

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



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Chicago, Illinois

February 2013



718th REGULAR MEETING

Mary Abroe
on
"Grosvenor of Ohio"

★★★★★

Friday, February 8

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$47 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée: Chicken Piccata,
Baked Orange Roughy,
Vegetarian Plate or
Fruit Plate*

Please Note:

Make your reservations by Wednesday, Feb. 6, by emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, or calling 630 460-1865 with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please email us at dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org and/or call us at 630-460-1865.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:15 p.m., for a charge of \$10 per person.

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

Mary Abroe on Grosvenor of Ohio: Saving Chickamauga- From Horseshoe Ridge to Congress and Back

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

It is a truism that the Civil War casts a long shadow over our history, and this was uniquely so for the men and women who endured it. As veteran and future Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. famously noted, "The generation that carried on the war has been set apart by its experience....[I]n our youth our hearts were touched with fire." For Charles Henry Grosvenor, who vowed soon after Fort Sumter to give the secessionists "thunder," that memory of the Civil War included standing with other defenders of Horseshoe Ridge in the heat and blood of a northern Georgia battlefield on his thirtieth birthday. So maybe it is not surprising that he later used his legal and oratorical skills and political clout to help spearhead Chickamauga's preservation as our first national historical park. Eventually, then, the old soldier returned to the battlefield as head of the commission of veterans that administered Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park; it was a position he held, his life coming full circle, on the day he died.

Mary Abroe (like Charles Grosvenor, a proud Buckeye) holds a BA in history from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana and a PhD from Loyola University Chicago. Currently she teaches Western Civilization and American



Mary Abroe

history at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois.

Dr. Abroe has commented on and given presentations related to her interest in the Civil War era and historic preservation at professional gatherings and cultural institutions, including the Kenosha (WI) Civil War Museum and meetings of the Illinois State Historical Society, Ohio Valley History Conference, National Council on Public History, and Organization of American Historians. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *Civil War History*; *Mid-America: An Historical Review*;

the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*; the *Journal of Southern History*, and *Cultural Resource Management* (now CRM: *The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*), a publication of the

National Park Service. In 2011-12 she was project scholar for "Let's Talk About It: Making Sense of the American Civil War," co-sponsored by the NEH and American Library Association, at the Wilmette (Illinois) Public Library.

Dr. Abroe is a trustee of the Civil War Trust, director of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and member of the National Advisory Board of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. She also is a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago.



Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

Seminary Ridge Museum Will be Open on July 1

by Paul Post

(January 2013 Civil War News)

GETTYSBURG, PA – On July 1, 1863, Union Gen. John Buford viewed Confederate troop movements from a cupola atop a four-story building on the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg campus.

Next summer, visitors may get the same bird's-eye view from this vantage point during tours of the new Seminary Ridge Museum that's scheduled to open on July 1, the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg's first day.

The \$15 million project, 10 years in the making, will include four floors of exhibits in historic Schmucker Hall, a seminary dorm built in 1832 that both sides used as a hospital to treat their wounded during the three-day battle.

"People talk about walls talking. In this case the walls have been chattering to us," museum Executive Director Barbara Franco says. "The building itself is our major artifact. It's a great place to start any visit to Gettysburg because it focuses on the battle's first day."

Schmucker Hall has been called "the most important Civil War structure not owned by a public entity."

During renovations, which are now complete, workers made exciting discoveries including letters that had slipped between floorboards. Visitors will see original floors, plaster and wood details.

Each floor's exhibit will have a different theme. From the first floor, where visitors get an overview of the battle and the building's role in it, people will be directed to the top floor to see "We Have Come to Stay!" that details hour by hour events of the battle's first day.

On the third floor's "Steeped in Sorrow and Death," guests will see how the former dorm was converted to a hospital and learn the stories of the wounded, dying, and the surgeons and nurses who treated them.

"Many of these people with very serious wounds were lucky to get water," Franco said.

Old wooden cots with metal springs, found in the attic, show what hospital

beds might have looked like.

Displays will not only tell about such people during the battle, but who they were beforehand and, for survivors, what their fate was afterward. For example, Medal of Honor recipient Jefferson Coates of Wisconsin later homesteaded to Nebraska.

One of the longtime missing letters found in floorboards was addressed to Noah Koontz, of Co. D, 142nd Pennsylvania Infantry. He was born Oct. 30, 1842, in Somerset County, Pa.

After the war, he and his wife moved to Johnstown, Pa., where they survived the great Johnstown Flood of 1889. He died in 1916. According to his obituary Koontz was a teamster and helped build the Somerset and Cambria branch of the B&O Railroad.

