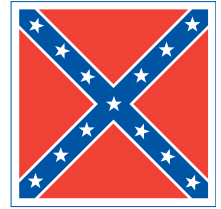


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXX, Number 1

Chicago, Illinois

September, 2009



683rd REGULAR MEETING

Tom Chaffin
on
"H. L. Hunley"

★★★★★

Friday, September 11

★★★★★

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: Sliced Striploin,
Salmon, Vegetarian Plate or
Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, Sept. 7 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing chicagocwrtdinner@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.

Tom Chaffin on "H. L. Hunley"

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

"On the evening of February 17, 1864, the Confederacy's H. L. Hunley sank the USS Housatonic and became the first submarine in world history to sink an enemy ship. Not until World War I—half a century later—would a submarine again accomplish such a feat. But also perishing that moonlit night, vanishing beneath the cold Atlantic waters off Charleston, South Carolina, was the Hunley and her entire crew of eight. For generations, searchers prowled Charleston's harbor, looking for the Hunley. And as they hunted, the legends surrounding the boat and its demise continued to grow. Even after the submarine was definitively located in 1995 and recovered five years later, those legends—those barnacles of misinformation—have only multiplied."

On Sept. 11th, distinguished Civil War-era historian Tom Chaffin will present the Hunley's incredible story. The Hunley's saga begins long before the submarine was even assembled and continues through its recovery in 2000. Based on his thorough survey of period documents relating to the submarine and extensive interviews with archaeologists working on the Hun-



Tom Chaffin

ley's restoration, what emerges is a narrative that casts compelling doubts on many long-held assumptions, particularly those concerning the boat's final hours.

Tom Chaffin is Professor of History at the University of Tennessee. After earning a Ph.D. from Emory University, Prof. Chaffin taught history at his alma mater for 12 years. His wide range of academic achievements include numerous articles as

well as books on Filibusterer Narciso Lopez, John C. Fremont, and the CSS Shenandoah, the latter being a History Book of the Month Club selection.

Professor Chaffin also directs and edits the President James K. Polk Correspondence Project. His Chicago talk will be based on his latest book, "The H. L. Hunley: The Secret Hope of the Confederacy" (Hill and Wang, 2008, from whom the first paragraph is quoted).



Battlefield Preservation

BY ROBERT GIRARDI

It is with heavy heart that I take pen in hand to report the disastrous defeat suffered in the Wilderness on August 25, 2009. Disregarding the 4-4 vote of August 24, which killed the proposal for the Walmart Store in the Wilderness, the commissioners reconvened and voted again. This time the pro Walmart crowd "won" in a 5-1 vote. It seems the others who voted against it could not attend the revote. This is the kind of politicking and commercialism that is going to doom preservation efforts. Victory was snatched away and now the world will have another Walmart...at the expense of sacred soil. Keep that in mind the next time you are ready to go shopping. There are alternatives to Walmart. There is only one Wilderness Battlefield.

The Wilderness is one of the most important locations of the Civil War. To have it paved over for low cost, low quality merchandise is a travesty to the thousand of Americans, blue and gray, who sacrificed their lives there. Anyone familiar with the area knows that the National Battlefield Park is already crowded out by the modern world. Major roads run through the battlefield and industry has already claimed much of the historic landscape. Keep in mind that the area is the focus of the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. Currently, there is little interpretation of the Wilderness battle, unless you include the Battlefield McDonald's, which is a travesty. Several wayside panels and the Elwood House are all that is there.

In April 2010, the Chicago CWRT will go to the Wilderness on its annual battlefield tour. Thank

God! Next year or the year after, we might have to line up behind the grocery cart rack next to the garden store to see where the Texas Brigade formed up to charge, or where the Union V Corps staged its attack into Sanders Field, or where the Union army re-defined the nature of the war by marching south to Spotsylvania instead of retreating northward. The folks in Orange County ought to comprehend that when the Chicago CWRT comes there and spends \$100,000, we are coming for the Wilderness, not to shop at Walmart! The people in Franklin, Tennessee, or at Fort Negley, in Nashville, and at Wildcat Mountain, and Richmond, Kentucky know what our dollars do for the local community.

Keep this in mind people. When you walk by the Battlefield Preservation table at the monthly meeting, holding the two drinks you just spent \$17.00 for...why can't you drop \$2.00 for tickets for battlefield preservation? If every attendee of the meetings gave \$2.00 we would double our yearly intake from the raffle alone. Currently, less than one-third of our attendees even spend the \$2.00. Does it matter? Of course it does. If we don't take action or speak up, who will? There is nobody else. Look around at the dwindling attendance. Where are the new members? It is up to us to do what we can, because there is nobody else to do it. Perhaps it is time to resurrect the battle cry of Jerry Russell, preservation's voice in the wilderness for so many years: "We who study must also strive to save!"

