

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLIII, Number 3

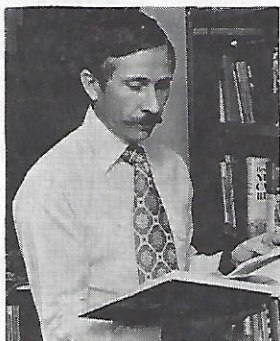
Chicago, Illinois

November, 1982

STEPHEN B. OATES ON JOHN BROWN: CATALYST FOR THE CIVIL WAR

When the antislavery forces lost the Congressional battle for a free Kansas, they vowed to carry the struggle to the territory itself. A fiery zealot of the abolitionist cause and a leading figure of the struggles of "Bleeding Kansas" and its aftermath was John Brown, whose personality, motives, and exploits will be the topic of Stephen B. Oates' address to The Round Table on November 12. Dr. Oates, a professor of history and adjunct professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, is a recognized authority on his subject and his presentation is certain to be both interesting and informative.

John Brown was a Connecticut-born abolitionist with the appearance of an Old Testament prophet who drifted west and settled in Kansas in 1855. He raised a free-state military company and immersed himself in the anti-slavery cause with increasing intensity and fanaticism. Brown led a party containing four of his sons on a nighttime raid along Pottawatomie Creek that resulted in the massacre of five proslavery settlers and plunged Kansas into full-scale guerrilla war.



STEPHEN B. OATES

It was during his involvement in the warfare in Kansas that Brown began to evolve a plan for a strike against slavery in the South. As a Calvinist with a belief in a God of wrath and justice, he envisioned a Biblically-inspired revolution to remove slavery from the U.S. His apparently wild scheme of invading Virginia, rallying slaves to his cause and establishing a provisional freedmen's republic was supported by several leading abolitionists.

On the night of October 16, 1859, Brown and a group of 18 men seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry with the intention of getting weapons to arm the thousands of slaves he expected to join his enterprise. Although the group had no trouble capturing the undefended arsenal, the operation fell apart when the slave reinforcements Brown had anticipated never materialized. Quick mobilization by local citizens and nearby militia succeeded in driving out the raiders who sustained heavy casualties. Brown himself was eventually hanged.

Of his talk on Brown, Oates says, "I shall discuss the historical controversy surrounding his 'sanity' and his role in the Kansas Civil War. Beyond a discussion of the man himself, his many contradictions and his Calvinist vision of a Biblically-inspired revolution to remove slavery from the U.S., I shall also delve into the enormous psychological impact his Harpers Ferry enterprise had on the slaveholding south and how that event exacerbated sectional tensions and more than any other event in the late 1850s



415th REGULAR MEETING

STEPHEN OATES
ON
JOHN BROWN: CATALYST FOR THE
CIVIL WAR

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1982

Como Inn
546 N. Milwaukee
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$12.50 per person



Beginning this month, anyone not making a reservation by noon of the Thursday preceding the Friday meeting will be charged an extra \$2 at the door. Also, if you make a reservation but find you cannot attend, please call the Book Shop.

spun the U.S. toward Civil War. My purpose will be to understand Brown and his motives—not pass judgment on the rightness or wrongness of his Virginia invasion (there has been too much polemical writing and discussion about this already)—and to understand Harpers Ferry through the eyes of embattled southerners of that time."

Stephen Oates was born in 1936 in Texas. He received his B.A. in 1958, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in 1960 and 1968 respectively from the University of Texas. His research and teaching specialties include Biography and American Studies, with special emphasis on the antebellum period; Civil War and Reconstruction; the South; U.S. race relations; American Indian history; and the American West.

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

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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 60007.



Bruce Catton's, "The Blue and the Gray," the long-awaited epic eight-hour drama about the Civil War, is scheduled to be broadcast on CBS-TV November 14, 16 and 17. (President Marv Sanderman has made arrangements for Round Table members to use the Pheasant Creek Clubhouse in Northbrook to view the November 14 showing. See the insert in this newsletter.)

The original story, prepared by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Bruce Catton and by John Leekley (who served as editor for Catton's final, posthumously published book, "Reflections on the Civil War"), is filled with carefully-researched detail. The script was written by Ian McLellan Hunter (as many know, our own fellow member and Nevins-Freeman Award recipient, the late E.B. "Pete" Long, assisted Hunter). The director is Andrew McLaglen, whose credits include 27 feature films, five of which starred John Wayne.