"Each of the corner galleries will be set up with realistic life-size figures," Franco says. "There will be 3-to-5-minute videos and hands-on things for visitors on each floor. There are great programming possibilities here as we go forward."

The second floor, "Voices of Duty and Devotion," delves into moral, civil and religious issues surrounding the war, highlighted by a "Faith and Freedom" exhibit.

State-of-the-art interactive exhibits are under construction in New York and will be installed this winter and spring.

Schmucker Hall is named for Samuel Simon Schmucker, a prominent anti-slavery advocate who helped focus national debate on slavery and an articulate spokesman for social justice. He founded the seminary in 1826. Schmucker welcomed Daniel Alexander Payne, the first African-American Lutheran seminary, to study there.

In addition to inside attractions, the museum project includes a one-mile walking path through seminary grounds with signage explaining various historical points of interest.

The seminary and museum are located just outside Gettysburg National Historical Park, where countless visitors tour the battlefield each year.

At present, the cupola is partially obscured by tall trees that will be taken down soon and replaced with shorter

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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.



oaks. This will give cupola visitors a better view of the battlefield and let battlefield tourists see the cupola the way soldiers would have in 1863.

During the battle, about 600 soldiers from both sides were treated there. The Union held the building on the first day, but relinquished control of Seminary Ridge to Confederates after retreating to high ground south of town.

After the battle, the Union once again took it over and care for soldiers continued into September.

The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The new museum, with 20,000 square feet of exhibit space, is a joint venture of the seminary, Adams County Historical Society and Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Association.

The project has been paid for with a combination of state, federal and private funding.

"The whole approach is to let the people who were here tell their stories," Franco said.

Group rates will be offered, with cupola tours available by reservation. A "soft" opening with limited preview tours is planned in April. New parking spaces will be spread throughout the campus.

For more information and to make a donation to the museum, which is still fundraising, go to www.seminaryridge.org

January Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

Dave Powell addressed the 717th meeting of The Civil War Round Table on “Failure in the Saddle,” an inquiry into the performance of Confederate cavalry in the Chickamauga campaign. Although the southern mounted arm had relative strength of numbers, union cavalry was better equipped and was far better able to replace losses of horseflesh. Trips home to secure mounts also depleted manpower.

After being maneuvered out of Tullahoma in 1863, Bragg’s Army of Tennessee retreated to Chattanooga a morally crippled force. But the army had two separate cavalry corps, one commanded by Joseph Wheeler, an 1859 West Point graduate with combat experience as a cavalry officer. After initially commanding an infantry regiment, he was transferred to the cavalry in 1862 and by mid-1863 commanded two cavalry divisions. But Wheeler was young and a poor disciplinarian, and did not relate well to his subordinates. He had his commander’s confidence but not that of his men.

Nathan Bedford Forrest led the second corps. Forrest had been an independent brigade commander with virtually no experience at the corps level. He was a “difficult” personality, both as subordinate and commander who quarreled with Wheeler and others. His principal shortcoming was that he “had to see things for himself”; he had to be at the scene of action and had difficulty delegating.

As General Rosecrans maneu-

vered south and west of the Gateway City of Chattanooga, he sent a force north and east to deceive the confederates, a plan which worked. Bragg concentrated his forces near the city, with only a solitary cavalry regiment patrolling the 50-mile extent of Sand Mountain (south and west of the city). Wheeler took one division south to Rome, Georgia, where it spent August “living high on peach pie,” and another to Alexandria, Alabama. Instead of deploying along the Tennessee River crossings on the army’s left flank, the bulk of Wheeler’s cavalry was 60 miles from the river. For Powell, this was the first major mistake made by the cavalry in the campaign.

Meanwhile, Forrest was fooled by the ‘deception maneuver’ north of the city. He asked Bragg to permit him to cross the Tennessee and attack, which Powell considered reckless. This and Wheeler’s absence caused Bragg to order Wheeler back north. But this move produced little intelligence, and Bragg was forced to evacuate Chattanooga once it was revealed Rosecrans had crossed the Tennessee in large numbers.

