

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

## EDWIN C. BEARSS ON FORT DONELSON



Edwin C. Bearss

appeared at a regular meeting in March, 1959 when he spoke on the Battle of Champion's Hill. Subsequently, in January, 1965, he described for us the history and raising of the U.S.S. Cairo and, in October, 1970, he related the saga of Grant's assaults on Vicksburg. In addition, Ed is an almost annual participant on our yearly battlefield tours, graciously serving as our chief guide as well as delivering an address at one of the evening banquets.

For his topic on the 13th, Ed has chosen a subject which will again touch the career of Ulysses S. Grant, as he will discuss Fort Donelson, the battle that first brought national prominence to the former Galena store clerk. After his victory at Fort Henry on February 6, 1862, Grant determined, without orders from Halleck, his immediate superior, to march overland to attack Fort Donelson, the Confederate bastion on the Cumberland River. He directed the federal gunboat fleet to return down the Tennessee River to the Ohio and then to proceed up the Cumberland to again cooperate with the army in this new assault.

Donelson was located on the river's west bank between Hickman and Indian Creeks and near the small town of Dover. The overall Confederate commander, Albert Sidney Johnston, had decided to withdraw his army south of the Cumberland after the fall of Henry. To safeguard his movement, it was necessary to hold Donelson and therefore the troops of Floyd and Buckner were ordered to the fort to reinforce the garrison. The former Secretary of War under Buchanan, John B. Floyd, assumed command of the fort.

By February 12, 1862, Grant's troops were besieging the Confederates in Donelson from the land side, but the Federal gunboat attack on the 14th was beaten back by the Southern batteries. All this time the men on both sides were suffering from near blizzard conditions and intensely cold temperatures. The heaviest fighting occurred on the 15th as the Confederates attacked in an attempt to break out of the encirclement. The failure of this assault, after its initial success, has been one of

The opening meeting of our 1974-1975 year will feature a welcome return visit by one of the most brilliant and knowledgeable scholars in the Civil War field, Edwin C. Bearss, Supervisory Research Historian of the National Park Service. An honorary life member of the Round Table and a good friend to us all, Ed first ap-



333RD REGULAR MEETING

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EDWIN C. BEARSS

on

FORT DONELSON

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1974

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CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION

29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



the most interesting studies in the ineptitude of command to come out of the Civil War. Ed will contrast for us the tragic blunders and heroic daring of the various Confederate generals as they snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. Meanwhile, Grant continued to receive reinforcements until the Federals outnumbered the fort's defenders almost two to one. Floyd and his second-in-command, the equally incompetent Gideon Pillow, made their escape, leaving Simon Buckner to receive the famous "unconditional surrender" dispatch. On February 16th, the fort capitulated; a loss which, as we shall learn, would have a material effect on Southern strategy and Northern morale.

Ed Bearss is a native of Montana, having been born in Billings and raised on a ranch near Hardin. During World War II, he was a member of a Marine Raider Battalion and participated in the invasions of Guadalcanal and New Britain. Wounded in action, he spent twenty-six months recuperating in various hospitals. His academic studies resulted in a degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University and an M.A. in history from Indiana University. Ed's career with the National Park Service began at Vicksburg where he was Park Historian. While there, his research and leadership led to the discovery and salvage of the Cairo.

Now stationed in Washington, Ed resides in Arlington, Vir- (Continued on page 3)

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
Phone: Whitehall 4-3085

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Fellowship .....	Arnold Alexander, Lloyd Miller
House Committee .....	Ray Jankovich and Irwin Levin

The only requirement for membership is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Donald E. Jensen, 335 East Woodland Road, Lake Bluff, Ill. 60044.



*from the  
Editor's pen*



The first Civil War Round Table was founded in Chicago in 1940. Since that time, the movement has expanded to include Round Tables in almost every state of the Union, as well as in many foreign countries, such as Great Britain, Germany and Australia. Many of our members have made major contributions to the literature of the Civil War, and those of us who have not been gifted as authors have been able to aid our writing members by performing research for them. In addition, our annual Civil War Round Table Fellowships have encouraged talented young people to make this phase of American history their specialty.

During our almost thirty-five years of existence, we have long dreamed of a permanent headquarters for the Round Table, a site which would not only serve as our offices but, more importantly, as the home of a complete research library open to all of those studying this vital period in our national history. Countless members who have been avid collectors of Civil War books and artifacts during their lifetimes have indi-

cated a desire to donate or bequeath their collections for this purpose if the Round Table only had a location in which to establish and house such a facility.

