

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVII, Number 4

Chicago, Illinois

January 1997

Kurt Carlson on "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?"

by Barbara Hughett

Irish immigrants were the focus of extensive discrimination in mid-nineteenth century America, and they themselves focused intensive discrimination against Negroes and frequently rioted against the African Americans in Northern cities. This is largely because, at the bottom of the social order, the Irish Americans were competing against free blacks for jobs. In 1846, a solid Irish vote helped defeat a referendum to grant equal voting rights to blacks in New York state. According to the *New York Tribune*, "no other class of our citizens was so zealous, so unanimous in its hostility to equal suffrage without regard to color." In the South, a person could get lynched for even suggesting emancipation.

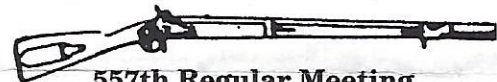
Thus, it seems incredible that Major General Patrick Cleburne, CSA, an Irish immigrant, proposed that the South not only emancipate, but also arm, its slaves; it's perhaps even more incredible that, while the Confederate government did not heed his proposal, he still became the hero of the western part of the Confederacy. Cleburne is one of only three Confederates named by name when Confederate Memorial Day was established; the others were Generals Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and Albert Sydney Johnston.

Former Round Table President Kurt Carlson will deliver an address on January 10 titled "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?" "Today," Kurt noted, "one can hardly pick up a book on the western theater of the war without reaching the conclusion that Patrick Cleburne was the best division commander in the Army of Tennessee, if not of the entire war. But the question occurred to me: what qualities made him the best division commander? In exploring that question (on my own, as a matter of personal interest), I discovered a number of character traits that General Cleburne had exhibited in his pre-war business and social life that carried over to his career as a Confederate officer and that, I believe, helps explain why he was so good at what he did."



Kurt Carlson

Some of these traits led Cleburne to his relatively early—and then very radical—proposal that the South arm



557th Regular Meeting

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Kurt Carlson on "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?"

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Friday, January 10

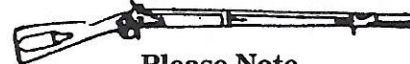
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Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

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

\$25 - The Civil War Round Table of Chicago members
\$30 - Nonmembers

Entree: Roast Loin of Pork with Applesauce or
Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, January 8, by calling Registrar Carole Le Claire at 847-698-1438. 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 available at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club, at the rate of \$5 per car.

and enlist its slaves to fight for the Confederacy, with emancipation as their reward. He apparently felt that it was his duty to make the proposal, even though he knew how unpopular it would be with his countrymen. Kurt believes that it was almost certainly what precluded any further advancement or promotions for Cleburne. Confederate President Jefferson Davis's denials notwithstanding

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817
Chicago Illinois 60605
Phone: 847-698-1438

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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, 601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

Special Executive Committee Meeting

- President Larry Gibbs has announced a meeting of the Executive Committee of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago on Saturday, February 22, at 10:00 a.m., at Notre Dame High School in Niles. All current officers and committee chairs and all former presidents are urged to attend.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

The American Battlefield Protection Program recently presented four new battlefield preservation awards. The recipients were The Siege and Battle of Corinth Commission, Mississippi, which is working on historical research and documentation, community outreach and planning, an archaeological survey, land acquisition, and the development of a 26-mile recreational trail with interpretive markers; Fort Davidson State Historic Site, Missouri, which has conducted research on the Battle of Pilot Knob, erected a series of historical markers, and begun developing a battlefield preservation plan; Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation, Inc, West Virginia, which has acquired more than 400 acres of core battlefield land with support from the APCWS; and Chattanooga Area Sites Assessment Planning Team, Tennessee and Georgia.

The ABPP recently published a brochure titled "Working Together to Preserve America's Historic Battlefields," which outlines the ABPP's mission, technical services, and partnership funding process, and lists reference sources and national preservation partners. For a free copy write to ABPP, Publications, PO Box 37127, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

Under a deal worked out by the Douglas Southall Freeman Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, forty-two acres of the Bethesda Church battlefield at Cold Harbor have been preserved and will be donated to the National Battlefield Park. The tract is on Route 360 about ten miles northeast of Richmond. It contains good quality earthworks of both sides, including the main battle lines, breastworks, and artillery positions.

Under the arrangement, the developers donated the forty-two acres, which had been rezoned for office development and appraised at \$1.4 million. The main entrance to the planned office park had been slated to cut through the tract. In exchange, The Freeman Branch will pay to relocate the entrance and create a new four-way intersection on Route 360.

At Manassas National Battlefield Park, developers are planning a shopping center on forty-nine acres abutting the park. The site is at the intersection of Interstate 66 and Route 234 and adjoins the Chinn Ridge area of the park. Manassas officials have requested that no buildings in the project rise higher than twenty feet, and have asked for a raised earthen berm and plantings of evergreens to create a buffer. The developer's plans are undergoing review by Prince William County.