Five years in development, the drama covers the tumultuous period of American history from John Brown's trial and hanging in 1859 to Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865. The story includes 781 scenes, all of which were filmed on location at 102 different sets in northwest Arkansas and Oklahoma. Many of the battle scenes were filmed at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park.

While the foreground of the story is fiction, its background is populated by a galaxy of historical figures. The plot focuses on two related families. The central character who serves as the most prominent link between them, is John Geyser (John Hammond), a talented young artist who leaves his family farm near Charlottesville, Va., to work as an illustrator on his uncle's newspaper in Gettysburg, Pa.

(Member Leslie McDonald will have 100 copies of a viewer's guide available, on a first come, first serve basis at the November meeting.)

The monument of General Alexander Hays, located in Gettysburg National Military Park, was formally dedicated in ceremonies on July 3. Erected in 1915 by Pennsylvania, the monument was never formally dedicated because of scheduling conflicts. The family of Alexander Hays IV initiated the movement to restore and dedicate the monument.

Also dedicated on July 3 was a monument to the soldiers of Tennessee who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. Tennessee was the only former Confederate state whose troops fought at Gettysburg which had not erected a monument on the battlefield. The monument, located at the spot where Tennessee soldiers joined other Confederate regiments as part of Longstreet's unsuccessful assault July 3, portrays life-sized figures of a drummer boy, a flag bearer and an infantryman. The figures stand on a granite base that bears an outline of Tennessee. The monument is the result of a fund-raising campaign sponsored by the Tennessee Monument Commission.

The restored Civil War battle flags at the GAR Memorial Hall in the Wisconsin State Capitol were rededicated in ceremonies September 29. Members of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table contributed \$1,000 to restore the flag carried by the famed 6th Wisconsin, a part of the Iron Brigade. The flags of many Wisconsin units were "rolled up and rotting away" at the GAR Memorial Hall Museum until a campaign was launched to restore them. The state contributed \$10,000 to the effort.

After two and one-half years of restoration at a cost of almost \$9 million, the Atlanta Cyclorama reopened this past June. The restoration of the painting of The Battle of Atlanta resulted from the efforts of The Cyclorama Restoration, Inc. which was formed in 1975.

OCTOBER MEETING

The possibility that Missouri might be lost to the Union was little recognized by the government in Washington in the early days of the Civil War. But the Battle of Wilson's Creek, in which Federal forces were defeated, opened their eyes. That battle, and the events leading up to it, was Richard Hatcher's subject when he addressed 85 members and guests at The Round Table meeting October 8.

Rick began the story in May, 1861. On May 10, Captain Nathaniel Lyon, commander of the U.S. arsenal at St. Louis, fearing that pro-secessionist Missourians would capture the arsenal, forced the militia at Camp Jackson to surrender. His goal was to keep military goods out of the hands of pro-Confederate Missouri governor Claiborne Jackson.

As the federals marched their prisoners back to the arsenal, they were set upon by pro-Southern sympathizers and before it was over between 90 and 100 citizens had been shot. Governor Jackson called the legislature into session and the Military Preparedness Bill was passed; Sterling Price was named Major General in command of the Missouri State Guard. General William S. Harney, commander of the Department of the West, met with Price and produced the Price-Harney Agreement whereby Price agreed to maintain law and order in the state while Harney agreed to prevent additional Federal military intervention in legitimate state affairs. Lyon, believing that all the agreement did was give Governor Jackson time to take Missouri out of the union, refused to honor the agreement.

Jackson and Price returned to Jefferson City via rail, burning railroad bridges behind them; Lyon set out in pursuit on June 13. As the federals neared Jefferson City, Jackson abandoned the city and moved to Booneville where, following a brief skirmish, his forces were defeated. Price, in Lexington, realized his position was untenable and ordered all state guard troops to move to the southwest part of the state where they could concentrate and drill.

Lyon ordered a column to Springfield to block the Missourians. Due to his military background, Colonel Franz Sigel was selected to lead the force. However, he did not move fast enough and Price got ahead of him, picking up recruits along the way. Sigel was now between Jackson moving south and Price to the south of him; General Thomas Sweeney ordered him to concentrate at Carthage, 58 miles west of Springfield. Sigel withdrew after a brief battle there July 5.

