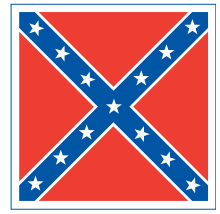


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXXIII, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

January 2013



717th REGULAR MEETING

David Powell

on

“Confederate Cavalry in the Chickamauga Campaign”

★★★★★

Friday, January 11

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$47 - Members/Non-members

Entrée: Chicken Napoleon.

Baked Tilapia.

Vegetarian Plate or

Fruit Plate

Please Note:

Make your reservations by Wednesday, Jan. 9, by emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, or calling 630 460-1865 with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please email us at dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org and/or call us at 630-460-1865.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:15 p.m., for a charge of \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$12 with a validated parking sticker.

David Powell on Confederate Cavalry in the Chickamauga Campaign

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

A 19th Century army's primary means of gathering information on its opponent was through the use of mounted troops. While the increase in combat power provided by modern weaponry meant that cavalry played a less prominent role on the civil war battlefield, their role off the battlefield was as important as ever. Any developing plan or campaign needed that critical flow of accurate information in order to ensure that an army commander made the right decisions.

In September of 1863, the Union Army of the Cumberland and the Confederate Army of Tennessee collided in battle along the banks of West Chickamauga Creek, fighting that raged for three bloody days before the issue was decided. Prior to that collision of arms, however for nearly three weeks the two armies played cat and mouse in the mountains of North Georgia, each grappling for advantage over the other. Braxton Bragg, commanding the Confederate force, relied heavily on his mounted arm during this confusing time. The Rebel cavalry at this time was a large force, more than 14,000 riders strong, and commanded by Joseph Wheeler and the



David Powell

legendary Nathan Bedford Forrest.

The relationship between Bragg, Forrest and Wheeler was complex, and full of conflict. The mounted men serving in gray that fall were numerous, but not always well trained or led. All of these factors would affect the campaign, and Bragg's decisions about when and where to meet the Federals in battle.

David A. Powell graduated in 1983 from Virginia Military Institute with a B. A. in history. Mr. Powell has written articles for various magazines. In 2009 he published his first book, the well received *The Maps of Chickamauga, An Atlas of the Chickamauga Campaign*.

David Powell has earned a reputation as an excellent field guide for the Chickamauga Battlefield. Mr. Powell's latest book, *Failure in the Saddle: Nathan B. Forrest, Joe Wheeler and the Confederate Cavalry in the Chickamauga Campaign* is the first book length study to examine the Confederate Cavalry operations during the Chickamauga Campaign.

Mr. Powell is a former president of the CWRT of Northern Illinois.



Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

Saving Fredericksburg's Slaughter Pen Farm

In March 2006, The Civil War Trust announced the most ambitious private battlefield acquisition project in American history—a \$ 12 million fundraising campaign to purchase the 208-acre Slaughter Pen Farm on the southern end of the Fredericksburg Battlefield. ...

The struggle for the Slaughter Pen Farm was among the most intense in Civil War history. More than 5,000 casualties were inflicted on the farm during the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862. Five Congressional Medals of Honor for valor were awarded for actions taken on the site that day. According to Ed Bearss, chief historian emeritus of the National Park Service, the farm was “without a doubt the most significant part of the battlefield at Fredericksburg that is not protected. Its acquisition will provide an opportunity to permit visitors to walk in the footsteps of history.”

For years, the fate of the Slaughter Pen Farm, located along historic Tidewater Trail (U.S. Route 2) in an area that witnessed tremendous industrial and commercial growth in recent decades, had hung in the balance. The property was zoned for industrial use, and sat immediately adjacent to a major north-south rail line, making it extremely attractive to developers. When the property was put on the market in December 2005, the listing agent described it as “one of the best industrial sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia.” Under the circumstances, preservation of the farm seemed a long shot at best.

Once the Slaughter Pen Farm was placed on the market, preservationists were in a race against time. Fortunately, the Trust was able to secure the assistance of Tricord, Inc., a local family-owned development company that had previously cooperated with preservationists to save the 140-acre First Day at Chancellorsville Battlefield. ... Tricord negotiated with the land own-

ers on the Trust's behalf, placing the property under contract in an agreement that turned the land over to the preservationists with no strings attached. ...