In other news from Manassas, the Virginia Department of Transportation wants to expand the intersection of routes 29 (the old Warrnton Pike) and 234 (Sudley Road) located near the Stone House in the heart of the battlefield. According to battlefield supporter Annie Snyder, the measure "would not only destroy an intersection that has been there since 1825, but will preclude any chance of closing 29 and 234 through the battlefield. It will soon result in demands to four-lane both roads through the park. That would gut the heart of the battlefields."

❧ DECEMBER MEETING ❧

by Larry Gibbs

On December 13, at the 556th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, 93 members and guests heard Robert E. Lee Krick speak on "The Army of Northern Virginia's Staff Corps: 'Bomb-Proof Officers or Backbone of the Army?'" Robert E. Lee Krick, son of famed Civil War historian Robert K. Krick and a fine historian in his own right, is author of *The Fortieth Virginia Infantry* (1985). He has spent the last seven years researching and writing a book on the staff officers of the Army of Northern Virginia, which is expected to be published late in 1997. Since 1991, Krick has been a historian on the staff of Richmond National Battlefield Park.

The topic of Civil War staff officers is unique. Usually the fame and glory went to the generals and field officers, but the staff officers of Civil War armies had many important duties. Krick noted that there were over 2000 men with staff rank in the Army of Northern Virginia. He asserted, "The Civil War was a meeting ground between the decorative staff officers before 1861 and the truly efficient staff officers developed after the Civil War."

Several difficulties existed in the development of staff officers in the Civil War. Staff officers develop much better in professional armies than in the mostly volunteer armies that existed during the war; criteria for staff officers were not in existence during the conflict. Krick defined staff officers as not surgeons or chaplains. They were not regimental level, but divisional or brigade level officers. Among the designated staff officers were inspector-generals, quartermaster generals, engineers, ordnance officers, judge advocates, and aides-de-camp.

The inspector-general was responsible for policing the rear echelons of the army. Sometimes they were used as couriers or messengers. If the inspector-generals fell down on the job, the entire army suffered. As Krick explained, "Discipline in the Army of Northern Virginia was not good before the Battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862), partially due to poor work by the inspector-generals." The most hated staff officers were the quartermaster generals. Almost universally derided, these men had the responsibility of procuring food and drink for the Army of Northern Virginia. Their job was pressure-packed and unpleasant. Seemingly the most reviled staff officers, they were sometimes referred to as "bomb-proof." Engineers laid out the lines of battle and moved the army from one spot to another. Krick continued, "Even though this duty was very important there were only 100 in the entire Confederacy in 1861 and 300 by the end of the war." Ordnance officers were required to keep sufficient supply of ammunition and cannon balls. Requirements for an ordnance officer included a good knowledge of math. Judge advocates meted out punishments for violations of discipline. The position of aide-de-camp was the least responsible staff officer position. The aide-de-camp would help the general or field officer do his duty in many ways. However, if the officer were killed, the aide-de-camp would have his duty immediately changed.

Did the staff officers affect the battles involving the Army of Northern Virginia? Krick stated emphatically, "Yes." For example, the Seven Days Campaign (June 25-July 1, 1862) around Richmond indicated no communica-

tions between officers. In addition, engineers made poor maps that hurt the chances of the Confederates. The Battle of Malvern Hill (July 1, 1862) was also illustrative of bad staff work. "The Rebel staff broke down from the start," exclaimed Krick. "General Robert E. Lee was not on the field when the battle started and an order was not well-written, therefore misunderstood." Confederate cavalryman Jeb Stuart and his staff officers lost contact with General Lee during the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863). And, at the Battle of Spotsylvania (May 8-12, 1864) Lee became angry at an engineer who laid out the salient which became known as the Bloody Angle.

Krick elaborated on the difficulties facing the Army of Northern Virginia: "In order for successful staff work to be achieved the following must be observed—constant communications between units, a recognition of reconnaissance over possible battle action, and clear and simple orders. Lee has been criticized for not properly using his staff, but he knew the requirements of a good staff. However, he could not carry out the orders with the staff at hand. He was limited by the use of civilians made into soldiers."

Krick's study found many of the staff officers of the Army of Northern Virginia were literate and well-educated. Many were lawyers and doctors. "Nepotism was rampant in the Army of Northern Virginia," stated Krick, "over one-third of generals had a close relative or friends on his staff."

Krick cited several famous staff officers in the Army of Northern Virginia. Two of the most famous were Major Jedediah Hotchkiss and Lieutenant Henry Kyd Douglas. Hotchkiss was the outstanding mapmaker for Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. Although he contributed greatly to the Rebel cause, Hotchkiss was never commissioned and called "major" only as a courtesy. Douglas, author of *I Rode With Stonewall*, exaggerated his achievements after the war.

