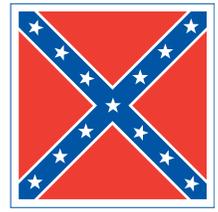


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXXIV, Number 6

Chicago, Illinois

February 2014



728th REGULAR MEETING

Harold Knudsen

on

“General James Longstreet”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, February 14

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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 Piccata,
Baked Orange Roughy,
Vegetarian Plate or
Fruit Plate*

Please Note:

Make your reservations by Wednesday, Feb. 12, 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.

Harold Knudsen on General James Longstreet

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

James Longstreet, the man Robert E. Lee called his “old war horse”, was the Confederacy’s senior Lieutenant General. And perhaps its most controversial general. His service with Lee, his alleged “slowness” at Gettysburg, his actions while under Braxton Bragg at Chattanooga, all sparked postwar criticism, as did Longstreet’s backing of the Republican Party and Reconstruction.

On February 14th, Col. Harold Knudsen will draw on his research to present a more modern, revisionist view of Longstreet the general.

Lt. Col. Harold Knudsen is an Illinois native. His career spans twenty five years of active duty service, and includes career artillery, command and staff Army schools and colleges. He has many years of tactical experience in the integration of fire support into maneuver plans and fire control computation for cannon units. He spent nine years in Germany training tactics offensive armored warfare, as well as peace-keeping and counter-insurgency training. A combat veteran of Desert Storm,



Harold Knudsen

he performed extensive artillery fire planning and execution in support of the US breakthrough of the Iraqi line and penetration into Iraq. He also served in Iraq and Kuwait during the Iraq campaign as a Force manager, fielding new equipment to units in Iraq. His years of staff work at the Corps, Army and Pentagon

levels give a strong understanding of operations from the lowest to the highest levels. Col. Knudsen has a Masters of Liberal Studies form Georgetown

University. His interest in James Longstreet began as a child, and expanded in Germany when applying and comparing Longstreet’s tactics and troop disposition in the training areas. His book: General James Longstreet the Confederacy’s Most Modern General, draws heavily from the 20th Century Army doctrine, field training, staff planning, command, and combat experience.



Valley Foundation Seeks Third Winchester Funds For Restoration By 150th

NEW MARKET, Va. – The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) aims to complete critical work in restoring and interpreting the Third Winchester battlefield, site of the Shenandoah Valley’s largest battle, before the 150th anniversary in September.

For more than 16 years, various individuals and organizations have worked to preserve the site. Now the SVBF needs to raise \$340,000 to complete restoration and interpretation of the battle area south of Redbud Run by June 1 in order to ensure the battleground will be ready for public sesquicentennial events planned on Sept. 19 and 20.

“This anniversary is a once-in-a-lifetime anniversary to show off the battlefield and to draw visitors from all across the nation,” said Executive Director Denman Zirkle. “We need the public’s support and generosity.”

Zirkle noted, “This is not a National Park Service property, and we do not have access to federal funds – matching or otherwise – to accomplish this task. We are looking to our friends and supporters for the financial assistance we need.”

During the Third Battle of Winchester (Opequon) more than 54,000 men clashed in a ferocious seesaw struggle that saw the outmanned Confederates gradually forced back until a final decisive Union attack sent the Confed-

erates “whirling through Winchester.”

Third Winchester was one of the war’s pivotal battles and the costliest battle fought in the Valley. More than 5,000 Union and 3,600 Confederate soldiers became casualties – including 3,000 in the Middle Field. Those Middle Field casualties included every Federal regimental commander as troops crossed the field for safety of the First Woods.

That same Middle Field is the centerpiece of the Foundation’s “Campaign for Third Winchester,” a fundraising effort to support the restoration, interpretation and community use of the 567-acre Third Winchester battlefield site.

The campaign is the largest project the SVBF has ever undertaken, with a total cost of \$2.2 million for the three-year effort.

The first phase is to remove the overgrowth and restore the topography that existed in 1864, add interpretative trails and signage, and make the Redbud Run stream valley accessible.

Zirkle said the carefully thought-out plans for the site include not just the restoration of the Middle Field south of Redbud Run to return it to its 1864 use as a grain field.