Under pressure from the high command to bring Bragg to battle, Rosecrans pushed forward into northern Georgia. Knowing he was being reinforced, Bragg retreated further, and after a week of maneuvering, had moved around the left of the northern army; Rosecrans sensed this and moved back toward Chattanooga. The cavalry was integral to this move:

Forrest was to cross the Chickamauga Creek at Reed’s and Alexander’s Bridges and interdict the Lafayette Road, the federal lifeline to Chattanooga. But he was late; the creek crossings were not secured and confederate infantry was delayed by Minty’s cavalry and Wilder’s mounted infantry brigades on September 18, 1863. That evening, Forrest went into camp instead of pushing toward the road, which Powell calls the second major mistake of the cavalry. The result was that the union army attacked on the morning of the 19th, surprising the confederates, upsetting Bragg’s battle plan, and changing the nature of the battle of Chickamauga.

The third great mistake made by the confederate cavalry occurred on September 21, 1863. Forrest led a reconnaissance up Missionary Ridge and sent word back to Bragg that the union army was evacuating Chattanooga and should be attacked. But this was not done, to the detriment of Bragg’s career. But Forrest’s dispatch was colored: the union army was in force at Rossville, blocking the way to Chattanooga.

In the command upheaval following Chattanooga, Wheeler retained his command but Forrest was let go to return to Mississippi. Powell concluded that the confederate government received little return on its considerable investment of money and men in the western cavalry during this pivotal campaign.

GRAPESHOT



On Feb. 5th, at the LaSalle Public Library, **Leslie Goddard** will present “Clara Barton.” Leslie will appear as Mary Chesnut Feb. 20th, at the Illinois Education Association, and Feb. 27th, at the Highland Park Public Library.

Rob Girardi will speak on “Illinois Fight the Civil War” Feb. 10th, Ethical Humanist Society, Skokie; on “The Murder of General William ‘Bull’ Nelson,” March 1st at the Northern Illinois CWRT; and on “Illinois Soldiers Respond to Emancipation,” at the Illinois History Symposium in Springfield Feb. 28th-March 2nd.

Bruce Allardice will present “Chicago in the Civil War,” on Feb. 1st, at the Northern Illinois CWRT; and present “Civil War Movies,” on Feb. 15th, at the Salt Creek CWRT.

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT’s website for additional coming events.

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

Jan. 29th, Blue Island Historical Society: Wayne Wolf interviews President Lincoln (Michael Krebs)

Feb. 1st-3rd, Pheasant Run Resort: “Military History Fest”

Feb. 2nd, **Chicago CWRT**: Winter Executive Committee Meeting

Feb. 6th, Lake County CWRT: Doug Stiles on “One of Lincoln’s Engravers”

Feb. 7th, Canal Corridor Assn. in Lockport: Dan Rozak on “Will County and the Civil War”

Feb. 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: **Mary Abroe** on “Charles Grosvenor, Colonel 18th Ohio”

Feb. 15th, Union League Club: luncheon with Tony Kushner and Harold Holzer

Feb. 17th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: **Leslie Goddard** as “Clara Barton”

Feb. 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Edward Finch on “The Navy and the Civil War”

Feb. 23rd, Grayslake Heritage Center: **Charlie Banks** on “Lincoln’s Funeral Train”

Feb. 28th, Moraine Valley CC: Jim McIntyre on “Grand Strategy North & South”

Feb. 28th, South Suburban CWRT: **Larry Gibbs** on “The Lost Cause”

2013 Tour – Antietam, May 1-5

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.*

Feb. 8: Mary Abroe, “Charles Grosvenor, Colonel 18th Ohio”

March 8: Leslie Goddard, “Mary Chesnut”

April 12: John Fitzpatrick, ““There is no fail here.” President Lincoln at Gettysburg”

May 10: Ethan Rafuse, “Lee and Gettysburg”

June 14: Timothy B. Smith, “Corinth”

Bjorn Skaptasen of the **Abraham Lincoln book store** reminds us that the next “Virtual Book Signing” will be Feb. 15th at four p.m., with **Tony Kushner** talking about his new book, Lincoln: The Screenplay, and **Harold Holzer** talking about his new book Lincoln: How Abraham Lincoln Ended Slavery in America. Visit www.virtualbooksigning.net for more details.

CWRT Winter Meeting

The Chicago CWRT Winter Executive Committee Meeting will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 2nd, at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago. All CWRT members are encouraged to attend.



