

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXV, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April, 1975

COL. HAROLD B. SIMPSON ON HOOD'S TEXAS BRIGADE

Having relived in March the campaigns of a prominent Confederate unit from the Army of Tennessee, in April we turn our attention eastward to review the achievements of its counterpart in the Army of Northern Virginia. On April 11, a former Chicagoan, Colonel Harold B. Simpson, will return to our podium, after an eight year absence, to relate the exploits of Hood's Texas Brigade.



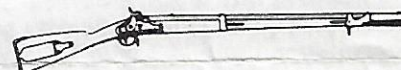
Harold B. Simpson

This famed band of Texans, without whose story no history of Lee's army can be written, was formally organized in Virginia in November, 1861. While at various times during the War troops from Georgia, South Carolina and Arkansas also were included in the brigade, its core consisted of thirty-two companies, divided into the First, Fourth and Fifth Texas regiments, which were raised in twenty-seven Texas counties. The first brigade commander, former senator Louis T. Wigfall, left the army in February, 1862 to assume a seat in the Confederate Congress. He was replaced by John Bell Hood who, when promoted to divisional leadership six months later, left as his legacy to the troops his name and, more important, his fighting characteristics.

The brigade participated in a total of thirty-eight engagements during the Civil War. In six of the most important battles, Gaines Mill, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, and Wilderness, it was in the midst of the heaviest fighting. Of the over thirty-eight hundred men who served in its ranks, only four hundred twenty-seven remained to surrender at Appomattox. The great combat ability of the brigade was realized by Lee himself who, voicing his dependency on the men from the Lone Star state, said "I rely on the Texans in all tight places". That this affection was returned by the brigade to Marse Robert is evidenced by the famous "Lee to the rear" incident at the Tapp farm during the battle for the Wilderness.

Even when peace had finally returned, the activities of the Texas Brigade did not cease. Its veterans' association, formed in 1872, was one of the most prominent groups of its type. Annual reunions were held through 1933, with the various cities in the state competing for the honor of hosting the meeting each year. The date of the reunion was always the same, June 27, the anniversary of the brigade's breakthrough at Gaines Mill, one of its proudest moments.

Harold Simpson participated in R.O.T.C. at the University of Illinois before he joined the Army as a lieutenant in 1940. Transferring to the Air Force the following year, he spent thirty-one months in the Pacific during World War II. His career in the service lasted a total of twenty-three years until his retirement in 1963 with the rank of colonel. While in the



340th REGULAR MEETING

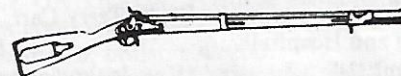
Harold B. Simpson
on
Hood's Texas Brigade:
Lee's Grenadier Guard

Friday, April 11, 1975

Chicago Bar Association
29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



Air Force, he attended military courses at the Air War College, Armed Forces Staff College, Air Command and Staff College, and the Air Tactical School. His civilian degrees include a B.S. in Foreign Commerce, an M.S. in Public Administration, and an M.A. in Personnel Management, all from Illinois, as well as a Ph.D. in history from Texas Christian University. Since 1963 he has been on the faculty of Hill Junior College, Hillsboro, Texas, where he now holds the position of Chairman of the Social Studies Department. He is also an Adjunct Professor of History at T.C.U.

Among the works authored or edited by Colonel Simpson are twenty-one books on Texas, Confederate and United States military history, as well as twelve magazine articles and over one hundred book reviews. Included in the books is his award winning "Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard" (1970) which will provide the basis for his address to us. As we noted in the February issue of the Newsletter, the Colonel was recently presented with the Earl R. Davis Award and the Dick Dowling Medal for his outstanding literary accomplishments. Among his many other honors have been appointments to the editorial boards of several academic journals.

