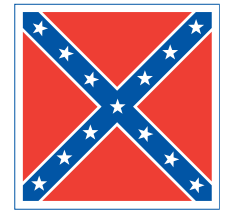


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVI, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

January, 2006



647th REGULAR MEETING

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT "WHAT-IFS" OF CIVIL WAR HISTORY

PANEL DISCUSSION

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, January 13

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET**

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$30 - Members/Non-members

Entrée:

Sliced Striploin of Beef.

Catch of the Day.

Vegetarian Plate

or Fruit Plate

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, January 9**, by calling **630-460-1865**. We now also have our **online dinner reservation system** at <http://www.thecwrt.org/commiss.htm>. Reservations made after Wednesday, January 11, will be surcharged \$5.

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.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of \$5 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$8 with a validated parking sticker.

The Most Significant "What-Ifs" of Civil War History

Panel Discussion

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

"What If"? Two words potent with meaning. Especially for the study of history. As President Eisenhower once observed, "The history of free men is never really written by chance but by choice—their choice". The history of our Civil War is a history of those choices, ranging from the choice to go to war in 1861 to the choice to end the war in 1865. Even during the war, people questioned the choices made by their political and military leaders. Today, 140 years later, "What ifs" abound. "What if" Lincoln had NOT been elected president in 1860? "What if" Great Britain had recognized the Confederacy? "What if" Lee had chosen to outflank the Union position at Gettysburg, instead of launching Pickett's Charge? Would the war have been changed significantly, and if so, how?

On January 13th CWRT ex-president **Mary Abroe** will moderate a panel discussion on "The Most Significant What-Ifs of Civil War History". Our panelists will be three ex-presidents who have plenty of opinions, **Rob Girardi**, **Larry Gibbs**, and **Bruce Allardice**. Rob Girardi will argue that the 1862 Corinth Campaign, and its aftermath, offered the best chance the North had of ending the war quickly—IF it had



Rob Girardi, Larry Gibbs, Mary Abroe, and Bruce Allardice

been conducted differently. Larry Gibbs will wonder what would have happened IF President Lincoln NOT issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the southern slaves. Bruce Allardice will explore the consequences IF President Davis refused to fire on Fort Sumter in April of 1861. Professor Abroe will "set the stage" and then try and keep the panelists from coming to blows. The format will have each panelist presenting his "most significant what if", followed by questions from the audience. Pointed questions are encouraged, since, as Francis Bacon observed in 1625, "A sudden, bold, and unexpected question doth many times surprise a man." It promises to be a lively evening.

The moderator, and the panelists, have a combined 80+ years membership in our Round Table. Mary, Larry and Bruce teach history at local colleges, while Rob is a policeman in Chicago. All four write for our Round Table newsletter. Rob and Bruce have authored or co-authored several books, and all have had articles published. All four have spoken to us before.



Battlefield Preservation Update

BY ROBERT I. GIRARDI

(Charleston, S.C.) – Just in time for the holidays, the Grinch has reared his ugly head outside Charleston Harbor. This time, though, the green icon is not trying to steal a few presents; instead, he's attempting to make away with hallowed battlefield land on the northern tip of Morris Island, S.C.

The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) has learned that the Ginn Company, a firm that specializes in resort development, has recorded two land plats for 125 acres on the northern tip of Morris Island. This part of the island, located near Cummings Point, played a pivotal role in the Civil War.

“Our history records few deeds of valor more heroic than the charge of the 54th Massachusetts on the ramparts of Fort Wagner,” remarked CWPT President James Lighthizer. “The scene of such gallantry should be preserved to inspire all Americans, not transformed into a resort for a select few.”

A barrier island just outside Charleston Harbor, Morris Island served as the launching pad for the Civil War siege of Charleston, considered by many historians to be the longest siege in U.S. history. Its shifting sands also witnessed the famous assault by African-American volunteers on Confederate-held Fort Wagner — an attack later depicted in the 1990 movie *Glory*.

