

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LII, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

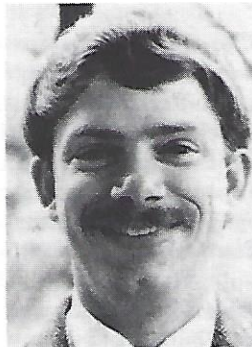
April 1992

## Dennis E. Frye on "Mosby Versus Sheridan in the Shenandoah"

by Barbara Hughett

After one year of waging war behind enemy lines, John Singleton Mosby had become the most celebrated guerrilla in the Confederacy. Favorite targets included supply trains, railroads, couriers, and the omnipresent sutlers' wagons. Newspapers in the North and South heralded Mosby's exploits in front-page headlines, and Union politicians and generals were constantly embarrassed by the "Gray ghost."

Federal efforts to erase this pesky nemesis had proved futile, but when young General Philip H. Sheridan arrived in the Shenandoah Valley in August 1864, Mosby faced his most determined opponent. General Ulysses S. Grant had just given Sheridan command of the newly-created Army of the Shenandoah, consisting of the 6th Corps, several brigades from General David Hunter's former Army of West Virginia, two divisions recently transferred from Louisiana, and two divisions of Sheridan's own cavalry. What followed became a classic "David versus Goliath" showdown, with Mosby's dozens squaring off against Sheridan's thousands.



Dennis E. Frye

Mosby the underdog has generally been declared the champion in his struggle with the titanic Sheridan. Historians cite famous incidents like the Berryville wagon train attack and the "Greenback raid" as proof of Mosby's effectiveness. Mosby himself claimed success when he boasted that his operations against Sheridan extended the life of the Confederacy by six months.

Yet close examination of the wartime record reveals a different story. Stripped of the mythology surrounding Mosby, the facts show Sheridan virtually neutralizing the "Gray ghost" during the 1864 Valley Campaign. Did Mosby's escapades stall Sheridan's war machine, or did the fabled raider fail to dent Sheridan's armor? This question will be examined when Dennis E. Frye addresses The Civil War Round Table on April 10. His topic will be "Mosby versus Sheridan in the Shenandoah."

Chief historian at Harpers Ferry National Historic Park since 1990, Dennis Frye has been a full-time historian at the park since 1979. He began his association with the National Park Service in 1973, at the age of fourteen, as a



### 510th Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

Dennis E. Frye

on

"Mosby versus Sheridan in the Shenandoah"

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Friday, April 10, 1992

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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: Roast Pork Loin with Stuffing,  
Orange Roughy, or Fruit Plate



### A Reminder

Please make your reservation by Wednesday, April 8. Mail the enclosed postcard or call the book shop at (312) 944-3085.

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.

volunteer at Antietam Battlefield and Harpers Ferry. A native of Pleasant Valley, Maryland, Frye graduated *summa cum laude*, from Shepard College in Sheperdstown, West Virginia.

Frye is the author of two books in the Virginia Confederate Regimental Series and is the co-editor of *The James E. Taylor Sketchbook: An Artist with Sheridan in the Shenandoah* (1989). He is currently in the process of researching and writing a multi-volume series on Harpers

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## THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

357 West Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60610  
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, 357 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.



**Books are needed for the raffle** held at each monthly meeting. The proceeds are donated to the cause of battlefield preservation. Please bring any books you may be able to contribute for use in the raffles to Ted Birndorf, chairman of the Battlefield Preservation Committee.

## BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

### ☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

In response to the March "Update," Will Greene, executive director of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS), sent the following letter: "I just read the March issue and wanted to tell you how much we appreciate mention of our success at Fisher's Hill. The fund raising continues to move forward. We have now collected more than \$208,000 for the project, leaving us less than \$14,000 in debt to our operating account. Needless to say, without the help of our allies like The Civil War Round Table, Fisher's Hill would not have been saved. We are looking at some sites now for our next big purchase, so be prepared for another spring campaign!

"As far as the future of the Valley battlefields is concerned vis a vis the National Park Service study, the APCWS and the National Parks and Conservation Association are working with residents of the Valley to develop a preservation and interpretation strategy. We continue to believe that the National Park Service has an indispensable role to play in not only assisting the private sector in acquiring the Civil War sites in the Valley, but bringing the benefits of that preservation to the public. We hope to be able to announce a proposal to achieve those goals later this spring and then work with local residents to promote that proposal throughout the Valley and in Congress. We will certainly continue to keep you informed of our progress."

**The new American Battlefield Protection Foundation (ABPF)**, initiated by Secretary of the Interior Manual Lujan Jr. last June to help save Civil War battlefields, has selected James F. Jennings Jr. of Albuquerque, New Mexico, as its president. Jennings worked twenty-five years for Phelps Dodge Industries, a copper manufacturing company, serving ultimately as president of its subsidiary, Phelps Dodge Communications.

The Battlefield Protection Foundation's goal is to raise \$100 million over the next several years and pour it into battlefield acquisition. It intends to concentrate on fund raising, and then to funnel the money to appropriate organizations at the grassroots level. In keeping with Lujan's desire for a public-private "partnership," the foundation will also look for opportunities where some level of government is involved in the preservation effort.