In addition to his literary pursuits, Colonel Simpson has been instrumental in founding the Confederate Research Center and Gun Museum, which he now serves as director. He is also director of the Hill Junior College Press. Colonel Simpson has been responsible for the organization of Round Tables at Wiesbaden, Germany, Montgomery, Alabama, Waco, Texas and Fort Worth, Texas.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago Illinois 60611
Phone: (312) 944-3085

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The only requirement for membership is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Burton Rovens, 6033 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60660.



*from the
Editor's pen*



Some random thoughts on various matters:

****Those of us who have had the good fortune to have visited the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania will readily testify to the magnificent quality of the Military History Research Collection contained within the College's library. Part of that collection comprises one of the nation's finest assemblages of resource material pertaining to the Civil War. Therefore we are extremely grateful to B.F. Cooling of the staff of the Research Collection for taking the time to prepare a complete catalog of all of the Civil War items in the Collection. This five hundred ninety-two page work, which has just been published, will readily become a basic reference tool of invaluable assistance to anyone researching a topic related to the events of 1861-1865. Those wishing a copy need only request one by writing the U.S. Army Military

History Research Collection, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 17013, asking for Special Bibliographic Series Number 11 (The Era of the Civil War 1820-1876).****

****Several months ago this space was devoted to a discussion of whether women should be admitted to membership in the Round Table. Although we invited response from the advocates of this policy change, only three replies were received and none of those was from the wife of a member. From this lack of reaction we must assume that the vast majority, both men and women, are in favor of the status quo. We might point out, in fact, that several members of the Campfollowers indicated that they preferred the situation as it now exists. However, we do wish to acknowledge those ladies who did write to support co-ed membership, our dear friend Alice Cromie, Pam Stilson of Barrington, and Martha Kayler of Wilmette. As space allows, we hope to print their letters in the future.****

****In what must be classified as a monument to ridiculous oversensitivity, Georgia Tech Athletic Director Bobby Dodd has instructed the school's band to cease playing "Dixie". The move was an apparent reaction to the feeling that the song was injurious to the school's high school recruiting program among black athletes. Apparently this new policy of anti-"Dixie" is spreading to other campuses, such as Auburn and the University of Georgia, as well, despite student support for the song. While we agree that it is most important to have regard for the feeling of others, we must take exception with anyone who fancies themselves offended by this tune. May we remind them of the request of Abraham Lincoln when, after the fall of Richmond, he was asked by serenaders what song he would like to hear.****

****We note that most of the other Round Tables have given their newsletters a title, such as "The Bushwacker" from St. Louis and "Hardtack" from Indianapolis. To us, this publication has always been just "The Newsletter", but maybe that is like naming the family pet "Dog". Therefore, as General Meade did on the evening of July 2, 1863, we shall solicit votes on our future course in this all important issue. We would appreciate your response to two questions: first, shall this newsletter have an official sobriquet and second, if so, what should it be. However, suggestions which reflect on the personal or journalistic characteristics of the Newsletter staff such as "The Sink" or "The Skulker" will not be accepted.****



Brooks Davis cordially invites the membership of the Civil War Round Table, their families and guests to attend a Civil War Memorial Service at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. James on Sunday, April 13th at 5:00 P.M. The service will mark the restoration in the church tower of a Civil War Memorial which survived the great Chicago fire of October 8 and 9, 1871. The memorial commemorates ten men from the parish who died in the War in such places as Williamsburg, Fort St. Charles, Arkansas and Gettysburg. Members of the church fought in virtually all of the major battles of the War to judge from the locations listed on the memorial plaques. The visit of newly-elected Abraham Lincoln to St. James, in company with his friend, parishioner Isaac Arnold, on November 25, 1860, is also remembered. A great many of the historic collection of photos, articles and memorabilia will be on view. Mr. Len O'Connor, the provocative television commentator and author will make an address during the ceremonies. Also, the Cathedral's well-known choir will sing music of the Civil War period, including a special presentation of Battle Hymn of the Republic. The program is part of a centennial series commemorating the rebuilding of the church in 1875 after almost complete destruction in the fire. The Cathedral is located at the corner of Cass (oops, Wabash) and Huron, one block west of Pine (Michigan Avenue), Chicago — about 10 minutes north of the Loop.

MARCH MEETING

Through the vivid description of "Mr. Kentucky", Frank Rankin, the footsteps of The Orphan Brigade were heard again by the seventy-seven members and guests present on March 14th. As was true of organizations throughout their state, the ranks of the Louisville Legion, which had won undying fame in the Mexican War, were split apart by the advent of the Civil War. Those members with Southern sympathy assembled at Camp Boone, just south of the Tennessee border, in July, 1861. The site had been selected so as to preserve the announced neutrality of Kentucky. By October, the 5,000 men had been formed into regiments which were banded together under the unit's official designation, the First Kentucky Brigade.

In the spring of the following year, one regiment and a battery were detached to go to the aid of Fort Donelson. There they were captured when Buckner was forced to surrender the garrison. The remainder of the brigade evacuated Bowling Green with the rest of Johnston's army after the fort's fall. As they marched south into Tennessee, they could not have foreseen that they would not again tread the soil of their native state until peace had been restored, after three long years of war.

The first chance to see the elephant came at Shiloh where, as part of Breckinridge's Reserve Division, they were in the midst of the turmoil of the Hornet's Nest. After suffering over eight hundred casualties in the two days of fighting, the brigade served as rear guard during the retreat, a role it was to play again and again in the campaigns ahead. In the next few months, the Kentuckians travelled across the western Confederacy, first assisting Van Dorn at Vicksburg, then taking part in an expedition to assault Baton Rouge, and finally marching to Knoxville where they were rejoined by their comrades who had been captured at Donelson. After this reunion they headed for Cumberland Gap with light hearts and broad smiles, for just across this storied pass was Kentucky and home. But it was not to be, for enroute the news of defeat at Perryville was received and an immediate return to Knoxville was ordered. As Frank pointed out, the failure of Bragg to include the brigade on his Kentucky invasion was just another example of Braxton's lack of foresight. Not counting their magnificent fighting ability, they would have been of invaluable assistance in securing recruits within the Bluegrass State, an avowed purpose of the campaign.

The unit's famous nickname was bestowed upon them after their next battle, Stone's River. As Breckinridge viewed their decimated ranks after the ill-conceived charge on January 2, 1863, he could only keep repeating "My poor orphans, my poor orphans". Ordered to Mississippi, the newly-crowned brigade participated in Johnston's futile attempt to succor Pemberton. After the fall of Vicksburg, the Kentuckians rejoined Bragg in time for Chickamauga. Playing their usual prominent role, it was their success on the Union left, despite the death of their commander, Ben Hardin Helm, which caused Thomas to seek help. Rosecrans' response to this request resulted in the decisive gap in the Federal line. At Chattanooga, the Orphans spearheaded Cleburn's repulse of Sherman at Tunnel Hill, the only bright spot in the Confederate disaster.

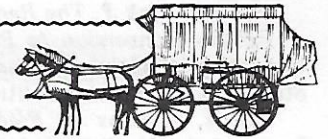
After the retreat from Missionary Ridge, Breckinridge was ordered to Virginia. His request to take the brigade with him was refused by Joe Johnston who regarded the unit as his finest combat troops. Starting the Atlanta campaign with 1,120 men, the Orphans had suffered over nine hundred casualties by Jonesboro. Yet they could proudly boast that not one from their ranks had deserted. As the Army of Tennessee, now led by Hood, headed north, the Kentuckians remained behind. Converted into mounted infantry and strengthened by returning former casualties, they joined Wheeler and Hardee to oppose Sherman's March To The Sea and Carolina Campaign. They fought on in this hopeless task

TO THE CAMPFOLLOWERS (LADIES)

