

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE.

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LX, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March 2000



589th REGULAR MEETING

CRAIG L. SYMONDS ON "THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY"

Friday, March 10

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$25 - Members \$30 - Nonmembers

Entree:
*Chicken Breast
Vesuvio
or Catch of the Day*



PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, March 6** 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.

PARKING: If you are driving and coming from the south, turn left into the Mart Plaza lot just after crossing the river on Orleans. From the north, turn right from Orleans on Hubbard, left on Kingsbury, right on Kinzie, and left into the Mart Plaza lot. **Parking is \$3 with a validated parking sticker.**

CRAIG L. SYMONDS

~ on ~

"The Battle of Mobile Bay"

CONFEDERATES HAD NO ADEQUATE PLAN

BY BARBARA HUGHETT

The final major naval action of the American Civil War was the Battle of Mobile Bay in August of 1864. A combined Federal force of 18 warships and 2,400 troops attacked the two forts guarding Mobile Bay, in order to deny the harbor to blockade runners. The two opponents were Vice Admiral David Farragut on the Union side and Admiral Franklin Buchanan, former captain of the *Virginia* (previously the *Merrimack*), on the Confederate side.

Craig L. Symonds will address The Round Table on March 10, on the topic of "The Battle of Mobile Bay." Dr. Symonds, the author of *Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin Buchanan* (1999), will focus his presentation on Admiral Buchanan—on the difficulty he had in constructing an adequate "modern" navy in Mobile Bay, and on the Battle of Mobile Bay as seen from his perspective.

Buchanan, a late adherent to the Confederate cause, was a full U.S. Navy captain (the highest rank then available) when the war broke out and was commandant of the Wash-

ington Navy Yard. A Marylander by birth and an officer whose official home of record was Pennsylvania, he was torn by the secession crisis. He resigned his commission after the Pratt Street Massacre in Baltimore in April 1861 because he assumed that Maryland would secede. When it did not, he tried to recall his resignation, but Sec-



Craig L. Symonds

retary of the Navy Gideon Welles refused to allow it and told Buchanan that his name was struck from the rolls of the Navy. Though angered by this treatment, Buchanan nevertheless waited until August—after First Bull Run—before going south.

A native Californian, Craig Symonds received his B.A. degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, and both his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Florida. Currently professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy, he has served on the faculty of that institution since 1976. He has also taught at the U.S. Naval War College and at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, England.

Symonds has written or edited fifteen books, including *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War* (1997), *Gettysburg: A Battlefield Atlas* (1992), and

Joseph E. Johnston: A Civil War Biography (1992).

His many honors include the Naval Academy Research Excellence Award (1998), the S.A. Cuning-

ningham Award for Literary Achievement (1997), and the John Lyman Book Prize (1995). In 1993 his biography of Joseph E. Johnston was a finalist for the Lincoln Prize. Additionally, he has delivered numerous papers and presentations and has written more than 80 articles and book reviews for major historical publications.

RESERVATIONS BY MARCH 6



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817
Chicago, Illinois 60605
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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 LaSalle Building, Suite C-817, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION UPDATE

BY ROGER E. BOHN

Do our concerns for Battlefield Preservation really reach the young people today? The result of education on the subject of the Civil War and what lessons we can learn from it can well be seen in the following Op-Ed letter from a recent local newspaper...

I am a 13-year-old 8th grader writing in regards to "Civil war lessons loses right to bear arms" (Jan. 29). When I was in 5th grade, I participated in a Civil War re-enactment with my elementary school, and I disagree with the superintendent of Wheaton-Warrenville District 200, who is not allowing lifelike muskets in Monroe Middle School's mock Civil War. Seventh graders can tell the difference between real guns and flour-shooting muskets. Fake muskets do not make children want to go buy a gun and shoot people.

The superintendent, on the other hand, thinks that letting the children have any sort of guns, real or not, is inappropriate. Could not the same be said for teaching any sort of history that involves weapons? Guns were a part of the Civil War, and there is no way around it. More Americans died in the Civil War than any other war to this day. Doing the re-enactment without guns teaches nothing about how the real Civil War was.

