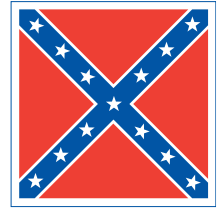


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXIX, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April, 2009



670th REGULAR MEETING

Stephen Wise

on

“Gate of Hell”

★★★★★

Friday, April 17

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$40 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée: Chicken Aegean,
Catch of the Day, Vegetarian
Plate or Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, April 13 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing chicagocwrtidinner@earthlink.net, 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 \$5 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$10 with a validated parking sticker.

Stephen Wise

on

Gate of Hell: The 1863 Campaign for Battery Wagner and Charleston

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

The summer of 1863 witnessed three massive campaigns that sharply affected the Civil War's outcome. An ocean of ink has been spilled on two of those campaigns—Gettysburg and Vicksburg. But the Union army/navy campaign to take the “cradle of the Rebellion,” Charleston, was perhaps the most interesting of the three.

The campaign introduced a new era in the science of engineering and gunnery. It involved extensive use of ironclad vessels as a combined northern army/navy task force tried to sweep the Confederates off Morris Island and capture Battery Wagner. The campaign was a major testing ground for African American troops including the well-known 54th Massachusetts. It also involved such personalities as Generals P.G.T. Beauregard, Quincy A. Gillmore, Rear Admiral John Dahlgren and Nurse Clara Barton.

For our meeting, Dr. Stephen R. Wise will give a presentation vividly recreating the 1863 Campaign for Charleston. The skillful, bold operations made the 1863 Campaign for Charleston exceptional in the annals of military history. One British observer considered the battle of Morris Island to be the war's most important campaign. Though popularized in the movie “Glory,” the long, drawn out battle was much more than a solitary regiment and a single charge.

Dr. Stephen R. Wise, a historian who lives in Beaufort, South Carolina, is the director of the museum and the Cultural Resource Manager for the Marine Corps



Stephen R. Wise

Recruit Depot located at Parris Island, South Carolina. A native of Toledo, Ohio, Dr. Wise received his bachelor degree from Wittenberg University and a master's degree from Bowling Green State University. He was drawn to the University of South Carolina to study under the direction of the late Thomas L. Connelly, the noted Civil war historian, under whom Wise earned his doctoral degree.

Dr. Wise has written and edited a number of works including Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War, a highly acclaimed, com-

prehensive account of the Confederate effort to deliver supplies through the northern blockade. Another publication, Gate of Hell: The Campaign for Charleston Harbor 1863, covers the 1863 campaign that found

northern troops battling on Morris Island for the control of Charleston harbor. The South Carolina Historical Society gave Gate of Hell an award as the best book written in 1994 on South Carolina history.



Battlefield Preservation

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Eighth Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award Will Be Given in April: Members of the Battlefield Preservation Fund committee currently are accepting donations to the Ed Bearss Preservation Award "fund" at monthly dinner meetings. As instituted in 2001 by the CWRT executive committee, the Bearss Award honors our friend and longtime battlefield tour leader by contributing \$1,000 in his name to the preservation project/organization that Ed himself regards as most deserving. Last year's co-winners, each of which received \$1,000, were the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation and Pea Ridge National Military Park. Ed will announce this year's choice(s) during our 59th annual battlefield tour, "Kentucky/Lincoln," later this month.

Members who are unable to attend meetings also may send donations to BPF treasurer Brian Seiter, 9812 S. California, Evergreen Park, Illinois 60805. 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 CWRT newsletter. Thank you!

