

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

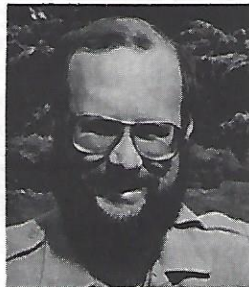
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November, 1986

## A. Wilson "Will" Greene on The Bloody Angle of Spotsylvania: May 12, 1864

In his work that has become a classic in Civil War literature, *Campaigning with Grant*, Col. Horace Porter, aide-de-camp to Gen. U.S. Grant, gave his thoughts on the fighting at the 'Bloody Angle': "The battle near the 'angle' was probably the most desperate engagement in the history of modern warfare, and presented features which were absolutely appalling. It was chiefly a savage hand-to-hand fight across the breastworks. Rank after rank was riddled by shot and shell and bayonet-thrusts, and finally sank, a mass of torn and mutilated corpses; then fresh troops rushed madly forward to replace the dead, and so the murderous work went on. Guns were run up close to the parapet, and double charges of canister played their part in the bloody work.... Wild cheers, savage yells and frantic shrieks rose above the sighing of the wind and the pattering of the rain, and formed a demoniacal accompaniment to the booming of the guns as they hurled their missiles of death into the A. Wilson "Will" Greene contending ranks. Even the darkness of the night and the pitiless storm failed to stop the fierce contest, and the deadly strife did not cease till after midnight."



The fighting that took place at Spotsylvania Court House represented the second major engagement in Grant's 1864 campaign to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia and to capture Richmond, the Confederate capital. On November 14, 1986, A. Wilson 'Will' Greene, park historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, will address the Round Table and describe the fierce fighting that developed at the salient in the Confederate entrenchments, ever since described as the 'Bloody Angle'. In his remarks, Mr. Greene will attempt to place this fighting in the context of the Spotsylvania portion of Grant's 1864 campaign. He will highlight the episodes which characterized the day as the most vicious of the war. To supplement the better known accounts of the battle, he will use some unpublished sources to provide a better understanding of the sequence of events and their significance.

On March 12, 1864, when Grant was appointed commander in chief of all of the armies of the United States, his total command would number over 533,000 in 17 different commands. Henry W. Halleck, though replaced by Grant, would remain in Washington in the newly created position of chief of staff. In this capacity he would



455th Regular Meeting

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A. Wilson Greene

on

The Bloody Angle of Spotsylvania:  
May 12, 1864

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Friday, November 14, 1986

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Quality Inn

Halsted and Madison

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$13.00 per person

Entree: Turkey Ambassador, Fish, or Fruit Plate



assume responsibility for the mass of operational and administrative details, and thus assure the proper functioning of the entire army system. This would permit Grant to direct operations in the principal arena of combat, the eastern theater of the war. Since it confronted the strongest remaining Confederate army, Grant decided to accompany the Army of the Potomac in the coming campaign. This association would make it easier for him to maintain communication with Washington from its headquarters than would be the case if he were to accompany a western army. Gen. George G. Meade, the victor at Gettysburg, retained command of the Army of the Potomac, and in the main, Grant gave him only broad strategy. This left Meade free to make the necessary tactical decisions to implement that strategy. The campaigns that followed would find Grant in direction of the relentless pounding of Lee's army through the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, Cold Harbor, the crossing of the James River, the siege of Petersburg and the pursuit that would end at Appomattox Court House.

A native Chicagoan, Will grew up in Wheaton and  
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# 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 in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Dan Weinberg, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Illinois 60611.



The Hoosier Blue & Gray Civil War Round Table of Cambridge, Indiana, recently presented the National Park Service with a check for the cleaning and restoration of Indiana markers at Antietam National Battlefield. They undertook a fundraising effort last spring after contact with Superintendent Betty Otto revealed the deteriorated condition of five Indiana regimental markers, illegible headstones in the cemetery, and the need for cleaning and repointing of the Indiana monument.