I learned so much about the various battles of the Civil War, but with that knowledge came the fact that people were killed during this horrible war. None of my fellow classmates who participated in the Civil War re-enactment has become a gun-toting criminal. Rather, they are knowledgeable about a war that still affects us today. Jenny Knox, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

For a very different "Battlefield Interpretation," the December issue of *The Civil War News* reported that the Conference Committee on Appropriations for the Department of the Interior directs the National Park Service to expand its interpretation of the Civil War era at the battlefield parks.

While the NPS "does an outstanding job explaining the battles, it does not do so regarding the historical, societal, economic, legal, cultural, and political forces and events that led to the war and to the battles. The parks are often weak about the role that slavery played in causing the Civil War." Parks are encouraged to "include in

their exhibits and programs the story of slavery."

Robert Meinhard, Professor of History at Winona State University, disagrees. *The Civil War News* reports that "clearly, slavery is often missing from the programs and exhibits simply because it is not relevant in telling the story of that particular battle." Meinhard's Civil War courses devoted 80% of the time to social, economic, and political history of the era... "but battlefield parks are not the place to do this." The statutes are clear, according to Meinhard: "The parks were established to (1) preserve the battlefield; and (2) to study and interpret what happened on that battlefield." Perhaps that is why they are called National Battlefield or Military Parks, rather than National Social-Economic-Political-Cultural-Human experience-Legal Parks.

Meinhard also feels that the expanded objectives are unrealistic, considering the amount of time the average visitor spends for "interpretation." This is about one hour at the visitor center, and the average audio-visual program is 15 to 20 minutes. An overview of the battle is about all that can realistically be accomplished; and that will, hopefully, motivate the visitor to seek further information about the era and related topics, "The parks were established because of the battles and that is why people visit the parks," concludes Meinhard... not a bad conclusion. ☆



OUR 50th TOUR TO MIDDLE TENNESSEE has over-filled two buses and is "into" the third bus. For those of you who haven't signed up yet, please do so ASAP.

We will be going to sites and locations that the CWRT has not visited, and we will be into places that even the more seasoned "campaigners" could not get into on their own. We will also have experienced guides to tell us just what we are seeing when we get there! See your *50th Tour Newsletter* for details, and sign up soon.



FEBRUARY MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On February 11, Thomas Cartwright addressed 103 members and guests at the 588th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. In a dynamic and enthusiastic manner, Cartwright described the military actions at Spring Hill and the Battles of Franklin, Tennessee (November 30, 1864) and Nashville (December 15-16, 1864) in vivid, sometimes gruesome detail. He recited from memory personal recollections from letters and diaries with such emotion that it engendered a sense of stark reality to his speech. Cartwright has been employed at the Carter House in Franklin for the last eleven years.

On September 1, 1864, Confederate General John Bell Hood and his Army of Tennessee evacuated Atlanta. With about 40,000 troops, Hood was headed for middle Tennessee. Union General William T. Sherman followed, but by November 15 had joined the bulk of his army on the famous "March to the Sea."

Major General George Thomas commanded the Federals defending Tennessee. Major General John Schofield and 30,000 Union troops were stationed at Pulaski, Tennessee, to delay Hood's march toward Nashville. (Pulaski was about 150 miles south of Nashville, while Franklin was about twenty miles south of Nashville; Spring Hill was three miles south of Franklin.) Hood, perhaps trying to get ahead of Schofield's army, moved into position to block Schofield on the night of November 28-29 at Spring Hill.

Cartwright declared, "To put it bluntly, confusion reigned among the Rebel leadership." The Confederate generals were without specific instructions from Hood, while brief insignificant fighting occurred. With the Army of Tennessee in total disarray, the Rebels settled down for the night with two miles of campfires lit. During the night, the Union army inexplicably marched north to safety—with Hood's army within shouting distance. The mystery of the Confederate breakdown has never been adequately explained. Hood blamed several of his generals, but Cartwright stated that Hood deserved most—if not all—of the blame for the Union escape. As Private Sam Watkins succinctly proclaimed, "The bird [the Union Army] had flown!"