Today, Morris Island is at the center of a national debate about preservation of hallowed battlegrounds. Although much of the island is currently protected, the most historically significant part of the island remains vulnerable to development.

“Preserving Morris Island is a top priority for legions of organizations and individuals in both the public and private sectors,” said Blake Hallman, chairman of the Morris Island Coalition, a coalition of non-profit groups (including CWPT) seeking to protect the island battlefield. “In the spirit of the holidays, I

hope the property owner will allow us a chance to put together a viable offer, saving this land and its historic character forever.”

A public opinion poll commissioned by CWPT in February 2005 reveals that Charleston County voters overwhelmingly support preservation of historic Morris Island. According to the poll, 71 percent of those surveyed advocate protection of the barrier island, located just outside Charleston Harbor. Seventy-seven percent stated that Charleston County should ban development on Morris Island.

Rally ‘round the Flag

As many of you should be aware, the CWRT has been leading the charge for the preservation and the restoration of the National Colors of the 36th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Raised for the most part in the Chicago area, the 36th fought in all of the major Western campaigns of the Civil War. The National flag of the 36th is worthy of restoration, but needs special care from a conservator to survive. If we do not rally now to save the flags, our children and theirs will lose a precious connection to the past. All of Illinois’ flags (some 400) are housed in the State Military History Museum in Springfield at Camp Lincoln. Currently, several projects are underway to save specific flags.

The cost of the restoration/preservation of the flag is \$25,000. While that is an admittedly lofty sum, especially those committed to “buying dirt,” it is, I believe altogether fitting and proper that we see this project through to completion. Preservation needs to be understood as more than simply buying and maintaining the land where significant events occurred. It also needs to honor the memory and the symbols of those who suffered and died to preserve the Union, the most significant preservation effort in our nation's history. Illinois sent more men to serve the

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9670 N. Dee #205

Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

Phone: 630-460-1865

www.thecwrt.org

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, 9670 N. Dee #205 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016, or contact webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org.

armies of the Union per capita, than any other state. The war may not have been fought here, but it was certainly won in large part because of Illinois’ contribution.

In conjunction with the Northern Illinois and Salt Creek CWRTs, the Sons of Union Veterans and the DuPage County Historical Society, \$18,000 has already been raised. The CWRT has contributed \$7,500 towards this effort; \$5,000 was granted by the Executive Committee at the summer meeting and presented to the Illinois State Military History Museum by members of the BPC who were charged with the mission. The balance came from the Battlefield Preservation fund. We are close to meeting the goal, but close is not good enough. If we don't do it, who will? Please contribute whatever you can to this worthy cause. A sign and contribution box will be present at the registration table at our monthly meetings.

Similarly, don't forget to sound the charge for your own preservation concerns. A clipboard will be present at each meeting soliciting your input for worthy sites in need of preservation. The Battlefield Preservation Committee is charged with raising and dispersing funds to save our Civil War Battlefields. As a result of the suggestion made last month, \$500.00 was sent to assist in the preservation of Johnson's Island.

DECEMBER MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On December 9th Steven Fratt gave an enthusiastic presentation on "Civil War Tactics and Technology" before 75 members and guests at the 646th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago. Fratt, an associate professor of history at Trinity College in Deerfield, has written several articles for *North & South Magazine*. He is a Civil War reenactor and a General Joshua Chamberlain presenter. Fratt's speech concentrated on the extent that Civil War weapons and tactics became a part of modern warfare.

Fratt began by asking, "What is meant by the term 'modern war'?" According to Fratt, the modern age started in the 1600s when the centralized state and modern science were developed. Fratt viewed our Civil War as a transitional stage to what we now consider modern weapons and modern war.

