

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Chicago, Illinois

April, 1983

Robert W. Johannsen on Stephen A. Douglas and the Spirit of the Age

April marks the 170th anniversary of the birth of Stephen A. Douglas and offers an appropriate moment for a review of Douglas' contribution to the growth of the United States. Providing that review at The Round Table meeting on April 8 will be Robert W. Johannsen, J. G. Randall Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a man eminently qualified to discuss this subject. His biography *Stephen A. Douglas*, published in 1973, won the Francis Parkman Prize. We will welcome as our special guests to the meeting members of the Stephen A. Douglas Association.

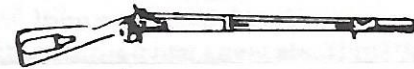
Of his talk, Professor Johannsen says, "a controversial figure in his own lifetime, Douglas has continued to be a center of controversy as historians still attempt to assess his role in American history. Most critics have reached their conclusions by focusing attention only on Douglas' involvement in the politics of the slavery question during the latter 1850s. Because his stance at that time has seemed so out of relation with the judgments of our own day, he has been charged with moral blindness, unscrupulous demagoguery, and much of the responsibility for the coming of the Civil War.



Robert W. Johannsen

"No historical figure can be properly understood and appreciated in isolation from the times which shaped and molded him. The temptation to view Douglas (and Lincoln, for that matter) in isolation from the world with which they interacted can lead only to a distorted or, at best, a blurred image. Furthermore, by failing to look at the 'whole' Douglas, critics have missed the thread of consistency (and even principle) that ran through his entire life and career.

"The first half of the nineteenth century—the formative years for Douglas, for Lincoln, indeed for the republic itself—was America's romantic period. It was a time that expressed itself in a passion for freedom, an exaltation of the individual, a profound commitment to the idea of progress and a boundless vision that prescribed no limits to what people, separately or as a nation, could accomplish. For America, born of revolution and guided by the future, romanticism dictated a special,



420th Regular Meeting

Robert W. Johannsen
on
Stephen A. Douglas and the
Spirit of the Age

Friday, April 8, 1983

Illinois Athletic Club
112 S. Michigan
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$12.50 per person



providentially-sanctioned mission. The United States was literally the hope of mankind and Americans could not rest until all the world had received the blessings of free republican government. To the romantics, these feelings and beliefs constituted what they called 'the spirit of the age.' Every nation, they believed, was defined by a unique national spirit and this was America's.

"The question I will address in my talk to the Round Table is, How representative was Douglas of this 'spirit of the age'?

"Douglas' life spanned America's romantic period. From his earliest years, he imbibed the popular romantic democracy of Andrew Jackson, accepting the tenets of Jacksonian thought as the foundation of his own political creed. Indeed, Douglas never ceased being a Jacksonian, even when the pressures of the slavery crisis seemed to dictate an alternative course. Like other romantics, he held the West—that meeting-ground of civilization and savagery—in special regard and much of his political energy was applied to directing America's westward movement and development. The Mississippi valley, the great heart of the continent, he really believed was destined to be the cradle of a new civilization. Douglas' Jack-

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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.



The cost of the First Annual Nevins-Freeman Assembly, to be held all day June 11 at the Chicago Historical Society, has been set at \$35 per person. This will include all sessions and the Award luncheon. The Nevins-Freeman Award recipient, Dr. John Hope Franklin, has notified us he will speak on "George Washington Williams as a Civil War Historian." Further information and registration materials will be mailed to all members.

Dr. Mark E. Neely Jr., director of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum at Fort Wayne, Indiana, has been named winner of the Barondess/Lincoln Award of the Civil War Round Table of New York. The award, given annually in memory of the late Dr. Benjamin Barondess, is for "contribution to the greater appreciation of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln." Dr. Neely is the author of *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*.

The First Annual Midwest Civil War Collectors Show will be held on September 24 at Seven Acres-Village Hall in Union, Illinois (about 45 minutes from Chicago). The show will feature 125 tables for buying, selling, trading and displaying military items and related memorabilia from the period 1776-1898. For further information and table reservations, contact Robert Nowak, 3238 N. Central Park, Chicago, Illinois 60618 (312) 539-8432.