Here in Chicago, in the Central Building of the Chicago Public Library, there is the magnificent G.A.R. Room and Memorial Hall. One of the most beautiful rooms in Chicago, it has not been used recently to full advantage as the membership in the Grand Army of the Republic has dwindled and finally disappeared. Today, the Chicago Public Library is restoring and refurbishing the great old building. This work, which includes air conditioning, new heating, lighting and additional exits and elevators, will be completed in time for the nation's two hundredth birthday in 1976.

The Civil War Round Table has been offered an opportunity to establish its headquarters in the Chicago Public Library, adjacent to the G.A.R. Memorial Room. There we would have a place for a great Civil War reference library, for our committee and Round Table meetings, for special exhibits and for any other useful, cultural and historical purpose we might decide upon.

The members of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Public Library have already committed almost \$12,000,000 for work on the building. They have indicated that they would welcome The Civil War Round Table. Our task would be to supply some book cases and furniture for the Civil War Library and for the establishment of an endowment fund to guarantee that all current and new publications would automatically be added to our collection. The library, in turn, would place all of its rarer books on the Civil War in the same area. The entire collection would be non-circulating and so would always be intact and available.

Thus, the doorway to the fulfillment of our long-standing dream is wide open. It is up to us, through our dedication and generosity, to insure that the hope becomes reality. The Executive Committee has established, under the co-chairmanship of Ralph Newman and Bob Franke, a committee whose purpose is the creation of the Civil War Round Table Room at the Chicago Public Library. The initial goal is not a great one - \$20,000.00. We are asking each member, to the best of his ability and resources, to make a tax-deductible pledge, to be paid over the next three years, to help make this facility possible. We also urge you to seriously consider making the Round Table the beneficiary of your library and collection, whether in your lifetime or after your death. During the next few months, members of the committee will be calling upon each of you to solicit your assistance in this campaign. Your response will determine its success.

## SUMMER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The first item on the agenda of the Executive Committee at its annual summer meeting, held on August 3rd this year, was a proposal to increase the yearly dues. After a complete financial report from the Treasurer, it was apparent to all present that, despite careful attempts to adhere to a tight budget, increased costs of operation seriously threaten the financial condition of the Round Table. Thus, a motion was adopted providing for an increase of five dollars per year for both local and national dues, effective immediately. At the same time, a revision was made in the geographic definition of local dues so that anyone residing outside a two hundred mile radius of Chicago will now be entitled to pay the reduced national dues rate. The former policy limited that rate to only those outside of our three-state metropolitan area.

A report was then given by Jerry Edelstein on alternative locations for our monthly meetings. His recommendation

that we stay, for at least one more year, at the Bar Association was, after full discussion, approved. Brooks Davis reported on the planning for the 1975 Battlefield Tour to Richmond. Among the ideas being considered are splitting the group on one or more days to allow a choice of excursions and also the extension of the tour from four to five days because of the many points of interest in the area. A suggestion of a fall, 1974 tour to Galena was not approved.

Al Meyer was elected to fill the vacancy on the Board of Trustees (a 2-year term) which had been created by reason of Dan Vetter's recent move to Arizona. Before adjournment, reports of the Research Center and Nevins-Freeman Award Committees were given and a committee was appointed to select next year's recipient of the latter award. Eighteen members of the Executive Committee were present for the meeting which was held at the Book and Bottle. As is the custom at the summer meeting, the new President was the host for lunch.

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All seven of the Lincoln-Douglas debates are being re-enacted this fall on the actual sites where they originally occurred. Portraying Lincoln will be our own member, Richard Blake, well known for his dramatic performance "A Look At Lincoln". The first re-enactment was at Ottawa on August 25th and dates for the others are as follows: Charleston - September 8th; Quincy - September 15th; Galesburg - September 22nd; Freeport - September 29th; Alton - October 6th; and Jonesboro - October 13th. Barbeques, parades, Dick's Lincoln performance, and 1858 style political rallies will also be part of the program at several locations. For information, contact Dr. Ralph Y. McGinnis at Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois 61920.

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Co-Chairmen Arnold Alexander and Lloyd Miller have announced that the recipient of the 1974-1975 Civil War Round Table Fellowship Award is James W. Geary, a Ph.D. candidate at Kent State University. A total of fourteen entries were received for the competition. Mr. Geary is twenty-nine years old, is married and has one child. He received his B.A. at the State University of New York at Buffalo and his M.A. at Kent State where his faculty adviser is Dr. John Hubbell, the editor of Civil War History.

The subject of Mr. Geary's doctoral dissertation is "A Lesson in Trial and Error: The American Congress and the Civil War Draft, 1862-1865". His study will focus on the five major conscription measures adopted by the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth Congresses, as he examines the attitudes of the Congressmen, the local administration of the draft, and the prior and subsequent history of conscription as it affected and was affected by the Civil War system.

Arnold has also recently heard from two prior winners of the fellowship. Dr. Okon E. Uya, whose work on Robert Smalls of South Carolina was published by Oxford University Press in 1971, is now Professor of History at Howard University. Dr. David L. Valuska is Assistant Professor of History at Kutztown State College in Pennsylvania.

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#### EDWIN C. BEARSS (Continued from page 1)

ginia with his lovely wife, Margie, and their family. Besides the numerous articles, studies and battlefield pamphlets he has authored, Ed has also written or edited many books, including "Decision In Mississippi", "Rebel Victory at Vicksburg", "Hardluck Ironclad: Sinking and Salvage of the Cairo", and "A Southern Record: The Story of The 3rd Louisiana Infantry". Among the countless awards he has deservedly received are Vicksburg Man of the Year for 1963 and the Harry Truman Award for Meritorious Service in the field of Civil War History. As all who know Ed will certainly attest, those in attendance on September 13th will be privileged to enjoy a most informative evening.



#### TO THE CAMP FOLLOWERS (LADIES)

Our new president, Mary Ellen Wehler, has announced that at the first Camp Followers' meeting of this season we will be privileged to have with us Minor T. Coburn, who will speak to us on "Spies For The Blue and Gray". Included in his talk will be a description of the exploits of agents of both sexes. Mr. Coburn, a long-time member of the Round Table, is now retired but previously served for many years as a teacher in the history department of New Trier High School in Winnetka.

The date for what should be an interesting meeting is September 13, 1974, the time is 5:30 P.M. and the place is the Book and Bottle, 17 East Chestnut Street. Please make your reservations by September 11th. To do so, write or call Mary Ellen Wehler, 244 S. Elmwood Drive, Aurora, Illinois 60506, 896-0169.

All ladies of Round Table members are cordially invited to join us and we would especially like to encourage the wives of new members to attend. A good time is always had by all!



#### NEVINS-FREEMAN AWARD DINNER

On the evening of June 14, 1974 over one hundred and fifty members, their ladies and guests were witnesses to a most impressive ceremony honoring Bruce Catton as the first recipient of the Nevins-Freeman Award for outstanding contributions to the field of Civil War history. The festivities began with a catered dinner elegantly served in the rotunda of the Grand Army of the Republic Rooms. Upon conclusion of the meal, all present moved into the auditorium for the program, which opened with the installation of new officers of the Round Table. Our new president, Ward Smidl, then presented to his predecessor, Gordon Whitney, as a token of our sincere appreciation for a job well done, a copy of one of the famous Rogers' Groups, a sculpture depicting two Union soldiers in battle. Following thereafter, honorary award life memberships were presented to Don Russell, Stan Kearney, Elmer Underwood and Henry Bass for their support of and service to the Round Table over the years.

This brought us to the presentation of the award to Mr. Catton. Those participating in paying tribute to him included our own E.B. "Pete" Long and Ralph Newman, Samuel S. Vaughn, President of Doubleday Publishing Co., and, by means of telegram and appropriate gift sent from California, Carl Haverlin. Following their remarks, which detailed Mr. Catton's life and literary achievements, our guest of honor responded, expressing his thanks and relating several personal experiences which had a profound effect on his career. After the program was over, Mr. Catton stayed on to graciously autograph copies of a poem written by him which had been distributed to all in attendance as a souvenir of the evening.

The award itself, which will be a permanent design and will be repeated each year, is approximately fifteen inches long and ten inches high. It consists of an appropriately engraved plate and a magnificent scale model of a Civil War artillery piece, complete with accoutrements, all mounted on a walnut base and covered by a removable transparent plexiglass case. It has been decided by the Executive Committee that the Award will be presented each year at the June meeting, which will also be the occasion of our annual Ladies Night.



