



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXXI, Number 1

Chicago, Illinois

September 2010



693rd REGULAR MEETING

Wayne Mahood

on

“General Wadsworth”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, September 10

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$45 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée: Sliced Sirloin,
Baked Salmon, Vegetarian
Plate or Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, Sept. 6 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing chicagocwrttdinner@earthlink.net, with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

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 \$12 with a validated parking sticker.

Wayne Mahood on “General Wadsworth”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

In 1864, then Brigadier General James S. Wadsworth, 4th Division, 5th Army Corps, Army of the Potomac (an unpaid volunteer and millionaire), lay dying on the battlefield of the Wilderness, having rashly tried to stem an attack by Lieutenant General James Longstreet’s Corps. The Confederates who discovered his dying body marveled at why the elderly Wadsworth, a man who was thought to be wealthier than the whole Confederate government, chose to live (and die) like the commonest of soldiers.

Born to vast inherited wealth, James Wadsworth spent his life in company with the great and the powerful. Wadsworth attended college in order to learn enough law to manage his properties. However, the life of a gentleman farmer and philanthropist couldn’t deter him from involvement in public affairs. He became so avid an abolitionist that he made an unsuccessful run for governor of New York. And although he lacked any military experience or ambition, when the war began Wadsworth immediately volunteered. His soldiers loved him for how he cared for them, and for his intrepid (if inexperienced) generalship on the battlefield.

Horace Greeley later wrote: “The country’s salvation claimed no nobler sacrifice than that of James S. Wadsworth, of New York.... No one surrendered



Wayne Mahood

more for his country’s sake, or gave his life more joyfully for her deliverance.”

Wayne Mahood grew up in Illinois and received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees at Hamilton College, the University of Illinois, and Syracuse University respectively. He taught high school social studies at York Community High School (Elmhurst, Illinois). Later he taught at SUNY-Geneseo from 1969-1994, chairing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,

He has written or co-authored eight books, including five dealing with the Civil War: The Plymouth Pilgrims (Longstreet House, 1989); Charlie Mosher’s Civil War: From Fair Oaks to Andersonville with the Plymouth Pilgrims (Longstreet House, 1994); “Written in Blood”: A History of the 126th New York Vols. (Longstreet House, 1997); The Life and Times of Brevet Major General James S. Wadsworth (DaCapo Press, 2003); Alexander “Fighting Elleck” Hays (McFarland, 2005). His articles have been published in *Civil War Times*, *Civil War Regiments*, *North & South*, and *New York History*. His wife, Bobbi Mahood, and he have two sons, Bruce and David, two daughters-in-law and four grandsons.



Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

Marker Honors 69th Pa. Charge at Glendale. by Scott C. Boyd, Glendale, VA – The 148th anniversary of the Battle of Glendale was commemorated by the dedication of a historical marker which tells the story of the 69th Pennsylvania “Irish Volunteers” bayonet charge to retake a captured artillery battery during the June 30, 1862, battle.

Before the June 26 dedication at the site some 30 men of the modern 69th Pennsylvania reenactment group traced their historical counter-parts’ trail through over half a mile of dense woods on their way to the clearing where the ceremony was held. Mosquitoes, ticks and a very hot, humid Virginia day were impediments to be coped with. As they approach the clearing where some 40 spectators awaited, the unit fired a rifle volley to announce its presence and begin the ceremony.

Civil War Trust Preservation Trust (CWPT) Chief Operating Officer Ron Cogswell congratulated members of the 69th for their perseverance in getting the Civil War Trails marker, which they financed, and for their “impressive, memorable way of carrying out the dedication ceremony”.

The CWPT purchased the land where the marker was erected in 2007 from Dr. Len Morrow, Cogswell said. Added to other pieces purchased nearby, 577 acres of the Glendale, also known as Frayser’s Farm, have been “permanently protected, with more to come.”

Additionally, Cogswell noted that more than 1,000 acres at Malvern Hill, “linked forever in geography and history to Glendale,” have been saved by the CWPT and National Park Service (NPS).

Someday all of these acres will become part of the Richmond Na-

tional Battlefield Park, Cogswell said. “With 1,500 acres, probably closer to 2,000, with trails and signage and markers like this one we dedicate today, you have the critical mass for world-class battlefield preservation and interpretation.”

Richmond Battlefield historian Robert E.L. Krick said, “All you need to do, if you’re trying to put this into perspective, is think just locally about the Civil War battlefields we cannot visit today or ever again, because they’re gone.”

He listed Yellow Tavern, Seven Pines, “and most of the battlefields in Chesterfield County.”...

“Those places are lost to us forever, and that’s not going to happen here at the Glendale, or Frayser’s Farm, Battlefield,” Krick said. He praised Dr. Morrow, the CWPT and other landowners who helped preserve the land.

