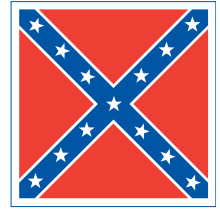


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXX, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 2009



684th REGULAR MEETING

Craig Symonds

on

“The Blockade”

★★★★★

Friday, October 9

★★★★★

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: Chicken Aegean,
Baked Tilapia, Vegetarian
Plate or Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, Oct. 5 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing chicagocwrttdinner@earthlink.net, with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

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.

Nevins Freeman Address

Craig Symonds

on

The Blockade: A Reassessment

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

Blockade! That word conjures up images of sleek, fast southern blockade runners (often captained by Rhett Butler) dashing through the moonlit seas, dodging Yankee gunboats in order to run in vital supplies for the Confederacy, and dresses for Scarlet O’Hara. The reality of the blockade was the reality of war—95% boredom, 5% stark terror.

Historians have argued for a century and a half whether the Union blockade of the South was a key factor in the North’s eventual victory, or a misappropriation of the North’s assets. Professor David Surdam, for one, has argued that the blockade only completed the ruination of a southern economy that was, by the nature of the war, doomed to ruin.

Just how effective was the blockade? What impact did it have on Confederate fortunes? What was life on the blockade like for the blockaders and for those who sought to run through it? In

this new assessment of the naval side of the Civil War, Craig Symonds offers a new analysis of an old question.

Dr. Craig L. Symonds is Professor Emeritus of American History 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



Dr. Craig L. Symonds

Department of the Navy’s Superior Civilian Service medal on three occasions. He served as Professor of Strategy at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island (1971-74) and at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, England (1994-95).

Symonds is the author of twelve 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, Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Navy, and the Civil War, won the Baroness Prize, the Laney Prize, the Lyman Prize, and the Lincoln Prize for 2009. Professor Symonds joins a distinguished list of Civil War historians, including Bruce Catton and Ed Bearss, as the winner of this Round Table’s Nevins-Freeman Award.

He and his wife Marylou live in Annapolis, Maryland. They have one son and one grandson.



Battlefield Preservation

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

“Cedar Creek Foundation Looks Forward To 145th”
By Craig L Barry

MIDDLETOWN, Va. — Time has a way of mollifying things. At least, Suzanne Chilson hopes they do. Chilson, who has been Executive Director of Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF) since 1996, says she has “never seen a year last one,” meaning 2008.

Oh, let’s not forget Chilson’s first event as Executive Director in 1996 when the Virginia monsoon season arrived later than normal and Noah’s Ark was almost reenacted instead of the Battle of Cedar Creek.

Last year, however, was a different kind of storm, though no less intense. As was widely reported, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation had applied for and received the Preservation Virginia (formerly APVA) designation for its property as one of the top 10 most endangered historic sites in America.

Then in late April 2008, an agreement reached between CCBF and the Belgian mining company Carmeuse over rezoning of property adjacent to both Belle Grove Plantation and Cedar Creek Battlefield sparked a backlash against CCBF both in the historical reenactment community as well as the media.

The settlement also caused a rift with Belle Grove Plantation, with whom CCBF had partnered in presenting the annual mid-October Battle of Cedar Creek Civil War reenactments.

Belle Grove decided to do a separate living history for a separate admission. By all accounts the 2008 Belle Grove living history event was not well attended. Despite some grumbling on the Internet forums about a boycott of the reenactment, the 2008 Cedar Creek battle drew close to 4,000 participants.

This was a very respectable turnout at Cedar Creek for a non-five year anniversary event. The number of

spectators was apparently not greatly affected by the controversy either, and admission tickets remained steady at around 5,000 sold.

The bickering on the Internet forums continued for a few more months before finally losing steam as more of the facts emerged in the print media about what was lost (nothing) vs. what was gained.

The 145th Anniversary Battle of Cedar Creek is right around the corner, on Oct. 17 and 18. The pre-registered number of participants is close to 6,000 or about 50 percent more than attended last year. If so, walk-ons will be necessarily limited and very few will be permitted to participate, so plan accordingly if you are going to attend in 2009.

According to Chilson, after several years of trying various battle scenarios, for the 145th anniversary, “Cedar Creek is returning to their time-honored tradition of the C.S. driving the Union out of their camps on Saturday, and the Federal counter-attack on Sunday.”

There also appears to be some thawing of the relationship with next-door neighbor Belle Grove Plantation. While Cedar Creek is not using any of the Belle Grove property (which prior to 2008 was rented by CCBF for \$5,000), the reenactment and Belle Grove living history program will be offered as a combination as well as separate tickets.

