Arnold W. Schofield on “Forgotten Warriors: American Indians in the Civil War as Allies & Adversaries”

A LEAST EXPLORED TOPIC

BY BARBARA HUGHETT

The role of American Indians as allies and adversaries of both the United States and the Confederate States of America is one of the least explored topics of Civil War history. The traditional view is one of Indians serving in the Confederate forces—such as the one commanded by Albert Pike and Stand Watie in the Trans-Mississippi Theater of Operations—and committing atrocities, such as scalping and mutilating the bodies of their enemies.

While this did happen, the reality of American Indians serving in the Civil War is much more varied and complex. The largest concentration of American Indians to serve in organized regiments in the United States Army during the war came from Kansas. Approximately 3,000 displaced Indians served in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd regiments of Indian Home Guards. Indian warriors served with courage and gallantry in both volunteer forces of the Union and Confederate armies. This was typified when Union and Confederate Indians opposed each other in mortal combat in the Battle of Honey Springs/Elk Creek, Indian Territory, on July 17, 1863.

At the same time the Civil War was taking place, there was also a vicious war being waged on the plains of the West between 1863 and 1865. Many western Indian tribes—such as the Cheyenne, Sioux, Kiowa, Navaho, and Apache—were fighting for their survival against the encroachment of Euro-American settlement on their lands. "Forgotten Warriors: American Indians in the Civil War as Allies & Adversaries" will be the topic of Arnold W. Schofield when he addresses The Round Table on January 9.

Arnold W. Schofield currently serves as senior research historian at Fort Scott National Historic Site in Fort Scott, Kansas. He is a career public servant, with 41 years of Federal service—31 years with the National Park Service and ten years with the Department of the Army. During his 23-year tour of duty at Fort Scott National Historic Site, Schofield has become very knowledgeable about various aspects of the Civil War in the West.

Prior to being stationed at Fort Scott, he served as a cultural historian on the Blue Ridge Parkway and at Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. While working for the Department of Defense, he attended college on the G.I. Bill and received a degree in history in 1972.

Schofield also serves as the NCOIC of the Fort Scott National Historic Site Ceremonial Color Guard, and as a regimental sergeant major of the 1st United States Dragoons. Both of these companies were stationed at Fort Scott between 1842 and 1853.
Jerry L. Russell, our Nevins-Freeman Award recipient in October, died, December 5, 2003. He was thought to be recovering from his lung surgery of November 24, but he died from complications following that surgery. He is survived by his wife, Alice Anne, and his children and grandchildren. I am pleased to have had personal contacts with Jerry over the past several years and to have had the benefit of his voluminous updates regarding battlefield preservation. I was also fortunate to have had the very pleasant assignment of driving Jerry and Alice Anne up to Milwaukee and back before his October presentation to our Round Table...it was interesting, enlightening, and entertaining.

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette mentioned in Jerry’s obituary that he had received accolades, including the Nevins-Freeman’s Award from the Civil War Round Table of Chicago for his forty years on behalf of battlefield preservation. A year earlier the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), the nation’s largest non-profit battlefield preservation group, had also honored Jerry with a lifetime achievement award. CWPT’s president, Jim Lighthizer, said “Our achievements of today would not have been possible without the yeoman’s work done by Jerry Russell during the past four decades.” Amen to that.

Alice Anne Russell said, in a recent conversation, that the future of the Civil War Round Table Associates has yet to be determined, but the planned tours and conferences for 2004 will be held as scheduled. The Annual Congress of Civil War Round Tables will be held in Vicksburg, October 7-10, 2004...”details to follow.” Ed Bears will lead the Vicksburg tour, which was billed as “A Living Tribute to Ed Bears,” and which will also be “A Memorial to Jerry Russell.”

Political consultancy put food on Jerry Russell’s table, but Civil War battlefield preservation was his passion. Jerry will indeed be missed.

The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) reports that a U.S. House-Senate conference on the fiscal year 2004 Interior Appropriations Bill has just agreed to allocate $2 million for the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program (CWBPP). This bill annually funds the National Park Service, including the CWBPP. President Bush’s 2003 budget request included the $2 million requisition for the CWBPP, which was the first time a president had asked for money to fund Civil War battlefield preservation matching grants. The CWPT worked with key political figures to support the funding. The CWBPP, since 1999, has used a total of $18 million in federal matching grants to save over 11,000 acres of high-priority Civil War battlefield sites in fifteen states.

A redesigned website for the CWPT: www.civilwar.org We can learn more about the CWPT and the preservation community with which we interact, the threats that preservation efforts face daily, and news about other CWPT members.

