

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LV, Number 1

Chicago, Illinois

September 1994

Frank J. Williams on "Abraham Lincoln: Our Ever Present Contemporary"

by Barbara Hughett

Throughout the ages, it seems that Abraham Lincoln is always with us. He symbolizes something different for each of us. In *Lincoln Reconsidered* (1956), David Herbert Donald's lead essay, "Getting Right With Lincoln," considers this phenomenon. According to Donald, because of Lincoln's "ambiguity," he could satisfy every national and political need. One might also say that Lincoln could satisfy every international need. For example, in his own generation, he could be: "Lincoln the nationalist" for the Italians, "Lincoln the democrat" for the French, and "Lincoln the libertarian" for his few English admirers at the time of his presidency.

During the 1992 presidential race, Lincoln seemed to belong alternately to Bill Clinton (who read *Lincoln on Democracy* on his campaign plane) and George Bush (who quoted him as a "lonely White House occupant"). Former President Ronald Reagan misquoted Lincoln at the 1992 Republican Convention and, in doing so, portrayed a phony Lincoln. The press, with its own picture of Lincoln, was quick to publicize the misrepresentation.

Forty percent of a Lincoln documentary broadcast on national television in December, 1992, was devoted to his assassination, attracting the viewer through morbidity and our fascination with violent death. Thus, the popular image of Lincoln has been changed from "Lincoln the emancipator" and "Lincoln the statesman" to "Lincoln the victim."

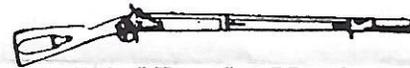
Each generation makes its own Lincoln, and he is not necessarily the Lincoln that we have known before. Lincoln was adaptable, rather than ambiguous. We know so much about him, and yet so little, that people of divergent views find elements within Lincoln's philosophy to admire.

The only Lincoln worth attesting to by modern people may be the Lincoln of the last voice we heard. Lincoln was constantly learning and growing, especially during the four years of the Civil War. Perhaps the Lincoln of the Second Inaugural Address and his final speech from the White House window represent the "real" Lincoln, because these utterances represent the last thinking he did on weighty issues.

"Abraham Lincoln: Our Ever Present Contemporary" will be the topic of Frank J. Williams when he addresses The Round Table on September 9. For over twenty years,



Frank J. Williams



533rd Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

Frank J. Williams on "Abraham Lincoln: Our Ever Present Contemporary"

☆ ☆ ☆

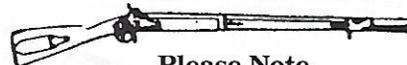
Friday, September 9

☆ ☆ ☆

Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$20.00 per person

Entree: Breast of Chicken with Lemon Herb Sauce or Fruit Plate



Please Note

Please see the enclosed letter about the new meeting reservations system! Make your reservation by Wednesday, September 7, by calling The Civil War Round Table offices at 312-341-1865. People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner.

The Union League Club is located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets. Parking is free at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club.

Frank J. Williams has combined flourishing careers in the law, public service, and the study of American history. He serves as president of both the national Abraham Lincoln Association and the Ulysses S. Grant Association. For twelve years, he was president of the Lincoln Group of Boston. He is a member of several Lincoln groups and Civil War Round Tables, including The Civil War Round Table of Chicago. He serves on a number of boards including the advisory board for the Lincoln Legal Papers Project.

A native of Providence, Rhode Island, Williams cur-

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841
 Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402
 Phone: 312-341-1865
 Fax: 312-341-1863

Officers

President	Barbara Hughett
Senior Vice President	Carole Cierniak
Vice President	Larry Gibbs
Vice President	Robert Girardi
Treasurer	James Nethery
Secretary	Bruce Allardice
Assistant Treasurer	Charles Bednar
Assistant Secretary	Michael Marienthal
Inspector General	Bruce Allardice
Membership Registrar	Carole Le Claire
Tour Registrar	Richard McAdoo
Newsletter Editor	Barbara Hughett
Contributing Editors	C. Robert Douglas, David Richert Larry Gibbs, Robert Girardi

Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968

Board of Trustees

Terms expiring in 1995: Gene Holland, Carole Le Claire, Frank Patton, Jerome Schur
Terms expiring in 1996: Robert Dawson, Karen Krieger, Eleanor Leichenko, Norman Poteshman

Committee Chairs

Fall Kentucky Tour	Brooks Davis
Spring Battlefield Tour	Larry Gibbs Richard McAdoo
Battlefield Preservation Fund	Mary Munsell Abroe
Financial Planning	Kurt Carlson
Nevins-Freeman Award	Joseph Wisheart Glen N. Wiche C. Robert Douglas
Publications/Printed Material	David Richert
Publicity/Public Relations	Donni Case
Hospitality	Susan Phillips Janet Linhart
Nominating	Kurt Carlson
Field Artist/Archives	Jerry Warshaw
Honors	Paul I. Kliger
Union League Club Liaison	John Higginson
Tape Record Librarians	Robert Girardi Roger Bohn
Battlefield Preservation Raffle and Schimmelfenning Boutique	Ted Birndorf
House	Thomas Herres Charles Ten Brink
Picnic	Paul Klekner, Robert Dawson

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402.

President Barbara Hughett addressed the Union League Club Civil War Round Table luncheon on July 25. Her topic was "The Civil War Round Table Movement: Its Past and Its Future."

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by Mary Munsell Abroe and David Richert

As discussed in this column in June, Disney's America, the speculative real estate venture-theme park that would be a magnet for additional industrial and commercial development in the vicinity, threatens the historical and natural landscape of Virginia's Northern Piedmont near Washington, DC. Manassas National Battlefield Park, only five miles away, is immediately endangered, and within fifty miles are five other Civil War battlefields requiring national attention: Chancellorsville, Wilderness, Brandy Station, Mine Run, and Spotsylvania. Also within fifty miles are nine other imperiled fields: Fredericksburg, Cedar Mountain, Ball's Bluff, Aldie, Auburn, Middleburg, Upper-ville, Thoroughfare Gap, and Rappahannock Station.

At its meeting July 9, The Round Table executive committee voted to go on record as opposing Disney's America and to communicate this opposition to Protect Historic America, an organization comprised of prominent American historians founded to fight the Disney project.

Round Table members wishing to express opinions and concerns about Disney's America can direct their comments to:

Michael Eisner, Chairman
 Walt Disney Company
 500 S. Buena Vista St.
 Burbank, CA 91521

Frederico Pena, Secretary
 U.S. Department of Transportation
 400 7th St., SW
 Washington, DC 20590

(Ask that his department require the completion of a comprehensive, rather than a limited, Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with Disney's America.)

Their senators (U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510) and congressman (U.S. Congress, Washington, DC 20515). Ask them to stop federal approval of an I-66 interchange — funded by taxpayers — to benefit a private corporation.

Editors of *Potomac News* (14010 Smoketown Rd., Woodbridge, VA 22192), *Journal Messenger* (9009 Church St., Manassas, VA 22110), *Prince William Journal* (13199 Centre Point Way, Dale City, VA 22193), and *USA Today* (PO Box 500, Washington, DC 20044). For additional information, contact Mary Abroe.

The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites and the Brandy Station Foundation in July offered \$5 million for 2300 acres at the Brandy Station battlefield in Culpeper County, Virginia. The offer was rejected by the landowner, who has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. However, the offer will be considered by a U.S. bankruptcy judge. Preservationists have been working for five years to prevent a California developer from completing a 1500 acre industrial development that was approved by the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors. Recently, the developer announced that 515 acres of the property would be sold to a company planning to construct a Formula One raceway.

