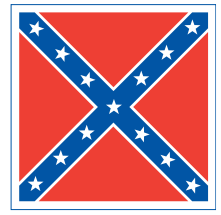


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXXI, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June 2011



702nd REGULAR MEETING

Peter Carmichael

on

“Robert E. Lee”

★★★★★

Friday, June 10

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$45 - Members/Non-members

Entrée: Sweet & Sour Pork.

Baked Salmon.

Vegetarian Plate or

Fruit Plate

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, June 6 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, 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 \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$12 with a validated parking sticker.

Peter Carmichael on “Robert E. Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

Did Robert E. Lee’s expectations of what his army could accomplish far exceed what his army could realistically expect to accomplish? Did Lee, despite his army’s repeated bloodlettings, further Southern war aims and sustain the Confederate people in their struggle for independence? Was Lee, at the same time, too addicted to the offensive, too bloodthirsty, and too eager to abandon the defense when he should have been concerned about preserving his army? Professor Peter S. Carmichael explores these questions in “Robert E. Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation” at the June 8th meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago.

Professor Carmichael serves as the Fluhrer Professor of History and the Director of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College. After completing his doctorate at Penn State University under Dr. Gary W. Gallagher, he went on to teach at Western Carolina Univer-



Peter Carmichael

sity, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and West Virginia University.

Professor Carmichael is the author and editor of four books, including The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion. He has also published a number of articles for both scholarly and popular journals. Every June Professor Carmichael directs the Civil War Institute’s summer conference, which draws more than 300 attendees from across the country. More

recently Professor Carmichael has appeared on the PBS Robert E. Lee documentary for The American Experience series and his lectures have been covered by C-Span. Peter’s Audacity Personified includes an essay of his titled “Lee’s Search for the Battle of Annihilation.” He is currently finishing a book entitled The War for the Common Soldier.



Preservation Can Save Lives

BY GEORGE WUNDERLICH

When we think of Civil War preservation issues, it is natural that our first thought drifts towards battlefield preservation. Our battlefields are irreplaceable artifacts that speak directly to the courage, will, suffering and triumph of our ancestors.

These sacred places do not exist only to serve those whose ancestors fought. They act as pilgrimages sites for all Americans to experience, even vicariously, the sacrifice that it took and takes to make America the great country that it is today.

Preserving our battlefields for this purpose is a lofty calling and an absolute necessity, yet it is an incomplete picture. We can, and must, do more if our heritage is to fully form and inform us as a people.

Land is vital to our story, as are artifacts and stories. The museums, archives, libraries and private collections of our country all help put flesh on our understanding of the land we fight so hard to preserve.

Together, the stories, artifacts and land can have a much more profound meaning than any single resource could ever have. This combination not only helps inform our current and futures generations; but by studying the sacrifices and triumphs of our past, we can save lives of our citizen soldiers today.

In 2004, the National Museum of Civil War Medicine was asked to take part in a military medical training program called the Joint Medical Executive Skills Institute Capstone Symposium.

Our first participation was a combination lecture and artifact-based interpretive program. In 2005, we combined this with a visit to the Antietam National Battlefield and McClellan's headquarters at the Pry House. The result was astounding.

During one particular session in the Pry House Field Hospital Museum where we were discussing Maj.

Jonathan Letterman's role at Antietam, a senior medical officer was visibly shaken and left the room abruptly. When questioned about his departure, his reply stunned everyone who heard it.

He stated that there had been a significant increase in the death rate of soldiers wounded in fighting near Fallujah, Iraq, that seemed unexplainable.

Upon hearing of the interaction between General George McClellan and Letterman, his Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac, this current officer realized that during a recent relocation of the medical communications center from the main communications center they had neglected to properly consider the placement of the medical dispatchers.

Unlike Letterman who had direct access to his commander, these dispatchers were working without real-time battle information.

In 1862, Letterman pre-placed medical assets on the battlefield because of battlefield information he gleaned from constant contact with McClellan.

In Fallujah, after the move of the medical communications center, the medical dispatchers no longer had access to this essential information. As he was explaining the situation to us, he was e-mailing his counterparts in Iraq to remedy the situation. We have been told that soon after, mortality rates once again dropped to their previous levels.

It was not simply the preservation of the Pry House that brought this story about. Nor is it only the preservation of the story of Antietam and the artifacts related to medical history.

