

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LIX, Number 4

Chicago, Illinois

December 1998

Paul Finkelman on "Lincoln, Race, and Slavery: Understanding the Emancipation Proclamation in the Context of Nineteenth Century Law and Politics"

by Barbara Hughett

THE presidential proclamation that, on January 1, 1863, freed the slaves in the unconquered Confederacy, was arguably the most important and most controversial executive document of Abraham Lincoln's presidency. Upon signing the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln said, "If my name ever goes into history, it will be for this act."

"Clearly," Lincoln biographer Stephen B. Oates writes, "Lincoln's generation did not regard the Proclamation as a meaningless decree. The wonder, of course, is that Lincoln stuck by a measure that aroused such public indignation." Yet, even such noted scholars as J.G. Randall, in the 1930s and 40s, discredited the Emancipation; and some—particularly during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 70s—even labeled The Great Emancipator as a white supremacist. Was Lincoln, especially in the context of his times, the friend of black freedom or the enemy?

Paul Finkelman will address The Round Table on December 11; his address is titled "Lincoln, Race, and Slavery: Understanding the Emancipation Proclamation in the Context of Nineteenth Century Law and Politics." Some of the questions he proposes to address are: "Was Abraham Lincoln a racist? Was the Emancipation Proclamation merely a war measure, or did it have a higher meaning and purpose? What were the constitutional constraints on Lincoln as he pursued emancipation and military victory?" Dr. Finkelman's lecture will focus on these issues, exploring the way Lincoln's career as a politician and a lawyer, and his lifetime opposition to slavery explain his shaping of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Paul Finkelman received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago and was later a Fellow in Law and History at Harvard Law School. He is currently the John F. Seiberling Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Akron School of Law. He is the author of more than a dozen books on American history,



Paul Finkelman

576th Regular Meeting

PAUL FINKELMAN ON "LINCOLN, RACE, AND SLAVERY: UNDERSTANDING THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NINETEENTH CENTURY LAW AND POLITICS"

Friday, December 11

UNION LEAGUE CLUB
65 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$25 - The Civil War Round Table of Chicago members
\$30 - Nonmembers

Entrees: *Roast Loin of Pork with Apple Sauce or Catch of the Day*



PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by Wednesday, December 9, by calling Registrar Carole Le Claire at 847-698-1438. People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner. **No last-minute orders for the Catch of the Day can be honored. The chef must have at least twenty-four hours notice.**

The Union League Club is located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets.

Parking is available at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club, at the rate of \$8 per car if you park between the hours of 4:30-10:30 p.m. If you do not get your ticket validated or park beyond the hours listed, you must pay the full amount.

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☛ NOVEMBER MEETING ☛

by Larry Gibbs

On November 13, Robert O'Neill gave an interesting presentation to 94 members and guests at the 575th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. The title of his speech was "The Federal Cavalry in the Peninsular Campaign." O'Neill, an investigator with the Fairfax County Police Department, is the author of *The Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville* and other articles and essays. Using an engaging style, he explained the deployment of Union cavalry during the 1862 Peninsular Campaign, a rather obscure but important aspect of that campaign.

In the Peninsular Campaign of May and June, 1862, Union cavalry operations have been overshadowed by the Rebel cavalry and its flamboyant commander, Jeb Stuart. This Virginia peninsula is bordered on the east by the Chesapeake Bay, on the south by the James River, and on the north by the York River. This area lies east of the Confederate capital city of Richmond, the major objective of Union General George B. McClellan in the spring of 1862. The entire Union operation included 120,000 Yankees, 14,600 horses, and 405 vessels.

"Unfortunately for the Union, General McClellan was not a visionary in cavalry tactics," suggested O'Neill. Under McClellan's orders, the cavalry would be concentrated in one mass and volunteers would suffice for cavalry operations. McClellan felt that U.S. cavalry should have only light cavalrymen. Carbines were scarce and seldom used. For the most part, the weapons of Union cavalrymen at this time were lances and pistols. McClellan stated that the cavalry duties included serving as an infantry escort, reconnoitering enemy lines, and destroying bridges whenever necessary.