The 69th Pennsylvania marker sits by the site of the Whitlock House, now just a small depression in the ground nearby. Krick said the Whitlocks “found themselves in just the most unimaginable predicament with the larger part of the two largest armies in the world trying to destroy each other on their farm here.”

They survived, he said. “Their cabin, much the worse for the wear, became the point of reference that soldiers mentioned in their letters, diaries and memoirs because this was the only landmark on this side of the road.”

Krick read from a letter he recently acquired which mentions a South Carolina soldier being buried 50 paces from the Whitlock House. He said there is no doubt many unmarked Confederate, and maybe some Union, graves are on the side....

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1039 Hinswood

Darien, Illinois 60561

Phone: 630-460-1865

www.chicagocwr.org

The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or contact bsa1861@att.net.



The musicians and singers of the 69th, who have issued two music CDs, performed several songs before unit historian, David Kopich, spoke. He said the 69th Pennsylvania “Irish Volunteers” Civil War Reenactors organization started its project to honor the original regiment about 16 years ago. He thanked the CWPT for its support.

The author of several books about the 69th, Kopich has been president of the unit for eight years and, wearing his captain’s uniform, was their leader at the ceremony. ...

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the reenactors passed by the marked – many left a sprig of green or a pinch of Irish soil on the plaque.

The former property owner, Dr. Morrow, told this reporter after the ceremony that his grandparents bought the land in 1918, “so I almost made it 100 years.”

Dr. Morrow said, “I’ve always been mindful that this hallowed ground. That’s one reason I wanted to see it come to preservation and the Park Service. You don’t want a Walmart here on top of this.”

From the August “Civil War News”

June Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

John V. Quarstein provided an energetic presentation to 72 members and guests on the “Battle of the Ironclads” at the 692nd meeting of the Chicago Civil War Round Table. The encounter between the *Monitor* and *Merrimack* resulted from technological changes in ship design over the decades prior to the war which fulfilled the exigent needs of the combatants. The Confederacy needed to match Union naval superiority while the northern navy was faced with the need to maintain its advantage on internal waters.

The development of explosive shells capable of destroying wooden ships precipitated the need for ironclad ships and the advent of steam power in the early 19th century promoted changes in ship design. The invention of the screw propeller in 1839 provided below-waterline protection for a ship’s drive force. These technologies were first used by the Russians in the Crimean War (1854-5); the French and English navies soon followed with ironclad steam frigates. The United States lagged behind, eventually building a steam screw frigate in 1857. This was the *USS Merrimack*, of whom it was said, “her engines were only good for going in and out of port.”

At the outbreak of the war, the *Merrimack* was moored in Gosport Naval Yard where on April 20, 1861, Virginia volunteers placed the facility under siege. Loyal sailors set fire to the yard, but the *Merrimack* sank, her hull intact. Confederate Secretary of the Navy Mallory was seeking a weapon to counter the Union blockade of Hampton Roads. John M. Brooke promoted an ironclad, a casemated vessel of increased buoy-

ancy. The naval architect John L. Porter put the casemate on top on the *Merrimack* hull to produce the *CSS Virginia*, 262 feet, 9 inches in length and pierced for ten guns, with a ram extending 15 feet from its bow.

The *Virginia* was launched on February 17, 1862. “Navigable as a waterlogged log” was how some described its seaworthiness, but its captain, Franklin Buchanan, termed it a “wooden ship killer.” When he took this ‘half submerged crocodile intent on evil’ on its shakedown cruise on March 8, 1862, he determined to attack the Union fleet, at Hampton Roads among which were the *USS Cumberland* and *USS Congress*. The *Virginia* fired ‘hot shot’ broadside into the *Congress*, which, damaged, ran aground under the guns of Fort Monroe. The ironclad then attacked and rammed the *Cumberland*, which started to sink immediately. The *Virginia* began to sink as well when its ram stuck to the *Cumberland*. But the ram eventually broke, and the two ships traded broadsides at 50 feet. Meanwhile, Congress raised the white flag, and Buchanan was wounded by fire from shore while on deck observing his ship’s work.

While this action was taking place, the *USS Monitor* was moving toward Hampton Roads. The *Monitor* was designed by John Ericsson who with Francis Smith invented the screw propeller. His model for an ironclad was initially rejected, but after President Lincoln expressed interest, it was adopted. The crew of this vessel was under the waterline—the first ship of its type. The *Monitor* was 171 feet long with an 11 foot draft and equipped with two Dahlgren guns. As the

ship moved out from the Brooklyn naval yard, “she did not appear to be a seagoing craft”; it is not surprising she almost sank while in tow to the Chesapeake.