Last year the Battle field preservation Committee was able to contribute \$3,000 to the sites we visited

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1039 Hinswood

Darien, Illinois 60561

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, 1039 Hinswood Darien, Illinois 60561, or contact bsa1861@att.net.



on the Kentucky tour. It would be a pity if we did not have a site to visit or contribute to in Orange County.

Email the Orange County Board of Supervisors and let them know how upset you are with their decision to approve the Wilderness Walmart. Here are the four Supervisors who voted in favor of the Walmart:

Mark Johnson -
rmj142@yahoo.com

Zack Burkett -
zburkett@orangecountyva.gov

Teel Goodwin -
Teel.Goodwin@vabb.com

Lee Frame -
leeframe@orangecountyva.gov

And send a big thank you to Supervisor Teri Pace (tpacedist4@aol.com) for being such a strong and constant supporter of the Wilderness Battlefield and National Park and for voting against Walmart!

June Meeting

BY TOM TRESMOTT

On June 12, at the 682nd regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, Tom Cartwright spoke to 96 members and guests on "Cleburne and Sherman at Missionary Ridge". For the latter, this engagement provided the best chance for success; for the former, it almost didn't happen, but proved to be the test of a lifetime.

On November 22, 1863, Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's division was slated to be sent to join Gen. James Longstreet in Knoxville. The Irish-born Cleburne and his division already had a stellar reputation in the Confederate Army of Tennessee; they alone were allowed the special honor of retaining their distinct blue flag with the white moon in the center, rather than carrying the recently adopted National (St. Andrews Cross) Flag. Cleburne was embarking his troops at Chickamauga station when he received a desperate message from Gen. Braxton Bragg, commander of the Army of Tennessee, who was heavily engaged at Missionary Ridge.

Cleburne was ordered to move up to the Ridge's northern end, Tunnel Hill; there, on the night of November 24-25, his 3-brigade division organized their defenses in total darkness, due to a lunar eclipse.

Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, the commander of the Army of the Tennessee, was also on his way to the battle, with five brigades and two divisions, nine brigades total, to take up a position on Billy Goat Hill, which he mistakenly believed (due to bad maps, he later said) to be the northern continuous end of Missionary Ridge, not northeast of it with a small valley in between. Not realizing the tenuous Confederate situation on Tunnel Hill to his south, which if attacked and taken then could have made Bragg's whole position on Missionary Ridge untenable, Sherman settled in for

the night of November 23-24. After much indecision and delay on the 24th, Sherman decided to attack Tunnel Hill on the morning of the 25th.

Leaving three brigades on Billy Goat Hill, the attack on the north-east side of Tunnel Hill, on a narrow front on the Confederate right but not the right flank, was commenced at 11:00. It was led by the brigade of Brig. Gen. John M. Corse, consisting of the 40th and 103rd Illinois, the 6th Iowa, and the 46th Ohio. Cleburne had positioned only Smith's Brigade and Swett's Battery on Tunnel Hill, but used Sherman's tardiness to good use, placing Govan in support, Lowrey's Alabamans to Smith's right, and Key's Battery to his left.

The fighting was fierce and hand to hand, as the Union troops charging uphill were raked by Confederate artillery, and Corse was wounded and removed from the field.

At 1:00, with the Confederates holding strong, Col. John M. Loomis' Brigade of Illinoisans and Indianans moved forward, supported by Col. Adolphus Bushbeck's Brigade of easterners, attacking the easily defendable northwest side of the hill. The Glass farm house at the foot of the hill changed hands repeatedly. Brig. Gen. Alfred Cumming's Georgia Brigade, part of Maj. Gen. Carter Stevenson's Division to the left of Cleburne, fell back. Cleburne responded by bringing in the 2nd, 15th, and 24th Arkansas from Govan's brigade, who by 3:00 were often resorting to throwing boulders and rocks downhill at the attacking Yankees, for they were running out of ammunition.

As the Federal brigades of Prussian-born Brig. Gen. Charles L. Matthies and Col. Green B. Raum were entering the fray at this time, Cleburne brilliantly counterattacked, the Confederates charging

through the haze of battle downhill at the upcoming Yankees. Soon the exhausted Union units were streaming downhill, many in great disorder.

At around 4:00, about the same time the Confederate center was giving way on Missionary Ridge, Sherman ceased his attacks on Tunnel Hill. So while the Battle of Missionary Ridge was a Union success, this portion of it was a disaster. Cleburne's men had taken 500 prisoners, eight battle flags, and inflicting 1300 casualties while taking only 228 -- or roughly 1/6 of the Union number, which ironically was about by how much he was outnumbered (30,000 versus 4-6 thousand).