Once the property was off the market, no longer destined to be sold for commercial development, the Trust began working with Sun Trust Bank, which provided a loan package that enabled the organization to embark on a lengthy fundraising campaign. The first big break for the effort came when the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT), one of the most effective local battlefield preservation organizations in the nation, committed \$1 million toward the project—a monumental sum for a group of its size. According to CVBT President Mike Stevens, “Standing on the last unblemished landscape, where so many men gave their lives, it is clear that such sacrifice and valor must be preserved to inspire future generations.” At the 2012 Civil War Trust Annual Conference, CVBT representatives honored their commitment, presenting the final installment of their payment and received a standing ovation from the grateful attendees.

In October 2006, the Trust held the first public event at the Slaughter Pen Farm, a news conference in which then-Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced that the project would receive a \$2 million federal matching grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program—a sum that remains among the largest awards in that program's history. The Commonwealth of Virginia also contributed \$300,000 toward the project through its Civil War Sites Preservation Fund, the only state-level matching grant program for battlefield preservation. Efforts to purchase and protect the Slaughter Pen Farm were among the driving forces behind creation of the program. The Trust's generous members also responded to the call for donations with enthusiasm.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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1039 Hinswood
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 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or editor@chicagocwrt.org.

Since the Slaughter Pen Farm is located outside the currently authorized boundary of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, the Trust will not be able to immediately transfer it to the National Park Service once the full cost is paid. However, the true reason to preserve a historic property like this is to open it for public education and appreciation. Knowing this, the Trust opened a 13-stop interpretive trail at the site in 2008. Moreover, the Slaughter Pen Farm is one of the four tours included in the Trust's Fredericksburg Battle App, which debuted in 2011. This GPS-enabled mobile battlefield tour utilizes the latest technology, including historian video and maps, to help visitors interpret the land under their feet.

To date, the Trust has raised more than 60 percent of the purchase price for the Slaughter Pen Farm; however, work remains to be done before this incredible part of our nation's history is fully set aside for posterity.

Learn more about the work that remains and how you can help at www.civilwar.org/fredericksburg

From *Hallowed Ground*, Civil War Trust, Winter 2012

December Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

Dale Phillips addressed the 716th meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago on "The Red River Campaign." As General Grant took over command of all federal forces in spring 1864, he determined to bring the full might of the union military to bear on the Confederacy. The campaign in Virginia was about to begin while Sherman was poised to advance toward Atlanta. But the high command was divided on how to occupy its third largest army, The Army of the Gulf. An attempt to gain a foothold on the Texas coast in September 1863 was foiled at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads. A union force moving directly overland via Opelousas, Louisiana was also defeated in October 1863.

When the 1864 campaign season began, Grant and Admiral David Porter favored moving on Mobile, but the president desired to move up the Red River. The reasons for this were complex: Lincoln wanted a show of force to the French who had installed Maximilian on the throne of Mexico; he also wanted to bring Louisiana and perhaps Texas back into the union in time for the fall election; the mills of New England were awaiting the cotton available in quantity up the Red; and major arms and munitions manufacturing and a prisoner of war camp were located near Tyler, Texas.

In the end, the administration decided on the Red. General Nathaniel P. Banks, who had been regularly routed by Stonewall Jackson in Virginia, was in overall command. General Franklin, 13th and 19th Corps, and General A. J. "Whisky" Smith, 16th Corps, were Banks' subordinates. It was intended also that

General Frederick Steele, attacking from Arkansas, would converge on Shreveport; the combined army would then enter Texas. Supporting the army was Porter's flotilla: 21 warships and over 100 support vessels. The campaign began in March 1864 when Smith's men, moving on transports from Vicksburg, met resistance at Fort De Russy near the mouth of the Red. The fleet bombarded the fort while Smith moved via Simmesport and stormed the fort from the rear, with few casualties. But from there the campaign began to unravel.

Banks' main force met Smith at Alexandria which the navy and Smith's men entered on March 15th with little opposition. Upon capturing the town, the navy set about confiscating cotton, "a business that does not belong to the navy at all," according to General Banks, and talk of prize money created ill will between the services. Banks now commanded a force of 36,000 battle hardened veterans. But upon receiving orders from Grant that he must release Smith's troops by the end of April, Banks moved with "unusual speed" according to Phillips.

