

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Chicago, Illinois

June 1999

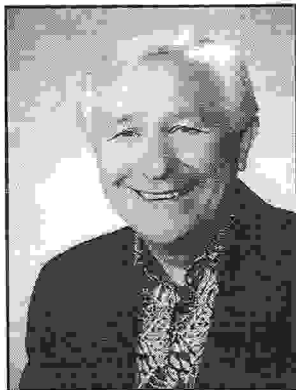
Thomas P. Sweeney on "General 'Fightin' Tom' Sweeny"

by Barbara Hughett

Born in County Cork, Ireland, on Christmas Day 1820, Thomas William Sweeny immigrated to the United States with his mother and brother William in 1832. While serving as a lieutenant with the 1st New York Infantry, he lost his right arm in the Mexican War. As a 1st lieutenant in the 2nd U.S. Infantry, he spent the 1850s in California and then at Fort Pierre, where he campaigned against the Sioux Indians. He was promoted to captain in January 1861 and assumed command of the St. Louis Arsenal. Serving on General Nathaniel Lyon's staff during the Battle of Wilson's Creek, he was wounded in the thigh on August 10, 1861.

Sweeny was made a colonel of the 52nd Illinois Volunteer Infantry on January 21, 1862. After the fall of Fort Donelson a month later, the 52nd was placed in charge of 6,000 prisoners whom they escorted to Chicago. At Pittsburg Landing, the 52nd was assigned to the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division of the Army of the Tennessee. Sweeny commanded the brigade, and General Charles F. Smith, the division.

The regiment took a prominent part in the Battle of Shiloh, on April 6-7, 1862, occupying a ravine known as the "Hornet's Nest" and losing 170 men—killed, wounded, and missing. Sweeny also commanded the regiment at the siege of Corinth on October 3-4, 1862, where they were again heavily engaged, losing 70, killed and wounded. On September 10, 1863, the officers of the 52nd Illinois presented the now Brigadier General Sweeny with a sword, a pair of field glasses, and a swordbelt and sash as "an expression of our high regard for you as an officer and a gentleman."



Thomas P. Sweeney

On June 11, Dr. Thomas P. Sweeney, M.D., will address The Round Table on the topic of "General 'Fightin' Tom' Sweeny." Dr. Sweeney is a graduate of Washington University and the University of Missouri Medical School. He interned in Michigan and returned to the University of Missouri Medical Center as a resident in radiology. He moved to Springfield, Missouri, in 1969, and since then has been associated with Spring-

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
582nd Regular Meeting

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
THOMAS P. SWEENEY ON
"GENERAL 'FIGHTIN' TOM' SWEENEY"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Friday, June 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

*Entree: Roast Cornish Game Hen, Stuffed
 with Wild Rice or Catch of the Day*



PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by Wednesday, June 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.

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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

Officers

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Webmaster	William Sullivan
<i>Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968</i>	

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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.

A white floppy hat with a Rock of Chickamauga medallion pinned to the front was left on the airport shuttle bus at the conclusion of the recent battlefield tour to Fredericksburg. If it's yours, claim it by calling Janet Linhart at 630-752-1330.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by Roger E. Bohn

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust presented the CWRT of Chicago with a Mort Künstler framed print at their meeting, which we attended during our Fredericksburg tour in May. The print is matted, framed, signed, and numbered "15/200 PG." The brass plate reads: "Lee's Lieutenants, Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 13, 1862" and is copyrighted 1997. The Gallery in Fredericksburg that handles this print retails it at \$395.00, and the Battlefield Preservation Committee will sell raffle/drawing tickets to raise money for our endeavors in this area. The tickets will be \$5 each or three for \$10. Tickets will be sold at the September regular meeting and at the Civil War Collectors Show at the DuPage Fairgrounds, Saturday, September 18, 1999. The winner will be drawn before the end of the show and the winner need not be present. Please support our efforts and, who knows, *you* may be the lucky recipient of this great print!

Donations totaling \$1,300 have recently been sent to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation (\$1,000 for matching-funds); Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF, \$200 dues); and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (\$100 dues). The Ralph G. Newman monthly book silent auction and the boutique continue to "produce," and if any individual has *any* type of donation to add to the "kitty," please let a Committee member know. We can always use the extra help.