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sonism and his dedication to western expansion were parts of an over-arching belief in America's romantic mission and this belief, deep-seated and unequivocal, colored virtually everything he did.

"Douglas' life ended in tragedy. The faith that had sustained him throughout his career was severely shaken by the polarization over the slavery question and the disintegration of the party system, to Douglas an important national binding force. The Union, dear to Douglas' heart and upon which America's providential mission depended, was placed in jeopardy by a momentum of events that seemed to him bred in parochialism and fanaticism. He died on the eve of the four-year blood bath into which the country was plunged, and from which a new Union emerged; perhaps it was just as well that he was spared that horror."

Robert W. Johannsen has been a member of the history department at the University of Illinois since 1959. A native of Oregon, he received his B.A. from Reed College in 1948 and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Washington in 1949 and 1953 respectively. He taught at the University of Kansas before moving to Illinois and has served as a visiting professor at a number of schools. He teaches courses in American history during the Age of Jackson and the Civil War and Reconstruction, as well as a graduate research seminar on Abraham Lincoln. His research and publication has concentrated in the 1840s and 50s.

In addition to the biography of Douglas, he has published *Frontier Politics and the Sectional Conflict* (1955), *In the Name of the People* (1959), *The Letters of Stephen A. Douglas* (1961), and *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (1965). Dr. Johannsen is presently completing a book on the cultural impact of the Mexican War, tentatively titled *To the Halls of the Montezumas: Americans and the War with Mexico*. Upon its completion, he will begin work on a biography of James K. Polk.

March meeting

There is a ten-day period in mid-June, 1863, that has been largely overlooked by historians and Civil War buffs—perhaps because that period is sandwiched between the Chancellorsville Campaign and Lee's second invasion of the north. The events of that period, and the effect they had on what happened in Pennsylvania in early July, was John Divine's subject when he addressed 110 Round Table members and guests on March 11.

As John explained, the events of those mid-June days were for possession of three mountain passes—Aldie Gap in the Bull Run Range, and Ashby's and Snicker's Gaps in the Blue Ridge. On June 10 Lee had started his invasion. To cover his maneuvering in the Shenandoah Valley, he needed a cavalry screen, and Stuart was ordered to block the passes. Federal General Hooker so far had not discovered Lee's intentions and he sent his cavalry to get to the Blue Ridge and look down into the Valley.

On June 17 Stuart ordered Munford to move east on the Little River Pike and block the gap at Aldie—he could thus cover both Snicker's Gap and Ashby's Gap Roads. That same morning the federal cavalry commander, Alfred Pleasonton, had ordered Gregg to move through Aldie Gap and camp at Middleburg—a clash was inevitable.

Kilpatrick's brigade, leading Gregg's advance, struck Munford's pickets east of Aldie. The 4th and 5th Virginia took dismounted positions behind a stone wall and Kilpatrick sent the 1st Massachusetts against this strong position, attacking by squadrons. This was a major mistake—the 1st Mass. lost 170 men in a short time.

The bloody battle continued. The 3rd Virginia charged through the Union lines but were forced to fight their way back out. Maine troopers drove back Munford one-half mile, and at 7 p.m. Stuart ordered Munford to withdraw from the field. Gregg was in control, but he had lost 305 against 119.

"Why," John asked, "did Stuart order Munford to break off?" He noted that Pleasonton had sent Duffie to advance on Middleburg and join with Gregg. His rapid advance almost captured Stuart and his staff who had come to Middleburg. Duffie was attacked by Chambliss and Robertson and he lost 70 per cent of his men—he was much maligned for this later. But, said John, by coming in on Stuart's flank he may have forced him to break off the fight at Aldie.