Another major problem in the park is vehicular traffic, estimated at 50,000 cars daily. The Park is also being "loved to death" by non-Civil War lovers of the sixteen miles of walking trails and green fields...perfect for those wanting a quiet walk (or run!). All of this will, of course, be settled and smoothed out by the time our 54th Annual Tour gets there.
On December 12, Hans L. Trefousse gave an interesting presentation, entitled "Booth Shot Better Than He Thought He Did," before 83 members and guests at the 626th regular meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago. A resident of New York City, Trefousse is a renowned authority on Reconstruction history and has written a number of books about this period of American history. The hypothesis of his speech was that the unfortunate presidency of Andrew Johnson was a major reason for the failure of Reconstruction. Above all, Johnson wanted the United States to remain "a white man's country" and his policies as president supported this desire.

President Abraham Lincoln gave a brief speech from the White House on April 11, 1865, in which he discussed in general terms his plans for reconstructing the country after the devastating Civil War. That evening a spectator, John Wilkes Booth, said, "That will be the last speech he ever makes!!" Three days later, Booth assassinated Lincoln and Andrew Johnson became the seventeenth president of the United States.

Johnson had been chosen as Lincoln's vice presidential running mate because, as a U.S. senator from Tennessee, a state that joined the Confederacy, he remained loyal to the Union. When he first became president, the Radical Republicans, who advocated harsh punishment of the South, thought Johnson agreed with them. Radicals also thought that President Johnson would use federal power to assist the newly freed four million blacks. However, they were soon bitterly disillusioned with the policies Johnson put forth.

Andrew Johnson, a former slaveholder, was an ardent racist. He believed that the black race was inferior to whites in every way, especially in intelligence. His views differed sharply from the views of the Radicals concerning racial relations.

A vacuum of power existed immediately after the end of the Civil War and Lincoln's assassination. "Southern whites were contrite and would acquiesce to Union power since southerners were anxious to restore authority," Trefousse asserted. Johnson took the initiative by claiming that former Confederate state governments should be restored as soon as possible. On May 29, 1865, President Johnson issued a blanket amnesty to all but the highest-ranking ex-Confederate officials. Additionally, Johnson called for elections to frame new state constitutions in former Confederate states—but only whites could vote!

These actions of Johnson's emboldened whites in the South to challenge any attempt to promote black suffrage. Trefousse proclaimed, "If true free love were established in the South, then the white southerners would have acquired. Pro-slavery spirit was given life due to Johnson's policies. Old feelings of racial hatred surfaced, eventually ending any chance for a successful Reconstruction.

In 1866, the southern state governments tried to restore the legacy of slavery with the Black Codes. These laws disenfranchised blacks for a short time, until the Radicals overturned them. High-ranking former Confederates were elected to Congress. President Johnson vetoed the 1866 Civil Rights Act and an extension of the Freedmen's Bureau. The Freedmen's Bureau was perhaps the nation's first welfare system, giving food, clothing, shelter, and educational opportunities to the blacks and poor whites in the devastated South. Both pieces of legislation were overridden by the Radical-controlled Congress. The white southerners saw that Johnson gave them a chance to subvert Radical plans for protecting blacks with his actions in 1866.

Many Radicals held out hope that Johnson would accept the Fourteenth Amendment. This amendment to the Constitution defined citizenship, protected equal rights of blacks, and gave due process to all U.S. citizens—including the freedmen. However, these hopes were dashed when Andrew Johnson doubted if any amendment should be given to the states; once again, he raised the hopes of white southerners that the Fourteenth Amendment could be defeated. This amendment eventually passed into the United States Constitution in 1868.

Johnson's political power waned in the fall of 1866, when he made many speeches in support of "white rule." Johnson warned that any black rule or representation was an invasion of the rights of states. Many Radicals were elected in the election of November 1866, to repudiate Johnson's policies. In 1867, the Reconstruction Acts were passed over a presidential veto. He felt these acts imposed black suffrage on the states. Civil authority in the conquered South was replaced by military authority. The clashes between Johnson and the Radicals led to the first impeachment of a president in American history.

In 1867, the Tenure of Office Act was passed. It stated that a president could not fire any of his own cabinet members. To challenge the constitutionality of this act, Johnson defiantly fired his Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton. Nine of the eleven counts of alleged wrongdoing dealt with the Tenure of Office Act. The House of Representatives presented the articles of impeachment for a Senate impeachment trial in March 1868. After officially being impeached, Johnson avoided being removed from office in the Senate trial by one vote—35 to 19. The failure to remove Johnson from the presidency was seen as a pivotal event in the struggle for political power during Reconstruction. As the Richmond Whig newspaper claimed, "The tide [against Radical Reconstruction] is turning!"