Battlefield Preservation Fund Committee Met in February: The BPF committee of the CWRT of Chicago met on Saturday, February 28, 2009 at the home of chair Rob Girardi. All members in good standing of the CWRT are invited to attend BPF committee meetings. Committee members present were Mary Abroe, Jerry Allen, Jim Cunningham, Larry Gibbs, Rob Girardi, and David Zucker. Minutes are as follows:

- 1.) Battlefield Preservation Fund: approximately \$8,500 on date of meeting
- 2.) Funding (restricted) for the Eighth Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award: approximately \$500 on date of meeting. The committee voted to augment the Bearss Preservation Award fund, if needed, with monies from the BPF so that the Bearss Award fund totals \$2,000 when Ed announces the awardee(s) on the upcoming Kentucky/Lincoln battlefield tour. This will allow Ed to designate two awardees (at \$1,000 each), as he has been able to do for the past three years.
- 3.) Approval: renewal of current membership in the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (\$500) and donation to Wil-

son's Creek National Battlefield Foundation (\$500)

4.) Approval: donations to the Civil War Preservation Trust's Sailor's Creek campaign (\$1,028); CWPT's Slaughter Pen Farm campaign (\$1,000); and CWPT's Glendale campaign (\$1,000)

5.) Chair R. Girardi reported that the "Battlefield Bookshelf," which replaced the silent auction as a funding effort for the BPF at monthly meetings (starting June 2008), has been successful during its brief existence; the Bookshelf has raised, on average, about three times as much per month as the Silent Auction was raising late in its life span. R. Girardi also reported that four boxes of books—books acquired from Broadfoot Publishing Company and members' donations—are available for the monthly drawing and the Bookshelf to raise monies for preservation.

CWRT Receives Thanks for Donations: Within the past months we have received notes of gratitude for contributions/membership renewals to several preservation organizations. Erik Nelson, president of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, addressed his group's thanks to members of the CWRT: "The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust wishes to extend to you its sincerest thanks and appreciation for your very generous recent membership renewal of \$250.00. It is the generosity of persons such as you that inspires us in our efforts to save historically significant land. Over the past twelve years, the CVBT has helped to preserve 675 acres in fee simple and 146 acres in easement in the Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania battlefields. Because of you and your support for preservation, this ground will be there for you, your children and all future generations." For more information on the CVBT, visit its Web site at www.cvbt.org.

From Dr. David Bush, chair of the Friends and Descendants of Johnson's Island Civil War Prison, came the following thanks for our membership renewal: "Thank you very much for your recent gift of \$250 to the Friends and Descendants of Johnson's Island Civil War Prison. Your organization's support of historic preservation allows us to remain steadfast in our goal to permanently safeguard and maintain the island for future educational, interpretive

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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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.



and research programs.

...Johnson's Island is considered one of the best-preserved examples of a Civil War prisoner-of-war facility in the United States. The prison site offers a rare opportunity for students and educators to make a direct connection to the past unlike any other...

Again, many thanks for your commitment to the Friends...and our mission of preserving a significant Civil War site...." For more information on this organization, visit www.johnsonsisland.com.

Finally we received acknowledgments from the Mount Zion Church Preservation Association (Aldie, Virginia) for a total of \$650 in contributions made over the past year: "You play a key role in maintaining and preserving this historic site." For more information on the Mt. Zion Church group, visit www.mtzion-cpa.org.

March Meeting

BY TOM TRESKOTT

On March 13, at the 679th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, John Latschar, Superintendent of Gettysburg National Military Park, spoke to 84 members and guests on "Reinterpreting Gettysburg: Lessons from the Civil War?", on how he and his people at Gettysburg are, in the words of the late John Hope Franklin, "connecting the dots of history" for this generation of Americans.

Why should we be interested in what happened at Gettysburg during the first three days of July in 1863? For one thing, some of our ancestors fought and died there. For another, the Union triumph in the Civil War shaped the nation, and the Federal victory at Gettysburg shaped the course of the war. Finally, Gettysburg can still provide understanding of the issues facing the country a century and a half ago.

Dr. Latschar and his staff are striving to "connecting the dots", as visitors of today interact with the past, looking for parallels as they try to make better decisions in the future. To make for better interaction, great progress has been made to return the battlefield to its 1863 appearance, a new visitors' center has been built, and the famed Gettysburg Cyclorama has been restored.

