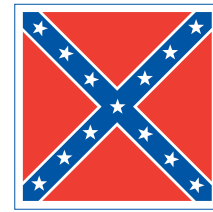


# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVI, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 2005



## 644th REGULAR MEETING

ED BEARSS

ON

THE MOST FORGOTTEN,  
MISUNDERSTOOD & LEAST  
APPRECIATED CIVIL WAR  
BATTLES AND SOLDIERS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, October 14

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA  
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

*Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.*

*Dinner at 6:30 p.m.*

\$30 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée:*

*Chicken Casriel.*

*Catch of the Day or*

*Vegetable/Fruit Plate*

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by MONDAY, October 10, by calling 630-460-1865. We now also have our online dinner reservation system at <http://www.thecwrt.org/commiss.htm>. Reservations made after Wednesday, October 12, will be surcharged \$5.

People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner.

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 \$5 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$8 with a validated parking sticker.

## EDWIN C. BEARSS

- on -

“The Most Forgotten,  
Misunderstood & Least  
Appreciated Civil War  
Battles and Soldiers”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

In this 65th year of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, it is altogether fitting and appropriate that we have Ed Bearss address our group. No man has been a bigger friend to our Round Table, and to the Civil War Round Table movement, than Ed Bearss.

We all know him as our indefatigable tour guide, barking orders for us to get off the bus and walk faster, striding with his fast, purposeful stride through the muck and mire of battlefields, delivering what the *Washington Post* calls “Homeric monologues” in a voice that needs no microphone to be heard. Ed’s been leading our tours for 40+ years now (since 1961), and those tours, and our lives, have been enriched by his presence, his energy, his endless store of colorful (and sometimes ribald) anecdotes, and his prodigious memory for facts.

Edwin C. Bearss grew up on a ranch in Montana. Even as a youth he was interested in the Civil War, naming his ranch animals after Civil War figures. Mary Abroe will be happy to learn that Ed’s favorite milk cow was named “Antietam”. In World War II he served with the



Edwin C. Bearss

Marines on Guadalcanal and New Britain, suffering wounds which caused him to spend 26 months in various hospitals. Upon recovery, he earned degrees from Georgetown University and Indiana University. While writing his history thesis on General Pat Cleburne, he visited battlefields and concluded that interpreting battles in the field was more interesting than academic history in an office. In 1955 entered the National Park Service as park historian at Vicksburg. While at Vicksburg, his research led to the discovery and salvage of the Union Ironclad *Cairo*, the remains of which are now on display at the park.

Ed is the author of numerous books and over 100 articles in scholarly journals. In 1995 he retired after 14 years as chief historian of the National Park Service. Ed currently leads well-attended

history tours in the U.S. and Europe, tours covering (among other subjects) World War II, the Indian Wars and the Lewis & Clark Expedition, along with his signature Civil War tours. As Ed has often said, “You can’t describe a battlefield unless you walk it.”



### **CWRT Renews Memberships in Preservation Groups:**

In July the Battlefield Preservation Fund (BPF) committee voted to renew the CWRT's memberships in the following organizations: Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT), winner of the 1st Bearss Preservation Award; Kernstown Battlefield Association (KBA), winner of the 2nd Bearss Preservation Award; Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg; and the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF). Upon renewal of those memberships, we received acknowledgements from all four. Denise Troxell, SHAF treasurer, sent thanks from that organization, while Larry Duncan, president of the KBA, wrote that he and his colleagues "really appreciate...(our) longstanding generosity."

From Dr. Mike Stevens, president of the CVBT, came detailed information about recent activities with which we assisted: "We are very pleased to announce that thanks to the Civil War Preservation Trust, Tricord Homes, and the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors, 140 acres of the Day One Chancellorsville battlefield have been saved.... Because of you and your support for preservation, this ground, which is quite literally America's sacred soil, will be there for you, your children, and all future generations, for as long as there is an America."

