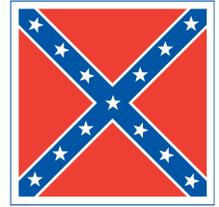


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXIX, Number 4

Chicago, Illinois

December, 2008



676th REGULAR MEETING

Craig Symonds

on

“Lincoln and His Admirals”

★★★★★

Friday, December 12

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$40 - Members/Non-members

Entrée: Prime rib, Catch of the Day, Vegetarian Plate or Fruit Plate

please note

Make your reservation by **Tuesday, Dec. 9** by calling **630-460-1865**. Reservations can also be made by emailing chicagoewrtdinner@earthlink.net with the names of your party and their choice of entree.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please call the number before 9 a.m. Thursday.

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 \$10 with a validated parking sticker.

Craig Symonds

on

“Lincoln and His Admirals”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

Know much about the United States Navy in 1861?

If you don't (and most of us don't), you have a lot in common with President Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln began his presidency admitting that he knew “little about ships.” But he quickly came to preside over the largest collection of naval ships to that time, not eclipsed until World War I.

On December 12th prize-winning historian Craig L. Symonds will trace Lincoln's steady growth as commander in chief of a wartime navy. That involved dealing with the men who ran the Navy: the loyal but often cranky Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, the quiet and reliable David G. Farragut, the ambitious ordnance expert John Dahlgren, and the energetic, self-promoting David Dixon Porter.

This talk is based on Dr. Symonds's new book, *Lincoln and His Admirals*, praised by one reviewer as “that rare thing, an important Lincoln book of genuine originality.” Symonds unveils an aspect of Lincoln's presidency unexamined by historians until now, revealing how he managed the men who ran the naval side of the Civil War, and how the activities of the Union Navy ultimately affected the course of the war.



Craig Symonds

Dr. Craig L. Symonds is Professor Emeritus at the United States Naval Academy, from which he retired in 2005. The first person ever to win both the Naval Academy's “Excellence in Teaching” award (1988) and its “Excellence in Research” award (1998), he also served as History Department chair from 1988 to 1992, and received the Department of the Navy's Superior Civilian Service medal on three occasions.

Dr. Symonds is the author of eleven books, including prize-winning biographies of Joseph E. Johnston (1992), Patrick Cleburne (1997), and Franklin Buchanan (1999),

as well as *The American Heritage History of the Battle of Gettysburg* (2001). *Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History* (2005), won the Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt Prize for Naval History. His most recent book is *Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Navy, and the Civil War* (Oxford University Press 2008). He and his wife Marylou live in Annapolis, Maryland.



Battlefield Preservation

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Battlefield Preservation Fund Committee Met in November:

The BPF committee of the CWRT met on Sunday, November 2, 2008 at the home of chair Rob Girardi. (All members in good standing of the are invited to attend committee meetings.) Committee members present were Mary Abroe, Jerry Allen, Nancy Bates, Jim Cunningham, Larry Gibbs, Girardi Brian Seiter, and David Zucker; not present were Jerome Kowalski and Marshall Krolick. Members of the CWRT present were Ellen Allen, Richard McAdoo, and Paula Walker. Minutes are as follows:

1) Treasurer Mary Abroe reported that the balance in the was approximately \$12,900. (Approximate balance was reported because, at the time of the meeting, the latest [October] bank statement was unavailable.) Of the balance noted, restricted funds amounted to \$330. Breakdown of restricted funds was as follows: \$270 (Ed Bearss Preservation Award monies) and \$60 (Illinois flag restoration monies). [It was also noted that treasurer Brian Seiter will assume the duties of treasurer of the committee in November 2008.]

2) The CWRT of Chicago will support the Civil War Preservation Trust WalMart in the Wilderness letter writing campaign by providing willing members with preprinted letters and envelopes/ mailing labels at upcoming meetings. Those letters, addressed to WalMart president and CEO H. Lee Scott, urge his corporation to choose an alternate site for a WalMart Supercenter whose current, proposed location is adjacent to the Wilderness portion of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

3.) The committee authorized the treasurer of the committee to renew memberships in the Kernstown Battlefield Association (\$250--the previous year's level); Friends and Descendants of Johnson's Island Civil War Prison (\$250--the previous year's level); and the Civil War Preservation Trust (\$1,000 Color Bearer—the previous year's level). [The CWPT uses dues from its Color Bearer members as an emergency fund to deal with land purchase opportunities for which urgent

action is needed.] The committee also authorized the treasurer of the to renew existing memberships in other preservation groups at the current level for the remainder of FY2008-09.

4.) In addition to the monthly meeting's book drawing as a way to raise funds for battlefield preservation, the committee inaugurated the new Battlefield Bookshelf in June 2008 to replace the old Silent Auction, which had reached the point of diminishing returns as an effective fundraiser. Books sold in the Battlefield Bookshelf... these generally are not recent releases but nonetheless known and respected titles...have been acquired by the committee in two ways: 1.) use of a \$1,000 infusion from the general fund (approved by the Executive Committee) for purchase from Broadfoot Publishing Company; and 2.) donation by members. In its brief existence of three meetings, the Battlefield Bookshelf had netted \$250 for the Battlefield Preservation Fund, an improvement on the recent past performance of the Silent Auction. Jerry Allen will contact the McHenry CWRT to see if that organization still is involved in an Illinois regimental battle flag restoration project.