By November 30, Schofield had his men dug in and prepared for an advance at Franklin. The main pike split two hills south of Franklin, descending into a valley with a river. The Federals were very worried about a

possible flank attack by the Confederates. Hood was adamant on his decision to have a massive frontal attack. "We shall make the fight," he asserted, "and we shall drive the enemy into the river at all costs!"

Hood, who had lost his right leg and the use of his left arm in previous battles, was criticized for lack of good judgment after the Battle of Franklin. Cartwright indicated there has been no direct evidence that Hood was perhaps delirious due to a prescription of laudanum, but there was no argument that Hood should not have been the Rebel commander at Franklin. As Confederate General Robert E. Lee said of Hood, "He is all lion and no fox." The frontal attack commenced as Hood had envisioned.

For about five hours—from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m.—on November 30, the Rebels futilely attacked at rallied *seventeen* times. "The Carter House was ground zero," commented Cartwright, "and one can still see the many bullet holes in the house today." Many soldiers were trapped in the withering crossfire around the Carter House. Confederate bands played to boost the morale of Rebel soldiers in a surrealistic sequence, with gunsmoke hanging like a shroud over the battle. As one soldier recounted later, "In this battle, the tooters and shooters went into battle together." Realizing that the odds of survival were slim, many Confederates referred to this area as the "Valley of Death" before the battle! In one of the suicidal charges, the Confederacy lost one of their best and brightest officers. Major General Patrick Cleburne, known as



"the Stonewall Jackson of the West," was killed instantly.

The horrific casualties are startling, especially on the Confederate side. Cartwright explained, "Six Confederate generals died, with about 2,000 Rebels killed, 5,000 wounded, and 500 captured. The Union army suffered about 1,700 casualties. "Courage," suggested Cartwright, "knows no uniform."

The Battle of Nashville, which occurred a couple of weeks later, was another Union victory. Cartwright held that "the battle of Nashville had already been fought at Franklin." On January 23, 1865, Hood resigned, while the rest of the Army of Tennessee was headed for North Carolina and the eventual termination of the Civil War.



James M. McPherson, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and The Round Table's 1996 Nevins-Freeman honoree, will be speaking at Indiana State University in Terre Haute on March 30 at 7:30 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public. Former President Larry Gibbs will be attending and is offering a ride to the event to as many as will fit comfortably in his car. For information, call Larry at 708-957-4662.

The 19th Annual Midwest Civil War Round Table Conference will be held on April 28-29 in Indianapolis. Sponsored this year by the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table and the Indiana Historical Society, the theme will be "Civil War in the New Millennium." Speakers include Ken Hafendorfer and Tom Goodrich; full conference registration is \$125 per person (not including hotel accommodations). For information, call Nikki Schofield at 317-328-8782.

A landmark book on runaway slaves and a major new intellectual biography of Abraham Lincoln will share the 2000 Lincoln Prize, the annual award given to the best work in the Civil War field. The prize, presented by the Lincoln and Soldiers Institute at Gettysburg College is the most generous national award in the field of American history.

John Hope Franklin and Loren Schwenger, co-authors of *Runaway Slaves: Rebels in the Plantation* and Allen Guelzo, author of *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*, were named first-prize winners. They will share the \$40,000 first prize and each author will receive a bronze bust of Lincoln by Augustus St. Gaudens. Second prize, \$10,000, will go to Michael Holt for his *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*. The awards will be presented at an April 18 banquet at the Union League Club of New York. Also at that time, a lifetime achievement award will be presented to noted historian Richard Nelson Current.