(continued from page 1)

attended public schools there. He secured his bachelor's degree from Florida State University in 1972 and his master's degree from Louisiana State University in 1977. There he served as a graduate assistant to Dr. T. Harry Williams, our Nevins-Freeman honoree in 1976. He has been employed by the National Park Service since 1973, with the following assignments: park historian, Petersburg National Battlefield Park; park interpreter, Gulf Islands National Seashore (Florida); park ranger, Shenandoah National Park (Virginia); chief of interpretive operations, Independence National Historical Park (Pennsylvania); park manager, Chalmette National Historical Park (Louisiana); and his current post as park historian at the Fredericksburg National Military Park. His speaking credits include addresses to six Round Tables; the Lee-Jackson Camp and the A.P. Hill Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans; and participation in *Virginia Country's* Civil War seminar on the Seven Days Campaign. He serves on the book review staff of *The Civil War Book Exchange* and his publications include four contributions to *Encyclopedia USA*: 'The Battle of the Crater'; 'The Battle of Brandy Station'; 'The Chattanooga Campaign'; and 'The Battle of Chickamauga.' Two works awaiting publication are: *The Curtin Light Guards: Story of the 109th PA and The 47th Virginia Infantry* (as part of the Virginia Regimental Series). His roots here are strong enough to enable him to rejoice in the success of the Bears and groan at the travails of the White Sox.

**A mix of offices, stores, and nearly 1000 housing units** will be built on a 514-acre tract just west of Manassas National Battlefield if the Hazel-Peterson Company of Fairfax, Virginia, has its way. The company has requested a rezoning for the tract, which includes Stuart's Hill which served as Stuart's and Lee's headquarters during Second Manassas. High density development in this area will adversely affect the park in at least two ways: increased traffic through the park; and destruction of the historic scene visible from the Brawner Farm and Battery Heights.

The Prince William County Board of Supervisors is generally pro-development, and letters opposing rezoning and in favor of historic preservation are needed. Write to the Board of Supervisors (#1 County Complex Court, Prince William, VA 22191), your U.S. senators (c/o U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510); and *The Washington Post* (1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071).

**Fellow member George Craig**, chairman of the Thomas Gravesite Fund, reports that due to generous contributions the fence enclosing Thomas' gravesite in Oakwood Cemetery, Troy, New York, has been rehabilitated. In the spring, the eagle surmounting the monument will be removed and shipped to a foundry in Vermont for rebeaking and rewinging. Funds for this project, and other maintenance, are still needed. Tax deductible contributions should be sent to Thomas Gravesite Fund, c/o George Craig, 83-12 St. James St., Elmhurst, NY 11373.

**Grave Matters** is a quarterly newsletter for those interested in the gravestones of officers and political leaders of the Civil War. Each issue contains sketches of historic cemeteries and tips on how to find the gravesites of famous personalities. The cost is only \$4 a year. To subscribe, send your check payable to Steven Davis—Grave Matters, 2324 Echo Cliff Court, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30345.

## October meeting

Dr. Richard Selcer was the speaker at the 454th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table on October 10. He discussed "Two Gentlemen from Virginia: the Lee-Pickett Connection."

Both Robert E. Lee and George Pickett are described as Confederate heroes of the Civil War. Lee is considered the embodiment of the Southern cause and Pickett is remembered for the charge on the third day at Gettysburg that bears his name. According to Dr. Selcer, Lee and Pickett had several traits in common. Both were native-born Virginians, West Point graduates, and professional soldiers. However, there were major differences between the two. According to Selcer, Lee placed duty and honor above all else, while Pickett was a bon vivant more interested in pride and self-interest.

Pickett commanded a brigade at Gaines' Mill, where he was wounded. He did not serve in the Second Manassas and Antietam campaigns because he was recuperating. Promoted to major general in November, 1862, Pickett took command of a division in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Pickett's division was held in reserve at Fredericksburg and was on detached service during the Chancellorsville campaign.

Pickett and his division of three brigades rejoined the Army of Northern Virginia for the Gettysburg campaign. During the march to Gettysburg, it was guarding the army's supply trains. On July 2, 1863, Pickett received orders from Longstreet to march his command from Chambersburg to Gettysburg. During the morning of July 3, when Pickett met Lee and Longstreet at the latter's headquarters, all the decisions to attack had been made. Pickett's division, supported by divisions from A.P. Hill's corps, would attack the Union center at Cemetery Hill.

Pickett's behavior before, during, and after the attack on July 3 is a controversial subject. During the two hour bombardment prior to the attack, Pickett couldn't be found among his troops. After the troops were formed, Pickett initially led the attack, but then again disappeared from sight. Eyewitness accounts place him no farther than the Codori farm house. Dr. Selcer compared Pickett's behavior at Gettysburg with the "Lee to the rear" episodes, where Lee placed himself on the battle lines at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania.

After the attack failed, and the remaining Confederates returned to their lines, Pickett's behavior again was erratic. Major W.T. Pogue was an eyewitness to both Lee and Pickett within minutes after the attack. He stated that Pickett appeared distraught, was hardly functioning, and his face showed pain and sadness. Lee, on the other hand, was calm and businesslike. He told the returning soldiers that the failure was his, and that he alone bore the responsibility.

