

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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December, 1988

Karen Osborne on "A Civil War Christmas"

by Barbara Hughett

The observance of Christmas is a world-wide tradition. Here in America, a nation of immigrants, we have a rich blending of the traditions of many nations. However, in mid-19th century America, Christmas was not the huge celebration that it has become today. It was, instead, a gentler, more introspective time...a time for drawing together. The Christmas tree was a community affair and was generally placed in each town's largest church or house, with gifts for all. A typical Christmas Eve would find families and friends gathering together for food, sleighing, and perhaps games of charades, singing, or some other inventive fun. They would meet again on Christmas morning for church services. It was a people time.

By 1861, all this was greatly altered by the horrors of war and uncertainty about the future. For those at the home front, there existed a great deal of suffering and want which was made more intense by the absence and suffering of those family members and friends who were separated from them by the war. As a young woman put it in her diary one Christmas, there was "no dinner, no supper, no brothers."

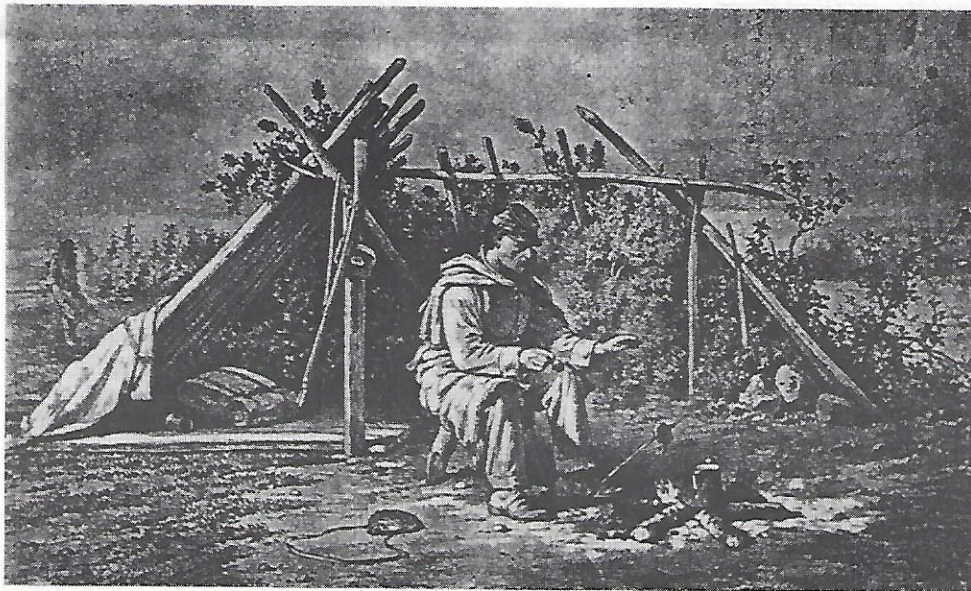
On December 9th, Karen Osborne will speak to The Civil War Round Table on the topic of "A Civil War Christmas." Through the correspondence of soldiers and their families and the words and music of the writers, poets, and composers of that time, she will seek to convey the

pathos of the period—the pain and the joy. She will discuss how the feelings about and observances of Christmases changed from 1861 to 1864, as the war progressed. As part of her presentation, she will lead the group in the singing of several of the favorite carols of the Civil War years.


Karen Osborne is a native of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, and received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Milton College in Milton, Wisconsin. She was on the faculty of Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville, North Carolina in 1975-76, and served for five years as interpreter of history and supervisor of the Norwegian Area at Old World Wisconsin in Eagle, Wisconsin. A resident of Berlin, Wisconsin, she is a performing member of the First Brigade Band of Milwaukee, an organization which is the recreation of the band which marched with Sherman in the campaigns of 1864-65. She is currently serving as secretary of the Heritage Military Music Foundation, and is a student at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh.

Over the past ten years, Karen has spoken on Civil War-related subjects to a variety of groups throughout the midwest. She addressed The Round Table twice in 1983. In June of that year, she spoke to the Nevins-Freeman Assembly on "The Saga of Mother Bickerdyke." In December, 1983, her topic was "Women in the Civil War."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



"A Christmas Dinner" from *The Civil War Christmas Album* by Philip Van Doren Stern.


 476th Regular Meeting

 Karen Osborne
 on
 A Civil War Christmas

 Friday, December 9, 1988

 Quality Inn
 Halsted and Madison
 Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.
 Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
 \$15.00 per person
 Entree: Breast of Chicken,
 Fish, or Fruit Plate



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, IL 60611.



A final reminder: 1988-89 dues must be paid by December 1. Persons not paid by that date will be dropped from the rolls.

