

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXVII, Number 1

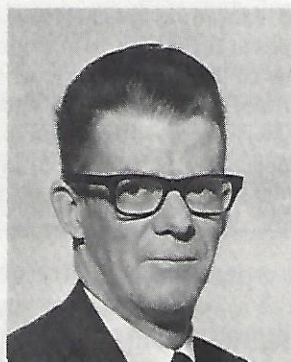
Chicago, Illinois

September, 1976

JOSEPH P. CULLEN ON THE BATTLE OF COLD HARBOR

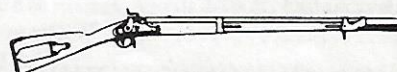
On June 3, 1864, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant ordered a frontal attack against Lee's heavily entrenched forces along a six mile front at Cold Harbor. The resulting attack proved to be the most crushing defeat for the Union during the entire Civil War. Joseph P. Cullen will describe this conflict for us, at our first meeting of the 1976-1977 season, on September 10, 1976. Joe Cullen, of course, is no stranger to our Round Table, having spoken to us on many occasions, most recently during our 1975 tour to Richmond. Those who attended that tour will certainly recall his excellent talk on General McClellan and the Battles of the Seven Days.

Joe Cullen, who now resides in Fredericksburg, Virginia, is a native of New York state. He spent the early part of his life working and travelling in Europe. He has a B.A. and M.A. degree in History from Syracuse University, and had a teaching fellowship there for two years. For four years during World War II Joe served as a B-29 pilot in the Army Air Corps, with service in the South Pacific. He joined the National Park Service in 1958 as Historian at the Richmond National Battlefield Park and has since served as Chief Historian at Fredericksburg, Staff Historian, and WASO and Public Affairs Officer in Richmond. Joe has authored numerous articles for various magazines as well as many National Park Service historical handbooks such as "Richmond Battlefields", "Where a Hundred Thousand Fell" (Fredericksburg), and "Yorktown". He has also written two books, "The Concise Illustrated History of the American Revolution" (1972) and the recently published "The Peninsula Campaign, 1862".



Joseph P. Cullen

His topic for our September meeting, the Battle of Cold Harbor, followed those of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania and the North Anna, all of which took place in less than a month in the Spring of 1864. After each of these prior battles, Grant had moved the Army of the Potomac to the southeast, attempting to flank Lee's right. However, each time he found the Army of Northern Virginia there ahead of him. Frustrated, Grant was determined to crush Lee's army and, as a result, decided to attack the strong Confederate position at Cold Harbor rather than try another flanking movement around the enemy. Beginning early on the morning of June 3, 1864, the main assault was made by Hancock on the Union left, Wright in the center and W.F. Smith on the right. The Federal assault was met by a destructive sheet of Confederate artillery and musketry fire which shortly



353rd REGULAR MEETING

Joseph P. Cullen
on

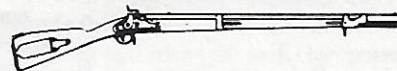
The Battle of
Cold Harbor

Friday, September 10, 1976

Chicago Bar Association
29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



The Round Table will hold a special fall tour to Galena, Freeport and Belvidere on October 9 and 10, 1976. For further information, see page 3.

brought the drive to a halt. Two more attacks were ordered, but these also failed and by noon Grant called off the operation. In the initial charge, Grant suffered over 7,000 casualties in less than 15 minutes. The Union general later stated in his memoirs that he was sorry that the attack had ever been made. Following his defeat at Cold Harbor, Grant again made a flanking movement around Lee's right by crossing the James, thus initiating the steps which culminated in the siege of Petersburg and Lee's surrender less than a year later.