The personality differences between Lee and Pickett can be seen from their reports of the Gettysburg campaign. Pickett's initial report placed the blame for the attack on other officers, who he mentioned by name. Lee returned the report to Pickett and told him to destroy it and submit another. Pickett never wrote the second report. Lee's report on the Gettysburg campaign places no blame for subordinates' failure. Instead, he cites other officers for their bravery and mentions several times that Pickett's division performed gallantly. However, Lee's report never mentions Pickett by name.

After Gettysburg, Pickett's military career eclipsed. As

an indicator, he was never considered to command Longstreet's corps after Longstreet was wounded in the Wilderness. At that time, Pickett was the senior division commander in Longstreet's corps.

Pickett commanded his division during the siege of Petersburg. In early April, 1865, Pickett was ordered to hold Five Forks "at all hazards." Pickett, however, joined two other generals for a shad bake and was absent from his command when Sheridan attacked; the Confederates were routed. After the Confederates were defeated at Saylor's Creek, Lee relieved Pickett of his command. Apparently, Pickett never received notification of this, and stayed with the retreating army. When Lee saw Pickett riding with the remainder of the division, he said, "I thought that man was no longer with the army." Relations between Lee and Pickett never improved. Their only meeting after the War was a strained one.

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**We report with sadness the death**, last June, of fellow Member J. Glenn Schnizlein of Naperville, Illinois. Glenn, who joined the Round Table last spring, bore a striking resemblance to Abraham Lincoln and often portrayed the president in parades, at commemorative events, and at schools. Our condolences are extended to his family.

**Founding Round Table member Elmer Gertz** will present one of the addresses in the Constitution Bicentennial Speakers Program at Loyola University. He will discuss "The Meaning of Civil Liberty" on March 24, 1987. Other speakers, and their topics, include: U.S. District Judge Hubert Will on "Perspectives on the 14th Amendment" (11/11/86); States Attorney Richard Daley on "Crime and Criminal Justice in the 20th Century" (1/20/87); Illinois Supreme Court Justice Seymour Simon on "The Meaning of the Constitution: How Do We Find It?" (2/17/87); Loyola Professor of Law Norman Amaker on "The Struggle for Equality: 1940s-1980s" (3/3/87); Rayman Solomon of the American Bar Foundation on "The Role of the Lawyer in the 20th Century" (4/7/87); and Dr. Kermit Hall of the University of Florida Law School and History Department on "The Imperial Judiciary" (4/21/87).

All lectures, which are free, will be held in Room 30, Marquette Center, 820 N. Michigan Avenue, from 7-8:30 p.m. For further information, contact Mary Abroe, 251-4745.

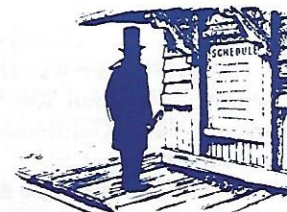
**Glen Wiche and Jerry Warshaw, co-chairmen of the Archives Committee**, are seeking materials relating to the history of The Round Table. They are interested in printed matter, correspondence, committee reports, graphics, press clippings, photos, slides, etc. This material will be kept at the Chicago Historical Society.

If you have any material, please contact Glen at 1360 N. Lake Shore, #504, Chicago 60610 (312) 642-8417 or Jerry at 748 Hinman, Evanston 60602 (312) 866-6667. If you want to retain originals, they will be glad to accept or make copies.

**Over 100 cassette tapes of previous talks** to The Round Table are now available. Included are addresses by such giants of Civil War history as Bruce Catton, Allan Nevins and T. Harry Williams, as well as most of the speeches of the past few years. Tapes are \$7 each (plus \$2 for postage). A complete list of tapes is available from Hal Ardell, 6781 N. Keota Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60646 (312) 774-6357.

## The New Books

compiled by Dick Clark



## BULLETIN BOARD

### Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

November 14: A. Wilson Greene on "The Bloody Angle of Spotsylvania: May 12, 1864."

December 12: Alan T. Nolan on "A Northerner's View of Robert E. Lee."

January 9, 1987: Marshall D. Krolick on "Captain to Brigadier: The Promotions of Custer, Farnsworth and Merritt."

February 20: Ralph G. Newman on "Robert Todd Lincoln in the Civil War." **Note:** This is the third Friday of the month.

March 13: Howard McManus on "The Battle of Cloyd's Mountain."

April 10: Mike Chesson on "The Bread Riots in Richmond."