## THE NEW BOOKS

(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Barney, William. *The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, [1974]. \$14.50

Conwell, Russell Herman. *Magnolia Journey: A Union Veteran Revisits the Former Confederate States*. Arranged from letters of correspondent Russell H. Conwell to the Daily Evening Traveller (Boston, 1869) by Joseph Carter. University: University of Alabama Press [1974]. \$6.75

Crook, David Paul. *The North, the South, and the Powers, 1861-1865*. New York: Wiley [1974]. On foreign relations. \$11.95

Cullen, Joseph P. *The Peninsula Campaign - 1862*. Harrisburg: Stackpole, 1973. \$8.95

Davis, Carl L. *Arms, the Union; Small Arms in the Civil War*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1973 [i.e. 1974]. \$12.50

Dillon, Merton Lynn. *The Abolitionists; the Growth of a Dissenting Minority*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press [1974]. \$10.00

Earle, Peter. *Robert E. Lee*. New York: Saturday Review Press [1974] \$12.50

Fleekles, Elliott V. *Willie Speaks Out: The Psychic World of Abraham Lincoln*. St. Paul; Llewellyn Publications, 1974. \$7.95

Fox, William F. *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865*. [Dayton, Ohio] Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1974. \$35.00. Reprint of the original of 1889.

Fribourg, Marjorie G. *The U.S. Congress: Men Who Steered Its Course, 1787-1867*. Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company, 1972. \$5.95

Katz, William Loren. *An Album of the Civil War*. Illustrated with original prints and photos. New York: F. Watts, 1974. \$4.95. For young people.

Lee, Charles Robert. *The Confederate Constitutions*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press [1974, c 1963]. \$11.50. Reprint.

Macdonald, Helen Grace. *Canadian Public Opinion on the American Civil War*. New York: Octagon Books, 1974. Reprint. \$11.50.

Melville, Dorothy Sutherland. *Tyler-Browns of Brattleboro*. New York: Exposition Press, 1973. \$10.00 Civil War years and their impact on a whole family.

Mullin, Gerald W. *Fight and Rebellion; Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*. New York: Oxford University Press [1974, c1972]. Paper \$2.50

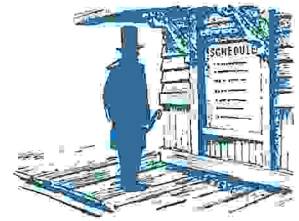
Nelson, Truman. *The Old Man: John Brown at Harper's Ferry*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973. \$8.95

Parrish, William E. *A History of Missouri, Volume III, 1860-1875*. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press. 1973. \$9.50

Perry, Lewis. *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1973. \$14.50

Quarles, Benjamin, editor. *Blacks on John Brown*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972. \$6.95

Ransom, John L. *Andersonville Diary: Escape, and List of Dead, with Name, Company, Regiment, Date of Death and Number of Grave in Cemetery*. New York: Haskell House [1974]. \$19.95. Reprint of publication of 1881.



## BULLETIN BOARD

### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle, second Friday in each month except as noted.

September 13: Edwin C. Bearss on "Fort Donelson."

October 11: Harold M. Hyman on "The Johnson Impeachment - From Appomattox To Watgate."

November 8: Wilbur Kurtz, Jr. On "Lincoln, Sherman and Lloyd Lewis."

December 13: Shelby Foote, topic to be announced.

January 10: William C. "Jack" Davis on "The Battle of New Market."

February 14: Gordon Whitney on "The Battle of Nashville."

March 14: Frank Rankin on "The Orphan Brigade."

April 11: Harold Simpson on "The Texas Brigade, Lee's Grenadier Guard."

May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour to Richmond.

May 9: Ralph G. Newman on "The Last Full Measure of Devotion - Abraham Lincoln's Incredible Funeral."

June 13: Ladies Night, Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner, and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at LaSalle Hotel Coffee Shop; all members welcome.

### NEW MEMBERS

Jay C. Willson, 1546 Elm Avenue, Northbrook, Illinois 60062

Larry D. Kinser, 2903 East Lynn Street, Anderson, Indiana 46014

James R. Soens, 631 Monroe, River Forest, Illinois 60305

Frank S. O'Donnell, 255 Melrose Avenue, Kenilworth, Illinois 60043

Paul I. Klinger, 1923 Warren Street, Evanston, Illinois 60202

Ira L. Wallis, c/o Arvey Corporation, 3500 N. Kimball, Chicago, Illinois 60618

Colman J. O'Neill, M.D., 322 N. Adams Street, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521

Harry H. Long, Jr., 1741 Birchcrest Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221

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William C. Vinck, 223 Custer Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60202

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Merlin E. Sumner, 403 Hatlen Avenue, Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056

Bartlett G. Rice, Sr., 225 Monroe Avenue, River Edge, New Jersey 07661

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Malvin K. Hoffman, 24 Candlewood Lake Road South, New Milford, Connecticut 06776