Daughter of a wealthy planter and wife of a top presidential aide, Mary Chesnut witnessed firsthand many key events in the South during the Civil War, recording them in a diary considered one of the most compelling personal accounts of the war. In this first-person portrayal, Chesnut reads from her journal, sharing stories of the events unfolding around her and her often surprising perspectives on race, political power, and social status. Small wonder her journal has been called “the most famous war diary of a Southern woman” and “one of the best windows we have into southern society during the American Civil War.”

Leslie Goddard writes and lectures frequently on American history, with particular expertise in the areas of women’s history and Chicago cultural history. She has presented numerous lectures and presentations for museums, libraries, community centers, civic organizations, and civil war round tables. Leslie is the spouse of past CWRT president Bruce Allardice, and currently serves as assistant secretary of the CWRT of Chicago.

With experience as a historian, actor, and museum teacher, Leslie Goddard brings a unique perspective to her history presentations.

Trained as a historian, Leslie earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, specializing in U.S. cultural history, American studies, and women’s history. She also holds both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in theater and has been working in the field of museum interpretation for ten years. Her programs combine her experience as a teacher and actor with her background as a historian and researcher.
The Civil War Round Table

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940
1039 Hinwood
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 Hinwood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or editor@chicagocwrt.org.

Battlefield Preservation

By Brian Seiter

CW Trust Contracts For 61 Brandy Station Acres; Must Raise $3.6 Million
by Scott C. Boyd

BRANDY STATION, VA — The Civil War Trust announced Dec. 20 it has a contract to buy 61 acres on historic Fleetwood Hill at Brandy Station for $3.6 million. The Trust has until June 7 to raise the money and close the sale, two days before the battle’s sesquicentennial.

The land at the crest of the southern end of Fleetwood Hill is the “crown jewel” of the Brandy Station battlefield, according to battle historian and Brandy Station Foundation co-founder Clark B. “Bud” Hall. It includes the site of Confederate commanding general J.E.B. Stuart’s headquarters for the battle.

“Protection of this property at the epicenter of the Brandy Station battlefield has been a goal of the preservation community for more than three decades,” said Trust President James Lighthizer in announcing the contract.

The Trust owns 878 acres of the Brandy Station Battlefield that are open to the public with signage, walking trails and a driving tour. Unlike most Trust land purchases, this recent one became public before the Trust board had officially voted to approve the deal.

“Typically we wait until the board approves a transaction,” said Trust Director of Policy and Communications Jim Campi. “However, the news of it being under contract was leaked to the Culpeper paper, so it came out sooner than anticipated.” Campi said the Trust’s board will make a formal decision on the purchase at its March meeting.

The Trust hopes to raise the money through $1.6 million in government grants and $2 million from private donors, according to Campi. “We need everybody involved with this deal. It’s a big number in a tight economy,” he said.

“The key is to raise $2 million in private sector money,” he said. “Bud Hall has taken the lead in helping us identify big donors to help us get to that $2 million goal.” Campi said, “We are concerned about the big amount of money that needs to be raised in a short amount of time.” While being confident that Trust members “are going to step up like they always have,” he said the Trust hopes a broader group will get involved as well.

“Any help we can get from the Civil War community would be appreciated,” Campi said.

“It’s a steep uphill climb to get that $3.6 million by the sesquicentennial anniversary. We’re committed to doing our best to get there.”

The Trust plans a Fleetwood Hill Appeal mass mailing in February or March to initiate the public fundraising campaign.

The Battle of Brandy Station on June 9, 1863, was the largest cavalry battle in the Civil War with 18,456 cavalry from both sides and an additional 3,000 Union infantry engaged. It was the opening phase of the Gettysburg Campaign, taking place just three weeks before the battle. In late July Confederates retreating from Gettysburg camped at Brandy Station.