☛ JUNE MEETING ☛

by Donni Case and Larry Hewitt

At the 532nd regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, on June 10, 120 members and guests assembled to hear Shiloh Battlefield Park Historian Stacy D. Allen challenge the traditional interpretation of the bloody seven-hour battle at the Hornets' Nest. Allen's very engaging talk, "Endurance Ceased to be a Virtue: A Revision of the Action at the Shiloh Hornets' Nest," was thought-provoking, especially for those members who had accepted the standard interpretation that, first, Prentiss saved Grant's bacon by buying him seven hours to regroup his retreating army and, second, that Braxton Bragg piecemealed 18,000 men through twelve assaults during those seven hours, with total disregard for his troops.

"I wish you well today, but we must have a victory." With commanding General Sidney Johnston's words to Brigadier General Randall Gibson, Allen began his presentation at noon of April 6, 1862, when the "seven-hour assault" against the sunken road began. Confusion reigned from the very start. The 8th Iowa reinforced the center of the line and Colonel Getty could hear, but could not see, the Confederates opposite his position.

His opponent, Gibson, was leading his Louisiana brigade in the first attack. The assault was disrupted as his troops moved from the field to a dense thicket of oak for cover. Here, two Confederate regiments, 4th Louisiana and 1st Arkansas, began firing into each other. There was utter chaos in the thicket with Colonel Henry Watkins Allen of the 4th Louisiana shouting, "For God's sake, cease firing, you're killing mine and I yours."

Gibson's first assault was repulsed eight paces from the Union line along the sunken road. His second attack was thrown back in a similar fashion. The Federal position was strong, and repulse of the third assault was worse than the previous two.

An argument between Bragg and Henry Watkins Allen ensued, the dialogue purely Shakespearean:

Bragg: "Those men must not fall back again!"

Allen (with two bullet wounds in his mouth, no less): "It cannot be taken from the front, must flank."

Bragg: "Serve them, as they have served you!"

Despite Bragg's orders to keep pressing the enemy, Gibson's brigade stopped. Gibson's action caused Bragg to write in a post mortem to his wife that, "Gibson was an inherent coward."

At this point, Allen challenged the audience to define reality as seen through the eyes of the men who fought at Shiloh. After all, history is "HIS-story," and, for the speaker, something seemed wrong with the traditional interpretation. He then reviewed the events prior to noon, April 6. Beginning with the Confederate high command's planning of the attack, Allen traced the movements of the opposing units through noon, April 6, to demonstrate the two principal fallacies of the Hornets' Nest action. On the Union side, rather than Prentiss and his division holding the sunken road, it was W.H.L. Wallace's division on the right and Stephen Hurlbut's on the left of the Union line.

On the Confederate side, after the inter-mingling of the corps led to the front being divided into four sectors, Bragg found himself responsible for driving nearly 10,000 Union infantry from the sunken road with Gibson's lone brigade and no artillery. Consequently, Bragg was only

responsible for ordering three attacks, not twelve. Furthermore, those three were not piecemeal, because he ordered every man on his front to participate in every charge. By the time an additional Confederate brigade reinforced Gibson at 3:30 p.m., Bragg had already departed to take command of the Confederate right, following the death of Albert Sidney Johnston.

It is certain that, while Bragg was opposite the Hornets' Nest, he never had more than one brigade of infantry, whose battery had been left at Corinth. Therefore, he ordered Gibson's brigade to attack alone three times because that is all the force he had with which to press the enemy in his sector of the front. The Hornets' Nest, a small piece of the battle but the focus of every Shiloh study, was so well-illuminated by Shiloh historian Stacy Allen that perhaps a few of us left with a clearer understanding of Braxton Bragg's performance and a better appreciation of generalship on that terrible Sunday along the banks of the Tennessee River.

Frank J. Williams (from page 1)

Frank J. Williams currently practices law there and resides in nearby Hope Valley. He received his A.B. degree in government and history from Boston College and then served for five years in the United States Army, which included active duty in the Vietnam War. He rose to the rank of captain, earning such decorations as the Bronze Star and three air medals, as well as the Silver Star of Valor from the Republic of Vietnam. After completing his military service, Williams earned a law degree from Boston University Law School and a master's degree in taxation from Bryant College.

