

Battlefield Preservation

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Time for the Seventh Annual Bearss Award Has Arrived: Members of the Battlefield Preservation Fund committee will accept donations to the Bearss Preservation Award "account" from the present through the 2008 battlefield tour itself. (Committee members are Mary Abroe, Nancy Bates, Larry Gibbs, Rob Girardi, Jerome Kowalski, Marshall Krolick, Roger Rudich, Brian Seiter, Bob Stoller, and David Zucker.) As instituted by the CWRT Executive Committee in mid-2001, the Bearss Award honors our good friend and longstanding tour leader by contributing \$1,000 in his name to the preservation project/organization that Ed himself regards as most deserving.

The first recipient was the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, followed by the Kernstown Battlefield Association, the Land Conservancy of Adams County (Gettysburg), and dual winners in 2005 (Friends of Raymond, Mississippi and the Franklin, Tennessee campaign of the Civil War Preservation Trust [CWPT]) as well as in 2006 (Camp Wildcat, Kentucky Preservation Foundation and the Richmond Battlefields Association); our donors' generosity in 2006 allowed the CWRT to donate \$1,500 apiece to Camp Wildcat and Richmond on Ed's behalf. In 2007 we also honored dual winners—the Perryville Battlefield Preservation Association and the Slaughter Pen Farm campaign of the CWPT—with \$1,000 each. All of the previous award-ees share proven track records of effective preservation activism. Ed will announce his decision regarding this year's recipient during our 58th annual battlefield tour to Shiloh (April 30-May 4).

Members who are unable to attend meetings also may send donations to BPF treasurer Mary Abroe, 212 Woodbine Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-3332. Please make checks payable to "Battlefield Preservation Fund/CWRT" and write "Bearss Award" on the memo line. All contributions will be acknowledged in the tour program and the CWRT newsletter. Thank you!

CWRT Receives Thanks for Donations: Within the past few months we received notes of gratitude for contributions/membership renewals to several preservation organizations. George Wunderlich, executive director of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine [NMCWM], addressed his institution's thanks to members of the CWRT: "On behalf of the...NMCWM, I would like to thank the Civil War Round Table of Chicago for its generous donation of \$500...."

From Jim Lighthizer, president of CWPT, came the following sentiments: "I cannot thank you adequately for your recent very generous gift of \$1,000 to help the Civil War Preservation Trust and the Carter House Association save the hallowed half-acre of the Carter Garden property at Franklin, Tennessee. Your gift has propelled us toward the \$100,000 we are working to raise, and I am very grateful for your wonderful support.

It is not often that you and I get a chance to reclaim part of a "lost" battlefield, especially one as significant as Franklin. So today, I thank you for not just saving our history, but for retrieving our history."

Finally, we received two thank-you letters from Elle Kelley of the Friends of Gettysburg/Gettysburg Foundation [formerly called Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg] in late 2007 and early 2008—one for renewing our membership and one for a donation in memory of CWRT member Frank Pettice from his daughter Sarah that Sarah requested we channel through our Battlefield Preservation Fund. As Ms. Kelly stated, "Your contribution of \$250.00 [in dues] will have immediate and lasting effects on the preservation of the national parks at Gettysburg....By renewing your Friends membership you are displaying your dedicated patriotism and devotion to the soldiers who fought for their patriotism here in Gettysburg

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
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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 bsallardice1@earthlink.net.



in 1863 and to the preservation of the beautiful home so loved by President and Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower....On behalf of the Gettysburg Foundation, thank you for having the dedication and heart to renew your Friends membership."

The contribution that generated the second thank-you note was made possible through the loving generosity of Sarah Pettice, who wanted to remember her dad Frank; those of us who knew him also remember Frank Pettice as the fine gentleman and unselfish worker for battlefield preservation that he was. This letter referenced the \$100 donation to commemorate Frank and continued as follows: "On behalf of the Gettysburg Foundation we are sincerely sorry for your loss and are honored to help keep his memory alive by continuing to preserve his passion for Gettysburg....Your continuing support has made possible the protection of nearly 500 acres of land; increased the repair and maintenance of historic structures; tripled the number of cannon carriages repaired each year; and provided over \$6 million in contributions and services returned to the Gettysburg Military Park. We have much yet to accomplish but with the continued support of individuals like you, we will succeed in our mission of preservation."