5.) Within the past year, a committee composed of members Chuck Bednar, Roger Bohn, and Dan Weinberg provided the committee with one hundred boxes of Civil War-themed note cards featuring the artwork of late member Jerry Warshaw. At a suggested donation of ten dollars per box--with proceeds to benefit battlefield preservation--members have acquired fifty-five boxes of cards.

6.) The Starved Rock (Ottawa, Illinois) CWRT is considering the initiation of a campaign to award Brig. Gen. William H.L. Wallace the Medal of Honor. Wallace, who grew up in that area and practiced law locally until the Civil War broke out, was mortally wounded at Shiloh during heroic action in the Hornets on the battle's first day. The committee discussed our own role in spearheading/supporting this campaign.

7.) The committee voted to make the following disbursements: \$150 to Mt. Zion Church, Virginia; \$854 to the

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9670 N. Dee #205

Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

Phone: 630-460-1865

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 bsallardice1@earthlink.net.



Morris Island, S.C. campaign of the Civil War Preservation Trust; \$1,000 to the Deep Bottom, Virginia campaign; and \$1,000 to the Glendale, Virginia campaign. The Glendale campaign is 75% complete, with the organization needing to raise about \$1 million in the next eight months to complete the transaction and preserve 319 core acres of the battlefield.

Receives Thanks for Donations: Over the past summer we received letters of gratitude for contributions and/or membership renewals to several preservation groups. An early August note from Linda Banchetti of the newly organized Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign addressed her organization's thanks for our \$300 membership: "Helping maintain the Battlefield and other historic aspects of the campaign is a noble...(cause). Thank you for helping." In a June letter Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust, thanked members of the Civil War Round Table for our donation to Fleetwood Hill campaign: "Thanks to you, I am proud to tell you that we have been 100 percent successful saving those 23 acres at Fleetwood Hill at Brandy Station!.... The best news of all, of course, is that this land will be carved up into a housing subdivision, protecting the historic views of the existing battlefield that we have worked so hard to save over the years. That is your legacy to all future Americans."

November Meeting

BY TOM TRESKOTT

On November 14, Rick Hatcher spoke on "Fort Sumter - 1829 to 1947" to 62 members and guests at the 675th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, reminding the group that while the war "moved" from Sumter after April of 1861, the fort remained significant during the course of the conflict - and beyond.

Fort Sumter came into being because the War of 1812 revealed the weak coastal defenses of the United States, and so became part of the "third system" of new forts along the coastline. With the three installations around Charleston, South Carolina --- Forts Moultrie and Johnson and Castle Pinckney --- all out of date, the Corps of Engineers arrived in 1828 to create a new fort, a half mile from Moultrie and designed to work in conjunction with the older one. Named after Thomas Sumter, the last surviving general of the Revolutionary War and a South Carolinian, Fort Sumter was a pentagon shaped fort built on a man-made (109,000 tons of rock were used) two and half acre island in the middle of Charleston Harbor, designed to contain 135 guns. But like many government projects, the fort was still a work in progress in 1860, when construction was stopped due to the secession crisis.

In December of that month, when South Carolina seceded from the Union, Fort Moultrie, with 186 officers and men, was the only Federal Garrison in Charleston. His position untenable there, Major Robert Anderson moved his command to uncompleted Ft. Sumter on the 26th. The next day, Lt. Richard K. Meade, a Virginian who later fought for the Confederacy, surrendered Castle Pinckney to the secessionists --- the first surrender of the Civil War. Opposing the small federal force during "the secession winter" were Confederates under the command of Brig. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, with guns trained on Sumter from Charleston and Forts

Johnson and Moultrie. Anderson and the Lincoln administration refused to surrender the post. On the morning of April 12, 1861, 43 heavy guns opened up on Fort Sumter, bombarding it for 34 hours. Six-hundred rounds hit the exterior, the enlisted barracks were gutted by fire, and the officers' quarters collapsed. With no reinforcements or resupply possible, with only 15 guns to reply, and with the garrison already reduced to 127 due to defections to the Confederacy, Anderson officially surrendered on April 14.

What did this all mean? To the North, it was the beginning of secession, rebellion, and treason. For the South, Charleston was the important port on the South Atlantic Coast. So Fort Sumter was both symbolically and strategically important for both sides.

