

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Chicago, Illinois

January, 1969

## Don Russell on 'Custer in the Civil War,' January 10



Don Russell

Veteran CWRT member Don Russell will tell of the Civil War career of a legendary American hero, George Armstrong Custer, at our meeting on Friday, January 10. Russell, a newsman and historian, has titled his talk, "Custer's First Charge—Custer in the Civil War."

George Armstrong Custer (West Point '61) has become a legend, especially among Westerners, because he and 264 other officers and men lost their lives at "Custer's Last Stand" at Little Big Horn in 1876. But Russell will discuss "Custer's First Stand," his record as a brigadier general at the age of 23 and major general at the age of 24 in charge of cavalry troops in the Civil War.

Custer distinguished himself at the battles of Gettysburg and Winchester and in the Shenandoah campaign. It was Custer who took the Confederate flag of surrender at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. And a day earlier it was Custer who set the stage for the truce by capturing four trains of Confederate supplies earmarked for Lee's army.

Confederate cavalry commander Jeb Stuart was killed by one of Custer's men. And Custer's name is linked with Kearney, McClellan, Grant, Meade and Sheridan.

"Custer made an important contribution to the Union cause," Russell observes, thereby fulfilling the admonition of Brig. Gen. Philip Kearney who commissioned Custer a lieutenant with the words, "Remember that fortune favors the bold."

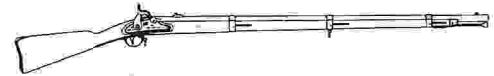
Russell warns, however, that much that we hear about Custer is legend that grew up after he gained posthumous fame after Little Big Horn. "After Custer's Last Stand many 'remembered' associations with him during the Civil War."

Born in Ohio and reared in rural Michigan, Custer became the object of a political dispute when he was to be made a major general. Each Congressman had an allotment of major generals and there was some controversy over which state Custer was to be charged to.

"In sum, Custer was a good soldier and a firm leader who remained in the Army from the time of his graduation from West Point to the day of his death at the Last Stand," Russell says.

"Westerners," he continues, "venerate Custer but they know nothing of his Civil War background and often neglect it when they write books about his military career."

While Russell's talk on Jan. 10 will concern Custer's Civil War career, he has no objection to entertaining questions about the general's later career including the massacre at Little Big Horn.



277th REGULAR MEETING

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Don Russell

on

"Custer's First Charge -  
Custer in the Civil War"

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Friday, January 10, 1969

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Furniture Club in Furniture Mart  
Executive Committee at 4:45 p.m.  
Nominating Committee at 6 p.m.

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6.30 p.m.



Don Russell, who joined the Chicago Civil War Round Table "two or three years after its founding in 1940," retired not long ago after 21 years on the staff of the Chicago Daily News. He served the News as a copy editor and later as editorial page editor whose duties included putting the page together "and writing an occasional editorial or column."

A native of Indiana, Russell got his taste for Civil War history at the University of Michigan where one of his professors was a Civil War scholar. In recent years, Russell confesses, his interests have "detoured West" and writing he now plans concerns the Western states and their history.

Among Russell's books are "Custer's Last," "Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill" and "Sioux Buffalo Hunters." He is editor of "Campaigning with Crook" and "Five Years a Dragoon." Our January speaker is currently managing editor of the Illinois Intelligencer, publication of the Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission.

Russell recently presented a Custer talk to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee and has spoken to the Chicago CWRT on Civil War battlegrounds.

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street,  
Chicago 11, Illinois  
Phone: WWhitehall 4-3085

## OFFICERS

President . . . . . Jerry Warshaw  
 Vice President . . . . . Clyde C. Walton  
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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES (Executive Committee)

Terms expiring in 1969: Maurice Fisher,  
Dan J. Lapinski, Charles Wesselhoeft.

Terms expiring in 1970: S. J. Kearney,  
James Coulter, James Henry.



PRESIDENT WARSHAW asks all members to volunteer to work on appropriate committees of the CWRT. Chairmen appointed by the president for 1968-69 are:

Membership and Hospitality: Wilson Smith  
 Awards: Chuck Falkenberg  
 House and Meals: Dick Cohen  
 Sickness and Memorials: Jim Coulter  
 Fellowship Co-Chairmen: Arnold Alexander,  
 Pete Long

Auditing: Charley Wesselhoeft  
 Nominating: Brooks Davis  
 Publications: Gil Twiss  
 Publicity: Dick Bjorklund  
 Battlefield Tour: Dan Lapinski and Clyde Walton  
 Speakers Bureau: Don Pfeuffer  
 Stand-by Speaker: Miner T. Coburn  
 Special Events: Ver Lynn Sprague and Warren Reeder

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## from the Editor's pen



Dr. Francis A. Lord ran into the Round Table's old-time disputatious spirit when he spoke on "Weapons and Their Effect on Tactics."

