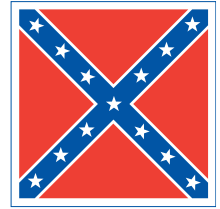


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXIX, Number 6

Chicago, Illinois

February, 2009



678th REGULAR MEETING

Nevins-Freeman Address

Bruce Allardice

on

“Lincoln as a War Leader”

★★★★★

Friday, February 13

★★★★★

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

please note

Make your reservation by **Monday, Feb. 9** by calling **630-460-1865**. Reservations can also be made by emailing chicagocwrt@dinner@earthlink.net with the names of your party and their choice of entree.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please call the number before 9 a.m. Thursday.

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.

Nevins-Freeman Address Bruce Allardice on “Lincoln as a War Leader”

Abraham Lincoln is regarded by many as our greatest President. An orator of unmatched eloquence, a savvy politician with a compelling personal story, he towers above his contemporaries. Like no other presidency in American history, Lincoln’s presidency was defined by the Civil War that began a month after he took office and continued after his death. Like no other war in American history, the Civil War forced the president to be aware of the political context in which military decisions were made. Like no other war in American history, the Civil War forced the president to be aware of the military consequences of the political decisions he made.

Lincoln’s performance in his dual roles as war leader and political leader must remain the focus of his administration. On February 13, Mr. Allardice will examine that leadership, coming to some troubling, and perhaps surprising, conclusions.

Bruce S. Allardice is past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago, and past president of the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table. A lifelong Chicago area resident and long-suffering White Sox fan, Mr. Allardice teaches history at South Suburban College. He has authored or coauthored five books, and numerous articles, on the Civil War. His More Generals in Gray (LSU Press 1995) was a selection of the History Book



Bruce Allardice

Club. He had two books come out in 2008: Confederate Colonels: A Biographical Register (U of MO Press), a biographical register of Confederate army colonels, and Kentuckians in Gray (U Press of KY), co-authored with Professor Larry Hewitt.

Mr. Allardice has presented numerous lectures and presentations on the Civil War and genealogy for Civil War Round Tables, museums, and civic organizations. An avid sports historian, Mr. Allardice currently heads up the “Civil War Baseball” subcommittee

for the Society of American Baseball Research (SABR) and is a member of SABR’s Biography Committee, specializing in researching the lives of 19th Century ballplayers.

Mr. Allardice is a graduate of the University of Illinois and the University of Illinois School of Law.

The Nevins-Freeman Award, the highest honor this CWRT bestows, is annually awarded for distinguished Civil War scholarship and aid to the Round Table movement. The first Nevins-Freeman Award was given to the famed Bruce Catton. Among the winners have been CWRT founder Ralph Newman, T. Harry Williams, Ed Bearss, and James McPherson.



Battlefield Preservation

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Walmart Seeks Special-Use Permit at the Wilderness: The Winter 2008 issue of *Hallowed Ground* (the magazine of the Civil War Preservation Trust) and the January 2009 issue of *Civil War News* report that Walmart recently applied for a special-use permit to build a 138,000-square-foot supercenter and nine additional stores on fifty-plus acres in Orange County, Virginia next to the Wilderness battlefield, which is a unit of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. The merchandising giant took this step in spite of appeals from scholars, historians, and members of the preservation community nationwide to build elsewhere in Orange County in a less sensitive location. In fact the *Civil War News* noted that CWPT president Jim Lighthizer, who attended meetings with Walmart spokespeople in Orange County, was “dismayed” by their indication that the company would not contemplate other sites; as Lighthizer put it, “The inclusion of plaques or other interpretive media within the store simply cannot compensate for the destruction of the historic ground itself, nor can it have any impact on the degradation of the park visitor experience that large-scale development will inherently produce.”

Now that the application has been submitted, it falls to the Orange County Board of Supervisors to approve a special-use permit before construction can start. Those who oppose the supercenter’s current location are deeply concerned that once the special-use precedent is set, the whole area will be targeted for development, thus irrevocably harming the entryway to the park and destroying the battlefields’ historic ambiance.

As for the insistence of Walmart spokespeople that “nothing important” happened at the proposed location, Gordon Rhea, author of *The Battle of the Wilderness* and *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: The Wilderness through Cold*

Harbor, differed sharply: “The proposed Walmart site lies at the intersection of the wartime Germanna Plank Road and the Orange Turnpike. This was the nerve center of the Union army. This land served as the heart of the Union Fifth Corps’ encampments and lies within the shadow of Grant’s and Meade’s headquarters [at the Wilderness]. It is truly hallowed ground.”