Adults can get two-day tickets for both venues for \$25, the reenactment for \$20 or Belle Grove for \$10. for additional detail check www.cedarcreekbattlefield.org

The CCBF Preservation Raffles are also running well ahead of last year for ticket sales. Chilson said, “The de-farbed P53 Enfield musket and signed copy of The Civil War Musket is creating a lot of interest. Ticket sales are running well ahead of 2008.”

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
1039 Hinswood
Darien, Illinois 60561
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, 1039 Hinswood Darien, Illinois 60561, or contact bsa1861@att.net.



She said, “Last year’s musket raffle was a great story as a descendant of a soldier who fought here won the musket.”

So, after 20 years the Battle of Cedar Creek is not only still around, but bigger than ever. The battle continues its tradition as the last major event on the Eastern Theater reenactment schedule, and CCBF continues its role of putting on successful events to raise funds for battlefield preservation.

Perhaps things have finally returned to normal in Middletown, Va.?”

(from the October issue of Civil War News)



Fall Tour of Springfield!

The CWRT will visit the Lincoln Museum and Library in Springfield on Saturday, Oct. 17th, with a return to Chicago the following day. A bus will leave from Chicago that Saturday morning. Meals and hotel are included. Cost is \$350 for a single room, \$600 for double occupancy. More details and registration forms will be available at our September meeting. You may download the form from the CWRT website, www.thecwrt.org.

September Meeting

BY JACKIE WILSON

The 683rd meeting of The Civil War Round Table was held on September 11, 2009, with Professor Tom Chaffin speaking on "H. L. Hunley". A moment of silence was held in recognition of the momentous occasion that date now represents in Americans hearts and minds.

Professor Chaffin stated that he began his interest in this submarine boat when he was a mere child. He and a friend had watched a televised dramatization of the CSS Hunley, and proceeded with an attempt to build their own, at least on paper. Needless to say they did not get very far. But that is also what happened to the attempts to produce the Hunley's predecessors.

The design and construction of the first submarine began in New Orleans and was handled by three men: James McClintock, Baxter Watson, and Horace L. Hunley. McClintock and Watson's roles were to design and build the machine while Hunley helped raise money and provided other support from his local contacts. Their reasoning for this endeavor might have been to hunt down and destroy union blockading ships for the bounty the Confederate Government had placed on the blockaders. It certainly was not patriotism on the part of Hunley. This could certainly help make them rich. If it worked. Plenty of people scoffed at their plans and yet others applauded their efforts.

The first attempt in New Orleans was called the Pioneer. Unfortunate turn of events meant that the testing phase was cut short and the boat scuttled in Lake Pontchartrain. The three men moved Mobile, Alabama where they were joined by William Alexander and began their next attempt. The American Diver was built and on one of its test runs it sank, but there was no loss of life.

The stubborn four had not given up. They started a third attempt named the Fishboat. General Pierre G.T. Beauregard was anxious to get his hands on the project and move it to Charleston to help break up

the blockade there. The vessel was removed to Charleston and was now ready for testing.

On February 7, 1864, the newly renamed CSS H. L. Hunley, was ready for her maiden voyage. She sank the USS Housatonic. But Hunley did not break the surface and no one saw her until 2000. She was lost somewhere in Charleston Harbor without a clue as to where or why she went down.

After recounting this short narrative of the story of how these submarine boats came to be, Professor Chaffin told us how he came to write The H.L. Hunley: the Secret Hope of the Confederacy (Hill and Wang, 2008). He stated that there are several other books that had been published but did not satisfy his historian soul. These books were speculative and did not have much in the way of primary sources.

His search for such material was very difficult as they were very hard to find. None of the four principals kept a journal or left many papers of any kind. But by searching the National Archives, the Union and Confederate Navy Records and other archives that hold personal papers of people not directly involved with the project, he was able to find a treasure trove of primary sources. The newspapers of the time were quietly unhelpful. However, many of the townspeople who observed the building of the three vessels were quite vocal, both pro and con, in their comments through letters and diaries. As these folk were not connected to the project, it took a lot of searching to find them. After the attack on the Housatonic, the United States Navy conducted an inquiry into just what had happened as no one had seen a successful submarine boat attack before. These are the primary source materials he used for his book.