Dr. Lord stated his thesis that many lives were unnecessarily lost because the Union forces did not use the most modern weapons available, notably that they did not use Henry and Spencer repeater rifles that were patented in 1860 and instead used Springfield muskets that had to be muzzle loaded. In answer to a question, Dr. Lord asserted that the Union's failure to use the newer weapons might be ascribed to Secretary of War Stanton who was, in his words, "insane."

Pete Long challenged the assertion that Stanton was "insane" citing some of the good things he accomplished for the Union cause. Clyde Walton, our vice president, attacked Dr. Lord's main thesis generally on the ground that it was based on hindsight and that the Union had to use the weapons that were available.

Dr. Lord made an eloquent plea for training persons of imagination in our military academies. Much of the loss of life in the Civil War, he contended, owed to the willingness of officers to follow out-of-date tactics regardless of their consequences.

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Brooks Davis, chairman of the nominating committee, announced that all past presidents are invited to attend a meeting of his group on Friday, Jan. 10, at 6 p.m. before the regular CWRT meeting convenes. Past presidents, he said, should be thinking of nominations "in terms of the future of the club."

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A guest at the head table Dec. 13 was Frank Palumbo, author of the new booklet "Supreme in Strategy of Tactical Command," a military biography of Maj. Gen. George Henry Thomas, "The Dependable General."

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Krolick's Kwick Kwiz was won by Pete Long's table, formerly known as Minor Coburn's table, the same group that has won every previous contest.

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Al Aimone appeared at our meeting in his Union suit on his way to address the Camp Followers and Marshall Krolick, already the father of two daughters, announced that he finally found the pattern and became the father of a boy.

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The Editor's Pen of the Chicago Civil War Round Table, ably wielded for many years by Gil Twiss, has passed to Dick Bjorklund. Gil will continue to contribute items to the newsletter as contributing editor, and Dick Clark of the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop will continue to compile "The New Books." The new editor, who is managing editor of Business Insurance magazine, has asked members and other Round Tables to contribute items to the newsletter.

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Applications for CWRT fellowships are now available from Arnold Alexander, chairman of the CWRT fellowship committee, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Chairman Alexander reminds all CWRT members and friends that they may make tax-deductible contributions to the CWRT Fellowship Fund for Civil War research and education. Contributions may be sent to Alexander at the address above.

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All CWRT members and their guests are welcome to attend meetings of the Unofficial CWRT Board of Directors and Chowder and Marching Society held each Monday at noon in our CWRT meeting room in Chodash Restaurant, 312 W. Randolph St.

Arnold Alexander reports that George Donaghue, Bernard Slapek and Francis R. Geigle have joined the list of contributors to the CWRT fellowship fund who can take their contributions off of their income tax.

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The Illinois Sesquicentennial celebration ended (officially) on Dec. 3, causing President Warshaw to say, "Say a prayer for Illinois."

One of the closing Sesquicentennial events was the rededication of the restored state capital at Springfield. The former capital, site of Lincoln's "House Divided" speech which in recent years served as the Sangamon County Courthouse, is now one of the great restored examples of Greek architecture in the country. Beneath the structure is a subterranean area that will house the Illinois State Historical Library.

Gov. Samuel Shapiro and former governor Otto Kerner participated in the dedication ceremony along with CWRT members Ralph G. Newman and Ver Lynn Sprague. Our group's contingent included Jerry Warshaw, Don Russell, Gil Twiss, among others.

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The New Market Battlefield Park said today the "fatal orchard" in which Virginia Military Institute cadets suffered their heaviest casualties in the 1864 battle will be replanted later this month.

E. Blackburn Moore, Berryville orchardist and former speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, will replant the orchard as a gift to the new park, a spokesman said. The park is a nonprofit operation by VMI.

VMI cadets began their final victorious charge from the edge of the orchard which lay between the historic Bushong House and the Union lines on Bushong Hill. Of some 250 cadets engaged, 57 were wounded, 10 of them fatally.

Fourteen apple trees representing seven varieties known to be in existence in this area at the time of the Civil War will be planted. They will be Grimes Golden Summer Rambo, Old Virginia Winesap, Jonathan, Yellow Transparent, Smokehouse and William Early Red.