“Fleetwood Hill is without question the most fought over, camped upon and marched over real estate in the entire United States,” Hall wrote in a monograph describing the Battle of Brandy Station and Fleetwood Hill’s role in the Union Army winter encampment of 1863-1864. The army left on May 4 for the Overland Campaign.

Said Hall about the pending purchase, “I could not possibly be more excited.”

Donations to the Fleetwood Hill Appeal and information about the battlefield can be found at the Trust’s website: www.civilwar.org/battlefields/brandystackton/brandystation-2013/

February/March 2013 Civil War News
Mary Abroe addressed our 718th meeting on February 80, 2013, presenting the life of Charles H. Grosvenor, commander of the 18th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and head of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park Commission. A Connecticut native whose family moved to Athens County, Ohio, when he was a boy, he embarked on a career in the law. When the war came, he enlisted in the army and immediately identified southerners as secessionist; with regard to these recalcitrant rebels, he wrote, “we will give them thunder.”

Grosvenor joined the 18th in the fall of 1861 and spent his early time with the regiment recruiting – he missed the early battles of what would become the Army of the Cumberland. His service was punctuated with a court martial charge – the record of which is sketchy. Grosvenor was promoted to Lt. Colonel in the spring of 1863.

The height of Grosvenor’s military service came at Chickamauga on September 29, 1863. Assigned to Colonel Stanley’s Brigade, the 18th participated in the fighting along the Lafayette Road. As the battle progressed, the unit was moved to the rear of the Snodgrass Cabin in reserve on Horseshoe Ridge. When the breakthrough under Longstreet came, the 18th made several charges toward what is now called ‘Hill One’ on the Ridge where its monument now stands.

Grosvenor was cited for exemplary behavior during this engagement by his brigade commander, Stanley, who noted his “gallant conduct” and by Brigadier General John Batt, who wrote of his “determined courage” on Horseshoe Ridge. Colonel Stoughton of the 11th Michigan spoke of Grosvenor’s “great coolness and gallantry in the thickest of fight,” and his regimental surgeon wrote home in praise of the “Athens Boys” who “did some hard fighting” but who nonetheless behaved admirably and “escaped miraculously” from the battle.

Grosvenor stayed with his regiment until the end of the war, becoming its brigade commander. The unit fought with General Thomas at the Battle of Nashville in December 1864, where he witnessed the death of his beloved cousin, Capt. Ebenezer Grosvenor. After pursuing the defeated Confederates into Alabama, the 18th again found itself in the Gateway City. Grosvenor participated in the initial phase of the Atlanta Campaign in May 1864 but was compelled to travel home when his young daughter took ill and died. His last post found him in Augusta, Georgia where he assumed the duties of Provost Marshall in that defeated community.

His war over, Grosvenor returned to Athens and resumed his legal and political career. He served in the Ohio House of Representatives beginning in the mid-1870’s and was elected to Congress from the 11th District numerous times from the mid-1880’s, retiring from the House in 1907. Like many war veterans, he participated in the post bellum national culture of reconciliation, and embraced reunions with his former adversaries. But he was not totally infused by this spirit. At Chattanooga on the 25th Anniversary of the battle, Grosvenor, spoke of the ultimate meaning of the war, saying of the war: “Its mighty edict was written on a hundred battlefields. The voters were columns of troops, the ballots were bullets and the bayonets and the sabers and the fixed ammunition of mighty armies.”

The core issue, the permanence of the union, was decided by the war: “The war legislated; it is the law of our country that the union is perpetual.”