It was the combination of story, place and artifacts that made the difference. We believe that there are now men and women whose lives were saved because of historical knowledge

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Darien, Illinois 60561
Phone: 630-460-1865
www.chicagocwrt.org

The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or editor@chicagocwrt.org.

that was remembered and taught.

Because of this incident (and there have been many more since 2005), over 4,700 federal medical professionals from all branches of the military, Veterans Administration and the Public Health Service, have been given the opportunity to visit these sacred spaces, see the artifacts and hear the stories of the Civil War.

They are more effective at their jobs for having this opportunity. They have come to understand that preservation is more than just about buying land. It is about total preservation and using that preservation to make real changes in our current world.

Thanks you all for supporting preservation of our Civil War legacy. Through your efforts, you may someday meet someone whose life you helped save.

Information about the National Museum of Civil War Medicine is available at 301-695-1864, museum@civilwarmed.org and www.Civilwarmed.org.

George Wunderlich is Executive Director of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.

From May 2011 Civil War News

May Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

Tom Schott spoke to the Chicago Civil War Roundtable at its 701st meeting on May 13, 2011, on “Alexander Stephens and Jefferson Davis: A Marriage Made in Hell.” Stephens was thin and gaunt, a “malformed, ill-shaped” individual with “nothing about him but lungs and brains.” He was afflicted throughout his life with multiple illnesses including rheumatoid arthritis, a degenerative cervical spine, migraines and depression. He was an alcoholic and a morphine addict.

But Stephens was a great speaker with a shrill pitched voice who became a prominent politician. Born in Crawfordville, Taliaferro County, Georgia in 1812, he graduated from Franklin College in 1832 and passed the bar two years later. He served in the Georgia legislature from 1836 to 1842 and was elected to United States Congress where he served until 1859. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1860 but did not take his seat.

Stephens was a reluctant secessionist. Although a Whig, he stood as a Douglas elector in the 1860 election. But he held that a state had an absolute right to secede, even if not provoked, and followed his state out of the union. Due to his *ante bellum* party affiliation, and because Georgia was the most populous state in the south, he was elected Jefferson Davis’ Vice-President.

Jefferson Davis too was a “moderate” secessionist who served as Secretary of State under Franklin Pierce and had been elected twice to the Senate. But while Stephens thrived in politics, Davis “wouldn’t practice it if he knew it.” The two shared some qualities—both were egotistical, self righteous, irritable, and quick tempered—but whereas Stephens warmed to people and had a sense of humor, Davis was aloof, humorless and rigid.

Stephens began to distance himself from the Davis administration after its removal from Montgomery to Richmond. His “Cornerstone” speech which focused on submission and the

inferiority of slaves put him at odds with the administration. He spent little time in Richmond after his inauguration in February, 1862, spending mere weeks there in 1863 and less time as the war progressed. He was dissatisfied with his official duties—as Vice-President he merely presided but could not speak.

Stephens quarreled with the administration over conscription and other issues. He conceived the war as a struggle for constitutional liberty, the right of the states to determine their individual destinies and the right of individuals to be free from government encroachment. He felt the fate of liberty hinged on Confederate success. The conscription acts, Stephens felt, depressed “natural” patriotism and disregarded personal liberty and state sovereignty. And he objected to the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*. Although constitutional, limits on fundamental rights must be restricted; the rights to trial in civil courts and to seek redress for false arrest must be preserved. Stephens simply hated martial law—suspending the writ muzzled dissent.

As the war dragged on, Stephens became strident in calling for a negotiated peace. Davis was opposed, but Stephens would have responded to any peace overture and supported Northern Democrats in such efforts. Notwithstanding his feelings on states’ rights, he did not support separate state action in peace initiatives. He was part of the failed “peace movement” in June and July, 1863, and participated in the Hampton Roads conference in February, 1865. These failed, of course.

Incarcerated for a short time following the cessation of hostilities, Stephens resumed his political career after the war, serving multiple terms in Congress and later being elected governor of Georgia. He died in March, 1883.

Schott considers Stephens’ legacy more complicated than usually portrayed. As secession segued into a ‘long’ war

he opposed, Stephens became preoccupied with the fate of civil liberties and struggled to maintain constitutional priorities. But the south was not united—the Confederate States of America were built on a contradiction. There was no party system in which to channel his opposition, and although he should have resigned, Stephens remained loyal to his “country,” Georgia, through the end of the struggle.