Richard Taylor commanded no more than 16,000 ill clothed, fed, and equipped confederates. Taylor labored with a communication problem after his entire cavalry was captured early in the campaign and with a commander, Kirby Smith, who ordered him not to fight and to retreat to Arkansas. When Banks left the river road and the protection of the navy at Natchitoches on April 1st, his men found a "howling wilderness" with pine thickets pressing in on the narrow clay road which

turned to "rusty mud" when it finally rained. The 20-mile long column was a recipe for disaster. Franklin failed to heed warnings, and was attacked at Mansfield on April 8th. Taylor crumbled the union line and caused a rout; Banks avoided complete destruction thanks to confederate looting.

Banks retreated to Pleasant Hill, where misalignment hindered defense. The confederate attack again pushed the federals back but Smith's troops counterattacked and restored order as well retrieving a great deal of material lost at Mansfield. Lyons Wakeman of the 153rd New York wrote home, "I had to face the enemy bullets with my regiment. I was under fire for about four hours and laid on the field of battle all night." Despite the victory, when he learned that a steamer had been sunk and that Porter could not follow him up the river, Banks determined to retreat. Taylor's force of 5,000 chased the reduced federal army past Natchitoches and back to Alexandria following a rear guard action at Monett's Ferry. The retreat was marked by wanton destruction of property.

The Red River campaign has been described as 'one damn blunder after another,' a campaign of waste. Perhaps the most poignant example of this was the death from illness of Pvt. Wakeman, buried in Chalmette Cemetery and later found to be Sarah Wakeman, one of the few females who faced combat in the Civil War.

GRAPESHOT



On Saturday, January 26th, the **Midway Village Museum in Rockford** will host its annual symposium, featuring **Dr. Douglas Wilson** of Knox College speaking on “Lincoln’s Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words.” David Oberg and Noah/Michele Neiber will also make presentations. The event lasts from 10 to 2, and costs \$28. Lunch is included. For more information, phone (815) 459-1958 or email lonna.converso@midwayvillage.com.

On Jan. 26th, at the Kenosha Civil War Museum: **Father Bob Miller** will speak on “Religion and the Civil War” starting at 1 p.m.

On Feb. 1st, at the Northern Illinois CWRT, **Bruce Allardice** will present “Chicago in the Civil War.”

On Feb. 15th, at the Salt Creek CWRT, **Bruce Allardice** will present “Civil War Movies.”

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT’s website for additional coming events.

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.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus 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

- Jan. 2nd, 2013, Lake County CWRT: Open Discussion on Fort Pulaski
- Jan. 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Tom DeFranco on “The Pipe Creek Plan and Its Effect on the Battle of Gettysburg”
- Jan. 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: David Powell on “Confederate Cavalry at Chickamauga”
- Jan. 11th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Tom De Franco talks on “The 36th Illinois at Stones River”
- Jan. 12th, Union League Club: cocktail reception for author Bruce Levine
- Jan. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Michael Peake on “Blood Shed in the War”
- Jan. 15th, Elgin Area Historical Museum: Brown Bag Discussion Group on Lincoln and the Civil War
- Jan. 18th, Salt Creek CWRT: Dan McCarthy on “Comrade August Willich-Fighting Marxist”
- Jan. 24th, South Suburban CWRT: Dave Van Haften on “Abraham Lincoln and the Structure of Reason”
- Jan. 24th, Moraine Valley CC: Josh Fulton presents “A Soldier’s Life”
- Jan. 26th, Midway Village Museum in Rockford: Civil War Symposium
- Feb. 1st-3rd, Pheasant Run Resort: “Military History Fest”
- 2013 Tour** – Antietam, May 1-5

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: Mary Abroe, “Charles Grosvenor, Colonel 18th Ohio”

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, “Corinth”

Bjorn Skaptasen of the **Abraham Lincoln book store** reminds us that the next “Virtual Book Signing” will be Jan. 12th at noon, with **Bruce Levine** talking about his new book, The Fall of the House of Dixie. On Jan. 19th **David von Drehle** will talk about his new book Rise to Greatness. Abraham Lincoln and America’s Most Perilous Year. Visit www.virtualbooksigning.net for more details.

CWRT Winter Meeting

The Chicago CWRT Winter Executive Committee Meeting will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 2nd, at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago. All CWRT members are encouraged to attend.