President Stevens also indicated that the CVBT is in the process of saving sixteen-plus acres at Chancellorsville on the Talley Farm ridge, just south of the historic Orange Turnpike (State Route 3); this acreage is part of the May 1863 Jackson Flank March area. Currently the Trust is raising \$50,000 as matching funds in order to receive a \$150,000 grant for completion of the purchase, and the support of our Round Table "will help us as we strive to meet this most recent fundraising challenge." In concluding, Mike Stevens emphasized the following: "Thank you! Together we are making a difference!!" We also received a personal phone call from vice-president Harriet Condon, in which she noted that "we really appreciate everything you do." For additional information on the CVBT, visit its web site at [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org).

In addition to approving and completing the noted membership renewals, the BPF committee also voted to renew our memberships in the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (NMCWM) and Save the Franklin Battlefield, Inc., both of which come due in the near future.

### **CWRT Supports Restoration of Chicago Light Artillery Monument:**

The Sons of Union Veterans (SUV) Reserve, the reenacting branch of the SUV, currently is the moving force behind the restoration of the Chicago Light Artillery Monument at Rosehill Cemetery; according to past president Jerome Kowalski of the SUV, the group is "in the final stages of fundraising" for the project.

In response to the CWRT's donation of \$250 from the Battlefield Preservation Fund, we received the following note of thanks from Bob Conklin, Adjutant, Battery A of the Chicago Light Artillery: "We want to express our appreciation for The Civil War Round Table of Chicago's generous donation to the Chicago Light Artillery, Battery A's Monument Preservation Fund. This will be applied for the restoration of the battery's monument at the Rosehill Cemetery recognizing the sacrifices the soldiers of the battery endured during the Civil War. Over the years weathering has taken its toll and deterioration is much in evidence. We are anxious to have the monument restored to more nobly recognize those original CLA veterans who performed with honor. Again your donation was most appreciated."

### **Wilson's Creek Preservation Group Will Acquire 150-Plus Acres:**

The September 1 issue of the *Springfield (MO) News-Leader* reported that 157 acres of historically significant land bordering Wilson's Creek National Battlefield will be purchased by the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that supports the NPS locally. The foundation, to which we made a \$500 donation last year, has been negotiating a deal with developer Steve Redford since last March, when Redford offered to part with the acreage for \$1.86 million. Among those applauding the conclusion

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9670 N. Dee #205

Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

Phone: 630-460-1865

[www.thecwrt.org](http://www.thecwrt.org)

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 9670 N. Dee #205 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016, or contact [webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org](mailto:webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org).

of this deal are Ed Bearss, Jim Campi of the Civil War Preservation Trust (which is donating \$50,000 for the acquisition), and Professor William G. Piston of Missouri State University; Piston calls the acquisition "one of lasting benefit to (the) people of Missouri and (the) people of the nation..."

The area around Springfield has been expanding rapidly in recent years. Making that problem more urgent has been Redford's proposed 2,000-acre Terrell Creek residential development, which borders Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Redford's offer earlier this year to sell the 157 acres was welcomed by the foundation, which eventually hopes to sell the land to the National Park Service. The NPS at Wilson's Creek, in turn, received a \$1.2 million appropriation in the 2006 federal budget and may complete such a purchase with those funds.

As is often the case in contemporary dealings between developers and preservationists, this deal between Redford and the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation represents a compromise. The foundation will gain 112 acres west of the park, the 112 acres being part of a total of 200 that have been designated historically significant. Most of the remaining 88 acres, however, lay within the Terrell Creek development. The foundation also will acquire 45 acres south of the park, part of a 160-acre tract that has been specified for acquisition; the rest of the 160 acres remains open land in private ownership.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On September 9th Richard McMurray received the prestigious Nevins-Freeman Award before 91 members and guests at the 643rd regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago. A famed historian, speaker, and raconteur, McMurray is the author of numerous books, among them *Two Great Rebel Armies* and *The Fourth Battle of Winchester*. As President Bob Miller states, McMurray is a very deserving recipient of the Nevins-Freeman Award because he is “well-informed, iconoclastic, and amusing”. McMurray’s presentation was titled “40 Years to a New Framework for the Civil War.”

