

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLIX, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

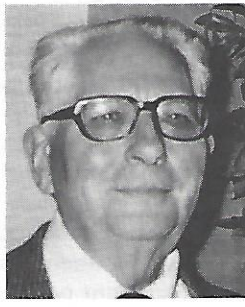
April, 1989

## Charles Wesselhoeft on "The Army of the Tennessee Under Grant"

by Barbara Hughett

Though it did not yet have the name, the story of the Army of the Tennessee really begins in September of 1861, with the assignment of Ulysses S. Grant to the command of the District of Southeast Missouri, headquartered in Cairo, Illinois. Grant's first action came that November when he led an attack on a Confederate camp at Belmont, Missouri on the Mississippi River. This almost ended in disaster when his troops broke ranks, giving the Confederates a chance to regroup; but Grant got his men back to their boats. While this battle accomplished little, it taught Grant some valuable lessons and demonstrated his coolness under pressure.

In February of 1862, Grant led the Army in a daring and successful campaign against Forts Henry and Donelson in western Tennessee. It was at Fort Donelson that he issued his famous ultimatum: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." The North celebrated one of its first major victories in the war and President Lincoln promoted Grant to major general. This was followed by fighting at Shiloh, Iuka, and Corinth. When Grant was criticized after the heavy Union casualties at Shiloh, Lincoln stood by him, saying: "I can't spare this man—he fights."



Charles Wesselhoeft

After many changes of designation, the Army finally became the Army of the Tennessee in the fall of 1862, when Grant was named department commander. In July of 1863, Grant and the Army accomplished their successful assault which resulted in the capture of Vicksburg. This led to the opening of the Mississippi to all Federal traffic and the dividing of the Confederacy in two. Grant's direct connection with the Army of the Tennessee ended when he was promoted to command what we today would call an Army Group after Rosecrans' disaster at Chickamauga in the fall of 1863.

While there are books which cover certain events in the history of the Army and books that deal with the Army as part of the overall history of the war in the west, there is no book exclusively about the Army of the Tennessee. Fellow member Charlie Wesselhoeft has done considerable research on the subject. On April 14th, he will speak to The Civil War Round Table about "The Army of the Tennessee

Under Grant." Charlie first became interest in the Army of the Tennessee upon discovering that his maternal grandfather, Julius Wintermayer, had been part of it. Mr. Wintermayer, who had been born near Wiesbaden, Germany in 1841, arrived in this country in 1850. His family settled in the Manitowac area, and there he grew up. He joined the 14th Wisconsin in 1861 and served with the regiment through the Vicksburg campaign, acquiring two wounds in the process.



480th Regular Meeting

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Charles Wesselhoeft  
on  
The Army of the Tennessee Under Grant

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Friday, April 14, 1989

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



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Charlie Wesselhoeft was born in Lake Bluff, Illinois, where he currently resides. In fact, he presently lives next door to the house in which he was born. He and his wife LaVerne have two daughters and one grandchild. During World War II, he served in both Europe and Japan as a member of the 97th Infantry of the United States Army. A member of The Round Table since 1961, Charlie has served in a number of capacities. Offices he has held over the years include those of inspector general, secretary, treasurer, trustee, and vice president. He has been a participant in many annual battlefield tours. He last spoke to The Round Table in November of 1971. His topic was "Civil War Railroads," another of his areas of interest and expertise.

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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, IL 60611.



As the newsletter went to press, we learned of the death of long-time member Don Jensen. Our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

**The Third Annual Deep Delta Civil War Symposium** will be held June 9-11 at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. The theme of the symposium is "Leadership During The Civil War, Papers in Honor of the late T. Harry Williams." Speakers will include Richard N. Current, Ed Bearss, Herman Hattaway, and Frank E. Vandiver. For information, contact the Deep Delta Civil War Symposium, Southeastern Louisiana University, P.O. Box 590, Hammond, Louisiana 70402.

