Edwin C. Bearss on Grant's Assaults on Vicksburg, October 16

Edwin C. Bearss, historian, National Park Service, will be with us again Friday October 16, 1970, his subject this time being "Grant’s Assaults on Vicksburg, May 19-22, 1863." Ed Bearss is thoroughly familiar with his subject—he addressed us March 12, 1959, on "Crisis in Movement, the Battle of Champion’s Hill," which occurred only a few days earlier, and his long service at Vicksburg National Military Park has made him an authority on the terrain. Ed’s more recent appearance before CWRT was Jan. 15, 1965, when he spoke on the raising of "The Ironclad Gunboat Cairo," a recovery operation that took more than eight years.

Grant’s final Vicksburg campaign, with which we are concerned, opened April 16, 1863, when the gunboats of the river fleet ran past the Vicksburg batteries. Grant then crossed the river with three corps below Vicksburg at Grand Gulf. He first struck east toward Jackson, driving off the forces of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, then turned back against Gen. John C. Pemberton’s army in front of Vicksburg. The battles of Champion’s Hill and Big Black River followed, and Pemberton retreated within the intrenchments surrounding Vicksburg. Before settling down to a siege, Grant ordered two assaults on the Vicksburg lines, our immediate subject.

Major General J. F. C. Fuller, British military expert, in his "The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant," calls the campaign up to this point, "an amazing success, the greatest in Grant’s life, and from a purely strategical point of view one of the greatest in military history." Of the attacks he says, "Though the assault failed, there was every excuse for it, but on the 21st, Grant determined to make a second which was less excusable in spite of the fact that his reasons for it were well considered." And at this point we turn the discussion to Ed Bearss.

Ed has been interested in the Civil War since he was a boy in Montana. His battle experience includes the invasions of Guadalcanal and New Britain as member of a Marine raider battalion. He was wounded and spent 26 months in hospitals. He studied at Georgetown University and received an M.A. in history at Indiana University. He is author of "Decision in Mississippi," 1962; "Crisis at North and South," 1963; "Hardluck Ironclad Cairo," 1966; "Steele’s Retreat from Camden," 1967; and, with Arrell M. Gibson, "Fort Smith, Little Gibralter on the Arkansas," 1969.

He was an organizer of the Civil War Round Table of Mississippi, and is known to many Chicago members through our battlefield tours.

The August, 1970, issue of Civil War Times Illustrated is a Special Souvenir Album on "The Siege of Petersburg." The entire 50 pages is given to the one subject, with text by Joseph P. Cullen, maps by William C. Davis, and design by Frederic Ray. The cover, extending front and back, reproduces John Adams Elder’s painting of "The Battle of the Crater," and there is generous illustration throughout.

The 104th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, reactivated, is seeking recruits, able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 65, willing to supply their own uniform and musket. Gordon Whitney and Bob Walters are beating the drum. Parent organization is the North-South Skirmish Association, which sponsors shooting events with the .58 caliber Springfield. At Galena September 26 and 27 a series of open house events were scheduled to be climaxd with an artillery meet, with De Gracie’s 1st Illinois Light Artillery, Loomis’ 4th Michigan Battery, and the 11th Ohio Volunteer Artillery taking part.
from the Editor's pen

“If the South had not had Robert E. Lee, it would have been better off,” Albert Castel concluded sardonically in his talk on “Lee and His Critics” at the September 11 meeting. “The war would have been shorter, with fewer casualties and less suffering.” He agreed that the North probably won the war and the South lost it in the West, “but was not this in large part because Lee, against battlefield odds greater than those usually faced by the southern generals in the West, was able to hold back the North so long and so well in the East?” He doubted if the generals in the West “would have suffered fewer defeats had they commanded more men.”

A professor of history at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Dr. Castel pointed out weaknesses in the arguments of Lee’s critics including Thomas L. Connolly, whom we heard on the other side in March, 1970. Castel decried the idolatry of Lee, noting that some opinion would not regard as saintly a man who was responsible as a killer of men, and who admitted enjoying warfare, it if were not so terrible, paralleling Gen. George S. Patton.