"APCWS's Donation Adds 660 Acres to Richmond Battlefield"... says the June issue of *Civil War News*. The acres at Malvern Hill are the largest addition to the battlefield park since 1936. The APCWS said that the \$2.3 million purchase was paid off a year ago and was, at the time, the largest grassroots fundraising effort in history for a battlefield. This has since been surpassed by APCWS fundraising for Third Winchester and Brandy Station ... which debt has not been paid off, so we must "keep up the good fight!" It's nice to see real progress, however, since the majority of the money for the Malvern Hill and Glendale purchases came from the APCWS membership, the Civil War Trust's CW commemorative coins fund, and proceeds from raffles and donations. *Working together, we can make a difference!*

"Huzzah" for Dell Computer ... for deciding against building a new plant on a 500-acre portion of the Stones River battlefield, as reported in *Civil War News*. The National Parks & Conservation Association (NPCA), the Civil War Trust, Civil War Round Table Associates and the Tennessee Nature Conservancy convinced Dell Computer of the property's historic significance, and they instead chose a site in Nashville. The City of Murfreesboro, however, wants to develop the area, and that leaves Stones River Superintendent Peckham with the chore of convincing them that protecting this site for its historic significance would be a long-term economic benefit for the community. Another "huzzah" for Don Barger of NPCA for saying "There's a lot of places where you can put an assembly plant [or hamburger stand!]. Battlefields are where they are." ☆

☪ MAY MEETING ☪

by Larry Gibbs

Michael J. Andrus gave an informative speech to 101 members and guests at the 581st meeting of The Civil War Round Table on May 14. His presentation was entitled "The Confederate Cover-up at Seven Pines." A supervisory park ranger at Richmond National Military Park, Andrus has written several articles for Civil War magazines as well as for *The Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*. The emphasis of the speech was on the controversy over the Confederate command decisions in the Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) on May 31-June 1, 1862.

In the spring of 1862, the Union Army of the Potomac threatened Richmond from the east. Under the direction of General George McClellan, the Federals were within ten miles of Richmond. A Rebel attack was required and the battle plan was excellent, according to Andrus. The Union army was separated into two sections, divided by the Chickahominy River, and appeared vulnerable. The Confederate plan devised by General Joseph Johnston made use of several east-west roads in the area. Three divisions led by General James Longstreet were supposed to attack on the Nine Mile Road. south of this road, General D.H. Hill's division was to attack toward the east on the Williamsburg Road.

The crux of the controversy over Rebel command surrounded the question of orders given by Johnston to Longstreet. The questionable movement of Longstreet's division in front of General Benjamin Huger's division created a delay of several hours in the Confederate attack. In order to achieve total surprise, Johnston wanted an attack early in the morning of May 31. Due to confusion, the first action was not seen until 12:30 p.m. Longstreet did not move his division eastwardly to battle along the Nine Mile Road, but moved south, next to Hill's division on the Williamsburg Road.

Andrus explained: "There was no written order from Johnston to Longstreet to explain this change in plans. Only verbal orders were delivered and this created the confusion over Longstreet's movement." As a result, General Huger's troops waited impatiently behind Longstreet's division on the Williamsburg Road. Huger eventually was seen as the scapegoat for this delay, since Longstreet blamed Huger for extremely slow movement of Huger's division, creating a delay of perhaps four hours in the attack. Johnston essentially supported Longstreet's claims.

Confusion reigned as Longstreet sent one of his brigades, commanded by Brigadier General Wilcox, five orders interspersed over the entire day. These orders illustrated Longstreet's indecisiveness because Wilcox was ordered back and forth between various positions. In the last order, Longstreet criticized Wilcox for his dilatory movement. Longstreet sent a message to Johnston, crying out for more support.

The Battle of Seven Pines lasted two days and suffered 10,000 casualties. This battle is perhaps better known as the battle where Joseph Johnston was wounded twice, replaced by General G. W. Smith for one day. Following that one day, General Robert E. Lee became the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia for the duration of the conflict.

What promised to be a major Confederate victory

proved to be a delaying action for the Seven Days campaign in late July of 1862. Andrus asserted, "The real battle among Confederate ranks occurred when each commanding officer tried to justify his performance during the battle."

On June 7, Longstreet wrote a letter to Johnston stating that he had received a lack of support due to "slow men out of place on the battlefield," alluding to Huger. Huger saw Longstreet's report several months later and demanded that Johnston vindicate him. Johnston did nothing. Instead, Huger was relieved from command and sent west of the Mississippi River as a staff officer. Since General G.W. Smith had been privy to verbal orders and conversations between Johnston and Longstreet, his observations were critical. In June of 1865, Smith gave a damning report of Longstreet's actions. His evidence included sheets of Johnston's scribbles during the battle. Smith indicated that his earlier omissions were caused by his personal feelings for General Johnston.

Longstreet defended himself, indicating that the entire strength of the Confederate plan was Huger's division which moved very slowly. Another division commander, D.H. Hill, told Smith that "he had not felt kindly of Longstreet since I read the letter of Longstreet to Johnston." The controversy simmered until Smith gave his version in 1891. Smith claimed, "Longstreet blundered badly from beginning to end in this battle and his version is not creditable."

When asked about Johnston's protection of Longstreet, Andrus explained, "Johnston may have given Longstreet discretion as commander of the wing that was to fight on the Williamsburg Road. However, I felt that Johnston was protecting himself by supporting Longstreet since Johnston was in command."

THOMAS P. SWEENEY (continued from page 1)
field Radiology Group.

He is a member of numerous medical and radiological societies, and is a life member of the board of the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation. He is also a member of the Civil War Round Table of The Ozarks, Museum of Ozark History, Ozarks Watch, and is a board member of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland.