In collaboration with fellow veteran Henry Boynton, Grosvenor was instrumental in passing the legislation creating the Chickamauga-Chattanooga Military Park, the first national historical park, and in securing federal funding for it and other battlefield parks. In 1910, he was appointed Chairman of the Military Park Commission and hosted the 50th Anniversary of the battle. Grosvenor died in Athens in 1917. Ms. Abroe praises his nationalism and determination to memorialize his generation’s experience. He passed through the ‘fiery trial’ of the heat and blood of a Georgia battlefield and was set apart by that experience. To the nation’s gratitude, he used that experience to engage veterans and the nation in securing his heritage, and ours.
On March 22-23 Kennesaw State University in Georgia, in conjunction with the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, will hold a symposium on “New Interpretations of the Civil War.” The speakers will include historians Larry Daniel, Richard McMurry, Brian Steel Wills, and our own Larry Hewitt, who will speak on “Fort Hudson: The Most Photographed Battlefield of the Civil War.” For more information, visit www.kennesaw.edu/civilwars.

On Mar. 1st, at the Illinois Historical Society’s symposium in Springfield, Rob Girardi will speak on “Illinois Soldiers Respond to Emancipation.”

On Mar. 12th, Mary Abroe will speak on “Observing the Civil War: Rhetoric and Reality of a Commemoration” at the Kenosha Civil War Museum, starting at 1:00 p.m. Visit the museum website, www.kennesaw.edu/civilwars.

On March 16th Mary Abroe will speak on “Observing the Civil War Centennial: Rhetoric and Reality of a Commemoration” at the Kenosha Civil War Museum, starting at 1:00 p.m. Visit the museum website, www.kennesaw.edu/civilwars.

On Mar. 21st, at the Lake County CWRT, Leslie Goddard will present “Mary Chesnut.”

Upcoming Civil War Events


Mar. 6th, Morton Valley Community College: Crey Millspaugh presents “Sophia Peabody Hawthorne”

Mar. 6th, Lake County CWRT: Dave Oberg, “The Swede Battery”

Mar. 6th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Dana Hales on “Weapons of Illinois Regiments”

Mar. 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: Lance Herdegen on “The Iron Brigade”

Mar. 8th, Kenosha CW Museum: Doug Dammann on “Freeman Conner: The Chicago Colonel of the 44th New York”

Mar. 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Charlie Banks on “U.S. Military Railroads”

Mar. 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: Jon Sebastian on “DuPage County in the Civil War”

Mar. 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Maria Bakalis on “Mary Lincoln: After the Assassination”

Mar. 28th, South Suburban CWRT: Bruce Allardice on “Baseball and the Civil War”

2013 Tour — Antietam, May 1-5

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.

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.

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, “Corinthis”

Sept. 13: John Michael Priest, “South Mountain”

Oct. 11: William Cooper, “We Have the War Upon Us”

Nov. 8: Lawrence Hewitt, Nevins-Freeman Address

Dec. 13: Kevin Weddle, “Lincoln’s Tragic Admiral”

Grayslake Museum to Host Lincoln Exhibit

The Grayslake Heritage Center and Museum, 164 Hawley Street, will be one of eleven museums in the nation to host a nationally traveling exhibition created by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Abraham Lincoln: Self-Made in America features high quality reproductions related to the life of our 16th President, with proceeds aiding in the preservation and restoration of the originals.

Flag of the 122nd Restored

On Dec. 31st, a ceremony was held in Carlinville to celebrate the restoration of the flag of the 122nd Illinois Infantry. The 122nd was raised in Macoupin County, and saw action at Tupelo, Nashville and Mobile. Macoupin County CWRT members spearheaded a drive that raised the $34,000 needed for the restoration. The flag will hang in the county courthouse.
2nd: Congress rejects a call by President Lincoln to adopt a standard railroad gauge of 5 feet and adopts the 4 foot, 8 and one-half inch gauge. It is sometimes called the Congressional gauge.

3rd: The Conscription Act (National Enrollment Act of 1863) is signed into law by President Lincoln. Congress requires quotas of draftees by state, but allows wealthy Americans the right to buy their way out of service for $300.00.

5th: Battle of Spring Hill. Confederate Cavalry under Earl Van Dorn and Nathan Bedford Forrest drive Union Cavalry off on the 4th, then surround the remaining infantry.