Congressional Reconstruction continued with the approval of the Fourteenth Amendment in July 1868. Blacks gained their suffrage for a brief time, but the process broke down by the early 1870s. Many northerners lost their resolve to fight for black civil rights. Many Radicals either died or lost elections. By the Compromise of 1877, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was elected president, while the remaining 5,000 U.S. soldiers were removed from the occupied former Confederate states. Black voting rights were denied, sharecropping restored white supremacy in land ownership, and Reconstruction was deemed a failure. In essence, Johnson's idea of "a white man's country" prevailed, at the expense of black civil rights.

As Trefousse surmised, the defeat of Reconstruction was a great tragedy in United States history. Everything changed when Booth fired the bullet that killed Lincoln. The situation could have been prevented if Andrew Johnson had not been president during early Reconstruction. His policies to make the U.S. "a white man's country" had profound impact on racial injustices over the next one hundred years. "An opportunity to achieve racial equality after the Civil War was missed because of the presidency of Andrew Johnson!"

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**DECEMBER MEETING**

**By Larry Gibbs**

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The New Books
Compiled by C. Robert Douglas


NEW MEMBERS

James F Catroppo, 817 Liverpool Circle, Manchester, NJ 08759, 732-323-8738

Janet Garretson, 823 Lake Street, Oak Park, IL 60301, 708-524-9037

Schimmelfenning Boutique

The history of The Round Table, The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship, by Barbara Hughett, is available for $30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710), or online at barnesandnoble.com or amazon.com.

In addition to The Round Table history and The Continuing Civil War, a collection of essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are generally available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes and CDs, and Civil War_buff posters. Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the Battlefield Preservation Fund of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago.

An "Illinois in the Civil War” online message board has been created as a forum to ask questions and get answers about our state in the Civil War (http://history-sites.com). This portal also contains links to similar Civil War message boards for many other states. The message boards are excellent resources to seek information on specific units or battles or to learn about Civil War ancestors.

The annual Abraham Lincoln Symposium will take place on Thursday, February 12, in the Hall of Representatives at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois. The theme this year is “Abraham Lincoln and the Party System.” Speakers are Mark E. Neely, Jr. (this Round Table’s 1989 Nevins-Freeman honoree), Michael Holt, and Mark Voss-Hubbard. Comments will be made by Graham Peck. The Symposium begins at 1:30 p.m. and is open to the public, free of charge. Martin Marty, of the University of Chicago, will be the speaker at the annual banquet of the Abraham Lincoln Association, held the evening of February 12 in the ballroom of the Springfield Renaissance Hotel. The cost of the banquet is $50 per person. For information and to make reservations, contact Cathy LeConte at Illinois National Bank in Springfield (217-747-5502).

SILENT AUCTION

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by late Round Table founding member Ralph G. Newman. The minimum bid is $5 per book, with a minimum rise of $1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker’s presentation, bidding will close and the last highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds go to benefit battlefield preservation.

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.


February 11: Lawrence Lee Hewitt, “The Confederacy’s Best Chance for Victory: Robert E. Lee and the Battle of Annihilation” (Please note that this is the second Wednesday of February.)

March 12: Thomas F. Schwartz, “Crazy Folks ... Why must I take my chances? - Abraham Lincoln and Death Threats”

April 16: (third Friday) James Ogden, topic to be announced.

April 29-May 2: Annual Spring Battlefield Tour, Atlanta Campaign

May 14: Bruce Tap, “Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War”

June 11: To be announced

The annual George L. Painter Lincoln Lectures will be held on Thursday, February 12 at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site Visitor Center in Springfield, beginning at 9:00 a.m. This year’s lectures feature Michael L. Carlebach, professor of art history at the University of Miami, and Vibert White, director of the public history program at the University of Central Florida. Admission is free. For information, contact Tim Townsend at 217-492-4241 or via email at tim_townsend@nps.gov.

Jerry L. Russell

IN MEMORIAM

The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, along with all the other Round Tables around the world and thousands of people who care about the preservation of Civil War history, mourn the death of Jerry L. Russell on December 5, at the age of 70. Jerry was so vital when he addressed us on October 10, when he accepted our thirtieth annual Nevins-Freeman Award. It’s extremely difficult to believe that he is gone.

Jerry was my good and loyal friend and had been for more than fifteen years. I will miss him very much. He was a good, honest, and dedicated man. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow Alice Anne and his entire family.

Barbara Hughett

(For further information, see the first item in the Battlefield Preservation Update on page 2.)