The plan includes making the northern portion a community resource for educational and rec-

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Darien, Illinois 60561
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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.

reational activities. That will include expanding the existing trails and adding an education center, scouting facility and restored Civil War-era apple orchard and kitchen garden. The northernmost section will be devoted to community events.

SVBF undertook archeological work, restoration clearing and interpretive planning on the Middle Field in 2013. Almost 200 people attended the kick-off benefit event in June. Boy Scout troops and others provided volunteer labor to clear brush and trees from the Middle Field.

“The Middle Field is a special place,” said Zirkle. “Standing there, you’re very aware that you’re at the epicenter of one of the turning points of American history.”

For information, call the SVBF at 540-740-4545, email jannice.hannah@svbf.net or visit shenandoahatwar.org

From January 2014 *Civil War News*

January Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

Rob Girardi held the 727th meeting of The Civil War Round Table in rapt attention describing the investigation into the "Murder of General William 'Bull' Nelson." This salacious incident took place in September 1862 during a period of political and military emergency: rebel armies launched a two-prong thrust into Kentucky at the same time confederate armies invaded Maryland and threatened Corinth, Mississippi. Caught by surprise, General Buell raced the Army of Ohio north to prevent the loss of Louisville and Cincinnati, and, potentially, all of Kentucky. Southern forces won overwhelming victories at Richmond and Munfordville, captured Bardstown and Frankfort, and installed a confederate governor.

Buell entrusted Louisville to Major General William Nelson, a Kentucky native. Appointed to the Naval Academy at age 16, he served in the Mexican War and rose to the rank of Commander at the time of the Civil War. A large man, 6'4" and 300 pounds and given to profanity, loyal to friends but a tyrant to enemies, his nickname "Bull" was well earned. Commissioned Brigadier General at the outset of the war with instructions to ensure the loyalty of his state, he established Camp Dick Robinson where Kentuckian unionists were armed with smuggled guns. His actions early in the war earned Nelson promotion to Major General. He was wounded at the battle of Richmond, Kentucky shortly before being given command of the Louisville defenses on September 14, 1862.

Assigned raw recruits and militia in whom he had little faith, Nelson assigned the task of organizing new regiments to Major General Jefferson C. Davis. A veteran soldier who led a division at Pea Ridge and the siege of Corinth, Davis felt this work beneath him and was openly critical of Nelson's leadership. Ordered to report on his work, Davis was insubordinate, causing Nelson to explode and relieve the Indiana native on September 22, 1862. This aroused the ire of Indiana governor Oliver P. Morton who had reinstated other officers previously removed by Nelson. After meeting with Morton, Davis was permitted to report to General Buell who had since entered Louisville. Upon arrival on September 28th, Davis visited his division but did not report to Buell.

Davis again failed to report to Buell at the Galt House on September 29th, but rather ate there with Governor Morton and his entourage. Nelson, who had also taken breakfast at the hotel, was in the lobby when confronted by Davis who demanded apology for the prior week's insult. Being rebuffed, the 5'7", 125 pound Davis threw a hotel calling card into Nelson's face. Nelson staggered Davis with a backhand, called him coward, and, when Davis raised a fist, slapped his face. As Nelson stalked off, Davis asked for a pistol and when one was produced, called out Nelson. Saying "Prepare to defend yourself," Davis shot him at point blank range just above the heart. Nelson ascended the stairs and collapsed on the landing. His friend General T.L. Crittenden

heard the shot and ran to the landing and asked Nelson if he were seriously hurt. Nelson uttered, "Tom, I am murdered" and died shortly thereafter.

Davis was immediately taken into custody at the Galt House. His stated initially that he did not intend to murder Nelson but only to force an apology, and that the pistol 'went off.' No formal military charges were brought against Davis or any of his companions who, it was rumored, were conspiring to kill Nelson. Meanwhile, there being no charges filed, Davis was released. Nelson's reputation in the army was such that most were of the opinion that his murder was morally (if not legally) justified, although Davis had his detractors as well. But Governor Morton was a staunch unionist and an ardent abolitionist, and despite lamenting the loss of Nelson, Lincoln needed Morton's support. His cabinet being split on whether Davis should be court-martialed, he took no action. A manslaughter indictment brought later in Louisville was eventually dismissed.