150 YEARS AGO – JANUARY 1863



- 1st:** Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) in Tennessee is still being fought. On January 2nd the Confederate army launches on unsuccessful attack on the Union army's left. The next day the Confederate army retreats, ceding much of Middle Tennessee to the Union.
- 1st:** President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Declaration that abolished slavery throughout America. To many in the Confederacy, this was seen as an open attack on the perceived way of life in the South and any chance of peacefully bringing the American Civil War to an early end based on diplomacy vanished with the Emancipation Declaration. In the opinion of many historians, this is the single most important measure of the first three years of the war.
- 10th:** The French government made it clear that it was willing to mediate in the war should the government in Washington wish it to do so.
- 11th:** A Union force commanded by General McClelland captured Fort Hindman on the Arkansas River. Nearly 4500 Confederate troops were taken prisoner.
- 16th:** The Confederate commerce raider 'Florida' evaded a Union blockade and slipped out of Mobile Bay. In the next 18 months the 'Florida' sank fifteen Union ships, mostly off the waters of the West Indies.
- 22nd:** Union General Ambrose Burnside gave up on trying to cross the Rappahannock River in Virginia as it had become too dangerous, due to mud, freezing rains and floods. Frustrated that he had not been given all the support he believed he should have got from his senior officers, Burnside decided to sack a number of them.
- 24th:** Burnside met with Lincoln and gave him a list of those he wanted dismissed. Burnside told Lincoln if he did not get the support of the President, he would tender his own resignation.
- 25th:** Lincoln removed Burnside from his command of the Army of the Potomac. The post was given to General Joe Hooker, Burnside's subordinate and fiercest critic.

Grayslake Heritage Center Abraham Lincoln Exhibit

The Grayslake Heritage Center & Museum will be one of only 11 museums in the nation to host a nationally traveling exhibit 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. These precious artifacts range from Lincoln's surveying instruments to the kid gloves he wore on that fateful night at Ford's Theater. The show will run March 23 to June 16, with weekly family-friendly programs to support the exhibition. For details, contact Dave Oberg at 8847 543-1745 or email doberg@villageofgrayslake.com.

HISTORIANS NAT HUGHES AND RICHARD CURRENT PASS AWAY

Two noted historians, who often spoke to our CWRT, passed away this winter.

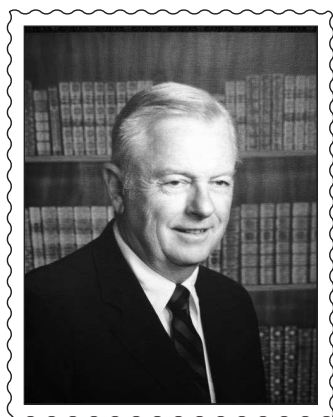


Dr. Current

“Richard N. Current, a Civil War historian whose award-winning scholarship helped demythologize Abraham Lincoln and raise Lincoln studies to a professional level of scholarly inquiry, died on Oct. 26 in Boston. He was 100. The cause was complications of Parkinson’s disease, his wife, Marcia Ewing Current, said.

Professor Current had a wide-ranging portfolio as a historian. His first five books, written in the 1940s and early ’50s, included a history of the typewriter and a study of Daniel Webster. But over the next 40 years he wrote or edited a number of volumes about Lincoln and his times that elevated him to eminence in Civil War studies, and by the mid-’60s he had joined David Herbert Donald and Don E. Fehrenbacher as groundbreaking leaders of a new, more scrupulous and objective generation in Lincoln scholarship.

“He was a giant in the field from the era that made Lincoln the subject of professional historical study,” said Gerald J. Prokopowicz, a former Lincoln scholar at the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Ind., and now the chairman of the history department at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.” [From NY Times]



Dr. Hughes

“Nathaniel “Nat” Cheairs Hughes, Jr., Phd., former headmaster of Girls Preparatory School (GPS), died early Wednesday morning at the age of 81.

A native of Chattanooga and life-long history student, Dr. Hughes received his B.A. in history from Yale University in 1953, a master’s degree and his doctorate degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1956. ...

He began his educational career in 1959, serving for three years at the Webb School in Bell Buckle, Tn., where he coached and taught history and English. He was appointed headmaster of St. Mary’s Episcopal School in Memphis, in 1962, where he served for more than 11 years, helping the school grow and prosper.

In 1973, Dr. Hughes moved with his wife and three children to Chattanooga and became headmaster of GPS, where he served faithfully for 14 years. In 1986, he was presented the William R. “Old Sawney” Webb Award “in honor of his distinguished career as a headmaster.”

Upon retiring in 1987, Dr. Hughes turned to his passion for history and writing. He has authored 35 books, including fiction and non-fiction, and in 2000 was awarded the Charles L. Defour Award for a lifetime of achievement in the historiography of the American Civil War.” [from the Chattanooga]