

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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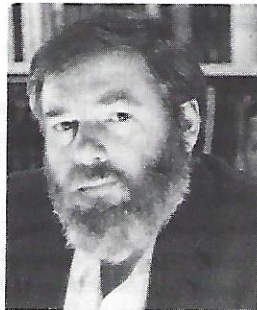
September 1991

Blake A. Magner on "Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade"

by Barbara Hughett

The Second Vermont Brigade was raised in the late summer and early fall of 1862, following a call for 300,000 volunteers by President Abraham Lincoln. Commanded by Brigadier General George J. Stannard, the brigade contained the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Vermont Infantry—all nine-month regiments. Prior to the summer of 1863, the Vermonters spent most of their time standing picket duty along the outer defenses of Washington, D.C. Their only excitement was a small skirmish with J.E.B. Stuart's men and a midnight visit by partisan ranger John Mosby. "Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade" will be the topic of Blake A. Magner when he addresses The Civil War Round Table on Friday, September 13.

At the start of the Gettysburg Campaign, the brigade was transferred to Major General Abner Doubleday's division of the Army of the Potomac's First Corps. The Vermonters arrived on the battlefield during the evening of July 1, 1863, and participated in the action of July 2, helping to support Second and Third Corps troops in the late afternoon.



Blake A. Magner

The brigade gained its fame on July 3 when it performed a flank attack on Pickett's men during Longstreet's assault. Just as Pickett's brigades were heading up Cemetery Ridge, the Vermonters wheeled toward the north, halted within easy range, and fired a volley into the 24th Virginia. When General Doubleday saw Stannard's attack, he waved his hat wildly and shouted, "Glory to God, glory to God! See the Vermonters go it!"

In this attack on Pickett's flank, there was a period during which both the 13th and 16th Vermont were in the battle line. In the course of the battle, the Green Mountain Boys captured two Confederate colors and won three Congressional Medals of Honor. Though all its regiments were mustered out by August 10, the Second Vermont Brigade contributed significantly to the Union cause.

Blake Magner, who holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in biology from Rutgers University, is currently chief chemist at a small New Jersey environmental laboratory. A native of Massachusetts, he has been interested in the study of the Civil War since 1962. He served as president of the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia from 1984-1986. He is the co-author of *Battlefield*



503rd Regular Meeting

Blake A. Magner
on
"Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade"

Friday, September 13, 1991

Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 North Orleans Street
Buttons—15th floor

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

\$17.50 per person

Entree: Breast of Chicken Porcini, Fish, or Fruit Plate



Parking

If you are driving and coming from the south, turn left into the Mart Plaza lot just after crossing the river on Orleans. From the north, turn right from Orleans on Hubbard, left on Kingsbury, right on Kinzie, and left into the Mart Plaza lot. Parking is free. Have your ticket validated at The Round Table registration table.

Commanders: Gettysburg and, as a cartographer, has had his maps printed in seventeen books and publications. He has also written articles for several Civil War journals and magazines.

Magner was the chairman of the General John Gibbon Memorial Committee, which raised \$80,000 to erect the bronze and granite monument honoring the general's contributions during the Battle of Gettysburg. It was dedicated at Gettysburg on July 3, 1988, during the 125th anniversary of the battle. He is the owner of C.W. Historicals, publisher of Civil War histories, and is presently editing *1863 Facts: The Gettysburg Encyclopedia*, with which he and Civil War Round Table Associates hope to raise funds for battlefield preservation.

June Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

"How small a part of all that all of mankind endures," the poet Alexander Pope mused, is "that part that kings or laws can cure." It is from this perspective—the idea that much in our lives that is important to us happens outside of the public framework—that social historians receive their mandate. One of the important social windows onto history is marriage. It serves as a critical institution of observation for social historians. "Parallel Lives: The Marriage of Abraham and Mary Lincoln" was the topic of Jean H. Baker on June 14, when she spoke before 100 members and guests at the 502nd regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. Baker, Elizabeth Todd Professor of History at Goucher College, is the author of several books, including the highly-acclaimed *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography* (1987).

Mary Todd was educated in the best schools available to women in "the Athens of the United States," as Lexington, Kentucky was known. When she moved to Springfield, Illinois, to live with her sister and brother-in-law, she brought with her, Baker noted, "not only her tremendous flirtatiousness and attractiveness, but also an interest in politics, which was quite unusual for a young woman of her time." In the mid-1800s, it was not considered tasteful for a lady to know or talk about anything public.

"Mary Todd was certainly interested in political men," Baker observed, "as three of her suitors were politicians." While maintaining that a shared interest in the political arena was the nexus for their romance, Baker added that, "when Mary Todd met Abraham Lincoln, there was clearly between these two that kind of chemistry that many Americans look for in their marriages."

Their engagement was broken on January 1, 1841—a day which Lincoln referred to as "the fatal first of January," and which precipitated a serious bout of depression for him. But the couple were reunited in 1842 and were married on November 4 of that year. "I believe these two balanced well," Baker said, "in their parallel lives together." Though quite different in temperament and background, the Lincolns successfully shared complementary roles in their relationship, and they had similar interests and goals.

Mary was supportive and helpful in her husband's political career. She educated Lincoln in the social area, wrote patronage letters for him, and served as a sounding board for his ideas. She was what Baker called "an unpaid counterpart to today's campaign managers." When, in November 1860, he heard in the telegraph office that the Pennsylvania returns assured his election, he got his hat and said, "I guess there's a little lady at home who would like to hear this news." When he turned into Jackson Street, the neighbors could hear him shout, "Mary, Mary, we're elected!"

When they went to Washington, their lives diverged. The work of a wartime president kept him in his office until late at night. The stream of patronage seekers made the White House seem like "a prison" to Lincoln. "I consider myself fortunate," Mary wrote her cousin, "if at eleven o'clock, I once more find myself in my pleasant room and very especially, if my tired and weary Husband is *there*, waiting... to receive me."

Taking on a typical feminine role, Mary Lincoln became the first presidential wife to be called the "First Lady." She refurbished the White House, which was in poor repair when the Lincolns arrived there. This was something she

could do publicly to create a symbol of the Union, and it was a significant contribution. Ambassadors from other nations were not unwilling, in 1861, to recognize the Confederacy. One way to help them understand that the Union would not be defeated was to make certain the president's dwelling was one that suggested elegance and permanence. Her parties, she hoped, would be symbols of the free republic. Mary also made frequent visits to wounded soldiers in the hospitals and was one of the few women in Washington who supported subscription drives for free Negroes.

The tragic death of their son Willie, in February 1862, brought tremendous grief to both parents. But, even through troubled times for the Lincolns, there was a sense of strength in their relationship. Mary encouraged her husband to spend time away from the pressures of his office. By 1865, they were taking more and more carriage rides together, and had made a few trips across the Potomac, as better times seemed to be coming.

On April 14, 1865, four days after General Lee's surrender, all of Washington was celebrating the end of the Civil War. Later, Mary Lincoln would recall that she'd had a headache and might have preferred to not go to the theatre that night, but her husband had heard that "Our American Cousin" had received wonderful reviews. "So," Baker concluded, "Mary put on her pretty bonnet and a small-patterned blue silk dress, and Lincoln stabbed at his hair and tried to smooth it down, and they left the White House together for the last time. Their parallel lives ended that night."

Shelby Foote to Receive 1992 Nevins-Freeman Award

The Executive Committee, at its meeting on June 29, voted to award The Civil War Round Table's 1992 Nevins-Freeman Award to Civil War historian and author Shelby Foote. Shelby will give his acceptance address at The Round Table's October 1992 meeting.

Former Round Table President Jerry Warshaw will be the recipient of the 1991-1992 Al Meyer Award. The Executive Committee, at its June 29 meeting, voted to bestow the award on Jerry to honor his many contributions to the organization over the past thirty-two years. The award will be presented at the June 1992 meeting.

Morris Library at Southern Illinois University, headquarters of the Ulysses S. Grant Association, has acquired an important collection of over a dozen documents, which includes correspondence from Grant, Abraham Lincoln, and Stephen A. Douglas. In one of the letters, Grant wrote, during the closing campaign of the Civil War, to his friend, Isaac N. Morris, "I am not a politician, never was, and hope never to be..." The collection was offered to SIU by Charles Keim as a tribute to the late George W. Adams, former chairman of SIU's history department.

The remains of a Confederate soldier—including bone fragments, buttons, cloth, two bullets, and the impression of a body—were found in Rome, Georgia, in a shallow grave that had been covered by a tree. He had apparently been killed during Sherman's siege of Rome. Over 500 people attended a recent reburial service, which featured the participation of Civil War reenactors.

The New Books compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Blight, David W. *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee*. 1991. LSU Press. pbk. \$8.95.

Cleaves, Freeman. *Meade of Gettysburg*. Introduction by Dr. Herman Hattaway. University of Oklahoma Press. 1991. \$14.95. Original of 1960.

Davenport, Don. *In Lincoln's Footsteps: An Historical Guide to the Lincoln Sites in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky*. 1991. Prairie Oak Press. pbk. \$12.95.

Furtwangler, Albert. *Assassination on Stage: Brutus, Hamlet and the Death of Lincoln*. 1991. University of Illinois Press. \$24.95.

Gaff, Alan D. *If This is War: A History of the Campaign of Bull's Run by the Wisconsin Regiment Thereafter Known as the Raggedy Ass Second*. 1991. Morningside House. \$29.95.

Henneke, Ben Graf. *Laura Keene: Actress, Innovator and Impresario*. 1990. Council Oak Books. \$19.95.

Johannsen, Robert A. *Lincoln, The South and Slavery: The Political Dimension*. 1991. LSU Press. \$19.95.

McKinney, Tim. *Robert E. Lee at Sewell Mountain: The West Virginia Campaign*. Pictorial Histories Publ. Co., Inc., 4103 Virginia Ave. S.E., Charleston, WV 25304. 1990. \$11.95.

The history of The Round Table, The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship, by Barbara Hughett, which made its debut at the fiftieth anniversary celebration, is available for \$30 per copy. You may order the book by writing The Round Table (add \$3 for postage and handling), or purchase a copy at the September meeting or at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, 357 West Chicago Avenue.

A reminder: There are only a few spaces remaining for the tour to Springfield on October 4-6. If you don't want to miss the trip, fill out the enclosed form and send it to Registrar Richard McAdoo.

Former Round Table President Brooks Davis is the author of an article in the current issue of *Crossfire*, published by The American Civil War Round Table, United Kingdom, about the Civil War experiences of his grandfather, who served in both the 30th Pennsylvania Emergency Militia and the Third Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery.

A memorial honoring black Americans who fought with the Union Army during the Civil War will be constructed in the nation's capital. The memorial, with seventy granite slabs engraved with soldiers' names, will be built along the U Street Northwest corridor. Howard University will authenticate the names that will be placed on the slabs. Over 185,000 African Americans served in the Union Army.

Lester Joseph, a member of The Round Table since 1953, died on July 11. Les and his late wife Ethel were frequent battlefield tour participants. Our sincere condolences are extended to the Joseph family.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans (Buttons, 15th Floor), the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

September 13: Blake A. Magner on "Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade."

October 4-6: Tour of Springfield.

October 11: Gary W. Gallagher, Nevins-Freeman Address, "Jubal Early and the Myth of the Lost Cause."

November 8: Alan T. Nolan on "General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History."

December 13: Mary Munsell Abroe on "Battlefield Preservation: The Early Years, 1863-1890."

January 10: Karen K. Osborne and Virginia Crane on "A Woman's War: Two Perspectives—North and South."

February 14: W. Glenn Robertson on "General Thomas J. Wood at Chickamauga: The Fatal Order Revisited."

March 13: Milton F. Perry on "Jesse James in the Civil War."

April 10: Dennis Frye on "Mosby vs. Sheridan in the Shenandoah."

April 30-May 3: Annual battlefield tour—Gettysburg.

May 8: To be announced.

June 12: Steven Newton on "Joseph E. Johnston: Rationalizations, Ego, and Politics After the Battle of Seven Pines."

New Member

Scott B. Johnson, 2049 N. Fremont, Chicago, IL 60614, (312)477-7595

Change of Address

Joseph L. Wisheart, 329 D. Woodview, Barrington, IL 60010, (708)304-1053.

Win Stracke (1908-1991)

by Joyce Warshaw

We regret to report that the summer months brought the passing of Honorary Life member Win Stracke. Win died on Saturday, June 29, in his apartment at the North Shore Hotel in Evanston. His death came on the same day that many of his Round Table friends were attending the Summer Executive Committee Meeting. A memorial service was held on the following Wednesday evening at the Old Town School of Folk Music, that wonderful institution in Chicago that Win founded, and guided for so many years.

Win is happily memorialized in our own Round Table History. Appendix G is his song "The Biggest Little Park in the World (Centennial Park on Chestnut Street)," composed to commemorate the Civil War Centennial and dedicated to its veterans—the members of The Civil War Round Table. Appendix H features "Part of Me," the moving ballad he composed for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary celebration of The Round Table in 1965. Win became known, too, as "The Voice of Illinois" for his service to the state during the Illinois Sesquicentennial in 1968.

"We shall meet, but we shall miss him."