Davis has a significant monument dedicated to him on the grounds of the Indiana capital. Nelson lies in a common grave in Maysville, Kentucky. The irony of this end is not lost on Detective Girardi, who seeks a "rightful part" for "Bull" Nelson in Civil War memory. Ambrose Bierce would surely take note.

GRAPESHOT



On Feb. 8th, **Jerry Allen** will present “Searching for Great Grandpa: Find Your Union Soldier” at the McHenry County Genealogical Society meeting, held at the Crystal Lake Bank & Trust.

On Feb. 8th, **Bruce Allardice** will speak on “Genealogy from Civil War records” at the Sycamore Public Library. On Feb. 13th, he will present “Civil War Movies” at the **Lake County Civil War Round Table** meeting in Grayslake.

On Feb. 12th **Larry Hewitt** will speak at the Palm Beach County CWRT on “Civil War Myths and Mythmakers”.

Come to the **Civil War Museum** in Kenosha for a weekend of living history, programs, and exhibits commemorating the role of physicians, nurses, and caregivers during the Civil War. The event is titled “Civil War Medical Weekend,” and runs Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 15th-16th.

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 CD format. For pricing and a lecture list, please 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.

More Upcoming Civil War Events

- Feb. 1st, Civil War Museum in Kenosha: Scott Wolfe on “Major General John A. Rawlins”
 McHenry County CWRT—no regular meeting in February
 Feb. 5th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Ray Guttendorf on “Jeff Davis’ Camels”
 Feb. 7th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Doug Stiles on “Lincoln’s Watch”
 Feb. 13th, Lake County CWRT: **Bruce Allardice** on “Civil War Movies”
 Feb. 13th, Milwaukee CWRT: Harold Knudsen on “General Longstreet”
 Feb. 18th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Eric Wittenberg on “Plenty of Blame to Go Around: Jeb Stuart at Gettysburg”
 Feb. 19th, Starved Rock CWRT of Ottawa: Drew Jessen on “The Camel Corps”
 Feb. 21st, Salt Creek CWRT: **Jerry Kowalski** on “General George Thomas”
 Feb. 27th, South Suburban CWRT: Members Night Panel Discussion. **Robert Girardi, Fred Johanson** and **Bruce Allardice** discuss “Could the South Have Made it as a Separate Nation?”

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*.

March 14: Aaron Barnhart, “Price’s 1864 Missouri Raid”

April 11: Scott Bowden, “Last Chance for Victory”

May 9: Dan Bastian, “Grant’s Canal”

June 13: Kenneth Noe, “The War in Appalachia”

Sept. 12: Frank Varney on “General Grant’s Memoirs”

Oct. 10: Mark Bradley, Topic TBD

Nov. 14: Steve Towne on “Civil War Espionage”

Dec. 12: Jim Ogden, Nevins-Freeman Address

The next **Virtual Book Signing** will take place in Saturday, February 15th at noon. Join the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop for a book discussion with Rae Katherine Eighmey. Eighmey’s new book, [Abraham Lincoln in the Kitchen: A Culinary View of Lincoln’s Life and Times](#), is a “culinary biography” of the president and his times. Through Eighmey’s eyes and culinary research and experiments, the foods that Lincoln enjoyed, cooked, or served are translated into modern recipes so that authentic meals and foods of 1820-1865 are possible for home cooks.