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KURT CARLSON (continued from page 1)

standing, and will explore the proposal in some depth—including why it was made and how it was received.

A native Chicagoan, Kurt graduated from DePaul University Law School and is currently a practicing attorney in Wheaton, Illinois. He served as president of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago (1993-94), and prior to that held the offices of trustee, assistant treasurer, treasurer, battlefield tour chair. He presently serves as chair of the Ways and Means Committee. His wife Joan, also an active Round Table member, has served on the Board of Trustees, and was for several years the Membership Registrar.

Additionally, Kurt has served as president of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table and has spoken to the Salt Creek Round Table, other Round Tables in Illinois and Missouri, and to Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs. In addition to Patrick Cleburne, his topics have included "The Battle of Shiloh," "The Battle of Fair Oaks/Seven Pines," "Reconstruction," and "The Emergence of Robert E. Lee." Last year, he prepared a paper for the Wheaton History Center on Illinois's contribution to the war effort in the areas of industrialization, transportation, and supply.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Brown, Joseph W. *The Signal Corps in the War of the Rebellion*. Butternut and Blue. 1996. \$60. Original of 1896.
- Burlingame, Michael, ed. *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln — John G. Nicolays' Interview and Essays*. Southern Illinois U. Press. 1996. \$29.95.
- Campbell, R. Thomas. *Gray Thunder: Exploits of the Confederate States Navy*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1996. \$19.95.
- Castel, Albert. *Winning and Losing in the Civil War: Essays and Stories*. U. of S. Carolina Press. 1996. \$29.95.
- Cockrell, Thomas D. and Michael B. Ballard, eds. *A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia — The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt*. LSU Press. 1995. \$34.95.
- Cullen, Jim. *The Civil War in Popular Culture — A Reusable Past*. Smithsonian Institution Press. 1995. \$29.95.
- Davis, William C. *Jefferson Davis — The Man and His Hour*. LSU Press. 1996. Pbk. \$19.95. Original of 1991.

The National Archives-Great Lakes Region has issued a Call For Papers for their upcoming symposium on September 26-27 on "Chicago and the Midwest in the Civil War Era." The symposium is being cosponsored by the Chicago Historical Society, the Public History Program of Loyola University Chicago, the Chicago Public Library, and the Civil War Round Table of Chicago. The symposium will be held at the Chicago Historical Society. The sponsoring organizations invite proposals for panels, papers, or other presentations on aspects of Chicago and its surrounding region in the Civil War. **The deadline for proposals is April 1.** For further information on qualifications for proposal materials, call 312-581-7816, or e-mail archives@chicago.nara.gov.

Kentucky Civil War Journal, according to a recent issue of *The Civil War Round Table Digest*, "the only monthly magazine devoted entirely to the Civil War in Kentucky," has just come out with Volume 1, Number 1.

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.

January 10: Kurt Carlson on "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?"

February 21: Bruce Allardice on "Confederate Officers Corps" (*This is the third Friday.*)

March 14: Dale K. Phillips on "Benjamin Butler and the Occupation of New Orleans"

April 11: David Ruth on "The Army of Northern Virginia Matures: The Peninsular Campaign of 1862"

April 30–May 4: Annual Battlefield Tour: Richmond

May 9: William J. Cooper on "Jefferson Davis"

June 13: Mark Grimsley on "Sherman's March to the Sea"

A reminder, especially to the editors of other CWRT Newsletters and any individuals or groups on our mailing list: The address of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago changed this past September. All mail should be sent to: The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, 601 South LaSalle Building, Suite C-817, Chicago, Illinois 60605. Phone inquiries should be directed to Registrar Carole LeClaire at The Round Table's phone line: 847-698-1438. Mail which is sent to any other address gets to us days or weeks after it has been sent!

To commemorate its 300th meeting, the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table will hold a special meeting on February 7, 1997. For additional information, contact Roger Bohn at 847-858-2956.

The Hagerstown Civil War Round Table (Hagerstown, Maryland) celebrated its 40th Anniversary at its regular meeting on December 5 with a "big cake" (but, its newsletter, *The Bugle Call*, assures us, "with no scantily-clad blonde jumping out of it.") and an address by author David F. Bastian on "Grant's Canal: The Union Attempt to Bypass Vicksburg."

The Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia will hold its 20th Anniversary Dinner on January 4, 1997. The guest speaker will be the eminent Civil War historian Dr. James I. (Bud) Robertson, Jr., recipient of our Round Table's 1981 Nevins-Freeman Award.

Honorary Life member Jerry L. Russell was recently awarded the General Patrick R. Cleburne Award of The Civil War Round Table of Arkansas for his "outstanding contributions to Arkansas's Civil War history." Russell is founder and charter president (1964) of the group. The presentation was made at the final banquet of the 1996 Congress of Civil War Round Tables, held in Jackson, Mississippi, in early October.