Joe will point out to us that this battle was one of the most significant fought during the Civil War, not necessarily because of the number killed or its character as a particularly vicious fight, but because the results of this battle changed the nature of the war in the East from a war of maneuver to a war of siege. It influenced the tactics and strategy of future wars by showing that well-manned, well-selected entrenchments, adequately supported by artillery, were practically impregnable to frontal assaults. He will bring out that this was sensed at both Gettysburg and Spotsylvania and finally proven at Cold Harbor. Cold Harbor was in a sense a preview of the trench warfare of World War I.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

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

OFFICERS

President Terry Carr
Senior Vice President Myron Cohn
Vice President Robert H. Franke
Vice President Maurice Fisher
Secretary William J. Sullivan
Treasurer Irwin Levin
Assistant Secretary Donald E. Anderson
Assistant Treasurer James H. Huber
Editor of Newsletter Marshall D. Krolick
Contributing Editor Richard E. Clark
Assistant Editor Robert H. Franke
Inspector General Charles D. Wesselhoeft

Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Terms expiring in 1977: John F. Scapin, Robert G. Walter, Glen N. Wiche, Edward J. Williams.

Terms expiring in 1978: John E. Comerford, Raymond J. Jankovich, Jr., Hugh P. McAniff, Marvin Sanderman.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Membership Ward C. Smidl
Hospitality Robert H. Franke
Publicity Robert A. Bermant, Daniel R. Weinberg
House Richard J. Percy, Merlin E. Sumner
Mailing List Brooks Davis
Nominating Gerald M. Edelstein, Ward C. Smidl
Speakers Bureau Daniel R. Weinberg
Battlefield Tour Gordon Whitney, Myron Cohn,
William J. Sullivan
Research Center Ralph G. Newman, Robert H. Franke,
Brooks Davis

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Ward C. Smidl, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60067.



As part of the Bicentennial observance, the National Park Service determined to remove for display the contents of the sealed vault in Wilder Tower on the Chickamauga National Battlefield Park. The tower is, of course, named for General John T. Wilder, famed federal mounted infantry commander and later mayor of Chattanooga. When the vault was sealed in 1899, it contained numerous Civil War artifacts and relics. When it was opened this year, after four hours of drilling, it was found to contain — nothing. Ed Tinney, Park Historian at Chickamauga, said scratches found inside the vault indicate it was broken into and resealed by thieves approximately sixty years ago.

*from the
Editor's pen*



The program for the Second Annual Congress of Civil War Round Tables has been finalized and it contains outstanding speakers and events of interest to every Civil War student. The agenda is set forth on page 4 of this Newsletter. In addition to those items, on Sunday, October 24 there will be an optional tour by bus to Gettysburg. Registration fee for the entire Congress, including all scheduled meals, lectures, seminars, the Antietam tour, and a one-year subscription to Civil War Round Table Associates (but not including the optional Gettysburg Tour), is \$76.00 if paid by September 15, \$85.00 thereafter. Cost of lodging is extra and arrangements must be made directly with the Penn-Ram Motel.

The first Congress was a success, but its impact will only be felt if the second one achieves an equal, or even greater success. That can only be brought about through participation from which will flow the free exchange of ideas leading to action. It cannot be considered immodest to say that we in Chicago have been a leader in the Round Table movement. That role must be carried forth into the Congress and the purposes for which it is organized. The best means of doing so is to have as many of our own members present as possible. We urge all who can attend to make their reservation now by addressing Civil War Round Table Associates, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217. For any additional information, please contact your editor.

SUMMER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The major item on the agenda of the Summer Executive Committee Meeting, held July 17, 1976, was the selection of a regular meeting site for the coming year. A committee, consisting of Charles Wesselhoeft, James Huber and Glen Wiche, had made an exhaustive survey of available sites, including restaurants, hotel banquet facilities, and private clubs. It was their recommendation, based upon their written report, that we remain at the Bar Association, which has extensively remodeled its dining rooms, but also, in order to meet rising costs and obtain better food selections, that we increase the price charged to the members for dinner. Both of these suggestions were unanimously approved by the Executive Committee and therefore, beginning in September, the dinner charge at each meeting will be eight dollars.