Patrick Cleburne was a tactical genius, and showed it at Missionary Ridge (he would do so again later on in the campaign at Ringgold Gap); he expertly arranged his defenses and arrayed his command in trying circumstances when he arrived at Tunnel Hill, and superbly moved his regiments as needed as the fighting progressed. He also had great strategic vision, as demonstrated by his preparation to arm slaves for the Confederate cause. Cleburne passed his test at Missionary Ridge. Sherman, on the other hand, who made "the blunder of the battle" by having his troops in the wrong place in the first place, moved his brigades slowly, indecisively, and in piecemeal, uncoordinated fashion (Matthies' Brigade was especially mishandled), and missed a golden opportunity for a decisive victory. Sherman, who admired Cleburne (and said so in his memoirs), would never again handle a battle so badly.

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 Sept. 12th the **Decatur CWRT** will hold its 14th Annual Fall Symposium, featuring 4 talks on the Civil War in the West by David Hinze, Bruce H. Stewart, Dr. Mark L. Bradley, and Col. Charles Gordon. For more details, phone (217) 578-2262 or email cwhist@yahoo.com.

On Sept. 10th **Rob Girardi** will speak on "What I saw at Shiloh" to the Macoupin County CWRT.

The 12th annual **Cantigny Civil War Symposium**, co-sponsored by this CWRT, will be held Oct. 3rd. The great lineup of speakers includes John Marszalak, Dan Sutherland, Paul Finkleman and Craig Symonds. Registration for CWRT members is \$20 (\$40 for the general public), and includes lunch. For more information, phone (773) 948-9001 or visit www.firstdivisionmuseum.org.

This Sept. 19th the **Civil War Collector's Show** and Sale will return to the Du Page County Fairgrounds in Wheaton. If you're looking to pick up a relic, a book, or just window shop, this is the place to do it.

The **Chicago History Museum** is currently featuring "Lincoln at 200", an online exhibit with over 200 images of Illinois's president. Starting October 10th, the museum will mount an exhibit, "Abraham Lincoln Transformed".

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be Noon, September 5th. Bruce Allardice and Rob Girardi from our Round Table will discuss their new books *Confederate Colonels: A Biographical Register* and *Campaigning with Uncle Billy*. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.

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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

- Sept. 2, Kankakee Valley CWRT: **Marshall Krolick** on "East Cavalry Field at Gettysburg"
- Sept. 2, Lake County CWRT: Bernie Gould on "Why the American Civil War?"
- Sept. 4, Northern Illinois CWRT: General Randall Rigby, "America's First Battles"
- Sept. 4, Salt Creek CWRT: Art Foley on "The Five Civilized Tribes in the Civil War"
- Sept. 8, McHenry Co. CWRT: Frank Crawford on "Partisan Rangers During the Civil War"
- Sept. 12, Kenosha Civil War Museum: 2nd Annual Great Lakes Civil War Forum. Topic: Abraham Lincoln and Gettysburg. Among the speakers will be our own **Marshall Krolick**. Visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org for more details.
- September, "Tavern Days" at the Glen Ellyn Historical Society, featuring many Lincoln programs. For more information, contact the GEHS at (630) 469-1867.
- Sept. 13, Elk Grove Historical Museum: "Pioneer Day" living History, with Taylor's Battery and re-enactors
- Sept. 17, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Theatre Program on "William Herndon and Mr. Lincoln"
- Sept. 22-29, Pamplin Park 4th Annual Members Tour: The Civil War in Middle Tennessee. Visit www.pamplinpark.org for more details.

Membership/Hospitality Chairman **Donna Tuohy** is looking for volunteers to help out with that committee. Contact Donna at (312) 649-1041 if you can help. The task is very social and enjoyable.

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*.

- Sept. 11: **Tom Chaffin**, "H.L. Hunley"
- Oct. 9: Nevins-Freeman Address. **Craig Symonds**, "The Blockade"
- Nov. 13: **Patrick Schroeder**, "Myths About Lee's Surrender"
- Dec. 11: **Brooks Davis**, "Lincoln and Davis as War Leaders"
- Jan. 8, 2010: **Rob Girardi**, "Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign"

Fall Tour of Springfield!

The CWRT will visit the Lincoln Museum and Library in Springfield on Saturday, Oct. 17th, with a return to Chicago the following day. A bus will leave from Chicago that Saturday morning. Meals and hotel are included. Cost is \$350 for a single room, \$600 for double occupancy. More details and registration forms will be available at our September meeting. You may download the form from the CWRT website, www.thecwrt.org.

Recent Deaths in the CW Community

The Civil War community, and this Round Table, lost several friends this last month: Bill Upham, a longtime member of the Milwaukee CWRT and son of a Civil War veteran: Dick Bjorklund, who used to edit this newsletter; Bill Scaife, Atlanta Campaign historian and tour guide on our last Atlanta battlefield tour; and Zev Weinberg, the son of our good friend Dan Weinberg. Our sympathies to their family and friends.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsa1861@att.net or (630) 297-8046.