



August 1992

Longstreet: Lee's "Old War Horse" Reconsidered

The BRCWRT's 1991-1992 season will end with a presentation from one of the finest historians working in the Civil War field. Jeffrey D. Wert will speak to us about General James Longstreet, one of the major figures of the war, yet somehow one of the more overlooked. Longstreet was respected and adored by Confederates during the war, but loathed by them afterward during the Reconstruction (when he became a Republican and criticized General Lee, who had become a Southern icon).

Jeffrey Wert has written many articles and essays on the Civil War and is author of *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864 and Mosby's Rangers*. Mr. Wert is writing a new biography of Longstreet, a man whom Lee called "my old war horse." Mr. Wert teaches American History at Penn Valley High School in Pennsylvania.

With an address by a leading historian on a controversial figure of great significance, our August meeting promises to be a great one. Don't miss it!

Miller Makes Camp Curtin Come Alive

BRCWRT President Bill Miller resurrected Camp Curtin during our July meeting. Bill pointed out that there was no real uniform training program during the Civil War, so Camp Curtin was often more a camp of rendezvous than anything else.

With interesting slides and colorful vignettes, Bill brought the officers, groups and soldiers of Camp Curtin back to life. We heard about the infamous "poisoned pie" that killed seven union men; the small pox outbreak that just missed infecting large portions of union troops who could have carried the deadly disease to Washington, D.C.; the Pennsylvania Bucktails, led by a one hundred pound "prissy little man with a squeaky voice and bad teeth;" and perhaps best of all, Lincoln's retort to a young man seeking a political appointment.

Retiring President's Report ***Bill Miller***

I take this opportunity at the close of the current campaign to inform the membership of the movements and engagements of this command in the past 12 months. I have the honor to report on the following.

Membership

We have been gaining recruits steadily over the last year and we now stand at a very strong 90 members--an increase of more than 200% since last August. A very high percentage of members attend meetings, especially during the temperate months in the spring and fall when attendance was usually in the high 50s and 60s. Attendance has been lower in June and July, prime vacation months. We should look to grow in 1993.

Treasury

The Round Table bank account is healthy. I will leave particulars to the report of the treasurer, and since we have an open-book policy, all members have access to financial statements at all times, but suffice it to say that membership dues and revenue from the book raffle have been sufficient thus far to keep the Round Table solvent. The book raffle has been very successful, and it will be continued. We should, of course, explore other sources of income.

Programs

We were fortunate to enjoy an exceptionally strong slate of speakers this year, and the program for the coming year is, I think, at least as strong. Our policy has been to mix prominent historians and authors with members and local talent to ensure that the membership has a chance to learn the latest in scholarship on the national level as well as the significance of some of the local sites near our homes. Members are encouraged to pursue their own study of the war and share their knowledge and insights with their fellow members.

Preservation

We continue to fight but we have not won any victories. The Round Table is a charter member of the Battlefield Preservation Advisory Coalition, which hopes to keep track of preservation issues and be the means by which all organizations interested in Civil War preservation can speak with a unified voice to government and other bodies. We made a donation this year to the Brandy Station Foundation with revenues received from our field trip to that site. We have been active in the effort to preserve Cannon Branch Fort here in Manassas, but the issue is still in doubt. We also waded into the fray over Senate Bill 514 in the Virginia legislature. We lost that fight, as the bill was passed, giving developers unprecedented power over the fate of historic land and battlefields. It is now more important than ever that historically significant land be purchased outright, for no other means of protection is sure.

Extracurricular Programs

We have held four extracurricular programs: Bus tour of Cedar Creek Battlefield, which was extremely successful in every way but financially. We lost quite a bit of money on it, but learned some valuable lessons. Our next field trip was completely successful, as Bud Hall led us to Brandy Station Battlefield. We entered the Virginia department of Transportation Adopt-a-Highway program and in our first skirmish in June picked up 30 bags of trash from the roads around the Stuart Hill tract -- where the shopping mall would have been (I had the pleasure of showing my son deer and rabbits in the beautiful meadow of wild flowers where the mall parking lot would have been). And finally, we recently completed a very successful Flagpole Campaign, about which more can be found in the newsletter. In the future, we will meet with representatives of the Manassas Battlefield to see how we can get more involved in preserving and promoting this resource -- "our battlefield."

Partnerships

We have built a strong, mutually beneficial relationship with the Park Service Staff at the battlefield, which we hope will continue to flourish. We have a good relationship with Manassas Museum, which is a member of the Round Table, and with some other Civil War groups, including Save the Battlefield Coalition, Brandy Station Foundation, American Blue & Gray Association, Civil War Round Table Associates and others. We should strengthen our connections with other area Round Tables, possibly holding a joint meeting once a year and getting a "superstar" speaker of the Shelby Foote ilk.

