forces toward Richmond. Following First Manassas, the government realized the need for concentric maneuvers to defeat the south. The difficulties in moving and supplying armies over the vast distances involved required cooperation between commanders which, despite rivalries, the union achieved. This contrasted with the southern high command where Davis did not enjoy good relations with Joseph Johnson and P.G.T. Beauregard, among others.

The Border States were another major component in the strategic correlation between the union and confederacy. These states shielded the seceded states from military intervention. If they had been hostile or recalcitrant, it would have been difficult to bring pressure on the confederacy.

The government’s initial purpose was to restore the union. This was consonant with the Anaconda design which insulated the civilians and excluded destruction of private property. But as the war continued, debate began on whether to increase the level of violence. McClellan’s view in mid-1862, that the war was for the union and should be fought according to the “highest principles of Christian civilization,” became increasingly unrealistic and not consistent with the administra-

tion’s evolving position on emancipation. This view also reduced the moral force of the union’s cause abroad and especially in Great Britain before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued.

The grand strategy of the confederacy was complicated in that it could not effectively define its borders. These were not self-evident—a natural border ran along the Ohio but otherwise it was amorphous. Adopting a ‘trading space for time’ strategy was difficult to execute without established borders and a loyal population, and was a dangerous policy as losing territory placed stress on the slave system. A purely defensive strategy did not suit the confederacy’s aims. The departmental system created the need to garrison large areas and diffused confederate power. Thus the confederacy took the war to the enemy. But the south pursued uncoordinated counteroffensives and its leader did not work out a fundamentally sound grand strategy.

Last, Reid took up the “self-imposed” embargo on its cotton crop. This he considered “a monumental miscalculation.” When Yancey extolled the virtues of slavery in a speech to an English audience, he virtually guaranteed Great Britain’s neutrality.

Dr. Reid provided an erudite synthesis of the strategic challenges facing the antagonists in the war. Yet we would defy anyone who claims history is ‘boring’ to say that a Holden Reid lecture is not both lively and extremely informative.

GRAPESHOT



The **Stephen A. Douglas Association** will hold its annual memorial ceremony and luncheon on June 2nd. The luncheon will start at noon at the Union League Club and will feature a talk by **Rob Girardi** on "The Little Giant and the Big War." Cost is \$40 per person. Contact **Dave Richert** at drichert@earthlink.net for more details.

On June 16th, **The Military History Education Group** will hold its "14th Annual Summer Conference" at Yoder's in Arthur, IL. Cost is \$55 per person, which includes the four presentations and lunch. Phone (217) 578-2262 for more details.

On June 8th the Moorings in Arlington Heights will host **Leslie Goddard** as "Clara Barton"

On Thursday, June 14th **Bruce Alardice** will speak on "Chicagoland Fights the Civil War" at the Niles Public Library. The event starts at 7 p.m.

The Du Page County Historical Museum is sponsoring a **Chicago Civil War Cemetery tour** on June 24th, with Jerry Feinstein as tour guide. For more information, phone (630) 510-4941

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at editor@chicagocwrt.org or (630) 297-8046.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus years of audio recordings of CWRT lectures by distinguished historians are available and can be purchased in either audio cassette or CD format. For lecture lists, contact Hal Ardell at hal229@ameritech.net or phone him at (773) 774-6781.

Each meeting features a book raffle, with proceeds going to battlefield preservation. There is also a silent auction for books donated by Ralph Newman and others, again with proceeds benefiting battlefield preservation.

Upcoming Civil War Events

June 1st, Northern Illinois CWRT: Annual Banquet: Craig Symonds on "Joe Johnston"

June 1, 3:30 p.m., Union League Club: Jeff Shaara will talk about his new book, *A Blaze of Glory: A Novel of the Battle of Shiloh*

June 2nd, Elk Grove Village Museum: Civil War Days, featuring the **Battlefield Balladeers**

June 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: Dennis Frye on "September Suspense"

June 8th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: "September Suspense" by Dennis Frye. Visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org for more details.

June 9th-10th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Annual "Salute to Freedom"

June 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Fred Reckowicz on "Eleventh Corps at Chancellorsville"

June 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: Annual Banquet with **Ed Bearss** speaking on "Personal Milestones along the Way: 50 Years of Civil War Round Tables"

June 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: **Dave Powell** on "Failure in the Saddle"

June 24th, Wood Dale Historical Society: "Luncheon with the Generals"

2013 Tour – Antietam

Bulletin Board



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated*.

June 8: Dennis Frye, "September Suspense"

Sept. 14: Tom Schwartz, Nevins-Freeman Address

Oct. 12: Ed Bonekemper, TBA

Nov. 11: Dale Phillips, TBA

Bjorn Skaptasen of the **Abraham Lincoln book store** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be Saturday, June 2nd, at noon, with **Jeff Shaara** talking about his new book, *A Blaze of Glory: A Novel of the Battle of Shiloh* and **Tim Smith** talking about his new book *Corinth, 1862*. On June 23rd at noon **Arthur Downey** will talk about his book *Civil War Lawyers* and **Brian Dirck** talks about *Abraham Lincoln and White America*. Visit www.virtualbooksigning.net for more details.

Camp Douglas News!

The Chicago Park District has approved an archaeological dig at the Camp Douglas site, tentatively scheduled for June 25th-29th. **Mike Weeks** of the Camp Douglas heritage organization is looking for some help with the dig, specifically, steel fencing, use of a truck for the week, and some donations to help cover the insurance costs. Contact Mike at (773) 547-3475 for more details.