To hear the entire talk, there is a recording of the meeting (and every meeting) available from Hal Ardell, audio librarian. Contact Hal at (773) 774-6781 or hal229@ameritech.net. To view his slide presentations see <http://classic.kodakgallery.com/civilwar/main>.

Armin Weng

A good friend and member of our Round Table, Armin Weng, passed away April 30th in Davenport, Iowa. A lifelong Lutheran minister, Armin spoke to our CWRT several times. He was on the board of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, and helped run the Quad Cities CWRT. Online condolences may be left at www.wheelanpressly.com.

Douglas Assn. Luncheon

The Stephen A. Douglas Association will hold its annual luncheon Saturday, June 4. At 10 a.m. a memorial ceremony will be held at the Douglas Tomb, followed by reception at the Palmer House and (at noon) luncheon. This year’s keynote speaker is Robert Dick Douglas III, the great-great grandson of the famed senator. The cost is \$40 apiece. For reservations or more information, email Joe Wisheart at jwisheart@sbcglobal.net

GRAPESHOT



On June 7th **Bruce Allardice** will present “The Ten Worst Civil War Generals” at the Blue Island Historical Society.

Leslie Goddard will present “Clara Barton” at the Mundelein Public Library on July 20th, and to the South Suburban CWRT on August 25th.

Dave Corbett and his “Battlefield Balladeers” will perform June 12 at the Antioch Public Library, July 9-10 at the Lake County Museum’s “Civil War Days,” and July 20th at the Batavia Park District.

Larry Hewitt will speak on “Slandered Heroes: Deserters Who Didn’t” to the CWRT of Central Louisiana on June 2nd. On June 4th he will present “Braxton Bragg Reconsidered” to the 26th Annual Deep Delta Civil War Symposium.

The **Elmhurst Public Library** is hosting a Civil War exhibit through June 3rd. See www.elmhurstpubliclibrary.org for more details.

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

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus 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

May 28th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Steve Michael on “The History of Memorial Day.” Visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org for more details.

May 29th, Union League CWRT: Adam Goodheart on “1861. The Civil War Awakening.”

June 1st, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Annual dinner

June 3rd, Northern Illinois CWRT: Annual Banquet, with Gloria Swift speaking on “Fort Pulaski.”

June 4th, Stephen A. Douglas Assn.: Annual luncheon

June 9th, Milwaukee CWRT: Pete Carmichael on “Robert E. Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation.”

June 10th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Marta Vincent on “Women’s Clothing during the Civil War era.”

June 14th, McHenry County CWRT: Bill Grey on “Longstreet in East Tennessee.”

June 17th, Salt Creek CWRT: Annual Banquet. Rob Girardi speak on “Illinois Fights the Civil War.”

June 21st, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Steven J. Ramold on “Baring the Iron Hand.”

June 26th, Lake County CWRT: Annual Picnic at Van Patten Woods

July 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Donald S. Frazier on “Blood & Treasure.”

Reminder: 2012 Tour (Chickamauga/Chattanooga)—May 3–6, 2012

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*.

June 10: Peter Carmichael, “Robert E. Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation”

Sept. 9: Marshall Krolick, “8th Illinois Cavalry Troopers”

Oct. 14: Nora Titone, “The Bitter Rivalry between Edwin and John Wilkes Booth”

Nov. 11: Gail Stephens on “Early’s 1864 Invasion of Maryland”

CWRT Elections

At the May meeting the CWRT held its annual election for officers in the 2011-2012 year. Elected were Bob Stoller (President); Brian Seiter (Sr. VP); Mark Matranga (1st VP); Paula Walker (2nd VP), Cindy Heckler (Treas.); Jon Sebastian (Asst. Treas.); John Kociolko (Sec.); and Mike Weeks (Asst. Sec.); Leslie Goddard Allardice, Mark Kunis, Bjorn Skaptason, Bob Gibson (Trustees, terms to expire 2012); Tom Murray, Dave Zucker, Fred Johanson, Rick Branham (Trustees, terms to expire 2013).

Bjorn Skaptason reminds us that the **Abraham Lincoln Book Store’s** next Virtual Book Signing will be noon, June 13th, with Joseph Glatthar speaking on his new book *Soldiering with the Army of Northern Virginia*, and Wayne Wei-Siang on *West Pointers in the Civil War*. Visit www.virtualbooksigning.net for more details.