In closing this report, I cannot fail to mention several who have distinguished themselves through gallantry or extraordinary service. I should like to thank Mac McMahon for his tireless efforts on behalf of Cannon Branch Fort; Martha Hendley, who has done virtually everything that *needed* to be done when I was unable to do it and who is as much responsible for the success of the round Table as anyone; Linda and Willi Shumacher for their considerable contributions of time and effort; Art Candenuist for helping complete the constitution, and Gary Thomas, who assumed the demanding duties of editor of the newsletter over the winter and has done an excellent job. Special tribute must go to the following members who have, without title or compensation, donated portions of their time and energy to making the round Table enjoyable for the rest of us. Christian Frank, Kevin Leahy, Bob Kindergan, Jay Corbalis, Rosemary and Lyle Henschell, Phil De Vore, Bill Davis, Scott Hefty, Ron Cloer and Tim Duskin. These are the people who make the Round Table what it is.

Finally, I must note the debt of gratitude owed our babysitter, Mr. Alan Libby of the National Park Service, who sacrifices one night a month to mind us, lets us stay up well past our bedtime, helps us pick up our toys and never says a word about the noise we make.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve the Round Table. I thank all the members for their interest and support, and I look forward to sitting in the back row beginning in September.

Respectfully submitted by William J. Miller (and gratefully received by the 90+ members of the BRCWRT who were so ably served by our first president).

***And Now, a Brief Message From the New
BRCWRT President, Dr. Armando Mancini***

The first year and probably the hardest one is now behind us and it looks like we're functioning rather well as a Civil War Round Table. We have had interesting field trips, contributed to preservation efforts in a variety of ways, purchased a flag pole for the second visitor Center at Manassas, helped other CW organizations with re-enactments and/or other functions, learned immeasurably from our excellent monthly speakers, and on and on. Not bad for a new group.

Of course we are all aware that young Bill Miller is the individual most responsible for these achievements and indeed, we are aware that he is the founder of the BRCWRT. Bill, we are all grateful to you and your officers for all you have done. GREAT WORK!!!

Speaking of "great" and "work," I had a great time last year working with the Field Trip Committee. The work was very enjoyable and satisfying and there is no reason why being President should be any different. I believe that enjoyment should be the focus for us next year. Let's be certain to build on our previous successes but be sure that doing it will result in a meaningful and fun experience for the entire membership.

Mancini Wins In a Squeaker

After a surprise late-entry from Hoss Perot, the BRCWRT elections were thrown into a quandary. According to reports from the AP, Perot dropped out of another, national race to devote himself full-time to securing the coveted position of BRCWRT president. The campaign expenditures of twelve dollars was a new record for BRCWRT elections--but the BRCWRT couldn't be bought, and Dr. Armando Mancini was elected in a unanimous vote.

Rounding out Mancini's ticket were Vice-President Kevin Leahy, whose victory was secured after he proved he knew how to spell "potato;" Martha Hendley, Treasurer, and Linda Schumacher, Secretary.

The Mancini administration will assume its duties at the September meeting.

Flag Pole Dedication

On Saturday, August 29, at 11:00 a.m. the new flagpole purchased by the Bull Run Civil War Round Table for the new Park Headquarters and visitor center at Manassas National Battlefield Park will be dedicated in a ceremony with Park Service representatives. The ceremony will include the first official raising of the flag, and will be followed by an ice tea reception. The media is expected to attend.

All BRCWRT members, friends, and civil war enthusiasts are encouraged to attend. To reach the ceremony, head west on Lee Highway (Rte. 29) from Stone House at the intersection of Sudley Road (rte. 234). Pass Brawner farm on the right, and look for a gray barn and the buildings on the left at the intersection of Lee Highway and Pageland Lane.

A footnote to the dedication ceremony concerns the process by which the money was raised for the flagpole. It's a testament to the spirit of cooperation that we were able to raise almost \$700 with an average gift of \$15.11, the largest check being a gift of \$25. Surprisingly enough, the ad hoc idea of passing around the jar raised \$134. Small gifts *do* add up. The use of the \$50 surplus will be voted on in the August meeting.

2nd Manassas Battlefield Tour

On August 15, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., a free tour focusing on 2nd Manassas will be given. Speakers include the following:

<u>Station</u>	<u>Principal Speaker</u>	<u>Alternate Speaker</u>
Brawner House	Joe Gray	Jim Burgess
Matthews/Dogan Hill	A. Mancini	Jim Crane
Sudley	Joe Gray	Gary Ecelburger
Unfinished Railroad	Bob Kindergan	Joe Gray
Deep Cut	Joe Gray	Jim Crane
Groveton	Joe Gray	Jim Burgess
N.Y. Monuments	Kevin Leahy	Jim Burgess
Chinn House	Jim Crane	Mac McMahan
Chinn Ridge Battery	Justin Isaac	Mac McMahan
Henry Hill	Bill Miller	Martha Hendley

The principal speaker will give a 15 to 20 minute presentation. The alternate speaker will add to the presentation as required. Jim Burgess will provide an introduction and status of the conflict at Brawner house and Martha Hendley will inform us on a minor skirmish at Portici.