At our March meeting Brooks Davis presented a program on the upcoming Richmond Battlefield Tour, describing what will be seen on each of the four days of the trip, as well as giving us a good background of the battles which took place in the Richmond area, both at the beginning and end of the war. Brooks also brought with him slides of the various spots to be visited on the tour, such as Monument Avenue, Hollywood Cemetery, the old capital building designed by Jefferson, St. Paul's Church, the Lee House, and the White House of the Confederacy, to name but a few. An exciting sidelight of the trip will be a cocktail party at Berkley, a beautiful plantation home on the James and home of two of our American presidents, William Henry and Benjamin Harrison.

In April Ralph Newman will talk to the Campfollowers on "What Was Abraham Lincoln Really Like". The meeting will be at the Newman apartment in the Hancock Building, 175 East Delaware, Apartment 5203. This promises to be another very interesting evening for the ladies. Please try to be with us on April 11, 1975 at 5:30 P.M. For reservations, write or call Mary Ellen Wehler, 244 South Elmwood, Aurora, Illinois 60506, Phone 896-0169.

The SUTLER'S WAGON



WANTED: Any information concerning the Reminiscences of Union General Jefferson C. Davis, a book or pamphlet written by the general in 1866; also wanted: a copy of "A Personality" by James Speed. Contact Gordon Whitney, R.R. #2, Box 48, Madison, Indiana 47250.

FOR SALE OR TRADE: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Volume II, in good condition. Contact Gordon Whitney R.R. #2, Box 48, Madison, Indiana 47250.

FOR SALE: 160 issues of Civil War Times and Civil War Times Illustrated — \$275. Contact Charles Shields, P.O. Box 148, Frankfort, Illinois 60423.



The April meeting of the Des Plaines historical society will feature a one hour film entitled "The Road To Gettysburg". The movie utilizes the writings of the soldiers to sketch the causes of the War and to trace the military events of the first two years of conflict. The last part of the picture is devoted to a reenactment of the great battle in Pennsylvania. The meeting, which is open to the public, will begin at 8:00 P.M. on April 15th in Webster Hall of the First Congregational Church, 766 Graceland Avenue, Des Plaines.

The Sons of Union Veterans will hold their annual memorial service honoring Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1975 at the Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois. The ceremonies will begin at 11:00 A.M. and will be followed by a luncheon at the State House Inn. Principal speaker at the luncheon will be the Honorable Harlington Wood, Jr., Judge of the Federal District Court at Springfield.

through the last months of the War, seeing action at Bentonville before laying down their arms at Washington, Georgia on May 6, 1865.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Angle, Paul M. *On a Variety of Subjects*. With an introduction by Hoke Norris. Chicago: Chicago Historical Society and The Caxton Club, 1974. \$6.95.

Aschman, Rudolph. *Memoirs of a Swiss Officer in the American Civil War*. Edited by Neinz K. Meier. Bern, Switzerland: Herbert Lang, 1972. \$15.00.

Brown, Stephen Dorman. *Harpers Ferry, West Virginia*. [Photos by Stephen D. Brown and John C. Garofalo]. Harpers Ferry, W. Va.: Little Brown House, 1974.

Browne, Ray B., editor. *Lincoln-Lore: Lincoln in the Popular Mind*. With a foreword by Russel B. Nye. Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, c1974. \$20.00.

Cooling, B. Franklin. *The Era of the Civil War — 1820-1876*. With accompanying essays by Richard Sommers and Gordon Chappell. Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, 1974. Special Bibliography No. 11.

Eaton, Clement. *A History of the Old South: The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation*. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1975. \$10.95.

Maddex, Jack P. *The Reconstruction of Edward A. Pollard: A Rebel's Conversion to Postbellum Unionism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974. The James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science, vol. 54.

Morris, Thomas D. *Free Men All: The Personal Liberty Laws of the North, 1780-1861*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. \$12.50.