## Battlefield Preservation Report

by Daniel J. Josephs

According to Dennis Frye, historian of the National Park Service at Harper's Ferry, a day-long meeting was recently sponsored by the National Park and Conservation Associates, regarding the status of the Harper's Ferry battlefield. The National Park Service conducted part of the meeting and gave guided tours of the battlefield areas at Harper's Ferry. Certain West Virginia federal legislators' representatives attended this meeting, as well as state and local officials. The purpose of this meeting was to inform and educate those individuals attending the meeting as to the location and the historical significance of the battlefields at Harper's Ferry. The National Park Service has instituted programs at schools in the area about the significance of the battlefield. The meeting was covered by local media and one newspaper questioned the local population as to whether the Harper's Ferry battlefield should be preserved. According to Mr. Frye, the local population's response was in favor of preserving the battlefield.

Also, according to Mr. Frye, the U.S. National Park Service held a public workshop to explore options concerning School House Ridge, in Harper's Ferry. Previously, the U.S. Congress had instructed the National Park Service to conduct a 45-day public comment period concerning the preservation of School House Ridge, the scene of Stonewall Jackson's attack upon Harper's Ferry in 1862. Mr. Frye said that 50 people attended this public workshop. At this workshop, the people were given options as to the preservation of School House Ridge—such as consent agreements, rezoning, and outright federal purchase. Mr. Frye said that all of the people chose the option wherein the Federal government would purchase School House Ridge outright to preserve the area.

The Congress had previously directed the National Park Service to conduct a cultural land study of land with historical significance adjacent to the Harper's Ferry historical park. The results of this workshop, as well as the public's comments and recommendations gathered during this comment period, and the results of the study will be given to Congress in the form of a formal recommendation requested by Congress. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior flew to Harper's Ferry and visited certain areas, including School House Ridge, on March 17, 1989, according to Mr. Frye. If you want to preserve School House Ridge at Harper's Ferry, you should write letters to Donald Campbell of the U.S. National Park Service during this public comment period and urge the Federal government to preserve School House Ridge.

**A reminder:** Please submit *any* Round Table memorabilia you may have to the 50th Anniversary Committee. The Committee will pay for the copying of the materials and will return all photographs. When submitting photographs, try to identify as many people as possible. Bring these items to a meeting or send them to Jerry Warshaw, 748 Hinman Ave., Evanston, IL 60202.

**To commemorate the anniversary of Jubal Early's 1864 raid** and the burning of Chambersburg, a Civil War Seminar will be held on July 20-22. For information, contact the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce, 75 South Second Street, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania 17201.

## March Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

In early March of 1862, Union troops advanced 200 miles, in hard winter weather over a rugged and high terrain, from southern Missouri into northern Arkansas, fought a battle with Confederate forces, and then went on a further 300 miles. This was the longest, deepest penetration of the Confederacy until Sherman started on the Atlanta campaign. "The Battle of Pea Ridge" was the topic of Jerry L. Russell's address on March 10th, when he spoke before 86 members and guests at the 479th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. Founder and national chairman of Civil War Round Table Associates, Mr. Russell has been for many years one of the foremost activists in the fight to preserve our Civil War battlefield sites.

It was for control of Missouri that the Battle of Wilson's Creek had been fought in August of 1861. Since the Federal forces had been defeated there, Missouri State Guard General Sterling Price had endeavored to gain control of the state for the Confederacy. In Missouri, "a true civil war was being waged," Mr. Russell noted, "with family against family and brother against brother." Although, as 1862 dawned, the state remained legally in the Union, the legislature had adjourned in Jefferson City and moved to Springfield, where Governor Claiborne Jackson established a Confederate government. Missouri was important to both sides, and St. Louis was especially vital. For the Union, it was the base for western operations; for the Confederacy, it was a base for operations into the upper Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys. In February, 1862, Brigadier General Samuel Curtis, new commander of the Union Department of Missouri, entered Springfield and took it without a fight. Although Curtis and his men had achieved the objective of driving them from Missouri by February 16th, the Confederates had still not been defeated. Hoping to score a major victory, Curtis ordered his men to pursue the Confederates into Arkansas. Thus, the battle to save Missouri for the Union, which should have been fought in Missouri, was fought in Arkansas instead. After entering Arkansas and having some minor clashes with Confederates at Cross Hollow Timber and Bright Water, Curtis set up temporary headquarters at Little Sugar Creek.