Also on the agenda were reports by the treasurer, the 1977 Battlefield Tour Committee and the Research Center Committee. In other action by the Executive Committee, a Fall tour to Galena was approved (details of which are described elsewhere in this Newsletter), Marshall Krolick was appointed our official delegate to the National Civil War Round Table Congress to be held in October, the present forms of speaker's gift and Nevins-Freeman Award were approved for future use, and a suggestion for a dues increase was voted down.

The 1976 convention of the California division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy was held in San Diego's U.S. Grant Hotel. This news has caused scientists to wonder if the latest California earthquake wasn't really just Jubal Early turning over in his grave.

JUNE MEETING

The third annual Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner was held June 11, 1976. The evening began with a visit to the Chicago Historical Society where we were greeted by the Society's director, Dr. Harold Skramsted. His welcoming remarks were followed by a tour of the Lincoln and Civil War exhibits. The Round Table members and their ladies and guests then strolled the short distance to the Germania Club where cocktails and a fine dinner were served amid the elegant furnishings of this historic Chicago landmark.

The program opened with the installation of the new officers for the 1976-1977 year. Incoming president Terry Carr then joined with past recipient Ralph G. Newman to present the 1976 Nevins-Freeman Award to our honored guest, Dr. T. Harry Williams, Boyd Professor of History at Louisiana State University. After accepting the award, Dr. Williams brilliantly described for us those aspects of the Civil War which, in his opinion, have made it such a popular area of study for over one hundred years. He began by comparing "our war" with the American Revolution, pointing out that even in this Bicentennial year the latter conflict has not elicited the interest that historians, both professional and amateur, across the country have long evidenced in the events of 1861-1865.

Dr. Williams attributes the enormous popularity of the Civil War to many factors, the first of which is that, despite its being a big war, it was still a personal conflict, manageable to the mind and controlled by men, not machines or technology. Those men themselves are also a major consideration, for they were men of character whose personalities did much to mold the outcome on the battlefield. Who can fail to become fascinated by the eccentric Jackson, the colorful Forest, the dogmatic Grant, or the aristocratic, yet human Lee.

Then too it was a war of pathos; to quote Whiteman "A strange, sad war". This fact can best be illustrated by the divisions it created not only in the country, but in families and friendships. Yet, because of those pre-existing relationships, it was also a war of fraternization and chivalry. Also, the Civil War was at once a modern war, but at the same time an old-fashioned war. Its days were marked by the first use of many new weapons created by the blossoming industrial revolution, but, especially in its early years, its tactics did not advance at an equal rate. The tragic outcome of this transition was an even greater shedding of blood than had ever been seen before.

In a governmental sense too, the Civil War is unique, as it marks the only failure of American democracy. Just this once, were we unable to resolve our internal problems by debate, legislation, election or judicial action. Perhaps this violent confrontation was necessary to illustrate to all future generations the folly of going beyond the remedies established by the Constitution.

This brought Dr. Williams to yet another reason for our continued study, the effect of the Civil War on the events which were to follow it. It ended slavery, but did nothing to resolve the position of the ex-slaves, thus leaving the issue of race relations to fester into the 1970's. However, and probably most important of all, as Dr. Williams concluded, the Civil War was the single event which determined that our country would forever be a strong federal union and not a confederacy of individual states. Thus is it any wonder that so many millions of words have been written and read about the Civil War, not only by those who actually lived through it, but also by those who, by those words, bridge the gap of time to vicariously "see the elephant".

TO THE CAMPFOLLOWERS (LADIES)

September 10, 1976 will also mark the opening of the 1976-1977 year for the Campfollowers. As our regular members will readily attest, our meetings provide an opportunity to combine a delightful social evening with a learning experience in the field of Civil War history. We urge all interested ladies to join with us and share what has become a most looked-forward-to monthly event.