11th: Ulysses S. Grant renewed his efforts to reach Vicksburg when he tried to push gunboats past Fort Pemberton, near Greenwood.

14th: Admiral David Farragut pushes his command vessel, the Hartford, past Port Hudson, but Confederate fire seriously damages three other vessels.

16th: Ulysses S. Grant ends his Yazoo Pass expedition, but orders William Tecumseh Sherman to try Steele’s Bayou again.

17th: Battle of Kelly’s Ford. Federal cavalry under William Averell crossed the ford of the Rappahannock River then ran into a Rebel line. After brief but heavy fighting, the Yankees withdrew that afternoon. Major John “The Gallant” Pelham [CS] was killed in this battle.

21st: Union Major General Edwin Vose Sumner dies in Syracuse, NY of natural causes, while on his way to assume command of the Department of Missouri.

25th: Ambrose Burnside ordered to command the Department of the Ohio

29th: Stymied in his attempt to reach Vicksburg on the east bank of the Mississippi, Grant orders General John McClernand to march south on the west bank to Miliken’s Bend.

New Companion App for The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide

A new companion app for The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide, a book written by CWRT member (and Secretary) Mike Weeks, will be available at the iStore by early March. The app provides GPS driving directions to 444 Civil War sites and helps users construct their own Civil War road trip based on the sites in the book. For more information, see Mike’s website at www.civilwarroadtrip.com.
New book on the 89th Illinois

After 20 years of research and writing, Quincy resident Phil Reyburn has completed and published a regimental history entitled, “Clear the Track: A History of the Eighty-ninth Illinois Volunteer Infantry, The Railroad Regiment.” The regiment was organized and promoted by the railroads centered in Chicago. William Fox listed the 89th among the “Three Hundred Fighting Regiments” of the war.

Unlike many other regiments, the men of the 89th never compiled their own history. This book is the first definitive history of the regiment. Our late member Steve Stewart helped Phil with research for the book.

Currently, the book is available online at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.com.

Lincoln Play Premiering at Royal George Theater

Eighty-Eight Entertainment presents the Chicago Premiere of Hershey Felder’s riveting new production, AN AMERICAN STORY for ACTOR AND ORCHESTRA, which tells the story of Abraham Lincoln’s last day, in a limited engagement at The Royal George Theatre, 1641 North Halsted, previewing Friday, March 8, 2013 and opening Sunday, March 10 at 3 p.m. The Chicago Premiere follows successful tryout productions in Los Angeles and San Diego.

AN AMERICAN STORY features an original book and score by Felder and will be performed with a live orchestra. Drawing upon the songs of great American composer Stephen Foster (Beautiful Dreamer, My Old Kentucky Home, and Oh Susanna), as well as President Lincoln’s own words, AN AMERICAN STORY is based on true events as seen through the eyes of a simple young man who suddenly found himself at the center of world history.

The talented Hershey Felder is familiar to Chicago theater fans for his production of George Gershwin Alone and other works.

New book on Chicagoan’s Civil War

Two Years Before the Paddlewheel: Charles F. Gunther, Mississippi River Confederate, is the edited diary of Chicago millionaire Charles F. Gunther. Charles F. Gunther is a Yankee ice peddler who is trapped in the South at the outbreak of the war, and takes a job on the southern steamboat Rose Douglas. Presented here are two years of diaries of Gunther’s experiences working on the Rose Douglas, ferrying Confederate troops and supplies. After the war, Gunther makes a fortune in a candy business located across the street from Marshall Field’s in Chicago, becomes a premier collector and preserver of Civil War artifacts and Lincoln memorabilia, endows the Chicago History Museum with its Civil War collection, and goes on to hold political office as an alderman and City Treasurer of Chicago.

Edited by Wayne Wolf and Bruce Allardice, the book is available for order online at State House Press (www.tamupress.com), Amazon.com, and Barnes & Noble.