Once it was found in 2000, the Hunley was raised from the Charleston Harbor and taken to a research facility. There she has been treated like the archeological treasure that she is. The bodies of the sailors were still on board and at their work stations. There is no

way to tell the cause of death at this time, so the question as to how they died is still unanswered. It appeared that none of them had tried to use either of the two escape hatches.

Dr. Jacobson, the head archaeologist of the study and reconstruction of the craft, has stated that there is no way to tell exactly how they died. The sailors were buried in a local Charleston cemetery with full Confederate military honors. Unfortunately genealogical research has found only one sailor with a living descendent. And yes, George Dixon did have a gold coin with him, but there was no proof of a girl friend.

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



General George Thomas (aka **Jerry Kowalski**) has been asked to serve for a sixth year as National Chaplain of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Way to go, Jerry!

Rob Girardi will speak at the Ann Arbor CWRT on Oct. 12th and the Campaign CWRT on Oct. 15th. Rob's new book, *The Civil War Art of Keith Rocco*, will be out soon.

The 12th annual Cantigny Civil War Symposium, co-sponsored by this CWRT, will be held Oct. 3rd. The great lineup of speakers includes John Marszalak, Dan Sutherland, Paul Finkleman and Craig Symonds. Registration for CWRT members is \$20 (\$40 for the general public), and includes lunch. For more information, phone (773) 948-9001 or visit www.firstdivisionmuseum.org.

The Bensenville Park District is holding its "Heritage Day" this October 3rd at the Fischer Farm, 16W680 Old Grand Ave. Events include Civil War reenactments. For more information, contact our own Jonathan Sebastian at jsebast@luc.edu or visit www.bensenvilleparkdistrict.org.

The Chicago History Museum is currently featuring "Lincoln at 200", an online exhibit with over 200 images of Illinois's president. Starting October 10th, the museum will mount an exhibit, "Abraham Lincoln Transformed".

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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.

Upcoming Civil War Events

- Oct. 2, Northern Illinois CWRT: Eric Jacobsen, "Hood's Tennessee Campaign"
- Oct. 2, Salt Creek CWRT: Rick Benson on "Henry Wirz"
- Oct. 7, Kankakee Valley CWRT: **Bruce Alardice** on "Conscription and the Civil War"
- Oct. 7, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Frank Crawford on "Executions of the Civil War." Visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org for more details.
- Oct. 13, McHenry Co. CWRT: K. M. Fisher on "Andersonville"
- Oct. 14, Union League Club: Dr. Thomas Schwarz on "Lincoln & Grant: A Partnership Forged in War." Contact reed@ulcc.org for more information.
- Oct. 17, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Scott Wolfe on "The Second Harpers Ferry Raid: The Fate of John Brown's Men"
- Oct. 18, Lombard Public Library: Diane Ladley tells "Civil War Ghost Stories"
- Oct. 22, South Suburban CWRT: Joseph Kahr on "General James Longstreet"
- Nov. 3, Blue Island CWRT: Noah Trudeau on "Lessons in Leadership"
- Nov. 14, McHenry Co. CWRT Annual Symposium, featuring talks by our own **Bob Miller** and **Rob Girardi**

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsa1861@att.net or (630) 297-8046.

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*.

- Oct. 9: Nevins-Freeman Address. **Craig Symonds**, "The Blockade"
- Nov. 13: **Patrick Schroeder**, "Myths About Lee's Surrender"
- Dec. 11: **Brooks Davis**, "Lincoln and Davis as War Leaders"
- Jan. 8, 2010: **Rob Girardi**, "Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign"
- Feb. 12: **Paul Finkelman**, "Lincoln and Emancipation"
- March 12: **Eric Jacobson**, "The Battle of Franklin"
- April 9: **David O. Stewart**, "The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson"
- May 14: **William W. Freeling**, "The Strange, Difficult Triumph of Southern Secession"
- June 11: **John V. Quarstein**, "Battle of the Ironclads"

Newberry Library Lincoln Events

Starting in October the Newberry Library of Chicago presents "With Malice Towards None," an exhibition of rare Lincoln artifacts created by the Library of Congress to commemorate President Lincoln's 200th birthday. A collection from the Newberry's archives, "Honest Abe of the West" will be displayed starting Oct. 10th. And on Oct. 17th Glennette Tilley Turner, author of *The Underground Railroad in Illinois*, will give a talk and bus tour on that topic. Phone (312) 255-3700 for more details.

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be noon, Oct. 17th, with Barton Myers and Ron Elliott talking about their new books, *Executing Daniel Bright* and *Through the Eyes of Lincoln*. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.