The Foundation recently made its first award of money toward a battlefield purchase—a \$100,000 gift to save the historic Grove Farm at Antietam Battlefield in Maryland. The money went to the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), which is buying the forty-acre farmland tract for \$325,000 (see the December 1991 Battlefield Preservation "Update"). Another \$100,000 is being donated by the Maryland Environmental Trust, and the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites has provided SHAF a matching grant of \$15,000. SHAF will have to raise the remaining \$100,000. For information, write SHAF at P.O. Box 550, Keedysville, Maryland 21756.

**☞ A reminder:** Please get the balance of your payment for our 1992 battlefield tour to Gettysburg to Registrar Richard McAdoo by Friday, April 10. If you have not yet made your reservation, do so soon as there are very few spaces still available.



## ☞ MARCH MEETING ☞

by Barbara Hughett

At the outset of the Civil War, Southern cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point suffered much anguish about what to do. Eventually, seventy-four of them either resigned their appointments or suffered dismissal for refusing to take an oath of allegiance. A cadet from Virginia wrote his mother, "I have refused to take the oath ... I actually cried ... I know well that I resign everything." Over ninety percent of West Point graduates of the classes between 1833 and 1861 served in the war. Not all the graduates remained loyal to their region: thirty two from the North joined the Confederacy; thirty-nine Southerners fought for the Union.

"Teaching the Civil War at West Point" was Herman Hattaway's topic on March 13, when he addressed 100 members and guests at the 509th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. Hattaway, professor of history at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, taught the course on "The Military History of the Civil War" as a visiting professor at West Point during the 1990-1991 academic year.

Noting that the cadets have had to meet high standards in order to gain admission to the Academy, he said that they are, as a rule, "marvelously pleasant" and attentive students. "They want to do well," he stated, "and they are not unrealistic about what that takes." Most of the cadets in his classes seemed to have a genuine interest in the Civil War. "They see in the Civil War commanders," Hattaway observed, "not just lessons illustrated, but also an ideal." One student told him that "learning about those that have gone before is like learning our own family history."

"Several facts about the war," he remarked, "seem to suffuse into the elemental knowlege possessed by all cadets. An untold number of them pointed out to me that of the sixty major battles of the Civil War, fifty-five of them had West Point graduates commanding both sides, and the remaining five had West Pointers on one side. As one of them observed to me, 'Cadets in class love to hear about West Point graduates,' and of their military exploits, and 'whether the graduate did well ... or not.'"

Quite a lot of notice is given to the Civil War era at the school, with most of the emphasis on individuals who remained loyal to the Union. In the main reading room of the library, however, one can be "torn between the two sides. The sad face of Robert E. Lee and the stern scowl of U.S. Grant ... face each other there." One of Hattaway's students wanted most to learn "how the leaders, on both sides, both good and bad, adapted to the situation" and "learned from mistakes." Some of the men and women in his classes also wanted to know about "the complex relationship between military and political action," as illustrated in the Civil War. But not every cadet, Hattaway said, "is turned on by such complexity. One such individual penned me a remarkable testimony: 'Cadets are not much interested in the socio-political and economic factors that led up to or followed the war. We want war. Plain and simple.'"

Another student wrote on his final exam that he had hoped Hattaway would ask some kind of question that would allow him to put his "own plug in on why the South lost." But now, he suggested, "you will have to wait for my own book ... my own doctoral thesis (publication date: 2010)."

Hattaway said that he looks back on his year at West Point with a feeling of great satisfaction. "One of my cadets," he remarked, "put his finger on the precise words that so often ran through my own mind: 'When your feet touch the ground [anywhere at West Point], you wonder whether you stand on the exact spot where Lee, Grant, Sherman, or the others stood. You look off down the Hudson and you wonder what they thought at the same site.' How often did I think about Stephen D. Lee—the subject of my first book and whose portrait adorned the mantle in our quarters all during our year on Post—and wonder about his thoughts when he looked at exactly what I was then looking at."

*(continued from page 1)*

Ferry during the Civil War; the initial volume deals with Stonewall Jackson's siege and capture of Harpers Ferry in September 1862. He has also written over two dozen articles for magazines and journals and has served as a guide for numerous battlefield tours sponsored by various historical organizations.

Past president of both the Hagerstown and Harpers Ferry Civil War Round Tables, Dennis Frye is a director of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) and co-founder and former president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF). His most recent appearances before The Round Table were during the 1990 battlefield tour to Antietam and at the January 1983 meeting, when his topic was "The Cows' Tails Mystery: The Siege and Capture of Harpers Ferry."

**E. Dean Howard**, a Round Table member since 1989, died on February 25. We extend our sincere condolences to his family.

**Former President Jerry Warshaw** presented a program of vintage Civil War films at the March meeting of the Frankfort Area Historical Society.

**Former President Marshall D. Krolick** addressed the Fort Wayne Civil War Round Table on March 9. His topic was "The Cavalry and the Chancellorsville Campaign." He will be speaking on "Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg" at the annual conference of the Confederate Historical Institute. Krolick will also serve as a tour guide for the conference, which will be held from April 9-12 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

**Senior Vice President Mary Munsell Abroe** spoke about battlefield preservation in the late nineteenth century at the February 7 meeting of the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table.