A good museum, like the new center, must take the visitor back to the time period in question, and give him or her some understanding of why the two sides were fighting in the first place. This effort to connect more social, political, and economic "dots", however, has been somewhat controversial, with more displays on the above and less on the tools of war, upsetting some of the more traditional "bugles and drums" fans.

As for parallels, are there lessons from Gettysburg relevant to our last presidential election? There are several, including such topics as: the politics of exclusion; the slave trade/oil dependency economic parallel; the use of biblical quotes to support both sides; the fact that once a war (be it the Civil War or the war in Iraq) is started, it can't be controlled; and that the home front is directly responsible for what happens in the battlefield --- as John Keegan has pointed out, an army is a product of the society from which it comes.

However, 2008 was not, as many have claimed, the most significant, or even the most contentious, election in American history. That was the election of 1860, one with serious constitutional questions and the fight over the issue of slavery --- no question was ever more divisive. Things were so fractious that there with four candidates for President. The Democrats split over the slavery --- John C. Breckenridge was the choice of pro-slavery South, while "popular sovereignty" Stephen A. Douglas was nominated by the North. There was even a Constitutional Union Party, with John Bell as their standard bearer, which was for sectional compromise and postponed debate. This paved the way for the "strange man", Abraham Lincoln, of the new anti-slavery expansion Republican Party, to win the election (and winning over Douglas in Illinois, which was anti-free black emigration, 51% to 47%).

To understand significant of the turning point at Gettysburg, one must understand the situation in the spring of 1863. The Confederacy appeared to be winning, and just had to avoid losing to emerge triumphant. The Union, on the other hand, had to conquer half a continent and suppress a rebellion, which was increasingly difficult, as Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was continuously victorious in the East. Lee and Confederate President Jefferson Davis knew a war of attrition was not winnable, and wanted to take the war to the North to affect popular support of the war. They needed to inflict a major defeat on Northern soil, because they knew the waning home front support was key (as would be demonstrated 100 years later by the Tet offensive).

The meeting at Gettysburg was an accident but the fate of the nation at stake. Twenty-one times more people were killed at Gettysburg than on September 11, 2001. After Gettysburg, the Union held the initiative. As long as civil support was unabated, the end was inevitable. Speaking of support, our speaker was kind enough to point out to his Illinois audience that only New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio provided more troops to the Union cause than Illinois; also, three Illinois regiments, two cavalry and one infantry, fought in the battle, suffering 14% casualties.

The Civil War was our greatest disaster and our greatest achievement, for it decided who we are as a nation. It settled the issue of union versus secession, and abolished the institution of slavery. It was our greatest military effort and social revolution; of the population of 31 million, 12.4 % were in uniform, and 2 % of the population died because of the war. There were 42 battles fought in the Civil War with more fatalities than 9/11.

Lincoln understood the true meaning of Gettysburg. "A few appropriate remarks" at there in November of 1863 would redirect the purpose and understanding of the war, not just for his generation but for ours. In these tough times, we can look for lessons in the past to determine just what to do and how to do it. The nation, saved at Gettysburg, is more permanent than any government elected of, by, and for the people. In these tough times we can look to the past and see that we have had tougher times, and have prevailed.

A recording of this (and every) meeting is available from **Hal Ardell**, audio librarian. Contact Hal at (773) 774-6781 or hal229@ameritech.net

GRAPESHOT



On Monday, April 6, starting at 11 a.m. at the Union League Club CWRT, **Jerry Kowalski** will appear as General George H. Thomas and speak about his life and times.

Bruce Allardice will be speaking on "Jeff Davis's Colonels" at the New Orleans CWRT April 15th, and the Austin (TX) CWRT April 16th. The talk is based on his new book, Confederate Colonels.