April 30-May 3: Annual Battlefield Tour—The Trans-Mississippi.

May 8: Betty Otto on "Maryland Campaign, September 1862."

June 5: Mark Boatner on "How the Civil War Dictionary Came Into Being." **Note:** This is the first Friday of the month.

### New members

Samuel M. Blackwell, Jr., 656 W. Rock Street, Plano, Illinois 60545.

Jim Carlisle, 1725 N. Marywood, #303, Aurora, Illinois 60505 (312) 851-7396.

Carole Cierniak, 8417 Johanna, Niles, Illinois 60648 (312) 698-3228.

Kitty Walker Douglas, 3100 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60657 (312) 935-0631.

Carole LeClaire, 8417 Johanna, Niles, Illinois 60648 (312) 698-3228.

Beth Van Elsen, RR #1, Box 283A, Colfax, Iowa 50054 (515) 674-3298.

**A catalog, listing a wide variety of National Park Service video tapes**, including the 28-minute "Antietam Visit" and a 13-minute artillery demonstration, is available from the Harpers Ferry Historical Association, Inc. The prices range from \$20 to \$30 per tape. Request a catalog from the Association at Box 197, High Street, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425.

**The last known widow of a North Carolina Confederate soldier**, Mrs. Harriet Victoria Pittman Stallings, died on June 28 in Wilmington. Mrs. Stallings, who was born on November 2, 1883, married Cyrus H. Stallings in 1914. Stallings, who served as a private in Company A of the 70th North Carolina Infantry, died in 1929. The above item was reported in the *Raleigh News and Observer* on June 29.

**Round Table Treasurer Joe Wisheart** reminds members that 1986-87 dues must be paid by November 1. Persons not paid by that date will be dropped from the rolls.

Hunt, Henry J. *Three Days at Gettysburg*. Foreword by William R. Jones, series editor. Historian's preface and footnotes by Kathleen R. Georg. 64 p. Golden, CO: Outbooks, 1981. pbk \$3.95.

Jackson, Donald D. *Twenty Millions Yankees; the Northern Home Front*. By... and the editors of Time-Life Books. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1985. qto, 176 p.

Johnson, Charles F. *The Long Roll, being a journal of the Civil War, as set down during the years 1861-1863*. Shepherdstown, WV: Carabelle Books, 1986. \$19.95. Original of 1911. Re: New York Ninth.

Luvaas, Jay and Col. Harold W. Nelson. *The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Gettysburg*. Carlisle, PA: South Mountain Press, 1986. 256 p. \$19.95.

Ramage, James A. *Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1986. \$25.00.

Rankin, Thomas M. *23rd Virginia Infantry*. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, 1985. 141 p. \$16.95. In the Virginia Regimental Histories series.

Ransom, John L. *John Ransom's Andersonville Diary*. Introduction by Bruce Catton. Port Washington, NY: Independent Publishers Group, 1986. pbk \$10.95. A reprint, again.

Sablosky, Irving, ed. *What They Heard: Music in America, 1852-1881*. From the Pages of Dwight's Journal of Music. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1986. \$30.00.

Schoonover, Thomas D., ed. *Mexican Lobby: Matias Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*. Edited and translated with an introduction by... Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986. \$21.00. (Schoonover was a CWRT Fellowship holder.)

Seville, William P. *History of the First Regiment, Delaware Volunteers*, from the Commencement of the "Three Months' Service" to the Final Muster-out at the Close of the Rebellion. Hightstown, NJ: Longstreet House, 1986. Original of 1884. \$15.95.

Skinner, Hubert C., Erin R. Gunter and Warren H. Sanders. *The New Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook*. Boog & Laurence Publishing Co., 1986. 270 p. \$75.00.

Thomas, Emory M. *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart*. New York: Harper & Row, 1986. \$22.95.

Thomas, John L., ed. *Lincoln and the American Political Tradition*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986. \$20.00.

Thompson, Jerry. *Henry Hopkins Sibley, Confederate General of the West*. Foreword by Frank E. Vandiver. Natchitoches, LA: Northwestern State University, 1986. \$25.00.

Wharton, Mary E. and Ellen F. Williams, eds. *Peach Leather and Rebel Gray: Bluegrass Life and the War 1860-1865*. Diary and Letters of a Confederate Wife. Lexington, KY: Helicon Co., 1986. \$15.95. Wife of Major Willis Field Jones.

Young, Ford E., Jr. *The Third Day at Gettysburg*. Edited by Ann N. Davis. Bethesda, MD: Americana Stories, 1981. 364 p. \$17.50.