

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE.

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LX, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April 2000



590th REGULAR MEETING

★★★★★

**ROBERT I. GIRARDI ON
"THE REAL WAR WILL NEVER
GET IN THE BOOKS"**

★★★★★

Friday, April 14

★★★★★

**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:

*Sliced Strip Loin with
Pommeroy Mustard
Bordelaise
or Catch of the Day*



PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, April 10**, 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.**

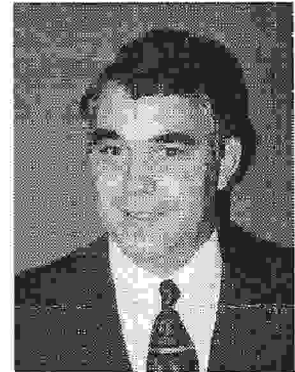
ROBERT I. GIRARDI

~ on ~

"The Real War Will Never Get in the Books"

HOW RELIABLE WERE THE SOURCES?

BY BARBARA HUGHETT



Robert I. Girardi

Walt Whitman, the great nineteenth-century poet who also cared for wounded soldiers at Union hospitals, wrote, in 1882, that "the real war will never get in the books." That phrase will serve as the topic of Robert I. Girardi's address to The Round Table on April 14. Mr. Girardi is graciously, on relatively short notice, replacing our scheduled April speaker, Herbert Mitgang, who is ill. We all wish Mr. Mitgang a speedy and complete recovery.

The focus of Mr. Girardi's presentation will be an examination of some of the available primary sources upon which most Civil War books are based. Questions he will address include: Did the real war get in the books? What sources were used in preparing these books and how reliable were these sources?

Girardi will discuss Civil War historiography and the manner in which books on the conflict were developed. He will also focus on the content of these volumes and the shortcomings of the authors and the books they wrote. As well as attempting to shed some light on the way we look at the American Civil War, he promises to debunk a few myths in the process.

Robert Girardi has been a member of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago

since 1983. He served as our president for the 1997-98 term. Prior to that, he served as assistant treasurer, treasurer, vice president, and senior vice president. He has been newsletter editor of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table since 1991. He holds a bachelor's degree in history and business administration from Rosary College and a masters degree in public history from Loyola University Chicago. He also studied aerospace engineering for several years at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

He is a detective in the violent crimes division of the Chicago Police Department. In addition to his police career, he has numerous accomplishments as an author and historian. Girardi was co-editor, with Peter Cozzens, of *The Military Memoirs of General John Pope* (1998), which was chosen as an alternate selection

of the History Book Club. He was co-editor, with Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, of *The Military Memoirs of General William Passmore Carlin* (1999); and, with Roger E. Bohn, of *Captain Henry Whipple Chester: Recollections of the War of the Rebellion, Second Ohio Volunteer Cavalry* (1996). He is the author of "Railroad Defense During the Atlanta Campaign" in *The Atlanta Campaign, Volume 2* (2000) and of several historical briefs for artist Keith Rocco's

(continued on page 2)



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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 MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Possible Interstate Exchange Threatens Stones River Battlefield: Murfreesboro (Tennessee) city officials are promoting the construction of an interstate exchange a few miles from Stones River National Battlefield. Should the exchange become reality, one consequence would be the transformation of the nearby Manson pike into a four-lane highway, thus destroying the remains of that historic road. Concerned individuals can direct their comments to the Tennessee Transportation commissioner and encourage him not to endorse the Manson pike exchange at Murfreesboro: J. Bruce Saltsman, Commissioner, Transportation Department, James K. Polk Building, Suite 700, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0349. The fax number is (615) 741-2508, and e-mail is "transport@mail.state.tn.us." NOTE: Personal letters and faxed letters receive more attention than e-mails.

Bill to Advance Goals of Grant Monument Association Needs Congressional Attention:

The current issue of the Grant Monument Association newsletter reports that the Grant's Tomb National Monument Act (H.R. 546) languished without final disposal during Congress's last term. That fact requires reintroduction of the measure by Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York (previous sponsor) in the House and by Senators Daniel P. Moynihan and Charles Schumer in the Senate. The Grant's Tomb National Monument Act had two principal objectives: completion of the monument's restoration; and the property's continued maintenance and protection once restored.

Recent publicity on the deplorable physical state of Grant's Tomb in New York City was instrumental in capturing public interest and generating improvements at the site, but seri-

Former President Dan Weinberg donated an original Keith Rocco print, "The Stone Wall," which we are raffling off at The Civil War Round Table of Chicago booth at the Midwest Civil War Collectors Show on April 8, with the proceeds going to benefit battlefield preservation efforts. Many thanks go to Dan!