We report with sadness the recent death of long-time member Earl F. Bartholomew. A sixth generation Chicago-area resident, Earl was active in many genealogical and historical organizations. He was a founding member of the National Historical Society and worked to preserve the Grand Army of the Republic Room at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center. Our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

Battlefield Preservation Report

by Daniel J. Josephs

On November 11, President Ronald Reagan signed "The Technical Corrections Act of 1988" which included an amendment regarding Manassas National Battlefield Park. Under the terms of the legislation, approximately 600 acres will be added to the Park. According to the October 1988 issue of *Preservation News*, this area includes Stuart's Hill, the site of Robert E. Lee's headquarters during the Second Battle of Manassas in 1862. *Preservation News* also notes that purchase of this land will stop construction of the shopping mall planned for the site. The legislation also provides for a study of the relocation of Highways 29 and 34 which run through the Park.

Besides Manassas, the Antietam Battlefield has also been the beneficiary of federal legislation. According to Mr. Dennis Frye of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), on October 25, 1988. President Reagan signed legislation that, according to Mr. Tom Clemens of SHAF, removes the cap that the Antietam battlefield had with respect to owning property. Also, the legislation authorizes the Antietam battlefield to purchase certain historic areas within the boundaries of the battlefield park. According to Mr. Frye, the historic areas which are targeted to be purchased by the Antietam battlefield include the North Woods, the Cornfield, and the West Woods, all scenes of bitter fighting during the battle. The legislation authorized an expenditure of one million dollars to purchase these properties, according to Mr. Frye. The legislation was sponsored by U.S. Representative Beverly Bryan and U.S. Senators Paul Sarbanes and Barbara Mikulski.

According to Mr. Paul Chiles, a park ranger at Antietam, the main purpose of Civil War battlefield preservation in the 1880s was to commemorate the units who fought in the war. The plan was to preserve a battlefield for each of the victorious union armies. This plan was then expanded to purchase and preserve approximately 25 battlefields. Certain areas were purchased, including areas at Shiloh, Chickamauga, and Gettysburg. This plan proved to be too ambitious and expensive, according to Mr. Chiles.

As a result, another plan to preserve the battlefields was devised, called the Antietam plan. According to Mr. Chiles, this involved purchasing the land where the battle lines of the armies met and fought. The areas that were purchased were straight-line areas. Signs and markers commemorating the units and the battle were placed in these straight-line areas. At Antietam, some of these straight-line areas still exist, such as the boundary areas around the North Woods, and the Cornfield. In the 1960s, at the time of the Civil War Centennial, there was a push to preserve battlefields by having the government purchase contiguous parcels of land, such as at Antietam where certain farm areas were purchased.

At Antietam there are approximately 3200 acres of land within the park boundaries, according to Mr. Clemens. The park owns approximately 800 acres of this land. In addition, it owns scenic easements of approximately 1200 acres within the park. The purpose of the ownership of scenic easements is to control the development of the land so that, in the case of Antietam, the land may be preserved for historic purposes.

The significance of this legislation is that it enables the Antietam Battlefield to purchase areas such as the Corn-
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November Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

General William Tecumseh Sherman has been called the most original genius of the American Civil War. On November 11th, former Round Table president and noted Civil War scholar Gordon Whitney spoke before 117 members and guests at the 475th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, on the topic of "Sherman and His Lieutenants." "Sherman has emerged from the pages of history," Gordon observed, "as a harsh, ruthless, and unappealing man, who is probably best remembered for his five months of plundering and destruction through the middle south." His new concept of fighting, known as total war, was a strategy of exhaustion. It involved not merely the occupation of territory, but was aimed at wrecking the south, politically, economically and militarily.

Prior to the Civil War, Sherman had faced numerous disappointments and failures, and had suffered from severe depressions. After leaving West Point, his army career was very dissatisfying. In 1853, he left the army for what seemed to be brighter opportunities in the civilian world. This turned sour as depressed economic conditions brought on a series of deepening financial crises, forcing him to rely on help from his father-in-law, Thomas Ewing. Then, through the influence of an old army friend, Don Buell, he received the superintendency of a new school in Louisiana, The Louisiana Seminar of Learning and Military Academy, now the famed LSU. This position suited him well and it seemed he had finally found his niche. However, due to the secession movement's burst upon the scene, this job would not last. Sherman, with his firm convictions in the sanctity of the Union, resigned and returned to his father-in-law's house in Ohio. His brother John, a U.S. senator from Ohio, arranged a meeting for Sherman with President Lincoln. Soon thereafter, Sherman accepted a colonel's commission and command of the 13th U.S. Infantry. In the summer of 1861, he was given a much larger command in Kentucky, which turned into a disaster. Charges were brought by Secretary of War Cameron that Sherman was insane, and he was relieved of command. Because of this incident, largely inflamed by newspaper stories, he developed a lifelong mistrust of the press. He was given a series of mediocre assignments before coming under Grant's command. He performed well at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Although he failed again at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, by that time Sherman had gained Grant's trust and friendship and Grant did not abandon him.