The Confederate forces had been experiencing a great deal of trouble, due largely to friction and lack of cooperation between General Price and Brigadier General Ben McCulloch. In an attempt to remedy this problem, Confederate President Jefferson Davis named Major General Earl Van Dorn commander of a newly-created Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department. On March 3rd, Van Dorn arrived in Arkansas with only one staff member. He gave a rousing address to his troops, in which he announced his intention of driving the federal forces out of Arkansas, pursuing them through Missouri, and gaining control of the entire state. He ended his talk with: "Huzzah for St. Louis!"

On March 7th, after his former strategies had proved unsuccessful, Van Dorn decided to divide his forces and make a two-pronged attack. "He thought," Mr. Russell observed, "that similar attacks on the Federal right and left, closing toward the center in a pincer movement, would result in the ultimate defeat of Curtis." Since this was a rare occasion when the Confederates outnumbered the Federals (16,000 to 10,500), his optimism might have seemed justified. Curtis ordered Colonel Eugene Carr's division to the vicinity of Elkhorn Tavern to resist Price and his 6,000

men. General Franz Sigel's two Union divisions moved north of Leetown to oppose the other Southern wing under McCulloch.

In the fighting at Elkhorn Tavern, although Confederate Brigadier General William Slack was mortally wounded, Carr's forces were driven off around dusk. Meanwhile, north of Leetown on the other edge of the fighting, General Albert Pike, commanding a force of pro-Confederate Indians, scored some success in routing the Federals and capturing three pieces of artillery. However, Pike soon lost control of his Indian troops and they were not of much use thereafter. McCulloch's troops then joined with those of General James McIntosh to attack the Union forces under Colonel Peter Osterhaus. Shortly after 2:00 p.m., McCulloch, conspicuously dressed in a black velvet suit and plumed hat, moved forward to make a reconnaissance and was slain. Within a few minutes, McIntosh met the same fate. March 7th ended with a Confederate victory at Elkhorn Tavern and a Union victory at Leetown.

Much of what happened on the last day of fighting at Pea Ridge on March 8th was decided by the first day of fighting. The death of two Confederate generals and the mortal wounding of another did nothing to help Van Dorn's position or to boost the already low morale of his men. During the night, Federal forces had replenished their ammunition supplies and had concentrated for a showdown. Sigel had a rare good day, positioning his artillery with telling effect. Van Dorn, dangerously low on ammunition, could hold out no longer. His superior numbers were worthless without ammunition. He moved out, along the Huntsville Road. By 11:00 a.m., the Battle of Pea Ridge, one of the Civil War's most decisive engagements west of the Mississippi River, had ended with an overall Federal victory. Missouri was saved for the Union.



## Battlefield Tour Reminiscences

(The following are excerpts, with appropriate changes, from an editorial that first appeared in the April, 1977 edition, written by former newsletter editor Marshall Krolick.)

Well, it's that time again. On May 4 approximately 75 members of The Round Table and their guests will depart on our annual Battlefield Tour. For most of them, this is a regular event, one in which they participate every year. For most of them, even though they have visited each place countless times before, every year they come back without fail. Those who have never been might ask why and, if they did, the answer would probably be "It's the Battlefield Tour." That begs the question, but to those who go it's answer enough. What they're saying is really quite simple. It's not the places themselves that make them set aside the first weekend in May, it's the experience, maybe even the people and what they bring to each other.

To analyze that experience, you must look at many things. Of course there is the scholarship and the chance to make three-dimensional what has previously only come to us from the printed page. The words of Ed Bearss, as he brings to life the drama of battle; the lump in your throat when J. Ambler Johnston pulled Stonewall Jackson's watch from his pocket as we stood on the ground of Chancellorsville—these moments are "The Battlefield Tour."

Then, too, there are the good times, the fun of comradeship with old friends. The sing-alongs as Miles Janou-

*(continued on page 4)*

## The New Books compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Andrews, H., C. Nelson, B. Pohanka & H. Roach. *Photographs of American Civil War Cavalry*. Guidon Press. 1988. \$9.95.

Beringer, R., H. Hataway, A. Jones & W. Still. *The Elements of Confederate Defeat* (An abridgement of *Why The South Lost the Civil War*). University of Georgia Press. 1988. \$30.00, pbk. \$15.00.

Crofts, Daniel W. *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis*. University of North Carolina Press. 1989. \$45.00.

Damman, Dr. Gordon. *Pictorial Encyclopedia of Civil War Medical Instruments and Equipment*. Pictorial History Publ. Co. 1988. \$8.95 pbk.