Our speaker in September will be former educator and Civil War authority Miner T. Coburn, an Honorary Award Life Member of The Round Table. His topic will be "Illinois In The Civil War". The meeting will be held, as usual, in The Little Corporal Restaurant, State at Wacker (parking is readily available) with cocktails at 5:30, the program at 6:00 and dinner at 7:00. Reservations can be made by contacting Margaret April, 175 E. Delaware Place, Chicago 60611, 787-1860.

FALL TOUR TO GALENA

Under the guidance of Co-Chairmen Dan Lapinski and John Comerford, a Fall weekend trip to the Galena, Illinois area has been planned for The Round Table members and their families and guests. The tour will depart from Chicago on the morning of Saturday, October 9, 1976. Our first stop will be in Belvidere where we will be privileged to view the famed Stephen A. Hurlburt shrine in the company of Dr. G.P. Clausius, noted Hurlburtarian authority. If our stomachs are still in working order after this experience, will then have lunch. That afternoon there will be a visit to the site of the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Freeport.

Dinner and overnight accommodations have been arranged at Timmerman's fine Restaurant and Motor Lodge near East Dubuque. It is hoped that it will be possible to have a candlelight tour of the U.S. Grant home in Galena after dinner. On Sunday, we will tour the town of Galena itself with its many restored buildings, antique shops and excellent historical society museum. The latter exhibit is especially noted for its momentos of the nine Civil War generals who were residents of the town. The group will return to Chicago late Sunday afternoon, October 10.

Means of travel will be optional as there will be a bus available from Chicago for those who do not wish to drive their own cars. Final details are being worked out and will be received in the mail, along with reservations forms, by all members within the next two weeks.

Treasurer Irwin Levin has announced that dues for 1976-1977 are now being accepted. Anyone who has not paid by October 31, 1976, will be dropped from the membership roster. Those who include the cost of a subscription to Civil War History in their dues remittance are reminded that the terms of such subscriptions commence with the spring (March) issue, not the winter issue.

Justin George Turner, 78, passed away on June 16, 1976, in Santa Monica, California. A native Chicagoan, Mr. Turner was a noted Lincoln authority and one of the nation's foremost book and manuscript collectors. With his daughter-in-law, he recently authored the acclaimed biography "Mary Lincoln: Her Life and Letters".



PROGRAM
For
Round Table
Congress



BULLETIN
BOARD

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1976

- 2 - 7 p.m. Registration — Penn-Ram Motel
- 2 - 5 p.m. Self-Guided Tours. U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, Upton Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Reception (cash bar) & Buffet Dinner — Penn-Ram Motel
- 7:30 p.m. "Echoes From Cemetery Ridge" — Penn-Ram Motel, Sherman Lavigna, Battle Creek CWRT, Presiding
- 9:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open (byob) Penn-Ram