Frank Williams writes an annual report on *Lincolniana* for *The Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* and lectures on Lincoln-related topics throughout the world. He has been the principal advisor for several Lincoln symposiums, including one on "Lincoln and the American Political Tradition" at Brown University in 1984, for which he received a special Barondess-Lincoln Award from the Civil War Round Table of New York. Lincoln College awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1987.

The author of numerous articles for magazines and professional journals, Williams is currently working on a major two-volume bibliography of every Lincoln work ever published since the last century and, with Harold Holzer, a book on Abraham Lincoln's legal career. Frank Williams is also an avid and important Lincoln collector, with one of the largest, privately-held Lincoln libraries in the world.

There are a few spaces left for our Fall Kentucky Bluegrass Tour, set for October 12-14. To make a reservation, call Registrar Richard McAdoo at 708-944-5082, or see a tour committee member at the September meeting.

The September 9, 1994, meeting will be our first since making the Union League Club of Chicago the permanent site of our dinner meetings. Twenty-nine years ago, on September 10, 1965, The Civil War Round Table held its 243rd regular meeting at the Union League Club. The speaker was Clement M. Silvestro, then director of the Chicago Historical Society. His topic was "None But Patriots: The Union Leagues in the Civil War." Copies of the first page of that newsletter will be available at the treasurer's table at the September 9 meeting.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Chance, Josephy E. *Jefferson Davis' Mexican War Regiment*. U. of Mississippi Press. 1991. \$24.95.
- Coco, Gregory A. *Killed in Action: Eyewitness Accounts of the Last Moments of 100 Union Soldiers who Died at Gettysburg*. Thomas Publications, P.O. Box 3031, Gettysburg, PA 17325. 1993. \$6.95.
- Cooke, John Esten. *Wearing of the Gray Being Personal Portraits, Scenes & Adventures of the War*. Olde Soldier Books, Inc. 1993. \$35.00. Original of 1867.

The ninth annual Lincoln Colloquium will be held on Saturday, October 22, at Sangamon State University in Springfield. The theme this year is "Abraham Lincoln and a Nation at War." Speakers include James M. McPherson, Frank J. Williams, John Y. Simon, Harold Holzer, and Roger Fischer. George L. Painter will serve as moderator. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. and the program will conclude around 5:00 p.m. The \$30 per person fee includes a luncheon. Please register early as seating in the main auditorium is limited. Make checks out to Eastern National Park & Monument Association, and send to: Lincoln Colloquium, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 413 South Eighth Street, Springfield, Illinois 6701-1905. For additional information, call Tim Townsend at 217-492-4150.

The Nevins-Freeman Award: The First Decade, 1974-1983 is a twelve-page booklet written by Glen Wiche and Ralph Newman and published by The Round Table in 1984. Glen has copies of the booklet which he is making available to Round Table members, free of charge. If you would like a booklet, write Glen at 1415 N. Dearborn, #7B, Chicago, Illinois 60610, or call him during the day at 312-341-1860.

The Twelfth Annual Midwest Civil War Collectors Show will take place on Saturday, September 17, from 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road, Wheaton. For information, call Robert (Hawkeye) Nowak at 312-539-8432.

The Goose Creek Association of northern Virginia will sponsor a day-long symposium on the life and career of Colonel John S. Mosby, the "Gray Ghost of the Confederacy," on Saturday, October 8, in Middleburg, Virginia. For information, call The Goose Creek Association at 703-687-3073.

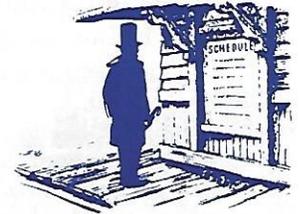
Civil War historian Edwin C. Bearss will address the Union League Club Civil War Round Table luncheon at noon on Tuesday, September 27. For information and to make reservations, call 312-427-7800, extension 266.