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We regret the death of Vernon Hanson, a founding member of our Round Table and first secretary of our organization. Mr. Hanson died at his home in Hinsdale in April, but no mention was made of his death in our newsletter.

Mr. Hanson's death reduces the list of founding members to ten: David H. Annan, Monroe F. Cockrell, Fred C. Evers, Elmer Gertz, Percival G. Hart, Harry Hershenson, Alexander J. Isaacs, Craig R. Johnson, Ralph G. Newman and C. Norton Owen.

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## TO THE LADIES—

The Camp Followers had a very interesting and informative program presented to them by Al Aimone, CWRT member, who spoke on "Clothing and Cooking of the Civil War." Aimone had with him several hats, coats and other pieces of wearing apparel used by Union soldiers. He told some fascinating stories about the uniforms. Members also enjoyed the Sutler's Christmas Wagon.

Mrs. Arnold Alexander will present the January 10 program. She will discuss what was meant by Lincoln's fifth wheel—which has nothing to do with transportation during the Civil War.

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In a television "first," members of the Chicago Civil War Round Table participated in Sheri Blair's "Exposure" program on WLS-TV (Chicago channel 7) on Sunday, Dec. 15. Questions covered during the panel discussion included: Could there be another Civil War? No. Was there humor connected with the war? Yes, certainly. Should we save our Confederate money? Yes, because some of it is worth well over face value, including the Confederate \$1000 bill now worth \$1500.

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### A LETTER

Dear Mr. Alexander:

My dissertation was completed in August, 1966. It was necessary, at that time, to expand the topic somewhat, and change the title to: "The Negro Soldier Movement and the Adoption of National Conscription." In the Spring of 1967 an article from the dissertation was published in Louisiana History.

After some revision, I am hoping that the entire manuscript will be accepted by a publisher. A copy of the thesis will be sent to you under separate cover.

Presently, I am teaching American Constitutional history at Eastern Michigan University while attending Law School at the University of Michigan.

Thank you again for your interest and support.

Mary Frances Berry, Ph.D

Editor's note: Miss Berry was one of our first \$500 fellowship winners.

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Participants in the program were Jerry Warshaw, freelance artist and Chicago CWRT president; E. B. "Pete" Long, research director for the Centennial History of the Civil War now on the faculty of the University of Illinois (Chicago); Ralph G. Newman, chairman of the Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission and proprietor of the the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop, and Richard Bjorklund, editor of this newsletter and managing editor of Business Insurance magazine.

Thousands of Chicago area viewers saw the program and heard facts and opinions concerning the war and of the activities of our Civil War Round Table. Panelists emphasized that anyone with a passing interest in the war is welcome to join and they gave strong plugs to the CWRT's fellowship program and to our famous battlefield tours.

If you missed the program, it's too bad.

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John T. Hubbell, Editor, CIVIL WAR HISTORY, Kent State University, Department of History, Kent, Ohio 44240 says, "Please advise your members to write me directly if they have difficulties with a subscription."

**COME ONE AND ALL**

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★ ★ **GRAND REVIEW BALL** ★ ★

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**LADIES NIGHT**  
FRIDAY  
★ ★ ★ February 14 ★ ★ 1969 ★ ★ ★

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**AMBITIOUS PROGRAM**

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**Entertainment**

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☆☆☆ **SPEAKER** ☆☆☆

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 **Eugene Kupjack**   
historian • craftsman

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**MUSIC • DANCING**

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 **1st BRIGADE BAND** 

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**An ORIGINAL Civil War Band**

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★ ★ ★ 104th Illinois Regiment, Reactivated ★ ★ ★

## THE NEW BOOKS



A PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN LETTERS BY HIS OLDEST SON. Edited by Paul M. Angle with Richard G. Case. Chicago Historical Society, 1968. \$6.95.

WHEN LINCOLN LEFT THE CAPITAL AND OTHER BALLADS, by Russell P. Askue. Philadelphia: Dorance, 1968. \$3.00.

CHARLES MORGAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHERN TRANSPORTATION, by James P. Baughman. Nashville: Vanderbilt U., 1968. \$10.00.

FROM PLYMOUTH APPOMATTOX, by Daniel J. Boorstin. New York: Random House, 1968. \$3.95. For young people.

CONFEDERATE PORTRAITS, by Gamaliel Bradford. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968. \$9.75. Original of 1914.

UNION PORTRAITS, by Gamaliel Bradford. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968. \$9.75.

