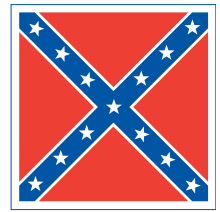


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXIX, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 2008



674th REGULAR MEETING

Gloria Swift

on

*“Ford’s Theater
Secrets Revealed!”*

★★★★★

Friday, October 17

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$40 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée: Chicken Aegean,
Catch of the Day, Vegetarian
Plate or Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, Oct. 13** by calling **630-460-1865**. Reservations can also be made by emailing chicagoewrttdinner@earthlink.net with the names of your party and their choice of entree.

People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please call the number before 9 a.m. Thursday to avoid a charge.

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 \$10 with a validated parking sticker.

Gloria Swift

on

Ford’s Theatre Secrets Revealed! Museum Objects Tell All!

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

We know that historical objects “tell a story” in a way that books and lectures can’t. The bloodstained fragments of Mary Todd Lincoln’s dress and Abraham Lincoln’s spectacles are just two of the many objects our state possesses and displays in order to help tell the story of our 16th president. Quite often those objects are a story in themselves. As one historian observes, if you added up every piece of wood displayed in museums as part of John Brown’s gallows, you’d have enough lumber to build Soldier Field!

On October 17th (the third Friday of the month) Gloria Swift, curator at Ford’s Theatre NHS, will speak on “Ford’s Theatre Secrets Revealed! Museum Objects Tell All!” This program takes a look at special items from the Ford’s Theatre

National Historic Site museum collection. The focus of the program is on various museum objects - what kind of “life” they led immediately after the assassination, what happened to them and finally, how they eventually “made their way back” to Ford’s Theatre to become part of the museum. After this fun program, you’ll never see a museum object the same way again!



Gloria Swift

Gloria enjoys working at Ford’s Theatre and telling the story of Abraham Lincoln through the use of the museum collections, of which there are many fabulous treasures. She is always creating new exhibits in order to share some of the objects from storage and serves as the contact point for the donations to the museum collection. Gloria considers herself extremely fortunate in her career with the National Park Service to have been able to experience so many enjoyable opportunities in her love of history.

Gloria Swift was born in Washington, D.C. and graduated from Northern Arizona University with a degree in American

History. Specializing in military history, Gloria has been an interpretive park ranger and curator with the National Park Service, working at such sites as Gettysburg National Military Park, Harper’s Ferry National Historical Park, and Monocacy National Battlefield. Her current duty station is Ford’s Theatre National Historic Site where she serves as curator. Gloria lives in Frederick, Maryland with her husband Mark.



Battlefield Preservation

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

CWRT Receives Thanks for Donations: Over the late spring and summer we received letters of gratitude for contributions and/or membership renewals to several preservation groups. A late May note from the Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association (NBPA) thanked the CWRT for our donation to help that organization deal with tornado damage to its historic Ritchey Mansion property, including outbuildings and site cleanup (see "Battlefield Preservation" in the June 2008 issue of this newsletter). According to David Weems, Records Secretary, "The members of NBPA are greatly encouraged by your generous donation of \$2,500 toward repairing the damage to NBPA property by the tornado of May 10, 2008. While most of the damage to the Ritchey Mansion House will be covered by insurance, we have considerable damage to other property that is not covered....In fact the village [of Newtonia] was devastated with many homes unfit for residence...."

In a June letter James Houghton, president of the Glorieta Battlefield Coalition, addressed his organization's thanks to members of the CWRT: "On behalf of the Glorieta Battlefield Coalition, our thanks to the Civil War Round Table of Chicago for their generous donation of \$500." Mr. Houghton also indicated that his group expected to open the Glorieta Battlefield Ridge Trail to visitors and dedicate the Texas Vista site over the summer, then move on to a vista project for the U.S. Regulars who fought at Glorieta Pass. For more information, visit the Glorieta Battlefield Coalition's Web site at the following address: www.glorietapass.org>

Also in June we heard from Edward Hochman, president of the Grant Monument Association, Suzanne Chilson of the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, George Wunderlich of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, and Frank White of the Alabama Historical Commission. Mr. Hochman relayed the following sentiments regarding our membership renewal: "Thank you... for your kind contribution of

\$100. Given that your organization is the oldest roundtable in the country, and given Ulysses S. Grant's long-established ties to and affection for both Illinois and Chicago, the GMA is especially honored by your gift."