THE NEW BOOKS

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- McPherson, James M. and William J. Cooper, Jr., eds. *Writing the Civil War—The Quest to Understand*. U. of South Carolina Press. 1998. \$29.95.
- Miller, Randall M., Harry S. Stout and Charles R. Wilson, eds. *Religion and the American Civil War*. Oxford U. Press. 1999. \$24.95.
- Moneyhon, Carl and Bobby Roberts. *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Texas in the Civil War*. U. of Arkansas Press. 1998. \$75.00.
- Montgomery, George, Jr., ed. *Georgia Sharpshooter: The Civil War Diary and Letters of William Rhadamantus Montgomery*. Mercer U. Press. 1998. Pbk. \$16.00.
- Moore, Mark A. *Moore's Historical Guide to the Battle of Bentonville*. Savas Publ. Co. 1997. Pbk. \$9.95.
- Newton, Steven H. *Joseph E. Johnston and the Defense of Richmond*. U. Press of Kansas. 1998. \$29.95.
- Niven, John, ed. *The Salmon P. Chase Papers, Vol. 4. Correspondence, April 1863-1864*. Kent State U. Press. 1997. \$45.00.
- Nolan, Alan T. and Sharon E. Vipond, eds. *Giants in Their Tall Black Hats: Essays on the Iron Brigade*. Indiana U. Press. 1998. \$27.95.
- Owen, Richard and James Owen. *Generals at Rest: The Grave Sites of the 425 Official Confederate Generals*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1998. \$65.00.

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.

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. Committee Chair Marvin Sanderman has announced that the all-star cast of speakers will include Stephen Ambrose, Jean H. Baker, Edwin C. Bearss, Lance Herdegen, and Marshall D. Krolick.

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.

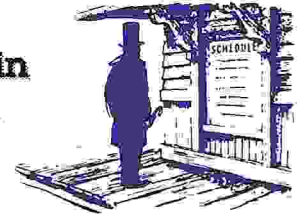
UPCOMING MEETINGS

The 22nd Annual Confederate Historical Institute Conference will be held on April 6-9 in Petersburg, Virginia. Edwin C. Bearss is among the featured speakers. For information, address CHI 2000, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217, or jlussell@civilwarbuff.com.

The 12th Annual Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Civil War Round Tables, sponsored by the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia, will be held on April 29 at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia. The theme is the Lincoln Assassination and among the speakers will be Allen Guelzo, Michael Kauffman, Gene Smith, and Elizabeth Trindal. The cost of the conference is \$75, not including hotel costs. For information, call Mike Cavanaugh at 215-725-3602.

Recent Round Table speakers Cullum Davis and Kenneth Winkle are both on the roster of speakers for the third annual symposium of the Abraham Lincoln Institute of the Mid-Atlantic. Titled "The Latest in Lincoln Scholarship," the event will take place on Saturday, March 25, at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Other speakers include Doris Kearns Goodwin, William Lee Miller, Thomas Turner, and Douglas Wilson. For information, call 202-707-2017 or direct an e-mail inquiry to lincoln-institute@erols.com.

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 10: Craig L. Symonds, "The Battle of Mobile Bay"

April 14: Herbert Mitgang, "Lincoln and the Press"

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

September 8: Thomas Lowry, topic to be announced

October 13: Charles P. Roland, Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner

November 11 (Saturday), All-day 60th Anniversary Seminar and Banquet

December 8: Gordon Rhea, "The Overland Campaign"

NEW MEMBERS

John Martin and Cheryl Mehrl, 1140 Country Club Road, Lake Zurich, IL 60047, 847-438-0707, martinmehrl@ameritech.net

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Robert and Kitty Douglas, 6292 Kennett Place, Mission, KS 66202-4289, 913-671-7008

Round Table founding member Elmer Gertz has been recuperating from his recent heart surgery and subsequent stroke at St. Joseph's Hospital. At press time, he was scheduled to be transferred to a rehabilitation facility—Vencor Lakeshore Hospital, 6130 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660—to continue his recovery. Visitors—and cards and letters—are welcome!

Former President Kurt Carlson addressed the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table on February 4, on the topic of "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?"