Historiography is the way that historians interpret history. McMurray has challenged the conventional historiography of Civil War military history with his emphasis on studying battles in the western theater. McMurray’s hypothesis is that until recently Civil War historians have emphasized eastern theater battles to the virtual exclusion of battles fought west of the Appalachian Mountains. He maintained that the Civil War was really won in the west, where huge areas of territory were conquered by Union armies. He pointed out that the eastern theater battles—even such gigantic clashes as Antietam and Gettysburg—did not result in significant loss of territory, but only many deaths. If the conquest of territory is the criterion for decisive battles, the western battles of Shiloh, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and Atlanta were decisive battles leading to ultimate Union victory.

McMurray indicated how his interpretation of Civil War battles became transformed over his career. He stated, “The first Civil War book that I read was about the war east of the Appalachian Mountains. Most of the rest of the narrative concerned the Battles of Gettysburg and in Virginia.

The generals in the book were Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jeb Stuart.” McMurray, who grew up near Atlanta, asked himself “Where was Lee in 1864 at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain?”

The concentration of interest in the eastern theater battles and leaders intensified when McMurray attended the Virginia Military Institute. He proclaimed, “I grew up with a bad case of V.D.—the Virginia Disease!” While at Emory University, McMurray wrote a thesis on John Bell Hood that later became a biography. In the South, McMurray claimed, “Confederate General Joseph Johnston was presented as the best thing since grits!” However, from his research, McMurray thought that Johnston should have been removed from command by Confederate President Jefferson Davis due to incompetence. Johnston’s Atlanta campaign was disastrous, opined McMurray. He argued that Hood wasn’t totally incompetent, as many Confederate supporters suggested. The Hood biography gave McMurray the beginning of a new paradigm which stressed the importance of the Atlanta Campaign and the western theater.

McMurray challenged traditional Civil War historiography when he wrote *Two Great Rebel Armies*. He elaborated on the importance of the (underestimated) Army of Tennessee as compared to the exaggerated emphasis on the Army of Northern Virginia. The new paradigm hypothesized that the most important military part of the war was the oft-neglected western theater. Union armies conquered huge amounts of territory with victories in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia and later in the Carolinas. Meanwhile, very few square miles were won or lost by either side in the east, even after the famous battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

McMurray argued strongly that the Battle of Gettysburg was NOT the most decisive Civil War battle. He claimed that the minor Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky in early 1862 was more important than Gettysburg, because Kentucky—the most important state in the 1861 Union—remained in the Union as a result of the battle. Using this logic, McMurray joked that President Lincoln should have made the Shiloh Address, rather than the Gettysburg Address.

Concluded McMurray, “If I have done anything important in Civil War studies, I wanted to get people to think, understand, and accept the significance of the western theater in the Civil War!”



### CWRT COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2005-2006

- Spring Battlefield Tour—Nancy Jacobs
- Tour Co-chairs—Dick McAdoo, Jim Nethery
- Membership/Hospitality—Jerry & JoEllyn Kowalski, Donna Tuohy
- Inspector General—David Zucker, Tom Trescott
- Dinner Reservations—Bill Sullivan
- Registrar—Janet Linhart, Sonya Reschly
- Ways & Means—Kurt Carlson
- Battlefield Preservation—Mary Abroe
- Nevins-Freeman Award—Dan Weinberg
- Honors—Marshall Krolick
- Nominations—Jerry Kowalski
- Raffle/Boutique—Frank Pettice, Steve Stewart
- Shows—Chuck Bednar
- Milwaukee Liaison—Roger Bohn
- Archives—Jackie Wilson
- Audio Librarian—Hal Ardell
- Publicity—Janet Linhart



## GRAPESHOT



LaVerne Wesselhoeft, wife of our longtime member, the late Charles Wesselhoeft, died Sept. 13th. LaVerne had been with our Round Table on many battlefield tours. Our sympathies to the Wesselhoeft family.