January Meeting

BY TOM TRESMOTT

On January 11, Ed Cotham spoke to 66 members and guests at the 667th regular meeting of the Civil War Round Table on "The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine" using the words of one man and the drawings of another to make a "soundtrack to the slide show" of an often overlooked aspect of Civil War service.

The words come from Henry B. Gusley, who was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1837. The son of a bricklayer, young Henry became a printer, which may explain how he came to be such a great recorder of events. He enlisted in the marines in October of 1861, was assigned to the U.S.S. Westfield, and was captured at the Battle of Sabine Pass in September, 1863. His diary, captured along with him, was obtained by the Galveston Tri-Weekly News. Published in installments during the fall of 1863, this "Yankee note-book" (the original has since been lost) became such a sensation that the newspaper ran each excerpt twice until the whole diary was published.

The drawings were done by Dr. Daniel D.T. Nestell, who was born in New York in 1819, and obtained a medical degree from City University of New York in 1843. When the Civil War broke out, Dr. Nestell volunteered for the Navy, was appointed Acting Assistant Surgeon in January of 1862, and was first assigned to duty on the U.S.S. Clifton. Like Gusley, Dr. Nestell was a keen observer, and his drawings made while in the service are currently in the Nimitz Library at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

New Orleans was the South's largest city, an economic target on the Mississippi, (which Commander David Porter thought could be taken by the southern approach) and the destination of an expedition, including the Westfield and the Clifton (the jour-

ney well-illustrated by Nestell), that left from New York on February 22, 1862. The flotilla, commanded by Commodore David Farragut, ran past Forts Jackson and St. Philip (which guarded the Mississippi River approach to New Orleans) and on April 28, 1862, the Marines took possession of the Crescent City.

The Clifton and the Westfield went off to a variety of river and coastal duties, including looking for Rebel steamers, action off Mobile Bay, and bombardment of Vicksburg (June 26-28). All the while Nestell made many interesting and detailed drawings, including the ships of the squadron, a waterspout, and a strange creature called an alligator. Meanwhile, Gusley had no clue about the run of the ram Arkansas past the Union fleet off Vicksburg, but did see the burning of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, and lamented the end of the "spirit ration" on September 1. He also complained about the mosquitoes during the capture of Galveston (Oct. 5), where he saw "The Lone Gun", drawn by Nestell, who also made the only drawing of the battle of Port Lavaca, Texas (Oct. 31-Nov. 1).

The flotilla was still off Galveston when Commander W.B. Renshaw, captain of the Westfield, warned his men to look out for surprises. Unfortunately, on January 1, 1863, the Federal force was surprised and devastated, Renshaw was killed while blowing up the Westfield to prevent its capture, and the Confederates took back Galveston. Gusley was transferred to the Clifton. The steamer division served in Louisiana that summer.

In September the steamer division was ordered to go back to Texas, this time to the seemingly lightly defended point of Sabine Pass. On September 8, 1863, however, less than fifty Confederates defeated the Union in-

vasion, the Clifton was disabled and captured, and Gusley and Nestell became prisoners of the Rebels at Camp Groce, Texas.

Henry O. Gusley corresponded with the editor of the Tri-Weekly News, actually subscribing so as to read his own diary, and was not released until April, 1865. Sadly, during his incarceration he developed serious stomach disorders, which prevented him from eating regular meals and from engaging in full-time work for the rest of his life. Gusley died in Rochester, New York, in 1884 at the age of forty-seven.

Dr. Daniel D.T. Nestell was released from prison in 1864. Upon his return to Union lines was assigned to the U.S.S. Alabama, where he served as ship physician for the rest of the war, seeing action at Ft. Fischer. Unfortunately, the years of serving on board ships during heavy bombardments resulted in Nestell losing most of his hearing. Accused by his former commanding officer of cowardice at Sabine Pass, Nestell was quietly dismissed from the Navy in June, 1865. With his deafness making private practice difficult, Nestell joined the Army and served as physician at various posts along the frontier. He died in Oakland in 1900 at the age of eighty-one.

In conclusion, Gusley and Nestell served widely, over thousands of miles, with much quiet and much noise, and seeing unbelievable success (New Orleans) and failure (Sabine Pass). Such were the unique war experiences of "Uncle Sam's nephews in the Gulf".