This is an excellent opportunity for a local, free tour. Call Armando Mancini, Jay Corbalis, or Phil De Vore to make reservations, as we need to know how many plan to attend. We will also need volunteers with large cars or vans for transportation.

The tour will begin at the picnic grounds off of Sudley Road. Bring your lunch, repellent, and brogans. More information will be given at the August monthly meeting.

Stonewall Jackson Returns to Manassas

Over 130 years after the legendary exploits that earned him his nickname, Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson will make a symbolic return to Manassas in a special exhibition of artifacts and illustrations entitled "Stonewall Jackson Returns to Manassas," presented by the Manassas Museum. The six-month exhibit will highlight Jackson's relationship to the Manassas area and his image as a popular hero of the South, second only to his commander, General Robert E. Lee.

It was during the First Battle of Manassas on July 21, 1861 that Jackson, leading a brigade of Virginia troops and still wearing his uniform as a professor from the Virginia Military Institute, earned the sobriquet "Stonewall" by holding the Confederate line at a crucial moment in the fighting. A year later, Jackson again distinguished himself during the Second Manassas Campaign, where a southern victory heralded Lee's first invasion of northern territory that would culminate in the Battle of Antietam in Maryland. Until his accidental death at the hands of his own troops in May, 1863, Jackson was regarded as a tactical genius. His forces often defeated larger Union armies through a combination of rapid marches and ferocious assaults.

After dying of the wounds he received during the Battle of Chancellorsville, Jackson was elevated to the status of martyred hero throughout the South. The Jackson legend has endured to the present day, and many objects associated with his life in peace and in war have achieved the status of icons of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. The Manassas Museum's exhibit examines this emotional legacy through such artifacts as his engraved pocket watch, a lock of his hair, a handkerchief stained with his blood, and the flag that covered his coffin.

Other artifacts featured in the exhibit include an engraved presentation sword and a camp stool and spurs used by Jackson during the war. A selection of lithographs depicting Jackson will also be on view during the Museum's exhibit.

"Stonewall Jackson Returns to Manassas" will open to the public on Friday, August 28, 1992, at the start of the Civil War Weekend in Prince William County. This three-day event will also feature programs at the Manassas National Battlefield Park, a day-long series of living history presentations at the Manassas Museum, and a reenactment of the Second Battle of Manassas at James S. Long Park near Haymarket. The exhibit will be open to the public until Sunday, February 29, 1993.

In Brief...

* The BRCWRT received a thank you letter from the Board of Directors of Brandy Station for the \$300 contribution given towards the preservation of that beautiful area. The letter was circulated among the membership at the last meeting. We also received verbal thanks from Mr. Bob Maher, co-founder and executive director of the American Blue & Gray Association for our help with the cleaning detail of Balls Bluff.

* Please note that Gary Thomas will be out of town next month, so all items for the newsletter should be sent to the P.O. Box, not his personal address. If you would like to step in to help out with the newsletter, please notify Armando Mancini. We're also looking for some long-term help with the newsletter. Contact Gary or Armando if you're interested.

* The North Carolina Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans is planning to erect a monument to Lt. General James E. Longstreet and asks for your tax deductible contribution. For more information, or to make a donation, write The General Longstreet Memorial Fund, c/o The North Carolina Division Sons of Confederate Veterans, P.O. Box 1896, Raleigh, NC 27602.

In History...

Bill Miller reminded us of one of the more boring aspects of war, prison life, in his presentation on Camp Curtin. Though Camp Curtin was set up as a training ground, it also was used at various points as a place to hold confederate prisoners. Since Bill talked a little about this northern prison, this month's "In History" will describe a southern prison camp. The following was printed in the Mechanicsborg (PA) Journal on August 28, 1862.

"While in the prison, their treatment, as well, as that of the other officers confined with them, was hard, they not being allowed to go out of the building at all, and the rations were of the meanest quality, and exceedingly small. They received nothing but sour bread, and a little more than a half a ration of meat, with little or no salt. This, with cold water, was all that was furnished them.

"They could purchase other articles if they desired, at the following prices: Coffee--\$2.50 per pound; Tea--\$16. Sugar--\$1; Butter--\$1 to \$1.25; Molasses of the meanest quality--\$1.50 per quart; Potatoes--\$2.50 per peck; Tomatoes--\$10 cents a piece; Eggs--\$1.00 a dozen; and everything else in proportion. Thus, by paying enormous prices, they were able to keep themselves alive."

Bull Run Civil War Round Table
P.O. Box 951
Manassas, Virginia 22111



Bob Kundergan
6546 Voder Street
Manassas VA 22110