On March 3, Robert E. Lee's Boyhood Home, in Alexandria, Virginia, was closed, after serving for thirty years as a museum. The Lee-Jackson Foundation, in a controversial clandestine negotiation, sold it to a private party, to be used as a residence. Virginia Attorney General Mark Earley has called for an investigation of the sale. A committee has been formed to support the investigation and a petition has been prepared. For more information on this matter and how to add your signature to the petition, visit the website at leeshome.com/ or write to The Committee to Save Lee's Boyhood Home Museum, P.O. Box 20631, Alexandria, Virginia 22310.

ous problems remain—problems that the proposed legislation aimed to address. Stairways and walkways approaching the monument, for example, continue in serious disrepair, as do other physical components of the monument's surroundings. Inside the structure, the area near the sarcophagi of President and Mrs. Grant is damaged and deteriorating. The monument itself has not been finished nor are there facilities available (e.g. visitor center, restrooms) that would offer public services and thus promote visitation.

The Grant's Tomb measure that died with the last session of Congress included provisions for on-site, perpetual military guards and a visitor center to fulfill preservation and educational requirements. The bill also called for federal acquisition of some surrounding land and completion of the monument. For additional information on the legislation, contact the Grant Monument Association (President: Frank Scaturro), P.O. Box 1088, FDR Station, New York, NY 10150-1088. Any individual wishing to support the legislation should 1.) contact his/her representative in the House (Washington, D.C. 20515) and ask that they co-sponsor the the former H.R. 546 when Rep. Nadler reintroduces it; and 2.) contact New York's senators (U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510) and ask that they introduce legislation equivalent to former H.R. 546 in the Senate. The Capitol switchboard, which provides access to all congressional offices, may be reached at 202-225-3121.



ROBERT I. GIRARDI (from page 1)
limited-edition prints.

Rob works with various historical organizations as an exhibit arranger, speaker, or special-event planner. Among other affiliations, he has worked with the Chicago Historical Society, the Bureau County Historical Society, and the Wheaton History Center. He led a panel discussion on the "Milt Rosenberg Show" on WGN radio in 1999, and is a popular speaker on the lecture circuit. He also somehow finds time to be a reenactor with the 1st Michigan Engineers and Mechanics, 10th Illinois Infantry, and to give presentations to high schools and elementary schools on all aspects of the Civil War, especially the life of the common soldier.

MARCH MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

Craig L. Symonds addressed 98 members and guests on March 10 at the 589th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. Symonds, a professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy and author of several books, engaged the audience with an interesting and stimulating speech, entitled "The Battle of Mobile Bay." His latest book is *Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin Buchanan* (1999).

By the time the Civil War began in April 1861, Franklin Buchanan had been a naval officer in the U.S. Navy for forty-five years. As a native of Maryland, Buchanan was in a quandry. He received news of a chaotic riot in Baltimore on April 19, 1861, when U.S. soldiers were attacked by a rowdy crowd. Assuming that Maryland would soon secede, Buchanan immediately resigned his U.S. commission. When Maryland did not secede, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles rejected Buchanan's attempt to reverse his decision and rejoin the U.S. Navy. Four months later, the Confederacy accepted Buchanan into the Confederate navy.

The Union navy was superior to the Confederate navy throughout the conflict. The Federals started with 90 ships in 1861, but had expanded to 700 ships by 1865. "The Rebels had no chance of matching the Union, but Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory tried to overcome the Union quantity with Confederate quality," Symonds explained, by attempting to build stronger ships that could overcome the Union's superior numbers.

One of the supreme ironies in the Civil War was Franklin Buchanan's ambition. He longed for fame, fortune, and glory, but he was not a vital player in the two most important events in his military experience. He was not inside the Confederate ironclad CSS *Virginia* (formerly the *Merrimac*) in its fateful battle with the USS *Monitor* on March 9, 1862. He had been wounded the previous day. During the Battle of Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864, Buchanan waited inside the CSS *Tennessee* when the Union ironclad USS *Tecumseh* exploded.

Buchanan, who was 64 years old and walked with a cane in 1964, had orders to defend and open up Mobile Bay. The city of Mobile, Alabama, was located about fifty miles north of the entrance to the bay—which was protected by the Confederate Fort Morgan on an eastern shoal and Fort Gaines on a western shoal. A Rebel ironclad, the CSS *Tennessee*, was prepared for action against a Union squadron of ships at 8:00 a.m. on August 5.