Camp life was one of simplicity for Sherman. He had few aides about him and felt no need for clerks. Contempt for luxury was evidenced not only in his equipment, but in his dress. Under his rough exterior, he showed sincere concern and compassion for his troops. His soldiers liked his free and easy manner with them, giving him the nickname "Uncle Billy."

Sherman's lieutenants were dedicated, ambitious men, thoroughly different in personality and habits. Though they did not always agree with him, he gained their respect and support. George H. Thomas, "the Rock of Chickamauga" was the strong, quiet type. Sherman's classmate at West Point, he understood Sherman better, perhaps, than anyone else. James B. McPherson was a practicing Christian, though not puritanical. When he lost his life in the Atlanta campaign, Sherman said, "I had expected something to happen to Grant and me. Either the rebels or the

newspapers would kill us both, and I had looked to McPherson as the man to follow us and finish the war." They called Oliver O. Howard "The Christian Soldier." Graduating 4th in his class at West Point, he was an ardent Abolitionist of strong convictions. Sherman said he exhibited "the highest traits of the soldier." Phil Sheridan's roommate at West Point, Henry Slocum, was calm, diligent, meticulous, and a loyal friend to Sherman. Perhaps the most ambitious of Sherman's lieutenants, John M. Schofield, was a friend of the Blairs, serving in Missouri during the early part of the war. Serving under Sherman gave him a feeling of security and confidence.

Sherman's friend Jeff C. Davis was serving at Fort Sumter when the first shots of the war were fired. His shooting of a fellow officer, in the midst of an argument in 1862, clouded his career ever after. Flamboyant, egotistical John A. Logan, of Illinois, left his seat in Congress to join the army. Known for his bold actions, he won the Congressional Medal of Honor. Frank P. Blair had known Sherman before the war. Sherman's wedding had been held at the Blair house in Washington. A Congressman from Missouri at the outset of the war, like Logan, he left to join the army. A great Lincoln supporter, probably no one did more to keep Missouri within the Union borders. While his dislike of politicians was legendary, Sherman rated Blair the best of the political generals. Vermont born William Hazen grew up in Hiram, Ohio, where he became a good friend of James Garfield. He was brilliant and courageous, but had a quick temper and could be extremely critical of others. Joseph Mower, from Woodstock, Vermont, was one of Sherman's favorites. Quick and agile, he struck with a tremendous force. Sherman used him like a linebacker.

After the war, Sherman's new found success enhanced his reputation. Congress talked of conferring the rank of lieutenant general upon him. He refused all accolades, insisting that the fame belonged to his officers and men. Gordon maintained that it was Sherman's "application of the philosophy of total war that made him the first modern general." The esprit de corps which developed between the general and his lieutenants continued in the post-war years. Most of them kept in close contact, with Sherman assisting their careers whenever possible. When Sherman celebrated his 71st and last birthday, he was joined by his three remaining lieutenants—Howard, Schofield, and Slocum.

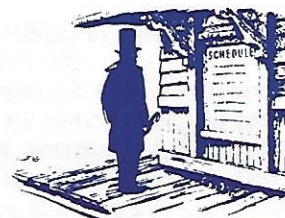
The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites needs to raise \$50,000 by the end of the year. If they do, The Gilder Foundation of New York will give them an additional \$50,000. APCWS's purpose is to acquire deeded interest in historic properties threatened with destruction across the Civil War's Eastern Theater. Only gifts of \$250 or more qualify for the matching grant. Contributors of \$500 or more will be eligible for books and prints donated by Broadfoot Publishing Company, the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop and others. Every donor will receive a free APCWS Gettysburg commemorative shirt. To make your tax deductible contribution, or for further information, contact APCWS, P.O. Box 23, Arlington, VA 22110.

On behalf of the newsletter staff and the officers of The Round Table, we wish all members and their families a joyous holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year.

The New Books compiled by C. Robert Douglas



BULLETIN BOARD



Conolly, Thomas: *An Irishman in Dixie: Thomas Conolly's Diary of the Fall of the Confederacy*. Edited, with an introduction by Nelson D. Lankford. University of South Carolina Press. 1988. \$24.95.