**John Y. Simon**, The Round Table's 1985 Nevins-Freeman honoree, spoke on "Grant: The First Year" at the March 17 meeting of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table in Minneapolis.

**The Fall Kentucky Tour**, which was being planned for October 1992, has been postponed due to scheduling problems.



## The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Potter, Jerry O. *The Sultana Tragedy: America's Greatest Maritime Disaster*. Pelican Publishing Company, 1101 Monroe Street, Gretna, LA 70053. 1992. \$19.95.
- Strayer, Larry M. and Richard A. Baumgartner, eds. *Echoes of Battle: The Atlanta Campaign*. Blue Acorn Press, P.O. Box 2684, Huntington, WV 25736. 1990. \$39.95; pbk. \$29.95.
- Thatcher, Marshall P. *A Hundred Battles in the West. St. Louis to Atlanta 1861-1865, The Second Michigan Cavalry*. Detroit Free Press. 1990. \$25.00. Original of 1884.
- Vetter, Charles. *Sherman: Merchant of Terror, Advocate of Peace*. Pelican Publishing Company, 1101 Monroe Street, Gretna, LA 70053. 1992. \$25.00.
- Walker, Gary C. *Hunter's Fiery Raid Through Virginia Valleys*. 1989. A&W Enterprise. \$29.95.
- Walker, Gary C. *The War in West Virginia—1861-65*. 1985. A&W Enterprise. \$24.95.
- Ware, E.F. *The Lyon Campaign in Missouri, A History of the 1st Iowa Infantry*. 1991. Press of the Camp Pope Bookshop. \$24.95. Original of 1907.
- Weinet, Richard P., Jr. and Col. Robert Arthur. *Defender of the Chesapeake: The Story of Fort Monroe*. 1989. White Mane Publ. Co. \$19.95.
- Wells, Edward L. *Hampton and Cavalry in '64*. Introduction by A. Wilson Greene. 1991. Owens Publ. Co. \$35.00. Original of 1899.
- Wheeler, Richard. *Sword Over Richmond (Eyewitness History of McClellan's Peninsular Campaign)*. Harpers. 1991. Pbk. \$10.95. Original of 1986.
- Winters, John D. *The Civil War in Louisiana*. LSU Press. 1991. Pbk. \$16.95.
- Wise, Jennings C. *The Long Arm of Lee: The History of the Artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia*. 2 vols. University of Nebraska Press. 1991. \$30.90. Original of 1915.
- Wyeth, John Allan. *That Devil Forrest: Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest*. LSU Press. 1989. pbk. \$16.95. Original of 1899.

**The history of The Round Table, The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship**, by Barbara Hughett, is available for \$30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the February meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

### Schimmelfennig Boutique

In addition to The Round Table history, the following items are available at each monthly meeting:

Lapel pins \$3.00 each, two for \$5.00

Mugs \$2.00 each, two for \$3

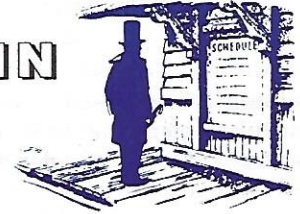
Meeting tapes \$7.00 each

Photos \$5.00 each

Civil War Buff Posters \$10.00 each

Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the programs of The Civil War Round Table.

## 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.

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

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

*May 8:* Lawrence Hewitt on "Port Hudson: The Most Photographed Battlefield of the Civil War."

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

*September 11:* Wiley Sword on "Who Speaks for the Dead? A Perspective on Franklin and Nashville."

*October 9:* Shelby Foote, Nevins-Freeman Address.

*November 13:* John Hennessy, topic to be announced.

*December 11:* Peter Cozzens on "The Real Rock of Chickamauga: The Twenty-first Ohio on Horseshoe Ridge."

*January 8:* Brooks Davis on "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln as Commanders in Chief."

### New Members

Garry Edelman, 1636 W. Grace, #2, Chicago, IL 60613, (312) 929-0943

Ira Kaplan, 260 E. Chestnut, #407, Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 944-3074

Al Kupferman, 3023 Greenleaf, Wilmette, IL 60091, (708) 251-6250

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Sally Rudy, 4218 S. Hoagland Avenue, Fort Wayne, IN 46807, (219) 744-9519

Larry Selander, 1434 N. Astor, Chicago, IL 60610, (312) 664-6967

Earl L. Simon, 7804 Lake, Morton Grove, IL 60053, (708) 965-6728

### Change of Address

Tom Kane, Rural Route 1, Box 644 1/2, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

**The Museum of the Confederacy**, in Richmond, Virginia, will offer aerial tours of Civil War sites around the greater Richmond area on the last Saturday of every month. The tours, which cost \$60 per person, leave from the museum and include a free shuttle to the Richmond airport. Three choices are offered: the Richmond Battlefield Tour, the Confederate Capitol City Tour, and the Siege of Petersburg Tour. Flights are limited to three people per flight. For information, call (804) 649-1861.