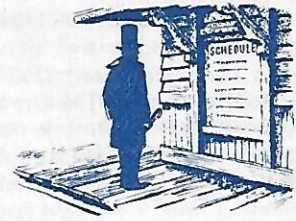
Wiley, Bell Irvin. *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865*. Foreword by C. Vann Woodward. Baton: Louisiana State University Press, 1974. Reprint of the edition done by Yale in 1938. Wrappers, \$3.50.



The 1975 Summer Civil War Institute of Virginia Polytechnic Institute will hold classes from June 15 thru July 4 this year. Sessions will be held on the campus of Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The curriculum will include battlefield tours as well as classroom activities, all designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the background, progress and legacy of the war. Upon successful completion of the course, all participants will receive five quarter hours of graduate credit. Tuition is one hundred dollars and dormitory lodging is available at additional cost. The director and chief lecturer of the Institute is our good friend, Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson. All of those wishing to attend must apply for admission to the Graduate School of Virginia Tech, so for information and forms, write to Dr. Fred W. Bull, Graduate School, VPI&SU, Blacksburg, Va. 24061.

The 45th Illinois Volunteer Infantry and the Galena Chamber of Commerce will join in sponsoring the 4th Annual U.S. Grant Civil War Cantonment in Galena on May 16, 17 and 18. Included in the festivities will be drill and camp demonstrations, tours of Galena, a parade, a mock skirmish, musket and pistol shooting matches, and a military ball featuring the music of Milwaukee's First Brigade Band. For further information, write the 45th Illinois, P.O. Box 71, Galena, Illinois 61036.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Alexander J. Isaacs, an Honorary Life Member and one of our



BULLETIN BOARD

FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle, second Friday in each month except as noted.

April 11: Harold Simpson on "The Texas Brigade, Lee's Grenadier Guard."

April 30, May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour to Richmond.

May 9: Ralph G. Newman on "The Last Full Measure of Devotion — Abraham Lincoln's Incredible Funeral."

June 13: Ladies Night. Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner, and Installation of Officers. Recipient of Award: Ralph G. Newman.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at LaSalle Hotel Coffee Shop; all members welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

Thomas M. Cain, 1211 W. 22nd Street, Oakbrook, Illinois 60521.

Robert C. Grossman, 120 N. Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602.



original founders. Mr. Isaacs, who was sixty-eight, passed away on March 18, 1975. In addition to his professional activities as a Chicago attorney, he also had established a fine reputation as an appraiser and collector of rare and out of print books.

Many of our members have been quite active on the speaking trail. Past Presidents Gordon Whitney and Marshall Krolick appeared before the Madison C.W.R.T. in February and March, respectively. Gordon spoke on "The Battle of Nashville", while Marshall described "Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg". Frank Rankin related the adventures of "Morgan and His Men" to the Round Tables in Kansas City on February 25th and St. Louis on February 26th. He is scheduled to deliver the same address in Atlanta in the near future. On March 21st the Louisville C.W.R.T. heard Phil Hohlweck detail the exploits of "Berdan's Sharpshooters". Our Honorary Life Member and Battlefield Guide, Ed Bearss, will speak to a joint meeting of the Decatur and Springfield Round Tables on April 10th.

The latest book of Honorary Life Member Avery Craven, Professor Emeritus of American History, University of Chicago, has just been published. Entitled "Rachel of Old Louisiana", it is the biography of Rachel O'Connor who was mistress of one of the South's finest plantations from 1797 to 1846. Based largely on Rachel's own letters, the book provides a unique look at life in the Ante-Bellum South. Mr. Craven also prepared the illustrations for the volume.

In conjunction with the occasion of its 200th meeting, the Indianapolis C.W.R.T. recently issued a list of twenty of its best programs. We are proud to note that included were the presentations of five of our members or Honorary Life members, Ed Bearss, Dick Blake, Ed Johnson, E.B. "Pete" Long, and Bell Wiley.