The *Monitor* was commanded by future Admiral John Worden and assigned to defend the *USS Minnesota* which had gone aground. Early on March 9th, *Virginia* attacked. She had armor piercing ammunition but was not fitted with it that day. As the two ships battled, *Virginia*, smokestacks riddled and engine slowing, began to leak. *Monitor*’s turret was damaged and her speaking tube out of commission, making fire control haphazard and forcing Worden to use runners to relay messages from the pilot house. As her ammunition and coal were consumed, *Virginia* began to rise. *Monitor* attempted to ram her propeller, but her steering mechanism failed, causing an errant collision during which Worden was blinded. *Monitor* withdrew for repairs and *Virginia* resumed her attack on the fleet, but as night fell, the battle ended.

Virginia blocked the James River for three months but ran aground while trying to steam to Richmond, after which her crew destroyed her. *Monitor* participated in the May attack on Drewry’s Bluff but could not elevate her guns enough to take on the batteries there. She sank off the coast of North Carolina on Christmas, 1862, a sad end for a vessel that, with the other 66 US built ironclads and the *Virginia*, influenced naval warfare for 80 years.

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



Dave Corbett and his “Battlefield Balladeers” will perform Sept. 19th at Elk Grove Village’s “Pioneer Days”. Visit www.youtube.com/battlefieldballadeers for details.

Leslie Goddard will present “Clara Barton” Sept. 21st at the Lincoln-Davis CWRT in Alsip.

The Military History Education Group is holding its 15th annual “Fall Symposium” Saturday, Sept. 25th, at Yoder’s Kitchen Banquet Facility in Arthur, IL. Speakers include David Fraley, Tom Flagel, Stephen A. Wynalda, and James A. Morgan. For more information call (217) 578-2262. Tickets are \$50 in advance.

Mike Weeks spoke on “America’s Civil War Sites” to the Lincoln-Davis CWRT on Aug. 17th, and to the Chicago area Mensa on Aug. 28th.

Robert I. Girardi was a guest on John Kociolko’s radio show, WJJG Radio 1530, on Aug. 24th. In September Rob’s new book, “Gettysburg in Art and Artifacts” is due to come out.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsa1861@att.net or (630) 297-8046.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus 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.

Upcoming Civil War Events

- Sept. 1st, Lake County CWRT: Marty Cain on “Baseball During the Civil War”
- Sept. 1st, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Phil Angelo on “Civil War Correspondents”
- Sept. 3rd, Northern Illinois CWRT: Frank Crawford on “Medical Procedures on the Mississippi River”
- Sept. 9th, Milwaukee CWRT: Wayne Mahood on “General Wadsworth”
- Sept. 11th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Robert I. Girardi on “The Engineers at Fredericksburg”. This is part of their 3rd Annual Great Lakes Civil War Forum. See the attached brochure for more details.
- Sept. 14th, McHenry Co. CWRT: Frank Crawford on “My Friend in the Civil War”
- Sept. 17th, Salt Creek CWRT: Paula Walker on “A Whitman’s Sampler: A Sampling of Poetry from the War Years”
- Sept. 18th: DuPage Civil War Collectors Show in Wheaton
- Sept. 21st, Lincoln-Davis CWRT in Alsip: Leslie Goddard presents “Clara Barton”
- Sept. 23rd, South Suburban CWRT: Robert I. Girardi on “William Passmore Carlin, Fighting General”
- Sept. 30th, Conference on Illinois History in Springfield: Robert I. Girardi on “Lyman Widney and the 34th Illinois”
- Oct. 2, 13th Annual Civil War Symposium and Reenactment at Cantigny, featuring presentations by Bruce Levine, Russell McClintock, William K. Scarborough, and Joan Waugh. Contact the National Archives at (773) 948-9001 for more information.

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*.

Sept. 10: Wayne Mahood, “General Wadsworth”

Oct. 8: Earl Hess, “Petersburg”

Nov. 12: Robert Girardi, the Nevins Freeman Address

Dec. 10: Samuel C. Hyde, “A Wisconsin Yankee in the Confederate Bayou Country”

Jan. 14, 2011: Lawrence L. Hewitt, “Slandered Heroes: Deserters Who Didn’t”

Feb. 11: TBA

March 11: Susan Boardman, “Gettysburg Cyclorama”

April 8: Richard McMurry, TBA

May 13: Tom Schott, “Alexander Stephens”

June 10: Peter Carmichael, TBA

Reminders

Bjorn Skaptason at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop reminds us that the next “Virtual Book Signing” will be noon, Oct. 9th, with Earl Hess talking about his new book, [Into the Crater: The Mine Attack at Petersburg](#). For more information on these and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.

On Sept. 23rd the Wheaton History Center will unveil the flag of the 36th IL Infantry. This CWRT donated tens of thousands of dollars to help restore this sacred relic, in large part due to the vision and energy of our friend the late Steve Stewart. The event starts at 7 p.m., with General Thomas (Jerry Kowalski), among others, making some well-chosen remarks.

Website Address

A reminder: our website address is www.chicagocwrt.org.