GRAPESHOT

The **Abraham Lincoln Association** is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year with a 2-day symposium to be held in Springfield, IL, February 11-12. On Monday, February 11th, Jean Baker, Mark Neely and Douglas Wilson will take the podium, and the next day Brian Dirck, Brooks Simpson and Michael Vorenberg are scheduled to speak. Chicago-born historian Michael Beschloss, a regular on PBS and ABC, will be the keynote speaker at the association's banquet. For more information on this gala event, visit the association's website at <http://www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org>.

The "**Battlefield Balladeers**" will be performing at Reenactorfest Friday, Feb. 8th, the Geneva Public Library Sunday, Feb. 10, the Tinley Park Public Library Sunday, Feb. 17th, and the Rolling Meadows Public Library Wednesday, Feb. 27th. For more information, visit their website at www.watfam.us/balladeers or email CWRT member Dave Corbett at corbettrex@msn.com.

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

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

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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.

The **Stephen A. Douglas Association** has announced a scholarship prize essay contest on the subject, "How are the Lincoln Douglas Debates Still Relevant to American Society Today?" The contest is designed for junior or senior students at Kelly, Dunbar, and Gage Park High Schools in Chicago. The three \$500 prize winners will be announced at the Association's annual meeting on June 7th.

Battlefield Tour

Sign up for next year's CWRT battlefield tour! We're going to Shiloh, Corinth and Brice's Crossroads May 1-4, 2008. HQ is the Holiday Inn Express in Corinth, and as usual **Ed Bearss** will be the lead tour guide, with the able assistance of the Shiloh NBP's **Stacey Allen**. The tour reading list and schedule information is on the website at www.thecwrt.org. Space is limited, so sign up NOW.

The **Kankakee Valley CWRT** is holding its 17th annual Civil War Symposium this March 29th, at the Bon Vivant Country Club in Bourbonnais. Speakers include Tom Cartwright on "Pat Cleburne", Pete Cozzens on "Island Number 10", Jennifer Weber on "The Rise and Fall of the Copperheads", and Gordon Damman on "Dr. Jonathan Letterman." For more information, call Janet Leonard at (815) 933-8027 or email Mark Hess at mhess@yahoo.com.

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: David Long,
"Lincoln, Davis, and the Dahlgren Raid"
March 14: Brian Wills,
"Civil War in Cinema"
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"Copperheads"
May 9: Vernon Burton,
"The Age of Lincoln"
June 13: Bill Farina,
"U. S. Grant"

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission will sponsor a series of events in Kentucky to commemorate the life of our Civil War president. On Feb. 11th historians Doris Kearns Goodwin and Richard Goodwin will discuss President Lincoln's leadership qualities. On Feb. 12th, at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace NHS in Hodgenville, an all-star set of speakers will officially launch the two-year celebration of Lincoln's life. For more information, call the ALBC at (202) 707-6998.

Virtual Book Signings

On Saturday, Feb. 9th, at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop**, author William Lee Miller will be signing his new book, President Lincoln: the Duty of a Statesman. For more details, phone the shop at (312) 944-3085. The web address for accessing and watching these signings is www.VirtualBookSigning.net.

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BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

In early 1864 General Judson Kilpatrick led Union cavalry on a raid into central Virginia. One column of Union cavalry, under Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, had the assignment of slicing into Richmond, the Confederate capital, while the Richmond defenders busied themselves with Kilpatrick's main column. Dahlgren had orders to free the thousands of Union prisoners held in Richmond, but the raiders never made it into Richmond, and Dahlgren was killed. A minor affair in purely military terms, the "Dahlgren Raid" had major political consequences when Confederate soldiers found on Dahlgren's body orders indicating his other mission was to assassinate President Davis and the Confederate cabinet.

The Confederate government immediately publicized the orders, whose shocking nature helped harden Confederate resistance.

Questions and controversy over the raid resonate to this day. Some scholars believe that the assassination language was a forgery by the Confederate government. Others, admitting the orders mentioned assassination, wonder whether the assassination was Dahlgren's private plan, or whether higher-ups (Kilpatrick, Secretary of War Stanton, or President Lincoln) authorized the assassinations.



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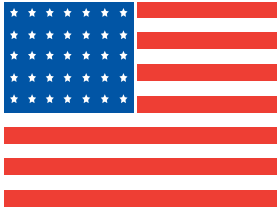
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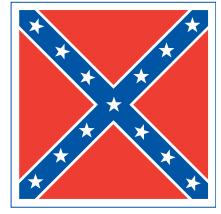
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Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXVIII, Number 6

Chicago, Illinois

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