Sweeney and his wife Karen own a private museum of Civil War history in the trans-Mississippi area. General Sweeney's Museum is located across the road from Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Park in Republic, Missouri.

Summer Executive Committee Meeting

President-elect Charles Bednar has announced that the summer Executive Committee meeting will be held on Saturday, July 10, at Notre Dame High School, 7655 Dempster, in Niles, beginning at 9:30 a.m. and lasting until around noon. Coffee, juices, and rolls will be served. *All Executive Committee members are urged to attend this important annual planning meeting. The Executive Committee is comprised of all former presidents who are current active members, and all officers and committee chairs for the upcoming (1999-2000) term.*

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Banasik, Michael E. *Embattled Arkansas: The Prairie Grove Campaign of 1862*. Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1996. \$30.00.
- Bates, David H. *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office: Recollections of the United States Military Telegraph Corps during the Civil War*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1995. Pbk. \$14.95. Original of 1907.
- Benz, Herman. *Abraham Lincoln, Constitutionalism and Equal Rights in the Civil War Era*. Columbia U. Press. 1997. \$32.00.
- Bonnell, John C., Jr. *Sabres in the Shenandoah: The 21st New York Cavalry, 1862-1866*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1996. \$34.95.
- Boyd, Belle. *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*. LSU Press. 1997. Pbk. \$14.95. Original of 1865.

Former President Paul Kliger, who now lives in Colorado, recently addressed The Civil War Round Table of Colorado in Boulder. His topic was "The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico." (Paul writes that he wants all his friends in Chicago to know that "I'm still alive and raising hell!")

Jerry Kowalski (aka "General George Thomas"), a newly-elected Round Table trustee, gave the main presentation at the Armed Forces Day festivities of the Glenview Navy League on May 19. The title of his address was "Orders, Then and New."

The Civil War Round Table of Chicago has begun making plans for a 60th Anniversary Celebration. An all-day symposium and gala evening banquet will be held on Saturday, November 11, 2000. At the January Executive Committee meeting, a 60th Anniversary Committee was formed, with Marvin Sanderman as its chairman. An all-star cast of speakers and other special events are being planned. Look for further announcements in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

SILENT AUCTION

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by late Round Table founding member Ralph G. Newman. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum rise of \$1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker's presentation, bidding will close and the last highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds go to benefit battlefield preservation.

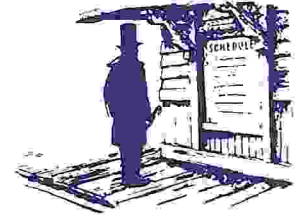
Schimmelfennig Boutique

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

The June 1999, meeting will be held at the Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard. Starting in September, 1999, all regular meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, unless otherwise indicated.

- June 11:* Thomas P. Sweeney, "General 'Fightin' Tom' Sweeney"
- September 17:* Kenneth J. Winkle, "The Village on the Bluff: New Salem's Role in the Rise of Abraham Lincoln"
- October 8:* David Herbert Donald, Nevins-Freeman Address
- October 22-24:* Fall Tour to Springfield, Illinois
- November 12:* Charles P. Roland, "An Antbellum Southerner Defends Slavery"
- December 10:* Cullom Davis, "From Court House to White House: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln"
- January 14:* Cathy Beeler, "The Battle of Monacacy"
- February 11:* Thomas Cartwright, "Stones River"
- March 10:* Mark Bradley, "The Surrender of Joe Johnston"
- April 14:* Herbert Mitgang, topic to be announced
- May 3-7, Annual Battlefield Tour (50th Annual tour), Middle Tennessee*
- May 12:* Robert Zeller, "The Civil War in Depth: Stereoptic Views of the Conflict"
- June 9:* John Y. Simon, topic to be announced

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Jose Riera, 1935 N. Fremont, Apt 2, Chicago, IL 60614, 773-975-1065

The 2000 Annual Spring Battlefield Tour of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago—our 50th annual tour—will be traveling to Middle Tennessee on May 3-7.

The tour will be chaired by Roger Bohn; Marvin Sanderman is the co-chair. Roger has provided the following sampling of the agenda:

Wednesday, 5/3: Register at Days Inn, Nashville ... near the airport.

Thursday, 5/4: Fort Donelson and Fort Henry

Friday, 5/5: Stones River, Fortress Rosecrans, and Murfreesboro

Saturday, 5/6: Columbia, Spring Hill, and Franklin ... a "surprise" for Fun Night

Sunday, 5/7: Travelers Rest, Fort Nagley, and Shy's Hill (And an optional tour of the Hermitage)

The Salt Creek Civil War Round Table is sponsoring its Sixth Annual Concert, featuring the 97th Regimental String Band, on Friday, June 15, from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Wheaton-Warrenville South High School auditorium in Wheaton. Admission is \$5 per person. For information, call Janet Linhart at 630-752-1330.