The **Orland Park Library** will be sponsoring a Civil War exhibit Oct. 15-Dec. 2, titled "Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation". Events will include music by the Battlefield Balladeers and book discussions. For more information, call (708) 428-5151 or visit [www.orlandparklibrary.org](http://www.orlandparklibrary.org).

The **Pritzker Military Library** in Chicago is sponsoring a "Civil War Round Table Day" Saturday, Nov. 12th. The event features talks by authors **Pete Cozzens** and Pulitzer Prize-winner **Doris Kearns Goodwin**. Space is limited, so reservations will be required. Call (312) 587-0234 for reservations. For further information, visit the library web site at [www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org](http://www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org) or call the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop at (312) 944-3085.

Longtime member and Boutique Committee chair Frank Pettice has been hospitalized after discovery of both cancer and the need for bypass surgery. We all wish Frank a speedy recovery. Get well cards can be sent to his home, 22844 Cottage Grove, Steger, IL 60475.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at [bsallardice1@aol.com](mailto:bsallardice1@aol.com) or (847) 375-8305.

### SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Lapel pins, Meeting Tapes and other items are on sale at each monthly meeting, with proceeds to go to battlefield preservation. There is also a book raffle, with proceeds again going to benefit battlefield preservation.

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by Ralph G. Newman and other members. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum raise of \$1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker's presentation, bidding will close and the highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds benefit battlefield preservation.

### CWRT SPRINGFIELD TOUR THIS NOVEMBER!

**Travel with the CWRT to Springfield, Illinois.** Leave Saturday morning, Nov. 5th, stop at Lincoln College for lunch and tour the **Lincoln College Museum**. In Springfield, visit **Lincoln's home**, law office, tomb and the rail station where he gave his farewell address (time permitting). Sunday will be devoted to a tour of the new **Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library**, guided by **Tom Schwartz**, Historian for the State of Illinois.

This two-day guided tour, at a cost of \$195.00 per person, includes bus transportation, three meals (lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday), museum admissions, a single or double room and all tips and gratuities.

Space is limited. The **deadline for registration is October 21, 2005.**

If you need any further information, or to make reservations, please call one of the following CWRT members: Marvin Sanderman, 847-520-3525; Brooks Davis, 312-654-0614; or Donna Tuohy, 312-649-1041, or visit the CWRT website at [www.thecwrt.org](http://www.thecwrt.org).

## 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.*

**October 14:** **Ed Bearss**, "The Most Forgotten, Misunderstood & Least Appreciated Civil War Battles and Soldiers"

**November 11 (Veteran's Day):** **Edward Bonekemper III**, "A Victor Not a Butcher—U.S. Grant's Overlooked Military Genius"

**December 9:** **Stephen Fratt**, "Civil War Tactics and Technology"

**January 13, 2006:** **Round Table Panel Discussion** (**Panel:** Bruce Allardice, Rob Girardi, Larry Gibbs; **Chair:** Mary Abroe) "The Most Significant 'What-If's' of Civil War History"

**February 10:** **James McPherson**, "Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief"

On Wednesday, Oct. 19th, at 6:00 p.m., Chicago's **Newberry Library** is sponsoring a talk by noted author **E. L. Doctorow** on his latest novel, *The March*, a fictional account of Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas. The public is invited to attend. For more information, call the Newberry Public Programs Office at (312) 255-3700, or go online at [www.newberry.org](http://www.newberry.org).

### OCTOBER DINNER FREE TO GUESTS

Our friend and battlefield guide, **Ed Bearss**, will be our speaker this month, to celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the CWRT of Chicago. As part of the celebration, the CWRT is offering a 2-1 deal—any member who brings a guest to that meeting, that guest gets their dinner **FREE**. An Ed talk AND a free meal—it's a great opportunity for members to introduce their friends to our Round Table!