150 YEARS AGO – FEBRUARY 1864



- 1st:** The U. S. House passes legislation reinstating the rank of Lieutenant General in the United States Army. All know this rank is reserved for Ulysses S. Grant.
- 3rd:** William Tecumseh Sherman, having moved to Vicksburg by boat, begins the Meridian Campaign.
- 5th:** Sherman enters Jackson, MS.
- 9th:** 109 Union officers led by Colonel Thomas Rose escape from Libby Prison on the banks of the James River in Richmond. 59 reach Union lines.
- 17th:** The CSS *Hunley* destroys the USS *Housatonic* with a torpedo outside Charleston Harbor. The *Housatonic* sinks without a loss of life. The *Hunley* also sinks, killing 9 men.
- 20th:** Battle of Olustee, FL. Near Ocean Pond outside the town of Olustee, Brigadier General Truman Seymour [US] attacked Brigadier General Joseph Finegan [CS]. Although evenly matched, the Confederates won.
- 22nd:** Battle of Okolona, MS. Nathan Bedford Forrest [CS] defeats W. Sooy Smith [US], who was attempting to link up with Sherman's Meridian Campaign.
- 24th:** Braxton Bragg becomes Jefferson Davis' chief of staff.
- 27th:** Federal prisoners begin arriving at Camp Sumter in Andersonville.
- 29th:** Kilpatrick's Richmond Raid. General Judson Kilpatrick splits his force in two, detaching 500 men under Col. Ulric Dahlgren to attack Richmond from the west.

This month in the history of the Chicago CWRT

- 1941 (73 years ago):** Robert Kincaid spoke on "Cumberland Gap in the Civil War" (note: this was the 3rd meeting of the CWRT)
- 1964 (50 years ago):** Senator Paul Simon spoke on "Lincoln the Legislator"
- 1989 (25 years ago):** James McPherson spoke on "Lincoln and Liberty"
- 2004 (10 years ago):** Larry Hewitt spoke on "The Confederacy's Best Chance for Victory"
- 2009 (5 years ago):** Bruce Allardice gave the Nevins-Freeman Address on "Lincoln as a War Leader"

Civil War Film Screening Feb. 11th

A new PBS series, Civil War: the Untold Story will be released to public television stations in April 2014.

Narrated by actress Elizabeth McGovern (of *Downton Abbey* fame), the documentary series looks at the war through the lens of the Western Theater. Featured battles include: Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge and Atlanta. Other important themes are: 1) untold stories of the African American experience during the war; and 2) relatively untold stories of President Abraham Lincoln.

To help promote the series, we are offering premiere screenings at various locales throughout the country. A Chicago screening (arranged by the Northern IL CWRT) has been scheduled at the Eisenhower Branch, Chicago Public Library (it's free) Tuesday, Feb. 11th, at 2 pm. The session will last until 5 pm. We will be seeing one whole episode and part of another and then discuss the episodes afterwards.

Those interested can view clips of the series by going to the series' Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CivilWarTheUntoldStory

Camp Douglas Historical Marker—Appeal for Donations

“Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Chicago area Civil War Round Tables,

A Couple of years ago a movement was begun to create and place a marker for Chicago's Camp Douglas, near the location of this historic camp, in the vicinity of 31st Street and Martin Luther King Drive.

This effort has been spearheaded by the Illinois State Historical Society, the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation and Chicago 2nd Ward Alderman Robert Fioretti.

As you are all aware, Camp Douglas was perhaps the most significant Civil War related site in the city. There has been no public commemoration of this important training facility and prisoner of war camp, since the dismantling of the Memorial Wall erected by Ernie Griffin several years ago. Towards that end, planning went forward to create and dedicate a permanent marker through the auspices of the Illinois State Historical Society.

In order to complete this effort, we must raise \$3,500. I have been asked to coordinate efforts to raise the necessary funds. We would like to complete the project this Spring.

Please consider making a donation to help complete this worthy effort. If all of the Chicago

area Civil War Round tables (and their members) participate, we can quickly do something tangible during the remainder of the Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the Civil War.

Please send checks made out to the Illinois State Historical Society, either to me, Robert I. Girardi, 8455 W. Berwyn Ave, 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60656 or to the Illinois State Historical Society, c/o William B. Furry, P.O. Box 1800, Springfield, IL 62705-1800.

Most sincerely,

Robert I. Girardi,
Past president of the Chicago CWRT,
Director, Illinois State Historical Society
Director, Camp Douglas Restoration
Foundation.”

The editor would only like to add 3 things to the above:

- 1) Donations are tax deductible
- 2) The Chicago CWRT has already pledged \$1,000 to this effort.
- 3) I've already pledged \$50 as my own contribution. I hope you will join me in this worthy, LOCAL, preservation effort.