HOODED AMERICANISM: THE HISTORY OF THE KU KLUX KLAN, by David Mark Chalmers. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1968. Paper; original of 1965. \$2.95.

THE FREEMEN'S BOOK, by Lydia Maria Child. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1968. \$8.50. Reprint of the 1865 ed.

BLUEPRINT FOR MODERN AMERICA: Nonmilitary Legislation of the First Civil War Congress, by Leonard P. Curry. Nashville, Vanderbilt U., 1968. \$8.50.

THE CIVILIZATION OF THE OLD SOUTH: Writings of Clement Eaton. Ed. by introd. by Albert D. Kirwan. Lexington, U. Ky. Press, 1968. \$7.50.

SLAVERY: A PROBLEM IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE, by Stanley M. Elkins. Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1968. \$5.00; paper, \$1.50.

NARRATIVE OF SOJOURNER TRUTH, by Olive Gilbert. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1968. \$11.50. Reprint 1878 ed.

AMERICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1860, by William Greenleaf. N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1968. Paper, \$3.45.

STONEWALL JACKSON AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, by G.F.R. Henderson. A modern abridgment, with an introd. by E. B. Long. Magnolia, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968. \$6.00.

BEHIND THE SCENES: THIRTY YEARS A SLAVE AND FOUR YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE, by Elizabeth Keckley. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1968. \$9.00. Reprint of 1968 ed.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, by Frank B. Latham. N.Y.: Watts, 1968, \$3.95. For young people.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF OUR ANTISLAVERY CONFLICT, by Samuel Joseph May. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1968. \$10.50. Reprint 1869 edition.

THAT LINCOLN BOY, by Earl Schenck Miers. Cleveland & N.Y.: World, 1968. \$3.95. Ages 8-12.

THE PROSTRATE STATE: SOUTH CAROLINA UNDER NEGRO GOVERNMENT, by James Shepher Pike. Ed. with introd. by Robert F. Durden. N.Y.: Harper, 1968. Paper, \$1.60. Reprint of 1874 edition.

LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1779-1900. Detroit: Gale Research Co., c1966. \$37.00. Original of 1900.

DISEASE IN THE CIVIL WAR: Natural Biological Warfare in 1861-1865, by Paul Eby Steiner. Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1968. \$10.50.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF BATTLES, 1754-1900, by Newton A. Strait. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1968. \$6.75. Reprint of 1900 work.

THE SUPPRESSED BOOK ABOUT SLAVERY. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1968. Reprint of 1864 edition.

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS

FEBRUARY 14: Ladies Night with the 1st Brigade Band and historian-craftsman Eugene Kuppjack.

MARCH 14: Brooks Davis on "The Battle of Perryville."

APRIL 11: Warren W. Hassler Jr. on "McClellan."

MAY 9: William K. Alderfer "Illinois' Wartime Capitol."

JUNE 6: Frank G. Rankin on "John Hunt Morgan."

All meetings are held on Friday nights in the Furniture Club of the Furniture Mart.

This year's battlefield tour will visit Shiloh, Corinth, Brice's Crossroads, Holly Springs and Memphis on May 1-4.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Edward Stroh, 53 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois 60604.



Salt Creek CWRT of Lombard-Glen Ellyn held its 50th regular meeting on November 15.

T. Harry Williams delivered the annual Fortenbaugh Lecture at Gettysburg college on November 19, "Lincoln and Davis as War Leaders." The lectures are dedicated to the memory of Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh, who served the college for 33 years as chairman of the department of history. The lectures are successors to the Civil War Conferences that were held annually at Gettysburg.

In a letter received by Brooks Davis, Miss Eleanor S. Brockenbrough, assistant director of Confederate Memorial Literary Society, Richmond, Va., said, "Miss (India) Thomas retired about five years ago, but is an active member of the board of trustees and busier than ever. And so am I as the duties of acting director are now added to those of assistant director and librarian. However, we hope to have a new director by the first of the year. . . . We think we have made a number of improvements (in the White House of the Confederacy) in thinning our exhibits and focusing attention on important items."

ABBOTT GIBNEY of the Michigan Regimental CWRT is writing a book on the life of Confederate General James Longstreet, to be published by Simon & Schuster. The biography will be aimed at youngsters of the junior high school level.

PRISON CWRT of Richmond, Va., lost four members at the close of the last year, but has added two new ones and now has a total membership of 16.

E. B. (Pete) Long is the January 29 speaker at Kansas City CWRT on "Generals and Their Ladies."

Decatur CWRT celebrated its 9th birthday on December 10.