Ms. Chilson, executive director of the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, wrote the following: "On behalf of the Board of Directors..., I wish to thank you for your gift of \$1,000.00 for our Battlefield Land Preservation fund. ... With your support, along with the continued generosity of many others, we have purchased over 300 acres of the Cedar Creek Battlefield which is now preserved in perpetuity for generations to come." For more information, visit the Foundation's Web site at the following address: www.cedar-creekbattlefield.org>

George Wunderlich, executive director of the NMCWM (which is the brainchild of our fellow member Dr. Gordon Dammann), expressed his institution's appreciation as follows: "On behalf of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine..., I would like to thank your organization for its generous donation of \$1,000 on June 9, 2008." Additional information on the Museum is available at www.civilwarmed.org>

Frank White, executive director of the Alabama Historical Commission, wrote the following on its behalf: "...I want to thank...the Battlefield Preservation Fund of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago for your generous donation of \$500.00. These funds will be used to support the ongoing preservation of the Fort Morgan [Mobile Bay] Historic Site.... Again, thank you so much for your generosity in supporting the important work taking place at Fort Morgan." Additional information can be found at www.preserveala.org>

Demolition of Gettysburg Cyclorama Center Is Still on Hold: In an article dated September 5, *Gettysburg Times* writer Scot Pitzer noted that the old Cyclorama building could be torn down as early as this December (along with the old Visitor Center facilities). However, the Justice Department has counseled Superin-

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www.thecwrt.org

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 bsallardice1@earthlink.net.

tendent John Latscher and the NPS that it would be "prudent" to delay demolition until a lawsuit attempting to save the Cyclorama structure is resolved, even though, according to Dr. Latscher, "we don't have to wait until a decision is made." That lawsuit, filed in December 2006 by the Virginia-based Recent Past Preservation Network and Dion Neutra (son of the building's designer, architect Richard Neutra), argues that the old Cyclorama Center itself is historic and that demolition would break federal preservation statutes. The *Times* article also noted that the Recent Past Preservation Network has asked for a ruling in federal court, but none has come yet from Presiding Judge Thomas Hogan.

The old Cyclorama Center was built in the 1960s on a site that was convenient for and attractive to tourists, thus reflecting the National Park Service's contemporary thrust of maximizing the appeal of its parks—historical and otherwise—to the visiting public. On the other hand, the old Cyclorama Center site also is one of the most historically significant at Gettysburg. In the opinion of this column's author, the old Cyclorama building is a singular encroachment on the historic Civil War landscape, and it should be removed.

September Meeting

BY TOM TRESMOTT

On September 12, at the 673rd regular meeting of the Civil War Round Table, **Peter Cozzens** spoke to 86 members and guests on "The Shenandoah Valley Campaign Reconsidered". His talk, based on his new book, *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign*, let it be known, in no uncertain terms, that our speaker was not president of the Thomas J. Jackson fan club.

Peter didn't enter into this project simply to bash "Stonewall". Rather, he was looking for a topic on which little or nothing had been written, and there had been no balanced account of the Valley Campaign of 1862. Of the two book length studies, William Allan's 1880 *History of the Campaign...in the Shenandoah Valley...* is too fawning and uncritical of Jackson, while Robert Tanner's excellent 1976 *Stonewall in the Valley* is told only from the Rebel point of view (incidentally, this is the only Civil War campaign where the Confederate sources outnumber those of the Union).

In the course of his research, however, our speaker came to despise "Stonewall" Jackson, primarily for his hypocrisy. While demanding iron discipline of his men, and denying Col. Kenton Harper of the 5th Virginia emergency leave to visit his dying wife with "Man, do you love your wife more than your country?", Jackson brought his own wife to himself, setting her up in a farmhouse near headquarters. And while he would attribute a Confederate victory to "God's will," in defeat Jackson would always seek a scapegoat to blame.

Peter was also very critical of Jackson's command style, especially his policy of never telling his second in command his intentions, as well as his habit of sending in troops piecemeal. Brig. Gen. Charles S. Winder, a commander of the "Stonewall Brigade" threatened to resign because of the latter practice.

Jackson had orders from General Joseph E. Johnston to hold Federal forces in the Shenandoah Valley, and Winchester, Virginia, was the key to the Valley. Our speaker selected two engagements in the campaign, First Kernstown and First Winchester, as typical examples of Jackson's personal and military style. The Union forces in the latter instance was commanded by Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, a political general who, in polar opposition to Jackson, was viewed as grievously underrated as a general by our speaker, who especially admired Banks rise from child laborer to Speaker of the House of Representatives.

On March 23, 1862, after Banks had left Winchester to Manassas, Jackson, wanting to demonstrate Confederate strength in the Valley, moved to Kernstown (just south of Winchester on the Valley Pike), sending his main force to Sandy Ridge. Brig. Gen. Richard B. Garnett, now in command of the Stonewall Brigade, deployed his eight regiments along a stone fence on the ridge. Outnumbered two, maybe three to one, running out of ammunition, with no support and not knowing Jackson's plans, Garnett ordered a retreat. Jackson had Garnett arrested for this action, but a court-martial trial was never held. While Kernstown was a tactical victory for the Union, it alarmed Washington enough to take one of Banks' divisions to defend Washington, and be in fear of "Stonewall's" activities.

Two days before Front Royal (May 23) Banks, with 4800 Federal troops at Strasburg, Virginia, and knowing, via his very good spies, that Jackson was coming, requested permission to withdraw to Winchester, but was denied by Secretary of War Edwin P. Stanton. Jackson won an easy victory at Front Royal, forcing Banks to retreat to Winchester. Banks, heavily outnumbered, decided to stay and fight in order to let his wagons

get to Williamsport. While Jackson and the Confederates won victory at Winchester on May 25, certain conceptions do not uphold under scrutiny: despite the image of a disastrous and fiery retreat, Banks lost only 50 wagons in his retreat (less than 10%); and Banks' men spoke well of him.