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1976

- 8:00 a.m. Bus Leaves For Army War College
- 8:15 a.m. Coffee & Donuts — Upton Hall
- 8:30 a.m. CALL TO ORDER — Upton Hall
Col. W.P. Jones,
District of Columbia CWRT, Presiding
Welcoming Remarks by Col. James B. Agnew,
Director, Military History Research Collection
- 9:00 a.m. BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION SEMINAR
Upton Hall, George Craig, CWRT of NY,
Presiding — Dr. Robert Meinhard
Winona State University, Winona, Minn.
Report From Civil War Sites Fund
Panel on Various Preservation Topics:
Hancock Tomb, Cyclorama, Petersburg, etc.
- 10:30 a.m. COFFEE BREAK
- 10:45 a.m. CONTINUATION OF PANEL/SEMINAR —
Upton Hall. Judith Anthis, New Albany (Ind.)
CWRT, Presiding
- 12 Noon LUNCHEON — Army War College Officers
Club — Roland Galvin,
CWRT of Richmond, Presiding
Speaker: Francis Wilshin, Fredericksburg, Va.,
Former Superintendent,
Manassas National Battlefield Park
"The Bullock Maps of First Bull Run"
- 1:45 p.m. HISTORY SEMINAR — Upton Hall
Guy DiCarlo, CWRT of New York, Presiding
Dr. Jay Luvaas, Allegheny College
Meadville, Pa. — "Civil War Tactics &
Strategy"
- 2:45 p.m. COFFEE BREAK
- 3:00 p.m. CWRT ACTIVITIES PANEL — Upton Hall
Tom McCall, CWRT of North Carolina, Presid-
ing — Various speakers from CWRTs, relic-
hunter groups, re-enactment organizations,
etc.
- 4:30 p.m. TOUR OF MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH
COLLECTION
Dr. B. Franklin Cooling
Assistant Director for Historical Services
Army Military History Research Collection
- 6:00 p.m. Bus Returns to Penn-Ram Motel
- 7:00 p.m. Reception (cash bar) — Penn-Ram Motel
- 8:00 p.m. BANQUET — Penn-Ram Motel
Speaker: Dr. Harry Pfanz, Chief Historian,
National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
"Preservation Problems at Manassas and
Gettysburg"
- 9:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open (byob)—Penn-Ram
Meeting of Resolutions Committee — Penn-
Ram Motel

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1976

- 8:00 a.m. Bus Leaves for Army War College
- 8:15 a.m. Coffee & Donuts — Upton Hall
- 8:45 a.m. CALL TO ORDER — Upton Hall
Mrs. A.P. Andrews, Jackson CWRT, Presiding
- CONGRESS BUSINESS SESSION
Report of Resolutions Committee
Discussion of 1977 Congress Site

FUTURE MEETINGS

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

September 10: Joseph P. Cullen on "The Battle of Cold Harbor."

October 8: William W. Hassler on "The Haunting Mystery of A.P. Hill."

October 9 & 10: Fall Tour to Galena, Freeport, and Belvidere.

November 12: Brooks Davis — Topic to be announced.

December 10: Robert Orr Baker on "The Battle of Brices Cross Roads — June 10, 1864."

January 14: Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. on "Lee and Jackson: The Confederacy's Premier Team."

February 11: Mark E. Neely, Jr. on "To Distinguish Myself: Lincoln and the Mexican War."

March 11: Dr. William E. Parrish on "The Bohemian Brigade: The East Covers the War in Missouri in 1861."

April 8: Elden E. (Josh) Billings on "Sherman: A Critical Character Sketch."

May 4-8: Annual Battlefield Tour to Middle Tennessee.

May 13: Dr. Richard J. Sommers on "Petersburg."

June 10: Ladies night, Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Wieboldt's Men's Grill, 9th Floor, State and Madison; all members welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

Paul P. Gergen, 4200 Marcourt Lane, West Des Moines, Iowa 50265.

Nathan Yellen, 7327 N. Kedvale, Lincolnwood, Illinois, 60646.

Michael W. Fielding, 2110 Lincolnwood Drive, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

Donald Baker, 317 S. Dominion Drive, Wooddale, Illinois 60191.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Theodore H. Wirtz, 40 Northgate Road, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070.

Malvin K. Hoffman, 2406 South Voss, Apr. D220, Houston, Texas 77027.

10:00 a.m. BUS TOUR TO ANTIETAM BATTLEFIELD
Roger Johnson, Hagerstown CWRT, Presiding
Luncheon: Venice Inn, Hagerstown
Tour Conductor: Ed Bearss, Historian, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
Assisted by the Hagerstown CWRT

6:00 p.m. Bus Returns to Penn-Ram Motel
7:00 p.m. Reception (cash bar) — Penn-Ram Motel
8:00 p.m. BANQUET — Penn-Ram Motel
Marshall D. Krolick, The Civil War Round Table (Chicago), Presiding
Speaker: Ralph G. Newman, Proprietor, Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, Chicago, Ill.
Founder, CWRT Movement