At the Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia, on May 5, 1862, McClellan used the cavalry as an advance escort to clear a path for the infantry. "The cavalry, under the command of George Stoneman, did not win a great victory but accomplished a good rear guard action to aid the progress of Union infantry at Williamsburg," claimed O'Neill. "McClellan felt that his cavalry forced a battle that he did not want." After this battle, McClellan changed his strategy concerning cavalry for the duration of the Peninsular Campaign. The cavalry regiments were separated into smaller detachments, creating a more confusing command structure. O'Neill asserted, "McClellan used the cavalry in an awkward fashion; for him, the cavalry involved too much risk in an advance position or too much tardiness while waiting for the infantry. His strategy was to keep the cavalry in front of the infantry, but in close proximity. Confusion and a waste of resources resulted. For example, some Union cavalrymen sat on their horses for twelve hours, with no food, during the operation."

In the midst of the Seven Days' Battles (May 25-June 1), Union cavalry burned five bridges at the South Anna

UPDATE (continued from page 2)

sis on the historical and emotional aspects of Gettysburg, as well as on the coherent understanding of the causes, course, and consequences of the battle and of the war. The mission is to make a visit to the Gettysburg battlefield the premier Civil War experience for the 21st century. With our help and understanding, it may well be so.

River. Occasionally, escort duty signified perpetual motion. Some lacked horseshoes and nails; other horses died after being pushed too hard. The loss of horses meant little to McClellan. "Finally, the Union command problems, the lack of weapons, poor strategic use of the cavalry, and a poor choice of officers caught up with the Federals," claimed O'Neill. These factors eventually contributed to the Union withdrawal from the Peninsula, in defeat.

At the Battle of Gaines' Mill on May 27, the Union cavalrymen were among the most courageous men on the battlefield. The Union army suffered a disaster as Federal lines crumbled. Approximately 220 Union cavalrymen charged into a Rebel brigade at breakneck speed, but soon had to retreat. During the following Seven Days' Battles, the Union cavalry served as rear guard action, since McClellan decided to abandon his hopes of capturing Richmond. The Union retreated toward Harrison's Landing in preparation for withdrawal from the Peninsula. The Union horse soldiers suffered 234 casualties during the Seven Days' Battles, illustrating the bravery of these good, but inexperienced cavalrymen.

O'Neill asked, "What was the difference in the blue and gray cavalry during the Peninsular Campaign? The major difference was Jeb Stuart. Stuart had the confidence to build his Confederate cavalry with no convoluted command structure and adequate weapons. Stuart was given permission to go behind Union lines to destroy supply lines and railroads. In general, his cavalry disrupted Union movements of troops. In contrast, McClellan restricted the use of his cavalry, thereby hindering Union chances for victory. Even though Federal cavalrymen outnumbered Confederate cavalrymen (10,000 to 6,000), the Rebel command utilized their cavalry in a better fashion than did their Union counterparts. Later in 1862, the Union command realized that a competent cavalry with expanded duties was required in the overall strategy.

PAUL FINKELMAN (continued from page 1)

including *Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History* (1997); *Slavery and the Law* (1997); *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (1996); and *His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid* (1995). His most recent book, *Impeachable Offenses: A Documentary History from 1787 to the Present* will be published in December 1998, by Congressional Quarterly, Inc.

SILENT AUCTION

A reminder: We are continuing each month to hold a Silent Auction, with the books donated to The Round Table by our late founding member, Ralph G. Newman, and his wife Patricia. A few words of instruction for those of you not familiar with Silent Auctions: About twenty books will be offered each month; a bid sheet will be with each book. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum raise of \$1 per bid. Write your name on the first available line and indicate your dollar bid. Someone wishing to raise the bid places his/her increased bid on the next line. Five minutes after the end of the speaker's presentation, the bidding will close and the last highest bid is the winner of each book. All proceeds go to benefit battlefield preservation.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817
Chicago Illinois 60605
Phone: 847-698-1438

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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, 601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817, Chicago, Illinois 60605.