In Fratt's opinion, advances in weapons technology such as the muzzle-loading percussion cap rifle, rifled cannon, and howitzers cannot be classified as part of modern warfare, but rather as enhancements of older technologies such as the flintlock musket. Modern war technologies such as smokeless powder, steel rifles and artillery, and breech-loading rifles, first appeared in quantity later in the 19th Century, while more modern technologies such as machine guns, tanks, poison gas and grenades were introduced in the 20th Century.

Fratt also re-evaluated the traditional view of Civil War tactics. A common perception among Civil War enthusiasts was that Civil War soldiers would fire their rifles several times a minute, at targets ranging upwards of 500 yards. While the rifled musket possessed that theoretical capability, Fratt asserted that long-range rifle fire rarely, if ever, occurred. "The objective of Civil War tactics was to cause the other side to run, not to gain a high casualty rate", observed Fratt. The Enfield or Springfield rifle was more normally used at a range of 120 yards, for several practical reasons. First, since the average soldier had about 60 rounds of ammunition for use, a Civil War soldier wouldn't waste his ammunition by

shooting at an enemy 500 yards away. "The tendency of the average soldier was not to shoot at an extreme range, but at a 20-yard range!", explained Fratt. "The rate of fire mattered—not the range!" Second, given the low muzzle velocity of the rifle, it was almost impossible to hit, at 500 yards, the man you aimed at. Firing at long range would simply throw away precious ammunition and help clog your rifle.

Another key characteristic of the "modern age" is the centralized state. One of the results of the Civil War was the development in America of a strong centralized government. "America became a truly modern country with secession crushed," asserted Fratt.

Fratt contrasted the American military tradition at the time of the Civil War with the European, and modern American, military tradition. In America, prior to and during the Civil War, the regular army was miniscule, and the soldiers who fought the wars came from state militias. If huge armies, mostly drafted by a centralized state, epitomize modern warfare, the American Civil War does not fit that template. Rather, the European armies that fought the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, armies comprised of draftees incorporated into a regular army, represented the first truly modern armies.



56TH ANNUAL BATTLEFIELD TOUR MANASSAS/MOSBY MAY 4-7, 2006

A Rebel Victory—A Yankee Debacle... 1st Manassas, July 21, 1861

A quiet Sunday morning began at Manassas Junction/Bull Run for two confident converging armies. By late afternoon, the Federals began a disorderly retreat to Washington. Lack of training combined with poor leadership gave the South a joyous first victory and the North a firm resolve to successfully defend the Union.

A Signal Victory... 2nd Manassas, August 28-30, 1862

The summer of 1862 marked a dramatic change in fortunes for both armies. The raw volunteers of 1st Manassas became seasoned veterans. Fighting over the same battlefield as the year previously, Lee brilliantly maneuvered his troops to defeat John Pope. Lee wired the glorious news to Richmond that the Army of Northern Virginia had achieved a signal victory.

A Grey Ghost Ruled and No Yankee Slept Peacefully

John S. Mosby, ferocious warrior, brilliant tactician and leader of the 43rd Battalion, Virginia Partisan Rangers, struck supply wagons, attacked railroads, harassed Union troops and gathered intelligence for the Confederate Army in Northern Virginia and Shenandoah Valley from March 1863 to January 1865.

ITINERARY OF INTERPRETIVE STOPS ON OUR TOUR:

Thursday, May 4th...Blackburn's Ford, Visitor's Center, Stone Bridge, Sudley Church, Mathew Hill, Henry Hill, Ricketts' and Griffin's guns and Chinn Ridge. Our speaker for the evening will be **Ed Bearss**.

Friday, May 5th...Thoroughfare Gap, Bristoe Station, Brawner Farm, unfinished railroad, New York monument, Chinn Ridge and Henry House. Our speaker for the evening will be **Horace Mewborn**.

Saturday, May 6th...Mt. Zion Church, 2nd Rector's Cross Roads, Millwood, Berryville, Green Back Raid and Miskell Farm. Our evening will be spent with the **Central Virginia Preservation Trust** award ceremony for Ed Bearss on the newly acquired Mullins Farm in Fredericksburg, Va. We will also have "Fun Night" activities.

Sunday, May 7th...Marshall, Front Royal, Ventfield and Warrenton. We will return to the Holiday Inn for brunch at noon. We advise that you plan your departure for no earlier than 3 PM

GRAPESHOT



CWRT member **Kirk C. Jenkins** will be speaking to the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table of January 19 about his recent book, "The Battle Rages Higher: The Union's Fifteenth Kentucky Infantry." The Fifteenth Kentucky, recruited from the areas around Louisville and Cincinnati, as well as the area around Abraham Lincoln's birthplace, fought through four years of the war, and had the highest casualty figures of any regiment in the Fourteenth Army Corps.

CWRT member **Larry Hewitt** will be the annual speaker at the Confederate Heroes Celebration Weekend in Houston this year. The speech will take place at the Museum of Southern History at 2 p.m., January 22, the topic being "Lee's Finest Hour." Larry will also be addressing the Salt Creek Round Table on February 3, describing "How Lincoln Won the War."

CWRT ex-President **Bruce Allardice** will talk on "Jeff Davis's Colonels" at the Kankakee Valley CWRT Jan. 11th and the Northern Illinois CWRT January 27th. The talk is based on his forthcoming book.

Our friend **Don Anderson**, who was president of the CWRT 1983-84, passed away December 31st. There will be a memorial service for Don Saturday, January 21st, from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Elks Lodge in Des Plaines. Sympathy cards can be sent to Don's daughter, Priscilla Zieber, 13215 NE 123rd St., Apt. N238, Kirkland, WA 98034.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsallardice1@aol.com or (847) 375-8305.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Lapel pins, Meeting Tapes and other items are on sale at each monthly meeting, with proceeds to go to battlefield preservation. There is also a book raffle, with proceeds again going to benefit battlefield preservation.

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by Ralph G. Newman and other members. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum raise of \$1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker's presentation, bidding will close and the highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds benefit battlefield preservation.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Committee of the CWRT will be having its annual **midyear meeting** Saturday, January 28th, at the Chicago Historical Society, Clark St. and North Ave., Chicago. The proceedings will start at 8:30 a.m. The agenda, and information on other items for discussion, will be mailed to all Executive Committee members. The meeting is open to all CWRT members.

After that meeting there will be a brief meeting of the **Nominating Committee** to nominate a slate of officers for next year. The Nominating Committee consists of all ex-CWRT presidents. The nominations will be presented to the membership at one future regular meeting, and voted upon by the membership at the succeeding meeting.

TOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Included in this newsletter is the form for reserving your spot at the next **CWRT Battlefield Tour**, Northern Virginia, May 4-7, 2006. As always, Ed Bearss will be leading us. Information on registration and prices are on the form. There will be only two buses on this tour (due to space restrictions), so sign up early!

Bulletin Board



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated.*

January 13, 2006: **Round Table Panel Discussion** (Panel: Bruce Allardice, Rob Girardi, Larry Gibbs; Chair: Mary Abroe) "The Most Significant 'What-If's' of Civil War History"

February 10: **James McPherson**, "Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief"

March 10: **Gail Stephens**, "Lew Wallace"

April 21 (3rd Friday, due to Holy Week): **Horace Mewborn**, "John S. Mosby"

May 12: **Mark Noll**, "How the Bible Helped Start the Civil War"

June 9: **George Rable**, "Fredricksburg in the Larger Civil War Universe"

An article in Dec. 25th's Chicago Tribune points out that the original of the famous Gettysburg Cyclorama is currently in storage at Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, NC. The mammoth 376-foot long painting was last displayed at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933. This cyclorama is valued at many millions of dollars.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The staff of the CWRT newsletter hope everybody had a safe and happy Holiday Season, and wish everyone all the best for 2006!