Even though the Battle of Carthage was a small engagement, it had important consequences: it was Lyon's first defeat and Jackson and Price were able to join forces. For the next two weeks Price kept busy drilling and training his new recruits while in Arkansas Generals McCulloch and Pearce were also drilling and training their commands.

Meanwhile, Lyon was heading for Springfield which he reached July 13. The federal situation was not good, especially since Major General John C. Fremont, the new Commander of the Department of the West, chose to ignore Lyon's requests for reinforcements and supplies. From reports, Lyon concluded the enemy was intending to move against him from three directions, converging at Springfield; he thus decided to attack the largest of the three and then turn on the other two. But his scouts were wrong as to the location where the southern forces would merge and his force of 5865 would be meeting the combined commands of McCulloch, Price and Pearce—over 10,000 men—south of Springfield at Cassville.

A brief skirmish occurred at Dug Springs which ended in the rout of the Missouri State Guard brigade of General James S. Rains. But Lyon had learned that he was outnumbered and decided to return to Springfield. The southerners did not pursue. On August 4 Price met with McCulloch and asked him to take the offensive, but the Texan refused. Finally, McCulloch ordered

a move against Lyon, not realizing that Lyon had withdrawn to Springfield. He thus went into camp along both sides of Wilson's Creek while he tried to determine the federal disposition.

On August 9, Lyon called a council of war. Although the council favored retreat, General Sweeney met with Lyon later and convinced Lyon to attack the Confederates before retreating further toward Rolla. Learning of these plans, Sigel asked permission to take a separate column south, then turn west and strike the enemy camp the same time Lyon struck from the north. If the plan worked, the enemy would be caught in the jaws of the Union Army.

The Confederates had no idea the federals were so close. All went well at first and by 6 a.m. the federals held the crest of Bloody Hill. However, Captain William Woodruff's Arkansas battery opened fire, enfilading the entire federal line and stopping the advance. This gave the southern infantry time to move up toward Bloody Hill and give battle. An attack against Lyon's right flank petered out and by 8:30 a.m. all was quiet on the battlefield.

To the south, Sigel, who mistook the 3rd Louisiana for the 1st Iowa, which also wore gray uniforms, was defeated; by 9 a.m. the fighting was over and the Confederates could direct their full attention to the Federals on Bloody Hill. Price launched a vicious attack on Lyon's entire front but was driven off. Lyon was wounded while rallying the 1st Kansas. Then, as he led the defense against the next attack, Lyon was killed. Major Sam Sturgis, the senior officer on the field, assumed command.

Price's third and most formidable attack lasted about 30 minutes, but by 11 a.m. Price realized it was stalled and ordered his men to fall back. About the same time, Sturgis learned his army had nearly exhausted its ammunition and ordered the Army of the West to retire. The column reached Springfield about 5 p.m. Not until a fourth attack was ordered and mounted did the southerners realize the Union troops had retreated. However, they made no effort to pursue.

After an eight day march the Federals reached Rolla, safe from southern pursuit; this ended the campaign. In 69 days the armies had engaged in four skirmishes and two battles; the federals lost 258 killed, 873 wounded and 186 missing (24 per cent of the 5400 engaged). The southern losses were 279 killed, 951 wounded (12 per cent of the 10,200 engaged).

Shortly after Wilson's Creek, or Oak Hills as the Confederates called it, Price took Lexington, Missouri, and Jackson led the state out of the Union on October 31. The Wilson's Creek campaign, the defeat at Lexington, and the state's secession, according to Rick, opened the eyes of Washington to the importance of Missouri and the possibility of losing it to the Confederacy. Over the next three and one half years, thousands of Union soliders would be committed to its occupation.

(continued from page 1)

Dr. Oates is a prolific writer and lecturer. In addition to numerous articles and essays in various scholarly journals, he is the author of several books including a quartet of biographies written about Americans profoundly affected by the moral paradox of slavery and race in a land based on the ideals of the Declaration of Independence: *To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (1970); *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion* (1975); *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1977); and the recently published *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (autographed copies are available at the Book Shop).