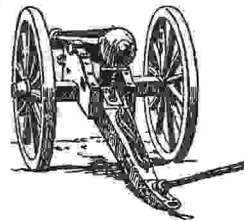
No stealth was possible because the Yankee squadron awaited the Confederate ships. Union Admiral David Farragut watched as the Union ironclad USS *Tecumseh* struck a mine (also known as a torpedo), exploded, and sunk within twenty seconds, killing 93 Union sailors. As he sent the rest of the squadron into the minefield, he exhorted his men to "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!"

As Buchanan, aboard the CSS *Tennessee*, tried to ram Union ships, the faster Federal ships

simply sped away. The Confederates were so ineffective, one Rebel proclaimed, "Our shells did not have any more impact than a bullet on the side of an alligator." Buchanan had to decide whether to withdraw or fight. Remembering that the CSS *Virginia* was scuttled near Hampton Roads by the Rebel navy, he decided that there was no good excuse to withdraw.

Farragut was surprised that Buchanan chose to attack the superior Union squadron. Farragut's ship, the USS *Hartford*, and the *Tennessee* sought to ram each other; they met off-center, scraping each other's sides. The *Hartford* slipped past the *Tennessee*, with cannons on both ships firing at point-blank range. The steering chains on the *Tennessee* were hit with cannon fire, rendering the ironclad unable to maneuver. Buchanan and the *Tennessee* were captured as the firing ceased.

Buchanan was wounded in the battle and taken as a prisoner-of-war to Key West Florida, and then to New York City. Exchanged in March 1865, he returned to Mobile in April when a final Confederate surrender occurred. "Defiant in defeat, Buchanan exemplified the fighting valor of the Rebel navy," concluded Symonds. "Since he valued discipline above all else, Buchanan was a throwback to the era of wooden ships and iron men. Buchanan has the honor of being the only full admiral in the Confederate navy."



PAUL I. KLIGER

June 2, 1911 - March 14, 2000

Former President Paul I. Kliger died on March 14, after suffering a stroke at his home in Louisville, Colorado. A Round Table member since 1974, Paul served in several offices before becoming president for the 1985-86 term. He chaired and co-chaired two battlefield tours and was made an Honorary Life member in 1990.

Paul is perhaps best known in Round Table circles for the magnificent job he performed as chair of our three-day Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, held October 12, 13, and 14, 1990. Paul was meticulous in his planning; he and his committee worked diligently for four years putting together what became a very memorable and successful event that drew over 400 people from around the country. A clinical social worker by profession, he cared deeply about the study of the American Civil War and battlefield preservation. He will be very missed. A memorial service is being planned for June 11 in Colorado. We send our most heartfelt condolences to his widow Ruth, his two daughters, and his two granddaughters.



Editor's Note: April 14, 2000, the date of our monthly dinner meeting, marks the 135th anniversary of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.

The Spring Session of The Midwest Civil War Collectors Show will be held on Saturday, April 8, at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road, Wheaton. For information, contact Robert "Hawkeye" Nowak (608-884-3237. hawkeye@jvlnet.com).

Former President Marshall D. Krolick addressed the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table on March 3. His topic was "The Promotions of Custer, Farnsworth, and Merritt."

Former President Barbara Hughett will address the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table on May 5. Her topic will be "The Civil War Round Table Movement: Its Past and Its Future."

Former President Robert Girardi is in the midst of a very busy spring speaking schedule, in addition to his address to our round table on April 10, as follows: March 9: Borders Bookstore/Oakbrook, "Remembering John Pope"; April 6: Oakbrook Terrace/Heritage Center's Anderson Theater, "Shiloh: A Union Soldier Returns Home"; Chicago Historical Society/Senior's Day Program, "A Union Soldier Reflects on the War"; and April 18, Chicago Historical Society/Teacher's Seminar, "The Union War Machine."

Major General George H. Thomas (aka Trustee Jerome Kowalski) spoke to the South Suburban Civil War Round Table on February 24. He spoke of his experiences during the Indian Wars.

Tour Registrar Carole LeClaire has announced that all those signed up for the May battlefield tour must have the balance of their payments made by the April meeting.

The Ninth Annual Civil War Symposium of the Kankakee Civil War Round Table will begin at 8:45 a.m. on April 15 at the River Oaks Banquet Hall in Kankakee. Speakers include David C. Hinze, Robert Lee Hodge, Thomas Cartwright, and George Levy. The cost is \$40 for adults, \$20 for students. Contact Art Schumacher at 708-757-7120.