Eight organizations—the Civil War Preservation Trust, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Friends of Fredericksburg Area Battlefields, Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield, National Coalition for History, National Parks Conservation Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Piedmont Environmental Council—have joined forces to form the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition. According to *Hallowed Ground*, the coalition’s purpose is “preventing this commercial development and protecting the unique rural and historical heritage of Orange County.” Just such determined cooperation among preservationists was the key to success in past campaigns like “No Disney Manassas” and “No Casino Gettysburg,” and it can succeed again. To find out more about the coalition and what individuals can do to help keep Walmart from desecrating the Wilderness, visit the coalition’s Web site at www.wildernesswalmart.com.

CWRT Receives Acknowledgments of Donations: Last summer’s decision of the CWRT’s Battlefield Preservation Fund committee to support the work of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield elicited the following sentiments from the organization’s Carolyn Elstner: “On behalf of Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB), thank you for the recent kind donation from the CWRT of Chicago. We will use (it) for the Ellwood Restoration Project, our greatest need at this time. Your \$1000 contribution will help Ellwood tell its story for generations to come.” (Historic Ellwood, summer

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9670 N. Dee #205

Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

Phone: 630-460-1865

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.

home of the Lacy family, was headquarters for Gouverneur Warren and the Union Fifth Corps during the battle of the Wilderness; the family cemetery is the burial place of Stonewall Jackson’s left arm.)

Within the past two months the CWRT also received letters of gratitude from the Civil War Preservation Trust for renewing our membership and for a donation to the Trust’s Morris Island campaign. David Duncan, director of membership and development, thanked the CWRT as follows: “Together, after literally years of hard work and behind-the-scenes negotiations, we are well on our way to forever saving the most important remaining 117 acres of Morris Island, South Carolina. Your recent gift of \$854.00... saved for perpetuity \$3 million worth of irreplaceable land that was in the sights of developers. I am sure the 650 soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts, who spearheaded the assault on Ft. Wagner not far from this land, would also approve!” Mr. Duncan also noted that various government agencies have pledged an astonishing \$30 to match each dollar donated.

January Meeting

BY TOM TRESMOTT

On January 8, at the 677th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, **Frank O'Reilly** spoke to 72 members and guests on "Hidden Fredericksburg --- the Battle We Thought We Knew", showing the group that initial impressions leave many aspects of the battle not considered. After twenty-some years working for the NPS at Fredericksburg, Mr. O'Reilly let us know about the things about Fredericksburg that "keep him up at night", and that Burnside requires more consideration before condemning him as an idiot.

The idea for the campaign was that of Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, who in examining the strategic situation saw that the road to Richmond must go by way of Fredericksburg. Why did Lincoln approve the plan on November 14th? Because in contrast to McClellan, whom had been fired by Lincoln just the week before, Burnside was aggressive and willing to develop a plan, so Lincoln gave the go ahead "if you move quickly". Burnside did; the Federals were moving within 24 hours, and the pontoon bridges (needed to cross the Rappahannock River) had been ordered for again on November 12, six days after McClellan first did.

The Confederates were surprised, but after arriving opposite Fredericksburg the Army of the Potomac waited for the pontoons, which despite being ordered for twice had still not arrived by November 15. Halleck knew they weren't ready, but refused to tell Burnside, for fear of giving him a chance to act like McClellan, and delay and offer excuses. It took two more weeks to get the pontoons to Burnside, in a comedy of mud, mules, and mistakes. Burnside would later take the bullet on this for the administration in front of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War (JCCW), while Halleck deftly dodged any blame.

When the Union army finally crossed the Rappahannock, Burn-

side had to deal with Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, 78,000 strong, reunited thanks to the repeated Union delays, and commanding the heights overlooking the city. The Confederate line was concave, and an attack on Jackson's salient on the Confederate right was the only one that would work, for success there would make the line untenable, forcing Lee to retreat west and away from Richmond rather than south and toward the capital.

The resulting Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, was a bloodbath. Why?

General William Buell Franklin, commanding the 65,000 men of the Grand Division on the Union left, had three problems: he was facing Jackson; the Rappahannock River was in his rear, cutting off any retreat; and the attack would be across a mile of open flood plain. While the intention was to attack before dawn, the actual order came hours after the attack was supposed to start, and was both unclear and at variance with what Franklin had been agreed on. One division "at least" was ordered to seize the heights at Prospect Hill; the rest were to cover the line of retreat on the road variously known at Old Richmond, Bowling Green, etc. Burnside had a different, and wrong, map than the one Franklin had, which only heightened the confusion.

At 10:00 a.m. (hours later than planned) the battle engaged. Maj. Gen. George G. Meade's division-sized assault against Stonewall Jackson and the Confederate right was driven off after some initial success, due in large part to the artillery of Maj. John Pelham. The attacks against the Confederate right, which Franklin had mistakenly (but, given the orders, understandably) come to believe was a diversion, were over by 2:30.