*Season's Greetings from the
Officers of The Round Table
and the Newsletter Staff!*



BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by Roger E. Bohn

The Ralph G. Newman Silent Auction books are doing very well for the Battlefield Preservation fund, and a disbursement will be announced at the December meeting. Participation in this Civil War Round Table "event" benefits the Battlefield Preservation fund, honors the good works of Ralph Newman, and provides the Auction bid-winners with a real asset to their Civil War libraries. To paraphrase a Chicago tradition: Sign up early ... sign up often.

The Mill Springs Battlefield Association recently held the largest Civil War reenactment ever held in Kentucky, for the purpose of raising money to purchase endangered battlefield land. The Association, in partnership with the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) and the Civil War Trust, owns the Mill Springs Civil War Park. This well-planned and organized event was very successful.

The Brandy Station Foundation acquired fourteen acres of Fleetwood Hill, the first land preserved on this focal point of the battle. Help will be needed to pay off the debt of the purchase, and the Capital District Civil War Round Table in Albany, New York, raised \$10,000 for the Fleetwood parcel. The APCWS owns 560 acres at Brandy Station, and another 1000 acres is under historic covenant.

The U.S. Senate recently approved a \$10 million appropriation to buy land on Civil War battlefields. *Civil War News* reported that the money would be made available to states and local communities. It would require a dollar-for-dollar match from "other sources," and boosts the effect of the funding to \$20 million. The APCWS and the Civil War Trust have recommended sites for funding: 1) 3rd Winchester, Virginia; 2) The Wilderness, Virginia; 3) Brandy Station, Virginia; 4) Gaines' Mill/Cold Harbor, Virginia; 5) Brice's Cross Roads, Mississippi; 6) Raymond, Mississippi; 7) Spring Hill, Tennessee; 8) Port Hudson, Louisiana; 9) Resaca, Georgia; 10) Bentonville, North Carolina; 11) Honey Springs, Oklahoma. It's time to start thinking about a letter to your congressman.

A park proposal to restore the 1863 Gettysburg landscape and build a new visitors center has been endorsed by a team of three nationally known historians: James McPherson, Eric Foner, and Nina Silber. The three praised the new General Management Plan for the National Park Service's dedication and determination to make the presentation of history at Gettysburg more informative, up-to-date, and comprehensive than it is at present. McPherson also cited "a subtle and perhaps unintentional, but nevertheless pervasive, emphasis on the Confederate perspective." Both McPherson and Foner called for the romanticized Confederate "high water mark" theme to be replaced with one "more relevant to the majority of potential battlefield visitors: 'a new birth of freedom.'" Also urged for consideration was more empha-

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The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Parker, John L. *Henry Wilson's Regiment (22nd Massachusetts Infantry)*. Butternut and Blue. 1997. \$45.00. Original of 1887.
- Patchan, Scott C. *The Forgotten Fury: The Battle of Piedmont, Virginia*. Sergeant Kirkland's Museum and Historical Society, Inc. 1996. \$29.95.
- Pohanka, Brian; Davis, William C.; and Troiani, Don, eds. *Civil War Journal: The Personalities*. Rutledge Hill Press. 1997. \$29.95.
- Priest, John M. *Victory Without Triumph: The Wilderness, May 6th & 7th, 1864*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1996. \$34.95.
- Raab, James W. *W. W. Loring — Florida's Forgotten General*. Sunflower U. Press. 1996. \$35.95; Pbk. \$21.95.
- Raus, Edmund, Jr. *A Generation on the March: The Union Army at Gettysburg*. Thomas Publications. 1996. Pbk. \$19.95. Original of 1987.
- Rawley, James A. *Abraham Lincoln and a Nation Worth Fighting For*. Harlan-Davidson Publishers. 1996. Pbk. \$12.95.
- Rhea, Gordon C. *The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern*. LSU Press. 1997. \$34.95.
- Rhodes, John H. *The History of Battery B, 1st Regiment Rhode Island Light Artillery*. Butternut and Blue. 1997. \$40.99. Original of 1894.
- Robertson, James I., Jr. *Stonewall Jackson — The Man, the Soldier, the Legend*. MacMillan Publishing. 1997. \$40.00.
- Scaife, William R. *Allatoona Pass: A Needless Effusion of Blood*. Published by author. 1995. \$28.00
- Schafer, Louis S. *Confederate Underwater Warfare — An Illustrated History*. McFarland & Co. 1996. \$28.50.



