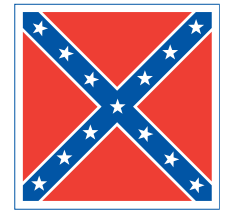


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVI, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March, 2006



649th REGULAR MEETING

GAIL STEPHENS
ON

LEW WALLACE;
CONTROVERSIAL
CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, March 10

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET**

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

\$30 - Members/Non-members

Entrée:

Roast Pork Loin.

Catch of the Day.

Vegetarian Plate

or Fruit Plate

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, March 6**, by calling 630-460-1865. We now also have our online dinner reservation system at <http://www.thecwrt.org/commiss.htm>. Reservations made after Wednesday, March 8, will be surcharged \$5.

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.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of \$5 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$8 with a validated parking sticker.

GAIL STEPHENS

- on -

“Lew Wallace; Controversial Civil War Soldier”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

In the spring of 1862, Union Major General Lew Wallace appeared to have an exceptional military career ahead of him. At the age of 35, he was the youngest major general in the Union Army. He had been a prominent Democratic politician and militia leader in antebellum Indiana. He was intelligent, ambitious and hardworking, but crucially, he was not a West Pointer.

Entering the war as colonel of the 11th Indiana Infantry, he quickly rose to major general. U.S. Grant gave him command of a division at Ft. Donelson and it was that division he was leading on April 6, 1862, when U.S. Grant ordered him to the battlefield at Shiloh. Grant criticized Wallace's march to that battlefield, and Wallace, under a cloud, did not hold permanent field command until appointed commander of the Middle Department of Maryland and Delaware in March 1864. Wallace went on to earn Grant's respect after he fought an important delaying action at Monocacy in July 1864, but he earned Abraham Lincoln's respect with his handling of the Middle Department.

Gail Stephens will discuss the actions of those involved at Shiloh; Grant, Wallace, and their staffs, and explore the reasons Grant condemned Wallace. She will share some observations from her own “march to Shiloh.” Mrs. Stephens will conclude with a brief discussion of Monocacy and



Gail Stephens

Wallace's administration of the Middle Department. The goal of this talk is to shed new light on Lew Wallace and provide a more complete picture of the Civil War career of this complex, controversial soldier.

Gail Stephens has a Bachelor's Degree in International Politics from George Washington University in Washington DC, and has done graduate work at Johns Hopkins and Harvard Universities. She worked for the Department of Defense for 26 years, retiring in 1994 as a member of the Department's Senior Executive Service. Upon retirement, a part-time interest became full-time study of the Civil War. She now volunteers at Monocacy National Battlefield near Frederick, Maryland, lectures on the

Civil War, teaches courses at area colleges and gives battlefield tours. In 2002, she won the National Park Service's E.W. Peterkin award for her contributions to public understanding of Civil War

history. She has written two articles for *North and South* magazine on the subject of Major General Lew Wallace, and articles for a number of other publications on the battle of Monocacy. Currently, she is writing a history of Lew Wallace's Civil War career, to be published by the Indiana Historical Society Press.



Battlefield Preservation Update

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Time for the Fifth Annual Edwin C. Bearss Preservation Award Has Arrived: Members of the Battlefield Preservation Fund committee currently are accepting donations to the Ed Bearss Preservation Award "account" at our monthly meetings. (Those members are Mary Abroe, Jerry Allen, Larry Gibbs, Rob Girardi, Nancy Jacobs, Jerome Kowalski, Marshall Krolick, Bob Miller, Steve Stewart, and David Zucker.) As instituted by the Round Table executive committee in mid-2001, the Bearss Award honors our good friend and longtime battlefield tour leader by contributing \$1,000 in his name to the preservation project/organization that Ed himself regards as most worthwhile. The initial recipient was the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, followed by the Kernstown Battlefield Association, the Land Conservancy of Adams County (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania), and last year's dual winners, the Friends of Raymond (Mississippi) and the Franklin (Tennessee) campaign of the Civil War Preservation Trust. All organizations maintain proven track records of effective preservation advocacy. Ed will announce his decision regarding this year's awardee during our 56th annual battlefield tour to Bull Run and Mosby's Confederacy (May 4-7).

Members also may send donations to BPF Chair Mary Abroe, 212 Woodbine Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091. Please make checks payable to "Battlefield Preservation Fund/CWRT" and put "Bearss Award"

in the memo line. All contributors will be acknowledged in the tour program and the CWRT newsletter. Thank you!