But the attacks continued on the Confederate left. Seven Union di-

visions, 38,000 men, made fourteen futile assaults against only 8000 Confederates. Why Burnside's fixation with Marye's Heights? Burnside wanted keep Lee pinned down, so he couldn't be able to help Jackson, the main focus of the battle. And even after it became apparent that the battle was lost, Burnside felt he couldn't release the initiative, for fear of a counterattack by Lee. It was darkness (6:00) that ended the attacks on the Heights, which started out first to let someone else win for the Army of the Potomac, and ended as an effort to keep from losing.

Ultimately, the pontoons were the crux of the campaign, and Burnside's order to Franklin was the crux of the battle. Franklin blamed Burnside and the JCCW blamed Franklin, believing he didn't adhere to the spirit of the plan. Franklin's number was up, anyway; he was a Democrat, and McClellan's left hand man.

Yet amidst the horrors of Fredericksburg, far from the vicious infighting among the officers of the Union army, there were amazing stories of individual soldiers. Perhaps the most famous incident of Fredericksburg was the heroism of Sgt. Kirkland of the 2nd South Carolina, who on December 14 brought water to wounded Union soldiers still stranded in no man's land. In a generation of heroes, Kirkland gives us hope, reminding us that humanity is alive in a dark place.

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

GRAPESHOT



Longtime CWRT member and former president **Brooks Davis** will speak on "Abraham Lincoln: Man of Faith" at the Richton Park Library, Feb. 23rd, at 6 p.m.

On Feb. 28th, everybody's favorite string-pickers, the **97th Regimental String Band**, will be performing for President and Mrs. Lincoln (Max and Donna Daniels) at the Glen Oaks Country Club, part of a gala to raise funds for the Glen Ellyn Historical Society. Call for tickets at 630 469-1867.

On Friday, Feb. 6, the **Northern Illinois CWRT** will feature Bruce Allardice, Larry Hewitt and Dave Powell in a panel discussion on "How to Get Your Civil War Book Published." The meeting starts at 7:30 pm at the Arlington Heights Public Library.

CWRT member **Michael Weeks** has a new book coming out soon: **The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide**. Published by The Countryman Press, it's organized around 10 "road trips" with further information on visiting over 400 Civil War sites. The release date is April 20th, and copies can be pre-ordered via Amazon.

Our own **Brian Seiter** will be speaking on "Canby vs. Sibley" at the Feb. 6th meeting of the Salt Creek CWRT, starting at 8 p.m. at Fairview Village in Downers Grove.

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.

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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.

CWRT Executive Committee Meeting

President **Jerry Allen** would like to remind all that the next meeting of the CWRT's Executive Committee will be at 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 7th, at the Chicago History Museum.

Battlefield Tour

A reminder—sign up soon for the **CWRT's 2009 battlefield tour!** It's April 22-26, 2009, and we'll be visiting Civil War sites in Kentucky. As usual, the incomparable Ed Bearss will be our main guide, with Wil Greene on Bus # 2.

Our base is the Campbell House in Lexington, KY. Among the sites we're touring are the **Perryville** Battlefield (Thursday), the **Mill Springs** and **Wildcat Mountain** battlefields (Friday). **Lincoln's birthplace** and **Tebb's Bend** (Saturday), and the **Richmond** battlefield (Sunday).

A Book List of suggested tour reading, and a tour Registration form, are included with this mailing.

Trivia Question: How often did President Lincoln sleep in what is today known as the "Lincoln Bedroom"?

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.*

Feb. 13: Nevins Freeman Address.

Bruce Allardice, "Lincoln as a War Leader"

March 13: **John Latschar**, of the NPS Gettysburg, "Reinterpreting Gettysburg: Lessons from the Civil War?"

April 17: **Stephen Wise**, of the Parris Island Museum, TBD

May 8: **James Ogden**, "Rescue at Horseshoe Ridge"

June 12: **Thomas Cartwright**, TBD

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be noon, Feb. 14th, featuring Catherine Clinton talking about her new book, Mrs. Lincoln. A Life, and Ronald White talking about his new book, A. Lincoln. A Biography. Registration is required. For more information on this and upcoming events, visit www.alincolnbookshop.com.

Larry Hewitt and **Bruce Allardice** will be making a joint presentation on "Abraham Lincoln" at the Union League Club Round Table Tuesday, March 3rd. They will have copies of their new book, Kentuckians in Gray (U. Press of Kentucky) there. For more information, contact Frank Patton at FrankP414@gmail.com.

On Feb. 7th **Dan Weinberg** will be one of thirty distinguished Americans awarded our state's "The Order of Lincoln" at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential museum in Springfield. According to the governor's office, this award is "the highest honor that can be awarded by the state of Illinois."