On June 19, just west of Middleburg, Gregg attacked Chambliss and Robertson. Four hours of fighting forced the Confederate line back about a mile. Exhaustion finally stopped the fighting. Hooker, who still had no information, again ordered Pleasonton to drive Stuart off and get to the mountain. Pleasonton asked for infantry support and got the 20th Maine. Early on the 21st, he put all of his cavalry and infantry in motion. The Confederates used the terrain for defense and Hampton made a strong stand at the bridge over Goose Creek. The steep banks and marshy meadows made the area unsuitable for cavalry, and the bridge was finally forced by infantry. When Stuart saw he could not hold, he ordered Jones and Chambliss to Ashby's Gap before he lost control of the road junction west of Upperville. He also sought infantry support from Longstreet.

Jones and Chambliss had 10 miles to cover; the intermediate roads were blocked by Buford. Buford and

Jones were traveling on parallel roads that would apex within three miles of the Blue Ridge. Jones sent the 11th and 12th Virginia to fight a delaying action. One mile north of the Little River Turnpike the 8th and 12th Illinois and 3rd Indiana met the 12th Virginia. With the arrival of the 7th Virginia, Gamble was driven back, but he recovered and in turn drove back the two Confederate regiments. However, the Confederates had relieved the pressure and Stuart soon had all his troops gathered at the foot of the mountain with a brigade of infantry (Kershaw's) for support. Five days of maneuvering and fighting were over.

Stuart had effectively protected Lee's movements, but he had not been in position to watch movements on the Potomac. If retention of the battlefield is the criteria, John said, Pleasonton had won. But he failed to furnish Hooker with the information he needed (he resorted to secondary information—local Negroes and a captured private from the 9th Georgia).

Overall, John explained, Hooker knew more about Lee's movements than Lee knew about the Army of the Potomac (Hooker had essentially stolen a march on him). Lee was thus anxious for Stuart to go into Pennsylvania for information, but he did not issue positive orders—he used "if" too much. This enabled Stuart to take a route that would deny Lee the services of his cavalry for seven days.

Why did Stuart take this route? John said his critics blame it on ego—he wanted to redeem his reputation which had been tarnished at Brandy Station. Another raid behind enemy lines would recapture his prestige. In John's opinion, Stuart's failure to place his cavalry on Ewell's flank did not lose the Battle of Gettysburg for Lee, but by his failure to do so he conceivably made Lee fight on ground not of his own choosing, something that had not happened since Malvern Hill, just one year earlier.

The John Pelham Historical Association will hold its first annual convention at Fredericksburg, Virginia, from May 20-22. Bob Krick will speak on "The Battle of Fredericksburg as seen by Confederate Soldiers." In addition, attendees will tour Fredericksburg and four plantations—Moss Neck, Hayfield, Gay Mont and Camden—which have Stuart, Jackson, Lee and Pelham associations. There will also be a tour of the cavalry route in the Ten Days' battles, beginning in Aldie and ending at Stuart's position along the Hazel River. For further information, contact Peggy Vogtsberger, 7 Carmel Terrace, Hampton, Virginia 23666.

Shy's Hill, site of the Confederate left flank on the second day of the battle of Nashville, will be cleared of undergrowth to permit easy access. The hill has been owned by the Tennessee Historical Society since 1956, but the Society was unable to make any improvements. The clearing is being done by the Metro Nashville Parks Department.

Fellow member Dr. Gordon Dammann of Lena, Illinois, and his Civil War medical and dental collection, was the subject of an article in the *American Dental Association News* in December. Gordon's collection of equipment, books, photos and documents was on display at Lincoln Memorial University in Hurler, Tennessee in connection with the World's Fair in Knoxville.

THE NEW BOOKS



(compiled by Dick Clark)

Brightwell, Juanita S. *Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia, 1861-1865: Index*. Compiled for the Lake Blackshear Regional Library by Juanita S. Brightwell, Eunice S. Lee, Elsie C. Fulgham. Spartanburg, S.C. Reprint Co., 1982. 513 p. \$30.00. Indexing the multi-volume roster.

Cable, Mary. *Lost New Orleans*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1980. xvi, 235 p. \$21.95. Architectural history.

Curl, Donald W. *Murat Halstead and the Cincinnati Commercial*. Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1983. \$17.50.

Donald, David Herbert, *The Politics of Reconstruction, 1863-1867*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982. \$17.50. Originally by Louisiana State University in 1965.