The McHenry County Civil War Round Table's Spring Seminar 2000 will take place from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on April 29 at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in McHenry. The speakers are Lance Herdegen, Tom Christianson, Donna Work, and Jack D. Coombe. The cost is \$35 per person. For information, call 815-385-5141.

THE NEW BOOKS

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Palmer, Michael A. *Lee Moves North: Robert E. Lee on the Offensive*. John Wiley & Sons. 1998. \$24.95.

Pickenpaugh, Roger. *Rescue by Rail—Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1998. \$27.95.

Priest, John M. *Into the Fight: Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1998. \$34.95.

Priest, John M. *John T. McMahon's Diary of the 136th New York, 1861-1864*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1999. \$24.95.

Priest, John M. *One Surgeon's Private War: Doctor William W. Potter of the 57th New York*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1999. \$19.95.

Pullen, John J. *Joshua Chamberlain—A Hero's Life and Legacy*. Stackpole Books. 1998. \$22.95.

Radford, Victoria, ed. *Meeting Mr. Lincoln: Firsthand Recollections of Abraham Lincoln by People, Great and Small, Who Met the President*. Ivan R. Dee. 1998. \$18.95.

Reese, Timothy. *Sealed with Their Lives—The Battle of Crampton's Gap, Burkittsville, Maryland, September 14, 1862*. Butternut and Blue. 1998. \$40.00.

Reid-Green, Marcia, ed. *Letters Home: Henry Matrau of the Iron Brigade*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1998. Pbk. \$11.00. Original of 1993.

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 report is good for Round Table founding member Elmer Gertz, who is progressing in his recovery from heart bypass surgery and a subsequent stroke. Several of us have been visiting with Elmer and are delighted to find him constantly improving. At 93½, he is an inspiration for us all! He promises to be in really good shape at least by our Sixtieth Anniversary Celebration this fall. Elmer is recuperating at a rehabilitation hospital, Vencor Lake Shore Hospital, 6130 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60660. Visitors—and cards and letters—are welcome!

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.



Jerry Allen, 787 Aspen Drive, Buffalo Grove, IL 60083, 847-520-9974, jallen5393@aol.com

Nicholas Back, 925 W. Huron Street, #521, Chicago, IL 60622, 312-666-2305

Gail and Taylor Bell, 1530 N. Dearborn Parkway, #8N, Chicago, IL 60610, 312-642-8368

James Cunningham, 10612 S. Claremont Avenue, Chicago, IL 60643

Todd J. Janus, 270 Big Terra Lane, Gurnee, IL 60031-4413, 847-856-0132

John Krohn, 8827 Flesher Circle, Eden Prairie, MN 55347, 952-949-0655

Christopher R. Manning, 315 S. Washington Street, Hinsdale, IL 60521, 630-323-5023

Cheryl and Jim Painter, 946 Arundel Drive, Arnold, MD 21012, 410-757-6875

E. Gail Pewitt, 1129 Big Foot Lane, Naperville, IL 60563

Bjorn Skaptason, 5054 N. Winchester, #2W, Chicago, IL 60640, 773-878-3140, jskapta@hotmail.com

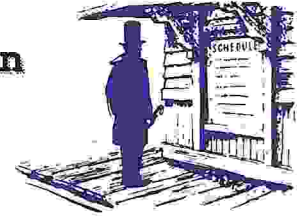
Gary Vodicka, 2814 College Plaza, #5213, Dallas, TX 75205, 972-501-1481

Mary Watson, 1083 N. Collier Boulevard, #325, Marco Island, FL 34145, 941-389-2354

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Stephanie Frazee, 1006½ North Boulevard, Oak Park, IL 60302

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.

April 14: Robert I. Girardi, "The Real War Will Never Get in the Books"

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, "Lincoln and Grant: The Commander in Chief and the Chief Commander"

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"



A Reminder: Monday Lunches

At least since the 1960s (and maybe earlier), a group of Round Table members have regularly gathered for lunch, seasoned with informal Civil War discussions, on Mondays at various downtown restaurants. Presently, the group meets at 12:15 p.m. on Mondays at, appropriately, Monday's Restaurant (on the mezzanine level) at 203 N. LaSalle Street. They meet every Monday (holidays excluded), except for the last Monday of the month when the Union League Club Civil War Round Table holds its meeting. Everyone is welcome. No reservation is necessary; a regular table is reserved for the group. For more information, contact Paul Klekner (o: 312-540-2482; e-mail: paul.klekner@us.pwccglobal.com).



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. Krollick.