Dame, William Meade. *From the Rapidan to Richmond and the Spotsylvania Campaign: A Sketch in Personal Narration of the Scenes a Soldier Saw*. Richmond, VA: Owens Civil War Books. 1988. \$25.00. Original of 1920.

Landscapes of Battle: The Civil War. Photographs by David Muench. Text by Michael B. Ballard. University Press of Mississippi. 1988. \$35.00.

Lewis, Thomas A. *The Guns of Cedar Creek*. New York, NY: Harper & Row. 1988. \$16.95.

Longstreet, Helen D. *Lee and Longstreet at High Tide*. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1988. New introduction by Carl W. Breihan. \$24.95. Original of 1904.

Lucas, Marion Brunson. *Sherman and the Burning of Columbia*. Foreword by Bell I. Wiley. Texas A&M Press. 1988. Pbk. \$11.95.

Luvaas, Jay & Harold W. Nelson. *The U.S. War College Guide to Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg*. South Mountain Press. Carlisle, PA. 1988. \$21.95.

MacDonald, John. *Great Battles of the Civil War*. Foreword by John Keegan. MacMillan Publ. Co. 1988. \$39.95.

Matter, William D. *If it Takes all Summer: The Battle of Spotsylvania*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC. 1988. \$37.50.

Mitchell, Reid. *Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Their Experiences*. Viking. 1988. \$19.95.

Nevin, John. *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union: A Biography*. LSU Press. 1988. \$24.95.

Robertson, James I. *Soldiers Blue and Gray*. University of South Carolina Press. 1988. \$24.95.

Stewart, William H. *A Pair of Blankets*. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1988. Edited, with a new introduction by Benjamin Trask. \$24.95. Original of 1911.

Stribling, Robert M. *Gettysburg Campaign and Campaigns of 1864 and 1865 in Virginia*. Gaithersburg, MD: Olde Soldier Books, Inc. 1988. \$25.00. Original of 1905.

Sutherland, Daniel E. *The Confederate Carpetbagger*. LSU Press. 1988. \$40.00.

Tidwell, William A., with James O. Hall and David Winfred Gaddy. *Come Retribution: The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS. 1988. \$38.50; pbk. \$17.95.

Turner, Maxine. *Navy Gray: A Story of the Confederate Navy on the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers*. The University of Alabama Press. 1988. \$24.95.

"The Confederate Generals Buried in Louisiana," by Jim Mundie, contains pictures of the generals and maps of the burial sites. It was published by the New Orleans Civil War Round Table, and is available for \$5 from The Civil War Round Table, c/o John B. Dunlap, Jr., 80 West Imperial Dr., Harahan, LA 70123.

Future meetings

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

December 9: Karen Osborne on "A Civil War Christmas."

January 13, 1989: Bruce Bazelon on "Gettysburg—After the Fight."

February 10: James M. McPherson on "Lincoln."

March 10: Jerry Russell on "Pea Ridge."

April 14: Charles Wesselhoeft on "The Army of the Tennessee."

May 4-7: Annual Battlefield Tour—Kennesaw Mountain, Andersonville.

May 12: Brig. Gen. Edwin Simmons, USMC (Ret.) on "The Assault on Fort Fisher."

June 9: John Y. Simon, topic to be announced.

New Members

Bob Kantor, 1088 Bluff Rd., Glencoe, IL 60022, 312/835-0988.

Judge Howard R. Kaufman, 4285 S. Maple Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302, 312/386-6665.

Greg A. Kinzewski, 1226 Greenleaf, Evanston, IL 60202, 312/864-3149.

Margaret J. Smogor, 1207 S. Old Wilke Rd., Arlington Heights, IL 60005, 312/255-2999.

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field, the North Woods, and the West Woods which are owned by private individuals. According to Mr. Clemens, these areas do not contain any scenic easements, nor are they in any way owned by the government. Furthermore, the private owners now desire to sell these historic areas outright, not just the scenic easement rights. With the funds authorized by this legislation and funds from private donations, according to Mr. Clemens, Antietam would be able to start to purchase these areas. Areas such as the Cornfield, where a cornfield still exists today, could be preserved. Other areas could be restored to the state they were in during the Civil War. By doing this, Antietam can prevent any further development of the land and preserve its historical importance as well as the memory of the men who fought there. Although this legislation does not enable Antietam to expand its boundaries to include other areas such as Grove Farm, it is very significant to preserve many of the vital locations where the battle was fought. According to Mr. Frye, there are plans to go to Congress next year to try to expand the boundaries of the park to include the Grove Farm and other historic areas.

A reminder: Please submit any Round Table memorabilia you may have to the 50th Anniversary Committee. Bring the materials to a meeting or send them to Jerry Warshaw, 748 Hinman Ave., Evanston, IL 60202.