The Union took the first step toward taking back Charleston on November 7, 1861, with the Navy victory at Port Royal. However, further efforts to retake Charleston were thwarted at Secessionville (June 16, 1862) and in an ironclad attack (nine brought into battle for the first time, with Dahlgren guns) on Ft. Sumter on April 7, 1863, where two years of artillery practice helped the command of Col. Alfred Rhett knock out four of the nine vessels, with minimal damage to the fort. General Quincy Gillmore and Admiral John Dahlgren then agreed on joint army-navy action, took Morris Island, put in heavy siege (100, 200, and 300 pound Parrot) guns there, and began the longest siege (July 10, 1863-February 17, 1865) in American military history, which included the attack on Battery Wagner, depicted in the film *Glory*.

In all Sumter endured six major bombardments, totaling 46,000 rounds of 7 million pounds of ordnance (with 53,000 pounds of unexploded ordnance recovered during the fort's restoration), which reduced the walls from 50 to 25 feet

high. Fifty-two men were killed in action fighting for the fort, with 267 wounded. The shelling so reduced the fort that it was no longer viable as an artillery post, and was made into an infantry and observation outpost, mostly symbolic in function.

When Gen. William T. Sherman's forces took Columbia on February 17, 1865, Charleston was no longer defensible, and Confederate forces abandoned the city the night of February 17-18, with Union troops occupying Charleston on the 18th. And so ended Fort Sumter's Civil War.

After the War, Sumter was the site of a channel light for Charleston Harbor, while the Corps of Engineers restored the lower tier of the fort. During the Spanish-American War, Battery Isaac Huger protected Charleston, taking up the middle third of the old fort. In July, 1942, two German U-Boats attempted to mine Charleston Harbor, and the first foreign prisoners of World War II were taken to Ft. Moultrie.

By the end of World War II, Ft. Sumter was completely obsolete, and was closed in 1947. The National Park Service took over the following year, and now every year 245-250 thousand people visit where the Civil War started.

A recording of this (and every) meeting is available from **Hal Ardell**, audio librarian. Contact Hal at (773) 774-6781 or hal229@ameritech.net

GRAPESHOT



The **Salt Creek CWRT** will hold a "show and tell" memorabilia display Friday, Dec. 5th, beginning 7:30 p.m. at Fairview Village in Downers Grove. For more information, contact Rick Zarr at (708) 597-2780.

The **Northern Illinois CWRT** will host a presentation by our own **Bob Miller** this Dec. 5th titled "Religion and Faith During the Civil War" The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Arlington Heights Public Library and is open to all.

Rob Girardi will speak on "Leonidas Polk and Kentucky in 1861" to the Kankakee Valley CWRT on Dec. 3rd.

Author Dr. Rod Andrews of Clemson University will be speaking on "Wade Hampton" at the **Blue Island CWRT**, 12804 Highland Ave., Blue Island, Tuesday, Dec. 16th. The event starts in the fieldhouse at 7 p.m. and includes dessert. Tickets are \$5. For more information, phone (708) 385-3304 or visit www.blueislandparks.org

At the South Suburban CWRT's Xmas Party on Dec. 18th, **Leslie Goddard Allardice** (Clara Barton), **Bob Miller** (Father Sheeran), and the **Kowalskis** (General and Mrs. Thomas) will appear in costume. The event will feature a press conference and book signing. For more information, contact Dale Ramsey at drcuster1876@yahoo.com.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsallardice1@earthlink.net or (847) 375-8305.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Fifty-seven 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.

CWRT Executive Committee Meeting

President **Jerry Allen** would like to remind all that the next meeting of the CWRT's Executive Committee will be at 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 7th, at the Chicago History Museum.

As part of the Lincoln Bicentennial, Dr. **Craig Symonds** will speak on "Lincoln and His Admirals" Dec. 13th at the Glen Ellyn Village Hall. For more information, contact the Glen Ellyn Historical Society at (630) 469-1867.

Fred Johanson spoke on "The Hornets Nest at Shiloh: Myth and Reality" at the Nov. 12th meeting of the Kankakee Valley CWRT.

Tour Reminder

A reminder—start thinking about the **CWRT's battlefield tour** next year! It's April 22-26, 2009, and we'll be visiting Civil War sites in Kentucky. As usual, the incomparable Ed Bearss will be our main guide.

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*.

Dec. 12: Craig Symonds,

"Lincoln and His Admirals"

Jan. 9, 2009: Frank O'Reilly,

"Hidden Fredericksburg - the Battle We Thought We Knew"

Feb. 13: Nevins Freeman Address.

Bruce Allardice, "Lincoln as a War Leader"

March 13: John Latschar,

of the NPS Gettysburg, TBD

April 17: Stephen Wise,

of the Parris Island Museum, TBD

May 8: James Ogden,

"Rescue at Horseshoe Ridge"

June 12: Thomas Cartwright,

TBD

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be Dec. 6th, featuring historian **Philip B. Kunhardt** talking about his new book, *Looking for Lincoln*. Registration is required. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.

Larry Hewitt and **Bruce Allardice** will be making a joint presentation at the Union League Club Round Table Monday, Jan. 5th. They will have copies of their new book, *Kentuckians in Gray* (U. Press of Kentucky) there. For more information, contact Frank Patton at FrankP414@gmail.com.