Johnson's Island letter: Last month's update mentioned our CWRT's donation to help preserve Johnson's Island, the POW camp for Confederate prisoners in Ohio. CWRT member **Gale Pewitt** sent us a letter written from Johnson's Island by his ancestor, William Frierson (1837-82), Lt. Col. 27th TN Infantry. Col. Frierson was captured by Union forces May 12, 1863, and was sent to Johnson's Island Prison June 18, 1863. He was exchanged at Point Lookout, MD, Feb. 20, 1865.

"Johnson's Island
November 5, 1863

Mrs. N. S. Davidson
Shelbyville, Tenn.

My Dear Aunt,

Your kind letter of the 8th of October was not unexpected—for I have never had a grief but that I could feel sure of your sympathy. Certainly at this hour the sadist [sic] of my life you could not forsake me. Suddenly bereft [sic] by cruel fate of the dear object of my intensest affections, I need the love, sympathy of friends to assure [sic] me of my duty to others. My own careless indifference to life and its ends should cause me to forget. I hope the time may come when this reflection may have its proper influence to brightening the future—now all gloom. Gloomy and dreary would that

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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, 9670 N. Dee #205 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016, or contact webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org.

future have looked at this time to to loose [sic] Sally under the circumstances that accompanied her death were so heart rendering that they can never be forgotten. Her last feeble utterance "where is my husband?" will ever ring in my ears to make me miserable. I know she is happy and will be eternally so: but I am too selfish not to remember my own condition—no home, no guardian angel.

I have heard before of your own misfortune and wish to write but I knew that a letter from me for the last three months could have given you but little comfort. I could not point to a more cheerful hereafter nor counsel resignation under present troubles because neither see the one or feel the other. My kindest regards to Uncle B. Lowe to Bettie and Hugh. Tell Bettie to write to me. Remember me to Uncle L. and Aunt Lizzie. I wrote to Grandma recently. Write again. Your letters are always acceptable. Your affectionate nephew,

William Frierson"

FEBRUARY MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On February 10th, this Round Table was honored to present today's foremost Civil War scholar, **Dr. James McPherson**, who spoke on "Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief" before 208 members and guests. Dr. McPherson recently retired from Princeton University, where he has taught for many years. He has written 15 books on the Civil War, the best known of which, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1989), won the Pulitzer Prize in History. An ardent supporter of battlefield preservation, McPherson is currently writing a book on the topic of his presentation; Abraham Lincoln as a war leader.

Recent books on President Lincoln have included topics such as the Gettysburg Address, the Cooper Union Speech, the Second Inaugural Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and Lincoln's melancholia. Most scholarship from 1960 to the present has made Lincoln's role as commander in chief less salient than other roles in his life. Ironically, the most vivid scenes in Lincoln's life reflect the consequences of war. Without the war, Lincoln would like exist in historical obscurity as part of a long line of forgettable presidents, asserted McPherson. As a "war president", the military aspect of his presidency is what mattered. Military victory was a necessity; if a Union defeat occurred Lincoln would have been considered one of the worst presidents. However, McPherson exclaimed, "the centrality of Lincoln was in his achievements as commander in chief", and quoted T. Harry Williams as stating "Lincoln was a better strategist than any of his generals!"

The fate of slavery and the survival of the Union rested on the Federal army and Abraham Lincoln. On domestic issues he shared power with Congress; on military strategy Lincoln shared power with his generals. Lincoln illustrated his war powers

when he rescinded General John Fremont's early emancipation proclamation in Missouri in 1861. Lincoln was Fremont's superior and Lincoln thought that the Union might lose Kentucky. Lincoln said, "I think to lose Kentucky is to lose the whole game!"

With virtually no experience in fighting in a war, Lincoln deferred to the aged General Winfield Scott in the early stages of the Civil War. Lincoln adapted and adjusted his overall strategy several times during the conflict. At first, Lincoln attempted to restore the Union, appealing to Union patriotism among southerners. McPherson explained, "Lincoln believed that a silent majority of southerners were really Unionists, but soon the Union defeat at Manassas (July 21, 1861) sobered Lincoln about the reality." Conquest of southern territories to force surrender was the second stage. Lincoln hoped continued pressure would break the Confederacy's will to fight. Since the Union armies outnumbered the Confederate armies, this strategy appeared to be a winner. However, Confederate generals such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson staged a strong Confederate counteroffensive in late 1862. Confederate armies took the Confederacy from almost certain defeat to near victory. This rapid turn of events stunned the northern public, and Lincoln's second strategy was foiled.