Harwell, Richard B. *Cornerstones of Confederate Collection*. 3rd edition. Wendell, NC: Broadfoot's Bookmark, 1982. 35 p., 20 facsimils. Limited edition of 500 numbered copies. \$10.00. A signed edition, bound by hand, limited to 100 numbered copies: \$20.00.

Hassler, Warren W., Jr. *With Shield and Sword: American Military Affairs, Colonial Times to the Present*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1982. x, 462 p. maps, bibliog, index. \$29.50.

Jones, James Pickett. *John A. Logan: Stalwart Republican from Illinois*. Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1982. xii, 291 pp., illus., notes, bibliog., index. \$20.00. Follow-up to his "Black Jack;" *John A. Logan and Southern Illinois in the Civil War Era (1967)*.

Ornelas-Struve, Carole M. *Memphis, 1800-1900*. By Carole M. Ornelas-Struve, Frederick Lee Coulter; edited by Joan Hassell. New York: N. Powers, 1982. 3 vols., illus., bibliog. \$24.95.

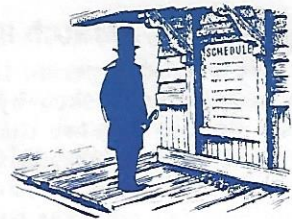
Rose, Willie Lee. *Slavery and Freedom*. Edited by William W. Freehling. Expanded edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. Pbk \$17.95.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. \$29.95.

A once-unwanted and buried statue of a Confederate soldier was exhumed from its grave in Elberton, Georgia last spring by the Elberton Granite Association which plans to put it in a museum. In 1898, community leaders decided to decorate the town square with a memorial to the Confederacy and donations were raised to pay for a statue to be fashioned by a European immigrant from the stone of a nearby quarry.

The memorial was unveiled July 16, 1898, but instead of being a statuesque, hero-like figure, it was a squatty figure with a strange looking cap and decidedly Northern dress. The statue, which was in surprisingly good condition, was loaded on a dump truck and driven through a car wash to clean it up.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Illinois Athletic Club, 112 S. Michigan, the second Friday in each month except as noted.

April 8: Robert W. Johannsen on "Stephen A. Douglas and the Spirit of the Age."

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

May 13: Kathy Georg on "Actions at the Rose Farm on the Second Day at Gettysburg."

June 11: First Annual Nevins-Freeman Assembly. Recipient of award: Dr. John Hope Franklin.

New members

Ellsworth H. Brown, 2328 Isabella Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201 (312) 491-6191.

A. Parks Honeywell, 94 Lincolnshire Drive, Lincolnshire, Illinois 60015 (312) 948-9499.

Gretchen R. Long, 890 Westmoreland Drive, Vernon Hills, Illinois 60061 (312) 362-2419.

Carl T. Heinze, 6822 Lyons, Morton Grove, Illinois 60053 (312) 465-0799

Joe M. Jenkins, 729 Mill Valley Road, Palatine, Illinois 60067 (312) 359-3329

Change of address

Gary S. Bellos, 224 Charles Place, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

Fellow member Myron Cohn spoke to the March meeting of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table on "Signaling Systems during the Civil War."

On April 23, 1982 Nevins-Freeman Award Recipient and Honorary Award Life Member Dr. Frank Vandiver will participate in the Confederate History Symposium at Hill Junior College in Hillsboro, Texas. The theme of the symposium is "Confederate Leaders—Civilian and Military." Dr. Vandiver will discuss Stonewall Jackson.

Nevins-Freeman Award recipient and Life Member Ed Bearss will receive the Houston Civil War Round Table Second Annual Award of Merit on April 14.

According to an item in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, a printed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed by Abraham Lincoln, which is owned by Lincoln Christian College in Lincoln, Illinois, has been authenticated by the Illinois State Historical Library. According to James Hickey, curator of the Lincoln collection at the Library, 48 such signed copies were offered for sale at \$10 each at the Great Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia in 1864 as a means of raising money for Civil War soldiers' charities. The copy at Lincoln Christian is one of about 10 known to exist. Hickey said he determined it was one of the originals by studying the inks used for the signature.