It was a well documented thesis, but of course all could not agree, provoking a lively discussion that extended far beyond the usual time. Attendance was the largest in many months, including 12 new members, also a record not equalled in a long time. Product of this new interest resulted from an action of Marshall Krolick, who arranged the mailing of copies of the Newsletter to subscribers to “Civil War Times Illustrated.”

TAPS

Colonel Wilbur Stuartvant Nye, managing editor of Civil War Times Illustrated, and of American History Illustrated, died June 1, 1970, at his home in Wormleysburg, Pa., near Harrisburg, at the age of 71. Members of the Civil War Round Table will remember his talk Nov. 5, 1965, on “Milroy Is Gobbled Up” based on his book “Here Come the Rebels,” a study of the Gettysburg campaign. He was also author, with the late Gen. E. J. Stackpole, of “Gettysburg, a Guided Tour.” Besides his work on Civil War subjects, he was an authority on the Indian wars. His books included “Carbine and Lance: The Story of Old Fort Sill,” “I Fought with Geronimo,” with Jason Betzinez; “Bad Medicine and Good: Tales of the Kiowas,” and “Plains Indian Raiders,” with original photographs by William S. Soule.

Nye was born in Canton, Ohio, and was graduated from West Point in 1920. He served 34 years in the Army, commanding the 173rd Field Artillery Group, XV Corps, in World War II. He was editor of the Field Artillery Journal, 1939-42.

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Robert Selph Henry, an honorary award life member of the Civil War Round Table, died August 19, 1970, at his home in Alexandria, Virginia, at the age of 80. Author and historian, he was a retired vice president of the Association of American Railroads and a life member of the Vanderbilt University board of trustees. At a Gala Dinner Oct. 15, 1944, the Round Table celebrated publication of Bob Henry’s “First with the Most’ Forrest.” He had given a talk on that subject Nov. 17, 1943. Later he edited “As They Saw Forrest: Some Recollections and Comments of Contemporaries.” His “The Story of the Confederacy,” which has gone through two important revisions, is rated as one of the best one-volume books on the Civil War. His Round Table talk in 1951 on “Rehearsal in Mexico: Trial by Battle of Civil War Leaders” preceded his book “The Story of the Mexican War.” Reflecting his long service with the Association of American Railroads was his...
book, “This Fascinating Railroad Business” and, with Frank P. Donovan, Jr., “Headlights and Markers: An Anthology of Railroad Stories,” a most delightful collection. One of Bob’s campaigns for the Association was to point out the error in maps, often in school texts, showing land grants to railroads. As the maps showed all the land from which alternate sections could be chosen, it greatly exaggerated the amount actually awarded.

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Harry E. Rice, long-time member of the Civil War Round Table, died August 20, 1970, at the age of 78. His home was at 1130 S. Michigan Ave. He was a stockbroker with Hayden, Stone & Co., 141 W. Jackson Blvd. He had been newspaperman with the Chicago American and Chicago Daily News. In World War I he served as captain and was past commander, American Legion, and of Chicago Chapter, Military Order of the World Wars. He was a member of the Union League Club. Services were at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. He is survived by his widow Elizabeth Condon, and a sister, Mrs. Theresa de Kruif.

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Prison Civil War Round Table of Richmond, Virginia, mourns Stewart W. Newsom, program director emeritus, who died May 31, 1970. Services at the Prison Chapel were attended by members of the Richmond CWRT. Newsom, who had spent half his life in prison, was a founder and active spirit in the Prison CWRT.

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A Civil War history section in the Park Forest Public Library was unanimously approved as a memorial to the late Leo H. Jacobson at a meeting of the Park Forest village board May 25, 1970. Jacobson, a village trustee, was a member of the Civil War Round Table of Park Forest, which will co-operate in the collection of books for the memorial, to be added to Jacobson’s books donated by his heirs. He died in November, 1969.

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A new publication is the News Letter of the Civil War Round Table of Northern New Jersey, which starts with the May, 1970, issue and will be published bi-monthly at Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey. Russ Gogel was speaker at the May 9 meeting, and an outline of his talk on “History, a Discouraging Art” is given by Richard F. Lemal, recording secretary. The News Letter editor is Harry E. Sawyer.

TO THE LADIES —

Next Meeting: New time, new place, all-new program. The time: Friday, October 16 (third Friday, not second), 5:30 p.m. assembly. The place: Chances R., at Wabash and Chestnut streets, a half-block from the book store, the place for hamburger on black bread and peanut hulls on the floor.

The program: Buster Keaton in “The General,” one of the best and funniest of all silent motion pictures; certainly the funniest on the Civil War, and yet based on actual events of the Andrews Raid and the stealing of the locomotive “The General.” Papa saw it May 8 at CWRT; here’s your chance to catch up. (But we are planning to scoop Papa on a couple of programs this year, so keep watching.)

The girl to call for reservations is Joyce Warshaw, 1319 Grant Street, Evanston, Ill. 60202; phone 866-6667.

Last Meeting: Howdy to everyone from Pete and Barbara Long came from Laramie, Wyoming, by tape recording, telling in detail the story of their horrendous move of 250 cartons of books and 150 cartons of household goods (Barbara seems to come up short on this showing). It took Mayflower’s largest (25,000 pounds) van to start the move and some neighborhood junior vandal started a forest fire among the debris left over, endangering the mulberry tree. However, Pete, Barbara, and the cat finally got on their way, arriving just in time for Laramie Days and the rodeo—and Pete admits a look at the sexy cowgirls filling the streets for that event was worth the trip and made it mandatory to take part in the street dance that night. Pete cut in to report a great welcome at the university, with time for research as well as work with eager Civil War students.

The Camp Followers nearly missed all this, for the tape was with Joyce and Jerry and their car developed a flat tire before it got out of Evanston. Joyce and Jerry had blank tape and recorder with them and started a recording of their tale of woe in trying to carry the good news from halls of ivy to Book and Bottle. So fast was their mission after the recovery from tire trouble that room was left on the tape for greetings to Barbara and Pete from all present.

THE WHITE HOUSE OF THE CONFEDERACY, left, will celebrate its 75th anniversary as a museum in 1971, and as The Museum of the Confederacy plans a new exhibits building and expanded garden as shown in an artist’s rendering, below. The White House is to be completely restored to the period 1861-65 when it was occupied by President Jefferson Davis. Those interested in supporting this program of historic preservation should become members of The Museum of the Confederacy, 1201 East Clay Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.
THE NEW BOOKS


Freeman, Douglas Southall. *A Calendar of Confederate Papers...*. N.Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1970. Original edition of 1908 limited to 1,000 copies. $27.50.


Roche, A. K., ed. *...even the Promise of Freedom*, in the words of Abraham Lincoln. Edited and designed by A. K.

BULLETIN BOARD

FUTURE MEETINGS

All regular meetings are scheduled for the second Friday in each month (except July and August) at the Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle Street, 11th floor.

October 16: Ed Bears on "Grant's Assaults on Vicksburg."

November 13: To be announced

Change of Address: Arnold Marcus Chernoff, 29 Londonderry Lane, Lincolnshire, Deerfield, Ill. 60015 (office)

Margo Twiss (Mrs. J. W.) Heegeman, 344 Gainesborough Road, Carrolane Farms, Virginia Beach, Va. 23462

Cincinnati CWRT Newsletter, Jim Blount, 1744 Sunset Drive, Hamilton, Ohio 45013

Death. Word has been received of the death of A.P. Andrews, our speaker last June 8 on "Gen. Earl Van Dorn."


Trefousse, Hans L. *Background for Radical Reconstruction; Testimony taken from the hearings of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, the Select Committee on the Memphis Riots and Massacres, and the Select Committee on the New Orleans Riots, 1866 and 1867*. Edited by... Boston: Little, Brown (1970). Paper $3.50.