A further misconception is that Jackson was always outnumbered in the Valley. In fact, "Stonewall" only faced superior numbers when McDowell and Fremont tried to pincer him. And since there was no overall Union command in the Shenandoah, their superior numbers did not avail them much.

In conclusion, then, our speaker made a convincing case that even though "Stonewall" Jackson achieved his strategic objective of relieving Union pressure on Richmond, he did so despite his poor relationship with subordinates and his own personality flaws, and as much due to luck than as to any military brilliance.

A recording of this (and every) meeting is available from Hal Ardell, audio librarian. Contact Hal at (773) 774-6781 or hal229@ameritech.net

Bruce Allardice spoke at the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation's Oct. 4 Symposium on the Confederate Army at Antietam. Bruce has a new website at www.civilwarbruce.com which lists his upcoming presentations.

Kentuckians in Gray, a new book co-edited by **Larry Hewitt** and **Bruce Allardice**, will be "out" this month. Published by the University Press of Kentucky, the book contains biographical essays on all Kentucky-born Confederate generals and field officers.

GRAPESHOT



One of the CWRT's oldest members, **Al Meyer**, will celebrate his 100th birthday on Nov. 8th. Al joined the CWRT in 1947—51 years ago! Anyone wishing Al a happy 100th can contact him at 5500 NW 69th Ave., # 421, Lauderhill, FL 33319.

Loyola University is hosting a symposium titled "Lincoln: A Question of Character" this November 8 from 9:00 to 1:30. Featured speakers include Kent Gramm and Douglas Wilson. The public is welcome. For more information, contact Ted Karamanski at tkarama@luc.edu.

Professor Jason Phillips will be speaking on "Diehard Rebels" at the **Blue Island CWRT**, 12804 Highland Ave., Blue Island, Tuesday, Oct. 28th, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5, and dessert will be served. For more information, phone (708) 385-3304 or visit www.blueislandparks.org.

Larry Hewitt will be speaking to the CWRT of New Orleans Oct. 15th on "James Buchanan Eads."

The new Illinois Civil War monument at **Allatoona Pass** Battlefield Park will be dedicated on October 4th. The ceremonies start at 11 a.m.

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

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Fifty-seven years of audio recordings of CWRT lectures by distinguished historians are available and can be purchased in either audio cassette or CD format. For lecture lists, contact Hal Ardell at hal229@ameritech.net or phone him at (773) 774-6781.

Each meeting features a book raffle, with proceeds going to battlefield preservation. There is also a silent auction for books donated by Ralph Newman and others, again with proceeds benefiting battlefield preservation.

Symposium at Cantigny

The National Archives is sponsoring its 11th annual **Civil War Symposium** Saturday, October 18th at Cantigny. The CWRT is a co-sponsor of this event, titled "Abraham Lincoln as War President." The great lineup of speakers includes Paul Finkleman on "the Emancipation Proclamation," Harold Holzer on "Current Lincoln Scholarship," Trevor Plante on "Lincoln Records in the National Archives," and Tom Schwartz on "Lincoln and the Copperhead Movement in Illinois." Dave Corbett and the "Battlefield Balladeers" will provide period music. Cost for the general public is \$40, however, CWRT members can get in at half price. For more information, contact the National Archives Great Lakes Region at (773) 948-9001, or email Chicago.archives@nara.gov.

Current CWRT Officers

Jerry Allen, President
 Rae Radovich, Senior Vice President
 Tom Trescott, First Vice President
 Bob Stoller, Second Vice President
 Brian Seiter, Treasurer
 Mark Matranga, Assistant Treasurer
 Donna Tuohy, Secretary
 Paulette Whitt, Assistant Secretary
 Trustees, terms to expire in 2010: Joellen Kowalski, John Kociolko, Paula Walker, Bill Sawisch
 Trustees, terms to expire in 2009: Jim Cunningham, Sonya Reschly, Cheryl Cooke, David Zucker

A list of committee chairs will be in the next newsletter.

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*.

Oct. 17: **Gloria Swift**,

"Ford's Theatre Secrets Revealed!"

Nov. 14: **Rick Hatcher**,

"Fort Sumter - 1829 to 1947"

Dec. 12: **Craig Symonds**,

"Lincoln and His Admirals"

Jan. 9, 2009: **Frank O'Reilly**,

"Hidden Fredericksburg - the Battle We Thought We Knew"

Feb. 13: Nevins Freeman Address.

Bruce Allardice, "Lincoln as a War Leader"

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be Oct. 17th, featuring Lincoln scholar **Harold Holzer** talking about his new book, *Lincoln: President-Elect Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter 1860-1861*. On Oct. 25th **Craig Symonds** will talk about his new book, *Lincoln and His Admirals*. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.

Our friends at the new **Civil War Museum in Kenosha, WI**, are sponsoring a bus tour of Civil War eastern sites this Oct. 13 to 20. Lance Herdegen will be the head guide. For more information, phone (262) 653-4140 or visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org. BTW, I visited the museum's exhibits during their recent (and very worthwhile) symposium and found the exhibits (finally) finished and worth the trip.