Next, the attempt to cripple Confederate armies was tried. Lincoln realized that the capture of a rebel army was more important than the capture of a city, even Richmond. Lincoln replaced generals such as George McClellan and George Meade, because each general failed to aggressively attack after Union victories. One general, U. S. Grant, impressed Lincoln, not only by capturing the key Mississippi River fortress of Vicksburg, but also for the capture of the Confederate army

defending that city. Lincoln and Grant followed the military dictum: fight your enemy where he is, and capture the crippled opponent's army where it is. Both agreed that the several Union armies should work in concert, a concept Lincoln had often urged on other generals, only to have them refuse to cooperate. By 1864 Grant as military commander coordinated simultaneous attacks by five Union armies stretched from Virginia to Louisiana. This strategy gave Confederate forces no time to move their armies from one threatened section to another section. The Confederate armies were effectively pinned down.

During the last year of the war, Lincoln's strategy evolved into "total war", where destruction of Confederate resources led to ultimate victory. Lincoln thought that the Union should strike at the heart of the rebellion—slavery. "Freed slaves who enlisted as soldiers became the heaviest blow to the Confederacy," opined McPherson. Those 200,000 fresh black troops helped to destroy the south's determination to fight any longer. With Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas and Phil Sheridan's wasting of the Shenandoah Valley, the loss of resources undermined the Confederate will to continue fighting. These adaptations, in McPherson's view, indicated Lincoln's mastery of military strategy as commander in chief.

Lincoln claimed, "War at its best is terrible." He did not shrink from his responsibility to win the Civil War. McPherson concluded, "In Lincoln's Second Inaugural, he talked about how the Civil War served as a punishment for the U. S. because of the sins of slavery." Out of duty Lincoln as commander in chief had to destroy the rebel army and whatever property the south had. This last stage of Lincoln's strategy provided for the ultimate Union victory.

GRAPESHOT



Past President **Jerry Kowalski** in the guise of Maj. Gen. Geo. H. Thomas was a presenter at Re-enactor Fest Feb 4. He also assisted in the building of the Kenosha Civil War Museum (repository of many of General Thomas' personal artifacts) at an evening open house on Thursday Feb 16.

Past President **Larry Gibbs** will be speaking Wednesday, March 1 at the Blue Island Park District's CWRT. For more information, phone Annie Anderson, Blue Island Park District, (708) 388-3872.

The **DuPage County Historical Museum** Association will host its 2nd annual "Inaugural Ball" Saturday, March 4, from 7-10 p.m. at the DuPage County Historical Museum. The ball will feature dancing with music provided by the 33rd Illinois Band. For more information, contact (630) 682-7343 or www.dupageco.org/museum.

On Saturday, March 11th the **Pritzker Military Library**, 610 N. Fairbanks Court, 2nd floor, Chicago will be hosting a program featuring talks by authors James Swanson ("Manhunt"), Kevin J. Weddle ("Lincoln's Tragic Admiral") and Kerry Trask ("Black Hawk"). For reservations and more information, contact Theresa Embrey, Pritzker Military Library, tembrey@pritzkermilitarylibrary.net, (312) 587-0234, or visit www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsallardice1@aol.com or (847) 375-8305.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Lapel pins, Meeting Tapes and other items are on sale at each monthly meeting, with proceeds to go to battlefield preservation. There is also a book raffle, with proceeds again going to benefit battlefield preservation.

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

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

On January 21st the CWRT's Nominating Committee met and nominated the following slate of officers for the 2006-2007 year:

President: Nancy Jacobs
Senior VP: Roger Rudich
1st VP: Jerry Allen
2nd VP: Steve Stewart
Treasurer: Rae Radovich
Asst. Treasurer: Tom Trescott
Secretary: Donna Tuohy
Asst. Secretary: Mary Beth Foley

New Trustee for term ending 2007:
 Sonya Reschly

Trustees for term ending 2008:
 JoEllen Kowalski, John Van Dellen,
 Bob Carlson, Brian Seiter

The publisher of Morningside Books, **Bob Younger**, died January 11th. Bob was instrumental in publishing, and republishing, many rare and valued Civil War books, and created *Gettysburg Magazine* for students of that battle. He was a long-time member of our Round Table.

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: Gail Stephens, "Lew Wallace"

April 21 (3rd Friday, due to Holy Week): Horace Mewborn, "John S. Mosby"

May 12: Mark Noll, "How the Bible Helped Start the Civil War"

June 9: George Rable, "Fredricksburg in the Larger Civil War Universe"

TOUR REMINDER

There's still some spots open for this year's battlefield tour of Northern Virginia, May 4-7. Get your reservations in soon!

MILITARY MEDICINE SHOW

The Scholl College of Medicine at Rosalind Franklin University is hosting a special show, "The Medics", on military medicine from the Civil War to the Vietnam War. "The Medics" is free and open to the public, and will run from February 10 to March 17, Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and by appointment. The University is located at 3333 Green Bay Road, North Chicago. Parking is free. For more information, contact Museum Coordinator, David McKay, at (847) 578-8417.