The first annual **Ralph G. Newman Union League Civil War Round Table Christmas Party** will be held by the ULC CWRT at its usual monthly luncheon on Monday, December 28. A special program is being prepared by Marshall Krolick and Frank Patton. A reception begins at the Union League Club at 11:30 a.m.; luncheon is served at noon. The cost is \$15 per person. For reservations, call 312-435-5000.

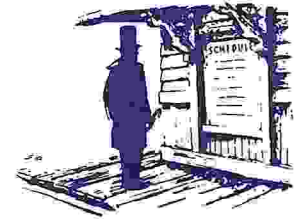
Schimmelfennig Boutique

The history of The Round Table, *The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship*, by Barbara Hughett, is available for \$30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

In addition to The Round Table history and *The Continuing Civil War*, the essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes, Civil War Buff posters and T-Shirts, CWRT T-shirts, polos, and sweatshirts.

Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the programs of The Civil War Round Table.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

December 11: Paul Finkelman on "Lincoln, Race, and Slavery: Understanding the Emancipation Proclamation in the Context of Nineteenth Century Law and Politics"

January 15, 1999: Marshall D. Krolick on "Council of War: Meade and His Generals on July 2, 1863" (**This is the THIRD Friday**)

February 12: Edwin C. Bearss, topic to be announced

March 12: Peter Cozzins, topic to be announced

April 9: Gary Gallagher, topic to be announced

April 29–May 2: Annual Battlefield Tour, Fredericksburg

May 14: Michael Andrus, topic to be announced

June 11: Thomas P. Sweeney, topic to be announced

NEW MEMBERS

C. Stephen Burgner, 4777 W. 70004 Road, Bourbonnais, IL 60914, 815-937-4455

Cheryl Cooke, 1130 S. Michigan Avenue, #1613, Chicago, IL 60605, 312-554-3909

Gary Moore, 3870 N. 3000 W Road, Bourbonnais, IL 60914, 815-933-0118

E. Bruce Mumford, 1430 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60610, 312-337-6123



Former United States Congressman Robert J. Mrazek, who co-authored the law that saved Manassas battlefield from being developed as a shopping center, has written a historical novel, *Stonewall's Gold*, which is being very favorably reviewed. Pulitzer Prize-winning author James M. McPherson calls the book a "rattling good adventure story that also has important things to say about the hard, vicious nature of the Civil War during its final months in the Shenandoah Valley." Civil War scholar and author Robert K. Krick, says *Stonewall's Gold* is "destined to become one of the great classics of Civil War literature."

Former President Brooks Davis addressed a luncheon presentation of the Women of St. Chrysostom's Church, held at the Women's Athletic Club on Michigan Avenue on November 17. His topic was "The Compelling Faith of Abraham Lincoln," and he was assisted in the presentation by Lincoln enthusiast and St. Chrysostom's vestryman Fred Boda.

Your Newsletter's typesetter has need for a few funny cartoons about the Civil War. If you have any to share, would you please send a copy to Muriel Underwood, 4431 North Monticello Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60625. Please note source of cartoon. *Thanks very much.*