

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVI, Number 1

Chicago, Illinois

September 1995

## Grady McWhiney on "Braxton Bragg"

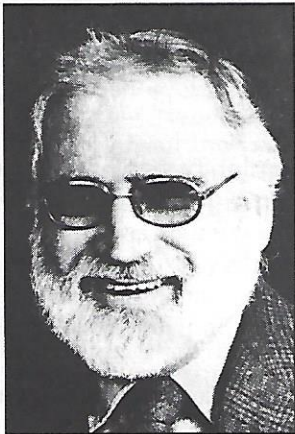
by Barbara Hughett

Braxton Bragg, a West Point graduate and veteran of the Mexican War, was appointed Brigadier General in the army of the Confederate States of America on March 7, 1861. He commanded the coast between Pensacola and Mobile, and was promoted to Major General the following September 12. Foreseeing important events in Kentucky, he asked to be sent there and served under Albert Sidney Johnston in the reorganization of the army at Corinth, Mississippi, and he led the Confederate right at the Battle of Shiloh. On April 12, 1862, he was appointed full General in the regular Confederate army, and on June 27, replaced Beauregard as commander of the Army of Tennessee.

He led his invasion of Kentucky, and fought at Perryville, Kentucky, and Stone's River, Tennessee. After demonstrating what some viewed as his ineptitude for high command in the Tullahoma Campaign, at Chickamauga, and Chattanooga, he was relieved by Joseph E. Johnston. He returned to Richmond to serve as military advisor to his good friend, Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

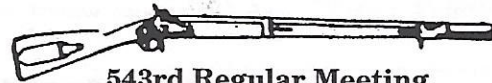
On September 8, Grady McWhiney will address The Round Table on the topic of "Braxton Bragg." In his talk, McWhiney will focus on the changing interpretation of General Bragg and his generalship. He will describe how most historians viewed Braxton Bragg thirty years ago, point out some changes in Civil War historiography that have taken place since then, and discuss how certain individuals associated with Bragg during the war have risen or fallen in the estimation of Civil War scholars. He will present his view that Bragg is no longer considered quite the incompetent villain he was during the Civil War Centennial in the early 1960s.

Grady McWhiney, a native of Shreveport, Louisiana, served with the United States Marines in the Pacific near the end of World War II. He received a B.S. degree from Centenary College in Louisiana, and an M.A. from Louisiana State University, where he studied under Francis B. Simkins and T. Harry Williams. He received his Ph.D.



Grady McWhiney

from Columbia University, where David Herbert Donald directed McWhiney's dissertation on Braxton Bragg. McWhiney has taught at various institutions in the United States and Canada—including Troy State University; the University of California, Berkeley; Northwestern University; the University of British Columbia; Tulane University; and the University of Alabama. For the past dozen years, he has been Lyndon Baines Johnson



### 543rd Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

Grady McWhiney on "Braxton Bragg"

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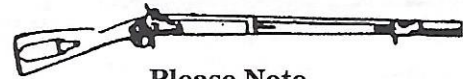
Friday, September 8

☆ ☆ ☆

Union League Club  
65 West Jackson Boulevard

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
\$25 - The Civil War Round Table of Chicago members  
\$30 - Nonmembers

Entree: Breast of Chicken with Lemon Herb  
Sauce or Catch of the Day



### Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, September 6, 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. **No last-minute orders for the Catch of the Day can be honored. The chef must have at least twenty-four hours notice.**

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.

from Columbia University, where David Herbert Donald directed McWhiney's dissertation on Braxton Bragg.

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(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

|                               |   |
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| Contributing Editors .....    | C. Robert Douglas, David Richert<br>Larry Gibbs, Robert Girardi |

*Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968*

### Board of Trustees

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| House .....   | Thomas Herres<br>Charles Ten Brink |
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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 Membership Committee, 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402.



## BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

### ☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

Monies from our Battlefield Preservation Fund were donated recently to projects at Vicksburg, Antietam, and Perryville. The Round Table gave \$2000 to a joint effort of Illinois Round Tables and individuals to complete the restoration of the Illinois Memorial Temple in Vicksburg National Military Park. Our organization also contributed \$500 to the Save Historic Antietam Foundation for its new endowment fund, the interest from which will be used to support SHAF's mission of preserving sites related to the 1862 Maryland campaign. Another \$500 donation to the Perryville Battlefield Preservation Association will help protect the state battlefield park at Perryville, Kentucky. Money for the Battlefield Preservation Fund comes primarily from the monthly book raffle. For further information, contact members of the Battlefield Preservation Fund committee: Mary Abroe, Larry Gibbs, and Marshall Krolick.

**The American Battlefield Protection Program**, a program of the National Park Service, has published its Study of Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, which examines fifteen battlefields in the Valley. The study identifies the condition of each site, assesses the threats to integrity, and provides alternatives for preservation and interpretation. According to the report, many of the Valley's most important sites now face threats to their survival and quick action is needed to ensure that these places will be around for future generations to visit and learn firsthand how the Civil War shaped our country. The seventeen-page study includes a series of foldout color maps that illustrate the boundaries and conditions of the sites.

Congress directed the National Park Service to undertake the study in 1990 because of the critical role that the Shenandoah Valley played in the conduct and outcome of the Civil War. A limited number of copies of the report are available at no cost by contacting the ABPP at 202-343-9505 or by writing to ABPP, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

**As noted in the June newsletter**, the American Battlefield Protection Program awards partnership monies to local and state battlefield preservation organizations to be used for battlefield preservation, interpretation, planning, community consensus building, and staff support. Following is a list of additional 1995 awards.

- \$75,000 to Georgia Department of Natural Resources for a Civil War Sites inventory of the Atlanta Campaign.
- \$20,000 to the Center for Spatial Technology at the University of Arkansas for a master plan of the Prairie Grove Battlefield.
- \$15,000 to the Mill Springs Battlefield Association to help fund a full-time staff person responsible for implementing protection and interpretation of the battlefield.
- \$10,000 to the Frederick, Virginia, County Department of Planning and Development for a resource management plan for the Kernstown battlefield.

## ☞ JUNE MEETING ☞

by Larry Gibbs

At the 542nd regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table on June 9, John Y. Simon, professor of history at Southern Illinois University, gave a stimulating address titled "Forging a Commander: Ulysses S. Grant and the First Year of the Civil War." Speaking before 138 members and guests, Simon told about the meteoric rise of Grant from a clerk in a Galena store in 1860 to an able trusted Union officer by April of 1862.

According to Simon, the restrictions placed on promotions by the seniority system were discarded with the advent of the Civil War. He noted that "the Civil War opened promotions to talent. At the beginning of the conflict, retirements and resignations created a new force of Union officers." U.S. Grant took advantage of the situation. He received his first command because Illinois Governor Yates remembered him and the fair share of patronage for Illinois allowed for Grant's appointment.

Colonel Grant's first battle at Belmont, Missouri, was inauspicious, but he began his rise to fame with the battles of Forts Henry and Donelson. Fort Henry (February 6, 1862) was anticlimactic because the Confederates surrendered before the Union soldiers arrived. Grant promptly turned east, marching his troops overland to attack Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. On February 16, 1862, Grant found himself famous because 15,000 Rebels surrendered. Grant was promoted to major general and became known as "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

Grant was not favored by Major General Henry Halleck, who wanted Grant to go by the book. Grant was criticized by Halleck and others for his "bad habits", i.e., his alleged drinking problem. Stung by this criticism, Grant asked to be relieved from command. However, he was restored to command before the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862. Early in this battle Grant ignored warnings, suffering a disastrous first day. He quickly recovered on the second day and regained the field.

Immediately after the Battle of Shiloh, the Union press and citizens asked questions, desiring explanations for the lack of preparedness. Grant, who gave the appearance of an alcoholic, was a convenient scapegoat. "Grant could not have been drunk at Shiloh, but this explanation followed him," Simon vehemently stated. However, Grant looked like he was hung-over. Based on recent research, Simon suggested that "a person who has a migraine headache looks like he suffers from a hang-over." Grant conforms with the personality type who suffers from migraines. Grant internalized his problems rather than explode with emotion. Simon strongly suggested that "migraine headaches were the reason for Grant's appearance, not alcoholism."

In early 1862, Grant developed his talents as a commander, but another general, George B. McClellan, did not. McClellan was an effective organizer who went by the book but who overestimated the strength of the enemy. McClellan, according to Simon, was paralyzed by fear and insecurity at the siege of Yorktown (April 1862). Simon indicated that "Grant acted with logic rather than formula." McClellan was the architect of his own failure, while Grant was the architect of his own success." Simon concluded by stating that "at the close of the first year of

the Civil War, Grant had risen farther than Halleck could ever have imagined."

MCWHINEY (continued from page 1)

Professor of American History at Texas Christian University.

His publications—a dozen volumes and more than eighty articles—include *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (1988); *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (1982); *Battle in the Wilderness: Grant Meets Lee* (1995); *Southerners and Other Americans* (1973); volume 1 of *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat* (1969 and 1991); and *An American Civil War Primer* (1992). *Civil War Times* selected *Attack and Die* as "one of the best one hundred books ever written on the American Civil War." *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat* won the Harry S. Truman Award and the American Historical Association's Pacific Branch Award.

Additional honors bestowed upon McWhiney include the New Orleans Civil War Round Table's Charles L. "Pie" Dufour Award, the Houston Civil War Round Table's Frank E Vandiver Award, the United Daughters of the Confederacy's Jefferson Davis Medal, the University of Alabama's Outstanding Scholar Award (1980), the Civil War Round Table of Chicago's Gallant Service Award (1979), and Columbia University's Award for the best dissertation in United States History. He is an Honorary Life Member of the American Civil War Round Tables of the United Kingdom (the first American so honored).

McWhiney has held offices in professional organizations and served on nearly thirty editorial boards and advisory councils, in addition to delivering some two hundred papers at more than one hundred different conferences and conventions. He has addressed The Civil War Round Table on four previous occasions: in January 1962, June 1964, September 1971, and January 1979.

**The American Civil War Research Association of the United Kingdom**, after over twenty-five years, is being forced to disband due to lack of volunteer help.

**Former President Brooks Davis** will be leading a course at the Northwestern University Institute of Learning in Retirement. "Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis" is one of seventeen courses the Institute is offering this fall at the university's downtown campus. Texts used for this course will be *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour*, by William C. (Jack) Davis, and *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by Stephen B. Oates. Tours and guest speakers will also be featured as part of the course. The weekly classes begin Tuesday, October 7, from 1:30–3:30 p.m. The Institute charges \$270 for three courses; each course is of two semesters duration. For information, call Brooks at 312-944-5082.

**The lunchtime Union League Civil War Round Table** will meet on Friday, September 29. Former Chicago Round Table President Marshall Krolick and Frank Patton will continue their presentation of a review of the first year of the Civil War. The cost of the luncheon is \$15 per person. A reception begins at 11:30 a.m.; lunch is served at noon. To make reservations, call 312-435-5000.

## The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Cannan, John. *The Wilderness Campaign: May 1864*. Stackpole Books. 1993. \$19.95  
 Coburn, Mark. *Terrible Innocence: General Sherman at War*. Hippocrene Books. 1993. \$22.50  
 Current, Richard N., ed. *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy* (4 volumes). Simon & Schuster. 1993. \$355

**Former President Mary Munsell Abroe** will address the annual banquet meeting of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table on Friday, September 1, at the Hilton Lisle-Naperville. Her topic will be "Antietam" and the cost is \$25 per person. To make reservations, please contact Roger Bohn, at 708-858-2956, by August 28.

**The Tenth Annual Lincoln Colloquium** will be held on Saturday, October 21, at the University of Illinois at Springfield (formerly Sangamon State University). This year's theme is "Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom." Speakers will include David Herbert Donald, John Y. Simon, Harold Holzer, Edna Greene Medford, and David E. Long. The event is chaired each year by George L. Painter, historian at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.; the program will run from 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The \$35 per-person fee includes a luncheon. The annual event is cosponsored by the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Eastern National Park and Monument Association, Sangamon State Historical Society, the Lincoln Group of Illinois, and the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Checks should be made payable to Eastern National Park and Monument Association, with the word "colloquium" written on the "memo" line of the check. You may send your registration fee to: Lincoln Colloquium, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 413 South Eighth Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1905. For additional information, call Tim Townsend at 217-492-4097.

**Former President Brooks Davis** will be the featured speaker at the monthly meetings of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table, in Minneapolis, on October 17, and the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table on November 9. His topic will be "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln as Commanders in Chief."

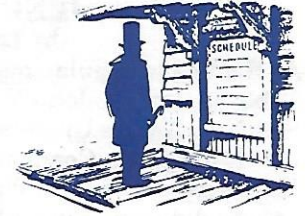
### Schimmelfennig Boutique

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 monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

In addition to The Round Table history and *The Continuing Civil War*, the essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes, Civil War Buff posters and T-Shirts, CWRT T-shirts, polos, and sweatshirts.

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 Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

- September 8:* Grady McWhiney on "Braxton Bragg"  
*October 13:* Nevins-Freeman Address: Richard N. Current on "Rediscovering the Civil War"  
*November 10:* David Herbert Donald on: "The Most Shut-Mouth Man': The Reticence of Abraham Lincoln"  
*December 8:* William C. (Jack) Davis on "Davis, Johnston, and Beauregard: A Triple Play that Crippled the Confederacy"  
*January 12:* Brigadier General Harold W. Nelson on "Teaching Generalship on Civil War Battlefields"  
*February 16:* James Ogden on "The Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga" (Please note: this is the **third** Friday of the month.)  
*March 8:* Brian S. Wills on "The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Battle from the Start"  
*April 12:* John C. (Jack) Waugh on "The Class of 1846"  
*May 1-5:* Annual Battlefield Tour: Chickamauga and Chattanooga  
*May 10:* Charles P. Roland on "Reflections on Lee: A Historian's Assessment"  
*June 14:* Michael W. Kauffman on "The Lincoln Assassination — The Investigation Continues"

### New Members

- George Hubbard, 473 Sheridan Road, Winnetka, IL 69993  
 James N. Lindstrom, 1857 Central Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104  
 James M. Molitor, Jr., 4230 Highway 159 South, Edwardsville, IL 62025, 618-288-9384  
 Hugh J. Schwartzberg, 853 W. Fullerton, Chicago, IL 60614, 312-525-5256

**The Thirteenth Annual Midwest Civil War Collectors Show** will take place in Wheaton on Saturday, September 16. More than 200 antique and book dealers from around the country will feature military items from the Revolutionary War in 1776 through the Indian Wars of 1898. The show will be held from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road, thirty-five minutes west of Chicago. General admission is \$3 per person; children will be admitted for \$1. For more information, call Bob Nowak at 312-539-8432.

**William C. (Jack) Davis**, who will address The Round Table on December 8, has been honored with the prestigious Jefferson Davis Award, bestowed each year by the Museum of the Confederacy. Davis, who is the author of more than twenty-five books on the Civil War, received the award for his recent book, *"A Government of Our Own": The Making of the Confederacy*.