Dobbins, Dr. Austin C. *Grandfather's Journal—Company B, The 16th Mississippi Infantry Volunteers, May 27, 1861-July 15, 1865*. Morningside Bookshop. 1988. \$24.95.

Dubois, Charles G. *The Custer Mystery*. El Segundo, CA: Upon & Sons. 1986. \$35.00.

Faust, Drew G. *the Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*. Louisiana State University Press. 1988. \$19.95.

Fehrenbacher, Don E. *Lincoln in Text and Context*. Stanford University Press. 1987. \$39.50.

Hagerman, Edward. *The American Civil War and Origins of Modern Warfare*. Indiana University Press. 1988. \$37.50.

Houbler, James A. *Cities Under the Gun: Images of Occupied Nashville and Chattanooga*. Rutledge Hill Press. 1987. \$39.95.

Jordan, David A. *Winfield Scott Hancock: A Soldier's Life*. Indiana University Press. 1988. \$29.95.

*North Carolina Troops. Volume I—Artillery*. Broadfoot Publ. Co. & North Carolina Division of Archives & History. 1988. \$35.00.

Sears, Stephen W. *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan: Selected Correspondence, 1861-1865*. Ticknor & Fields. 1988. \$29.95.

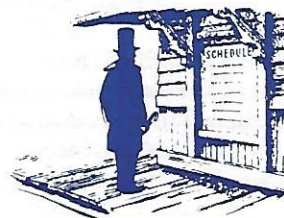
Shackelford, George G. *George Wythe Randolph and the Confederate Elite*. University of Georgia Press. 1988. \$25.00.

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sek pounded the piano; Pete Johnson throwing peanuts at the dancers on the showboat at Vicksburg; those same dancers turning their backs and lifting their skirts to prominently display Al Meyer's smile buttons; Will Plank's car stuck in the mud at Manassas; Ver Lynn Sprague in the washroom at Gettysburg; the birth of the Schimmelfennig legend on a restaurant signboard in Mississippi; Marshall Krolick being presented with a live pork chop at Schimmelfennig's headquarters in Gettysburg—these moments are "The Battlefield Tour."

We cannot overlook the awards and those who have been lucky, or unlucky as the case may be, enough to win them. The look on the face of a true Daughter of the Confederacy as we thank her for opening her ante-bellum home by presenting her with the bust of Abraham Lincoln;

## BULLETIN BOARD



### Future meetings

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

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

May 4-7: Annual Battlefield Tour—The Atlanta Campaign and Andersonville.

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

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

September 8: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner. Recipient of Award: Mark E. Neely, Jr.

### New Members

Robert A. Carlson, 2889 N. Nagel Court, Lake Bluff, IL 60044 (312) 564-9122.

E. Dean Howard, 411 Grove St., Evanston, IL 60201, (312) 869-6141.

William J. Larned, 721 Greenwood, Wilmette, IL 60091, (312) 251-0257.

Ray C. Lyons, 6758 S. Jeffrey Ave., Chicago, IL 60649, (312) 493-0449.

Susan Phillips, 808 Judson, #2-D, Evanston, IL 60202, (312) 869-6761.

### Change of Address

Dr. Frank E. Vandiver, Director, The Mosher Institute for Defense Studies, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-2400.

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the treasured Bafart Award, that hollow cane awarded for excellence in imbibing; the Confederate Purple Heart, meticulously created by John Margreiter and given without a straight face for sacrifice beyond the call of duty—these moments are "The Battlefield Tour."

And, perhaps most importantly of all, for each of these moments there is the memory. Whether within your own mind or around the table wherever Round Table members gather, the stories are told and retold over and over. Each time the laugh wells up again, the wistful smile appears. Some of the old regulars are gone now, but each year as we get on that bus their spirit is already aboard, and so it will always be. The feeling they had is handed down to us and we in turn will pass it on. That too is "The Battlefield Tour," and thus the only question left is "Where to next year?"

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(continued from page 1)

Charlie worked for the Harris Trust and Savings Bank for 43 years. When he retired ten years ago, he held the position of vice president in the department of the comptroller. Since his retirement, among other pursuits, he spends a great deal of time doing research on the Army of the Tennessee.