Treasurer Pat Krelle Sumner reminds members that anyone not paying 1982-83 dues by November 1 will be dropped from the rolls.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Barnwell, John. *Love of Order: South Carolina's First Secession Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c1982. 258 p. \$25.00

Brandt, Keith. *Abe Lincoln: The Young Years*. Illustrated by John Lawn. Mahwah, NJ: Troll Associates, 1982. \$6.00

Grant, Ulysses S. *Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*. New introduction by William S. McFeely; edited with notes by E.B. Long. New York: Da Capo Press, 1982. Pbk. \$10.95. Original of 1952.

Howell, H. Grady, Jr. *Going to Meet the Yankees*. A History of the "Bloody Sixth" Mississippi Infantry, C.S.A. Jackson, Mississippi: Chickasaw Bayou Press, c1981. 388 p. illus. \$30.00

Jaffa, Harry V. *Crisis of the House Divided*. An interpretation of the issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. With a new preface. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Paper \$9.95. Original of 1959.

Jones, Douglas C. *The Barefoot Brigade*. New York: Holt, 1982. \$15.50. A novel concerning the 3rd Arkansas Infantry.

McMurry, Richard M. *John Bell Hood and the War for Southern Independence*. Lexington; University Press of Kentucky, c1982. \$19.50

Sauers, Richard Allen. *The Gettysburg Campaign, June 3-August 1, 1863*. A Comprehensive Selectively Annotated Bibliography. Foreword by Warren W. Hassler, Jr. xvi, 227 p. With appendices giving list of audio-visual materials and the Union and Confederate forces engaged during the campaign. Index. \$39.50

Smith, Page. *Trial by Fire. A People's History of the Civil War and Reconstruction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. 1024 p. \$29.95. Fifth volume in his multi-volume history of the United States.

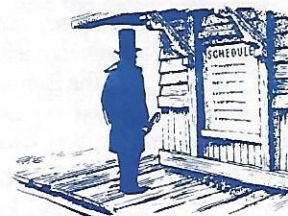
Zall, P.M., editor. *Abe Lincoln Laughing*. Humorous anecdotes from original sources by and about Abraham Lincoln. Edited with an introduction by P.M. Zall. Foreword by Ray Allen Billington. Berkley, California: University of California Press, c1982. \$15.95

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War are raising funds to help restore the New Jersey Monument at Gettysburg which has fallen into disrepair over the years. Send donations to: New Jersey Monument Fund, SUVCW, c/o Richard Hines, 310 Oakford Avenue, Delanco, New Jersey 08075.

Mark Boatner, author of *The Civil War Dictionary*, is planning to revise and update that 22 year-old book and seeks suggested changes and corrections from any student of the Civil War. Send them directly to Col. Mark M. Boatner, III, 208 W. Main St., New Roads, Louisiana 70760.

On November 20 the Capital of the Confederacy 2nd Annual Civil War Show and Sale will be held at the Virginia State Fairgrounds in Richmond. Guns, swords, bayonets, buckles, bullets, canteens, paper items, books, and more will be available for sale and show. No flea market material will be permitted. For information, contact: C.V.R.H.A., % John Duggan, Jr., Chairman, 3809 Whitlock Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23223 (804) 648-2084.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Como Inn, 546 N. Milwaukee Avenue, the second Friday in each month except as noted.

November 12: Stephen Oates on "John Brown: Catalyst for the Civil War."

December 10: Perry D. Jamieson on "Artillery Tactics of the Civil War Era."

January 14, 1983: Dennis Frye on "The Cows' Tails Mystery: The Siege and Capture of Harpers Ferry."

February 11: C. Robert Douglas on "General George H. Thomas: Time and History Will Do Me Justice."

March 11: John Divine on "Cavalry Campaigns: A Prelude to Gettysburg."

April 8: Robert V. Johannsen on "Senator Stephen A. Douglas."

April 27-May 1: Annual Battlefield Tour to Chattanooga-Chickamauga.

May 13: Kathy Georg on "The Battle of Gettysburg."

June 11: Civil War Conference. Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and Installation of Officers. Recipient of award: Dr. John Hope Franklin.

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The Meserve Gallery of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington has been established for the Frederick Hill Meserve Collection of Mathew Brady's photographs. Currently on exhibit are over 50 portraits, including likenesses of such illustrious 19th Century Americans as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Carl Schurz, Samuel Morse, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Ulysses S. Grant, and, of course, Abraham Lincoln. The most impressive item is a large portrait of Lincoln taken by Alexander Gardner four days before the assassination. The Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily.