



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVI, Number 3

Chicago, Illinois

November, 2005



645th REGULAR MEETING

ED BONEKEMPER

ON

A VICTOR NOT A BUTCHER— U.S. GRANT'S OVERLOOKED MILITARY GENIUS

★★★★★

Friday, November 11

★★★★★

**HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET**

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$30 - Members/Non-members

Entrée:

Lemon Pepper Chicken.

Catch of the Day

or Fruit Plate

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, November 7**, by calling 630-460-1865. We now also have our online dinner reservation system at <http://www.thecwrt.org/commiss.htm>. Reservations made after Wednesday, November 9, will be surcharged \$5.

People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner.

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 \$8 with a validated parking sticker.

EDWARD BONEKEMPER III

- on -

“A Victor Not a Butcher— U.S. Grant’s Overlooked Military Genius”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

Despite the fact that General Robert E. Lee was on the **losing** side in the Civil War, many historians have persistently named him the greatest general of the War. Large segments of the Civil War public have accepted the deified view of Lee advanced by such renowned historians as Douglas Southall Freeman. On the other hand, General Ulysses S. Grant—by all accounts the best army commander the North had—has been unfairly maligned because of the bloody 1864 campaigns he conducted against Robert E. Lee to secure final victory for the Union. However, more recent scholarship has tended to question this traditional view of Grant as the clumsy butcher.

On November 11th (Veterans’ Day), Edward Bonekemper will offer his perspective on Ulysses S. Grant, the man and the general. “A Victor, Not a Butcher” takes you into those decisive campaigns to prove that far from being a crude butcher (as he has been characterized not only by Southern partisans, but by historians) Grant’s casualty rates actually compared favorably with those of other Civil War generals. Grant was an inspired military leader with a genius for issuing lucid orders, maneuvering his troops adroitly, and making excellent use of his staff. His perseverance, decisiveness, moral courage, and political acumen place him among the greatest generals of the Civil War—indeed, of all military history.



Edward Bonekemper III

Bonekemper traces Grant’s record of unparalleled success—Forts Henry and Donelson, Shiloh, Iuka, Corinth, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, the Overland Campaign, the James River crossing, Five Forks, Petersburg, and Appomattox—showing how Grant won his victories through expert execution of carefully planned military strategies, not the meat-grinder tactics of myth. Bonekemper will also explore the paradoxes of Grant’s early years and his struggles with alcoholism—personal battles that led many contemporaries to underestimate him.

Edward H. Bonekemper III received his B.A. cum laude in American history from Muhlenberg College, his M.A. in American history from Old Dominion University, and his J.D. from Yale Law School. He is the author of *How Robert E. Lee Lost the Civil War*. His latest book, *A Victor, Not a Butcher: Ulysses S. Grant’s Overlooked Military Genius*, was published in 2004 by Regnery Press. Currently, he is a visiting lecturer in military history at Muhlenberg College and an adjunct history professor at American Military University. He is also a retired Coast Guard Reserve commander. He and his teacher wife of forty years, Susan Weidemoyer Bonekemper, live in Fairfax Station, Virginia.



Battlefield Preservation Update

BY ROGER E. BOHN

The delivery of our CWRT of Chicago's \$5000 donation check for the restoration of the 36th Illinois Infantry flag is shown by the photo insert taken on October 5, 2005. The actual flag is pictured on the left, and it is being stored in the Illinois National Guard facility in Springfield, Illinois. Pictured, from the left, are Jody Crago, Director of the DuPage County Historical Museum; Major General Randal Thomas, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard (shown receiving the check); and Roger Bohn, Past President of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago and representing the Battlefield Preservation Fund Committee. Not pictured is Mark Whitlock, of the Illinois National Guard, our tireless contact for matters concerning the 36th Illinois flag.

Our Executive Board meeting of August, 2005 voted to make this donation in an on-going effort to complete the funding necessary to have this flag restored. After restoration, the flag is expected to be moved into the **DuPage County Historical Museum** in Wheaton, Illinois and displayed there for educational purposes. The \$5000 was available from the general fund due to largesse from the Vicksburg Tour in May of 2005.

The organizations or individuals donating to this preservation effort, beginning in 2003, are as follows: The Civil War Round Table of Chicago; Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War; DuPage County Historical Society; Salt Creek Civil War Round Table; Thom Nicholson, Robert Kuzma, Ronald Kumnick, Delmon Grapes, Paul Trautt, and Ralph McBride.

As of October 5, 2005, the donations total **\$17,080** toward a current estimated total restoration cost of **\$25,000**—and the costs can be expected to rise with time—so we must continue to strive to finish this project *as soon as possible*. We have an estimated \$7920 “to go,” and we are hoping the DuPage County

Board and the DuPage County Historical Society will be able to help us to complete our goal. We can then, finally, get onto the restoration *schedule*. This is a worthwhile, educational effort, and we will not “let up” until it is completed and proudly exhibited in Wheaton.

The 36th Illinois Volunteer Infantry fought in nearly every major engagement in the Western Theater, losing 204 men in battle out of 1376 total enrolled. A three-year regiment, the 36th was raised in **Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Lawrence, McHenry, and Warren** counties. It will indeed be an honor to have this memento of those who fought and died to make this the United States of America and to have it returned to our own Chicagoland area.

To paraphrase Brian Pohanka, *artifacts* attract attention, and that attention can turn into an on-going interest. *Study* of the subject will often follow...and who knows where that resulting *education* may lead.

Any individual or organization wishing to add to this funding can send a check to: Battlefield Preservation Fund Chair, **Mary Abroe**; 212 Woodbine Ave.; Wilmette, IL 60091-3332...make check payable to **Illinois National Guard and Military History Museum, Inc. (ING-MHM, Inc.)** Note: For restoration of 36th Illinois flag. All donations are tax deductible, according to the ING-MHM, Inc.



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
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 webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org.

The fifth **Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award** had its “kick-off” at the October special meeting. The event celebrated the 65th Anniversary of the Civil War Round of Chicago and the founding of the Civil War Round Table movement...a fitting time and place to show our appreciation for the evening's speaker and our long-time friend, Ed Bearss.

To respond to your invitation to individually honor Ed by contributing to the funding for this CWRT of Chicago award, **mail a check to:** BPF Chair, Mary Abroe; 212 Woodbine Ave.; Wilmette, IL 60091-3332. *Make check payable to: CWRT of Chicago, and notate “Ed Bearss Award.”* All individual contributors, of any amount, will be listed in the 2006 Tour Program and in the following CWRT Newsletter. ■

OCTOBER MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On October 14th the legendary Ed Bearss spoke to help commemorate the CWRT of Chicago's 65th anniversary. Ed spoke on "The Most Forgotten, Misunderstood, and Least Appreciated Civil War Battles and Soldiers" in front of 177 members and guests. Ed is known to us all as a popular speaker, author, tour guide delux and special friend of this Round Table. His presentation dealt with relatively obscure battles and leaders (and who better than Ed to know the obscure?). He emphasized that some should be remembered for their importance, while others should remain in obscurity.

Bearss opined "Two unappreciated Union generals were William Sherman and Edward R. S. Canby". From June 1864 to the end of the war especially, Sherman was very effective. The less-well-known Canby turned back the Confederate invasion of New Mexico in 1862. After Nathaniel Banks' fiasco in the 1864 Red River Campaign, Canby took control of Banks' forces and "cleaned up the west for the Union". He captured Mobile, Alabama in 1865, and later accepted the surrender of the Confederate armies of Richard Taylor (Department of Mississippi and Alabama, May 4, 1865) and Kirby Smith (Trans-Mississippi Department, May 26, 1865), the last two main Confederate armies to lay down their arms.

Ben Butler was a misunderstood but important Union general. When in command at Fortress Monroe in 1861, three Virginia slaves fled into his army. Rather than upholding existing law and returning the slaves to their owners, he protected the slaves by denoting them "contraband of war"—goods and materials captured from the enemy. The legal leg-erdemain established a precedent whereby fugitive slaves (dubbed "contrabands") were in effect freed without resorting to civil law or an emancipation proclamation.

Forgotten Union generals included Irvin McDowell. McDowell

was selected by Salmon Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, for his position as commander of the army defending Washington, and not by President Lincoln. He lost the First Battle of Manassas (June 21, 1861), and after that loss never again led an army into battle.

"Black" David Hunter was another obscure Union general. A good self-promoter, Hunter traveled on the same train that took newly elected President Abraham Lincoln from Springfield to the capitol in early 1861. Hunter made a good impression on the president-elect during the trip, and rapidly rose up the ranks. Although Lincoln liked Hunter, Lincoln rescinded Hunter's orders for emancipation of slaves in South Carolina in 1862. In May, 1864, Hunter, a native Virginian, ordered the burning of many houses in the Shenandoah Valley, earning him the lasting hatred of its citizens.

The forgotten Reuben Hatch was a Union army quartermaster who was court-martialed and cashiered for fraud and illegal procurement of foodstuffs. Due to strong political connections, Hatch was reinstated in the army as a major. At the end of the war, Hatch received a bribe from steamboat interests to send Union prisoners home on the steamboat *Sultana*. Licensed to hold 300 passengers, the *Sultana* had 2,300 men on board as it headed up the Mississippi River from Vicksburg. Just past Memphis, a boiler on the overloaded ship blew up, killing hundreds of soldiers.

Bearss also recalled some unjustly forgotten battles. In late May, 1862, Union forces under General George McClellan advanced on Richmond. The June 25th, 1862 Battle of Oak Grove, represented McClellan's first and last move to attack Richmond. An inconsequential skirmish, this was the first of the Seven Days Battles. McClellan's half-hearted advance at Oak Grove petered out, allowing the Confederates, under Robert E. Lee,

the time to bring Stonewall Jackson down from the Shenandoah Valley and attack McClellan's right.

Bearss concluded with an explanation of how the Battle of the Wilderness (May 5-12, 1864) may have been the most important Civil War battle. As Grant's Army of the Potomac suffered tremendous casualties in the battle, both sides were convinced that the Union army would retreat, slithering back to Washington D.C. This scenario had occurred several times before, notably at the Battle of Chancellorsville fought over much the same ground. Instead, Grant issued orders to advance, to move around Lee's right flank toward Richmond. Grant showed confidence in the fighting ability of his men. Bearss proclaimed, "This action by Grant led directly to Wilbur McLean's parlor at Appomattox Court House at 3:30 p.m. on April 9, 1865!"

VICKSBURG SEMINAR IN NOVEMBER

On Nov. 11-12 the Vicksburg National Military Park is hosting a seminar entitled "Vicksburg and the War in the West" at the historic Christ Church in Vicksburg. A great lineup of presenters includes James McPherson, William Cooper, Tim Smith, Michael Ballard, Richard Kiper, and singer Bobby Horton. The cost is \$150 per person and includes receptions on Friday and Saturday, and Saturday lunch. For more information, call the VNMP at (601) 636-0583.

The **Evanston Historical Society** has an excellent exhibit on "Evanston and the Civil War", at its headquarters, the historic Dawes House, 225 Greenwood St. in Evanston. The exhibit is free of charge. The EHS is also sponsoring a series of Civil War related speeches and events. For more information, phone the EHS at (847) 475-3410.

GRAPESHOT



There will be a ceremony honoring our nation's war dead Sunday, Nov. 13th at **Rosehill Cemetery**, starting at 10 a.m. Sponsoring organizations include the Sons of Union Veterans, the CWRT of Chicago, the Salt Creek CWRT and the Northern Illinois CWRT. Reenactors will be present.