Five more Lincoln-Douglas Debate reenactments are still to be televised nationally by C-SPAN. Beginning at noon (CST), the following debates can be viewed: Jonesboro—September 17; Charleston—September 18; Galesburg—October 8; Quincy—October 9; and Alton—October 15.

Zetna Andrews, a founder of the Jackson, Mississippi, Civil War Round Table and a longtime friend of this Round Table, died on August 18. We offer our deepest condolences to her family and friends.

Civil War scholar and author Frank Klement, who spoke to the Union League Club Round Table luncheon this past April, died in August. We offer our sincerest sympathy to his family and friends.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

- September 9: Frank J. Williams on "Abraham Lincoln: Our Ever Present Contemporary"
- October 7: Alan T. Nolan, Nevins-Freeman Address "Grant and Sherman: An Effective Partnership" (Please note: this is the *first* Friday of the month.)
- October 12-16: Fall Kentucky Tour
- November 11: Terry Van Meter on "The Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac"
- December 9: David E. Long on "I Shall Never Recall a Word": Emancipation and the Race Issue in the 1864 Presidential Election Campaign"
- January 13: James I. (Bud) Robertson, Jr., on "New Viewpoints on Stonewall Jackson"
- February 17: Ralph G. Newman on "A Handful of Lincoln and Civil War Authors" (Please note: this is the *third* Friday of the month.)
- March 10: Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., on "Give Us a Flag: Afro-Confederate Loyalty in Civil War Virginia"
- April 14: William Hanchett on "Lincoln's Assassination After 130 Years"
- May 3-7: Annual Spring Battlefield Tour—Charleston, Columbia, and Savannah
- May 12: Tamara Moser Melia on "James B. McPherson and the Ideals of the Old Army"
- June 9: John Y. Simon on "Forging a Commander: Ulysses S. Grant and the First Year of the Civil War"

New Members

- Norman Baskes, 3130 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60657, 312-248-5335
- Jane Coulson, 175 E. Delaware Place, #9009, Chicago, IL 60611
- Terrence P. Madden, 545 S. Waiola Avenue, LaGrange, IL 60525, 708-579-5728
- J. Dennis McDonald, 2128 W. 111th Street, Unit H, Chicago, IL 60643, 312-779-7924
- Jim Norbert, 2910 W. 100th Street, Evergreen Park, IL 60642, 708-425-2835
- Larry Peterson, RR2, 12 Sherrilyn, Carbondale, IL 62901, 618-985-2571
- William Sawisch, 418 Galaltad Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440, 708-972-0635
- John Scully, 258 Lawton Road, Riverside, IL 60546, 708-447-7531
- Judy Scully, 258 Lawton Road, Riverside, IL 60546, 708-447-7531
- Mary Springer, 6240 N. Tripp Avenue, Chicago, IL 60646, 312-685-6085
- Cheryl Weissman, 2641 W. Estes, #3-A, Chicago, IL 60645, 312-338-4395

Changes of Address

- John Blew, 10457 S. Seeley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60643, 312-238-1066
- David Howe, 1665 Clavinia Avenue, Deerfield, IL 60015
- William Howe, 1665 Clavinia Avenue, Deerfield, IL 60015
- David Kupferman, 3010 N. 8th Street, Tacoma, WA 98406
- Anthony John Mourek, Mourek Management, Inc., 977 North Oaklawn Avenue, P.O. Box 901, Elmhurst, IL 60126-0901
- Barbara Long Pleiter, Casa De Las Campanas, 18655 W. Bernardo Drive, #387, San Diego, CA 92127
- Dr. Abel Robertson, 415 Lee Avenue, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019-1367
- W.A. Tate, P.O. Box 885, 6068 Keisley, Coloma, MI 49038
- Karen Weber, 817 E. Oakland Avenue, #208, Urbana, IL 61801, 217-367-6402