Historian **John Hope Franklin** died in March, at age 94. The pioneer African-American historian, Dr. Franklin wrote the extensively on slavery and related topics, including the standard From Slavery to Freedom. He was the first African-American to hold an endowed chair at Duke University. In 1983 The CWRT awarded him our Nevins-Freeman Award in recognition of his scholarship.

The SUV and other heritage and veterans organizations will once again be honoring our state's **Abraham Lincoln** this April 18th at 10 a.m. The ceremonies will be held at the newly revamped Lincoln tomb at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield.

As part of the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's continuing series of events to mark President Lincoln's 200th birthday, **Larry Hewitt** spoke at the Glen Ellyn Historical Society April 2nd on "Lincoln and the War".

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

Fifty-seven 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

March 31, Union League Club of Chicago: Dr. David Zarefsky on "The Legacy of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates"

April 1, Lake County CWRT: Marty Cain on "The Lady of Arlington"

April 3, Salt Creek CWRT: Charlie Banks on "The Lincoln Funeral Train"

April 3, Northern Illinois CWRT: Art Bergeron on "The Red River Campaign"

April 14, McHenry Co. CWRT: Jeff Rees on "The Average Civil War Soldier"

April 16, Bradley (IL) Library: David Clark on "The Impact of Abraham Lincoln on Culture"

April 16, National Archives Great Lakes Region, 6:30 p.m.: Dr. Richard Carwardine on "Lincoln: a Life of Purpose and Power"

April 18, Borders Books in Crystal Lake: Discussion on "Lincoln as Commander in Chief"

April 18, Northern Illinois and McHenry County CWRTs: field trip to Kenosha Museum

April 21, Blue Island CWRT: Clint Johnson on "The Capture of Jefferson Davis"

April 23, South Suburban CWRT: Fred Johanson on "Collections"

April 25, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Steve Rogstad talks on "Re-examining the Lincoln Assassination". Phone 262 653-4141 to register.

April 27 and 29, Warren/Newport Library: "Lincoln Lectures". Phone 847 244-1550 for details.

May 1, Northern Illinois CWRT: Jenny Weber on "Copperheads"

May 1, Salt Creek CWRT: Len Overcash on "The 45th Mississippi"

May 5, Union League Club CWRT: Bruce Allardice and Larry Hewitt discuss "Abraham Lincoln" (rescheduled from March 2)

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*.

April 17: Stephen Wise,

"Gate of Hell: Campaign in Charleston Harbor, 1863"

May 8: James Ogden,

"Rescue at Horseshoe Ridge"

June 12: Thomas Cartwright,

"Cleburne and Sherman at Missionary Ridge"

Aug 22: CWRT of Chicago's Lincoln Seminar, at the Lisle

Hilton

Sept. 11: Tom Chaffin, "H.L. Hunley"

Oct. 9: Nevins-Freeman Address.

Craig Symonds, TBD

Nov. 13: Patrick Schroeder, TBD

Dec. 11: Brooks Davis, "Lincoln and Davis as War Leaders"

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be noon, April 25th, with Marc Egnal and his new book, The Economic Origins of the Civil War. On May 16th, **Larry Tagg** will talk about his new book, The Unpopular Mr. Lincoln. Registration is required. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.alincolnbookshop.com.

CWRT Nominating Committee

The CWRT Nominating Committee, composed of the past presidents of the CWRT, has nominated the following slate of officers for the 2009-2010 year:

President, Tom Trescott; Senior VP, Rae Radovich; 1st VP, Bob Stoller; 2nd VP, Brian Seiter; Treasurer, Mark Matrangola; Asst. Treasurer, Jim Cunningham; Secretary, Donna Tuohy; Asst. Secretary, John Kociolko. Trustees, terms to expire in 2011: Fred Johanson, Cindy Heckler, David Zucker and Eric Girardi. Trustee, term to expire 2010: Bjorn Skaptason.

The election of the 2009-2010 officers will be held at the May meeting. Any CWRT member can make a nomination from the floor at that meeting.