150 YEARS AGO – FEBRUARY 1863



- 2nd:** Grant started his attempt to build a canal around to the rear of Vicksburg.
- 3rd:** The French offer to mediate the Civil War.
- 3rd:** Union ram *Queen of the West* steams past Vicksburg to disrupt Confederate shipping. After being hit 12 times by artillery, she rams the Confederate ship *City of Vicksburg*.
- 5th:** General Joseph Hooker reorganizes the Army of the Potomac appointing J. F. Reynolds, Darius Couch, Dan Sickles, George Meade, John Sedgwick, W. F. Smith, Franz Sigel and Henry Slocum in command of individual corps. George Stoneman is named his cavalry chief. Smith's Ninth Corps is assigned to Newport News to increase pressure on Richmond.
- 6th:** Secretary of State William Seward informs Minister Mercier that the French offer to mediate the Civil War had been rejected by the United States.
- 12th:** West Virginia's constitutional convention reconvenes following Congress's request that certain wording (about slaves) be modified.
- 13th:** President Lincoln is visited by diminutive circus act General Tom Thumb and his wife.
- 14th:** The *Queen of the West* runs aground on the Red River. It is abandoned.
- 16th:** U. S. Senate passes the Conscription Act.
- 17th:** West Virginia approves a revised state constitution.
- 17th:** The order halting publication of the Chicago Times as a "copperhead" newspaper, is rescinded.
- 18th:** A Democrat Convention in Richmond, Kentucky, is broken up by federal authorities because some members were pro-Confederate.
- 24th:** The Territory of Arizona is organized from the Territory of New Mexico.
- 25th:** Confederate Major General Daniel Harvey Hill assumes command of all North Carolina forces.
- 26th:** The National Currency Act was signed into law by President Lincoln, creating a national banking system, a Currency Bureau and the office of Comptroller of the Currency. The act's goal was to establish a single currency.
- 26th:** The Cherokee Nation rescinds its declaration of secession and abolishes slavery, reversing its earlier course.
- 28th:** At Ft. McAllister near Savannah, federal gunships including the ironclad *U.S.S. Montauk* moved up the Ogeechee River to destroy the *Rattlesnake*, a Confederate privateer also known as the *Nashville* before it was decommissioned.
- 28th:** Work begins on rebuilding Ford's Theater in Washington D.C. after a fire.

CUSTER AUTHOR DIES

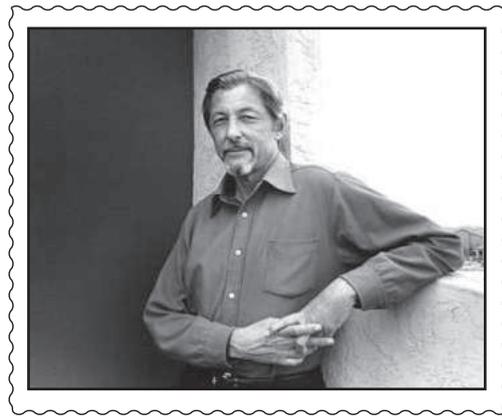
Noted author Evan Connell died recently in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at age 88.

He was a pre-med student at Dartmouth, which he attended from 1941 to 1943, but ultimately decided against becoming a doctor. This did not please his father, whom Connell described as “a rather severe man.”

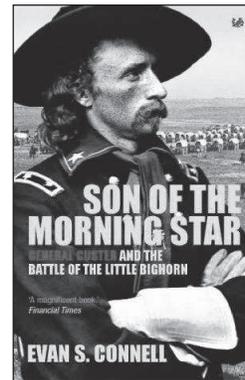
“He was concerned that I would never be able to make a living at [writing],” Connell, in a 2000 interview with the Associated Press, said of writing. “It was a justifiable concern, I think. I grew up in a home where there was no music, no interest in any of the arts.”

He dropped out of Dartmouth and joined the Navy, training as an aviator at a base near Albuquerque, where he fell in love with the vastness of the West. After completing his military service, he studied painting on the GI Bill and traveled, living in France during the 1950s and writing for the *Paris Review*.

His first novel, *Mrs. Bridge* (1959), according to the Man Booker Prize website, “dissects the life of a conventional upper-middle-class Kansas City matron who lacks a sense of purpose and conforms blindly to what is expected of her.” The novel was “one of the very few written since World War II that clearly deserves to be called, as it has been, a masterpiece,” William H. Nolte wrote in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. In all, Connell wrote 18 books, mostly novels.



Evan Connell



Connell's bestselling 1984 biography of Custer, *Son of the Morning Star* also earned praise and became a 1991 mini-series. Larry McMurtry, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, said the book was “one of the few masterpieces to concern itself with the American West” and particularly noteworthy for its portrayals of the Native Americans. Michiko Kakutani of *The New York Times* also called it a masterpiece with a “lasting visceral resonance.”

Connell won the \$100,000 Lannan Literary Award in 2000 and a Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 2010. [h/t Stanford University's “The Book Haven”]