“The Election of 1864” will be the topic at **Bruce Allardice's** talk on Nov. 9th at the Blue Island Park District, 12804 S. Highland Ave., Blue Island, at 7 p.m. For more information, call Annie Anderson, Marketing Coordinator, Blue Island Park District, at (708) 388-3872.

CWRT member **Gordon Damman** gave a lecture on “Dr. Jonathan Letterman: The Father of U.S. Army Battlefield Medicine” at the West Virginia Independence Hall Museum on Sept. 28th.

The **Pritzker Military Library** in Chicago is sponsoring a “Civil War Round Table Day” Saturday, Nov. 12th. The event features talks by authors **Pete Cozzens** and Pulitzer Prize-winner **Doris Kearns Goodwin**. Space is limited, so phone (312) 587-0234 for reservations. For further information, visit the library web site at www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org or call the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** at (312) 944-3085.

Hal Ardell, our CWRT's photographer-extraordinaire, posts photos of our tours and of each meeting at <http://www.kodakgallery.com/CivilWar>. This website requires a brief online registration to access the photos.

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

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Lapel pins, Meeting Tapes and other items are on sale at each monthly meeting, with proceeds to go to battlefield preservation. There is also a book raffle, with proceeds again going to benefit battlefield preservation.

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by Ralph G. Newman and other members. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum raise of \$1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker's presentation, bidding will close and the highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds benefit battlefield preservation.

CWRT SPRINGFIELD TOUR

A few seats are still available on the CWRT's Tour of Springfield, Illinois. Leave Saturday morning, Nov. 5th, stop at Lincoln College for lunch and tour the **Lincoln College Museum**. In Springfield, visit **Lincoln's home**, law office, tomb and the rail station where he gave his farewell address (time permitting). Sunday will be devoted to a tour of the new **Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library**, guided by **Tom Schwartz**, Historian for the State of Illinois. Our group will return to Chicago on Sunday evening at approximately 7:30.

For further information, or to make reservations, please call **ASAP** one of the following CWRT members: **Marvin Sanderman**, 847-520-3525; **Brooks Davis**, 312-654-0614; or **Donna Tuohy**, 312-649-1041.

LIFETIME SERVICE AWARDS GIVEN TO BOHN, SULLIVAN, AND ALLARDICE

At the October 14th meeting President Bob Miller gave out three “Lifetime Service Awards” to long-time CWRT members **Roger Bohn** (Milwaukee liaison), **Bill Sullivan** (website designer) and **Bruce Allardice** (newsletter editor). Bob noted that the beautifully designed medallions honor the many years these three members have “labored in the vineyards”, “largely behind the scenes”, to make The CWRT the success it is today.

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.*

November 11 (Veteran's Day): **Edward Bonekemper III**, “A Victor Not a Butcher—U.S. Grant's Overlooked Military Genius”

December 9: **Stephen Fratt**, “Civil War Tactics and Technology”

January 13, 2006: **Round Table Panel Discussion** (Panel: Bruce Allardice, Rob Girardi, Larry Gibbs; Chair: Mary Abroe) “The Most Significant ‘What-Ifs’ of Civil War History”

February 10: **James McPherson**, “Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief”

March 10: **Gail Stephens**, “Lew Wallace”

April 21 (3rd Friday, due to Holy Week): **Horace Mewborn**, “John S. Mosby”

May 12: **Mark Noll**, “How the Bible Helped Start the Civil War”

June 9: **George Rable**, “Fredricksburg in the Larger Civil War Universe” (Note: the May and June speakers have switched months from what was previously scheduled.)

CWRT ex-President **Roger Bohn** will be speaking on “The Union Naval Blockade in the American Civil War: Blockaders and Blockade Runners” at the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table's November 4, 2005 meeting. For more information, call Roger at (630) 858-2956.