



The Stone Wall

Bull Run Civil War Round Table

APRIL 1994 NEWSLETTER



"He Now Lives For the Ages"

On April 14, 1865 President Abraham Lincoln accompanied his wife to watch renowned actress Laura Keane perform the lead role in *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater. The Civil War was winding to a close after the surrender of R.E. Lee's forces at Appomattox Court House five days earlier. Lincoln was now responsible for binding the nation's wounds, a chore he planned on dedicating his second term of the Presidency to accomplishing. Before the night was over, Lincoln lay mortally wounded at the Petersen House across the street from the theater while John Wilkes Booth quickly became the most sought after criminal in the country - for killing the President of the United States of America.

Exactly 129 years after that fateful day, National Park Service historian Michael Malone, an expert on Lincoln's assassination, will present the details of this infamous event to the members of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table. Mr. Malone has been a member of the National Park Service for four years and has worked at Ford's Theater since November of 1991. He received his history degree through the SUNY system in New York State and taught high school in New York City for seven years. Mr. Malone also was a radio reporter for 15 years in New York, which included hosting his own talk show for several years. He likes to consider himself a world traveler, which includes all 50 states of this country and just about every National Park Service site that exists. He loves to talk about his work and we look forward to hearing him present to us the events at Ford's Theater - April 14, 1865.

HEAR IT ALL AT OUR APRIL MEETING!!!
Manassas National Battlefield Park Visitor Center
Thursday - April 14, 1994 - 7:30 p.m

FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Members:

Spring is finally here and, accordingly, activities within Bull Run Civil War Round Table have accelerated. We have just completed one spring tour and have another one in a month. April 19th is an important preservation date because the fate of Bristoe Station will come to a vote with the Prince William County Board of Supervisors. Details of all these events are provided in this month's newsletter.

We have a scheduling change to announce. Bron Wolf, a BRCWRT member, will detail the Battle of Franklin for us on July 14, 1994. We originally had our Civil War Jeopardy game slated for that month, but have since decided to postpone it in an attempt to incorporate other area round tables in this tournament. Hopefully, we can pull this thing off. In the meantime, we look forward to having Bron educate us concerning the important western battle at Franklin, Tennessee.

Our Executive Committee met last month to discuss some important issues. One issue was a donation for preservation which is detailed in this month's newsletter. We also unanimously approved officially incorporating our Round Table. The cost to our treasury will be \$75 this year and \$25 annually from now on. We all felt it was the wisest thing to do with an organization as large as ours to protect ourselves from liability. We are not quite sure of the actual size of our Round Table this year as we still have some late renewals coming in. We will publish a complete up-to-date list of our membership in the May or June newsletter.

While I'm on the subject of the newsletter, our editor, Gary Ecelbarger, has informed me that we are still receiving responses for our provocative column - Most Overrated and Underrated Generals of the Civil War - and expect to run this particular opinion page for a few more months. If anyone wishes to contribute to this column, they are encouraged to do so by sending their opinion to our P.O. Box. We are not looking for award winning essays here, just a half a page on who you think is the most overrated and/or underrated commander.

I wish to close this month with a quote from private James Dulzell of the 116th Ohio. At the battle of Piedmont he was particularly unhappy with Confederate attempts to capture his regiment's flag. His response was "If any man attempts to tear down that flag - shoot him on the spot!"

I wonder how Private Dulzell would react today to a flag burner? The thought just keeps me smiling.

Respectfully,

Scott C. Patchan

MEDAL OF HONOR

The Fletcher Pratt Award is given annually by the New York City Round Table to the best Civil War book and is considered the Pulitzer Prize of Civil War literature. Indeed, a list of previous winners of this prestigious award reads like a Who's Who of Civil War historians - Bruce Catton, James "Bud" Robertson, Ed Bearss, and Noah Andrea Trudeau to name a few. In March, the Fletcher Pratt Award winner for 1993 was announced. William J. Miller, the founder of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table, is now the newest recipient of this prestigious honor.

In 1991, Bill Miller started the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and directed the organization as its first president. At that time he had two published books under his belt - *The Men of Fort Ward* and *The Training of an Army: Camp Curtin and the North's Civil War*. Both books were well-written, valuable contributions to the Civil War literature. At that time, Bill was at work materializing an idea for his third book. As 1993 came to a close, Bill's idea became a reality when he published the book that has placed him among the hierarchy of Civil War authors - *Mapping for Stonewall: The Civil War Service of Jed Hotchkiss*, published by Elliott & Clark.

The following are what some noted historians think of Miller's book:

"Miller on Hotchkiss is really prime stuff--smooth, literate, compelling, first-rate in every way. Jed Hotchkiss's rich trove of primary material deserves some of the credit, but Miller deserves the most."

- Robert K. Krick - Author, *Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain*

"Jed Hotchkiss occupied a unique position in the Confederate army in Virginia; he contributed significantly to the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign and virtually all of the operations of the Army of Northern Virginia. In *Mapping for Stonewall*, which I thoroughly enjoyed, William J. Miller draws on Hotchkiss's wartime journals and voluminous personal papers to offer by far the best treatment to date of the brilliant cartographer's wartime service."

- Gary W. Gallagher - Editor, *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*

"William J. Miller's *Mapping for Stonewall*, a revealing image of "Major" Hotchkiss caught up in a Wagnerian epic, will belong remembered. Miller's narrative history of the stage on which Hotchkiss is an important player and his treatment of Hotchkiss's personal relationships with his superiors and associates make *Mapping for Stonewall* a must read."

- Edwin C. Bearss - Civil War Historian

CONGRATULATIONS BILL MILLER!!!

FROM THE ADJUTANT'S DESK

On March 10, the executive committee of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table met to discuss two issues. The first was incorporation of the Round Table which was unanimously approved and is detailed in the Vice President's message on page two of this newsletter.

The other issue discussed was a monetary donation for preservation. Over the past two years, this Round Table has made sizable contributions to the Manassas National Battlefield Park - including a \$650 donation for a flagpole at the new administrative building in MNBP and a \$600 donation for the repairs of the Groveton Monument at Deep Cut. For 1994, the committee unanimously approved a \$150 donation for the preservation of Civil War manuscripts at Handley Library in Winchester, Virginia.

The Handley Library is jointly operated by the Handley Library Board and the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society. It houses the largest (and closest) non-governmental collection of Civil War manuscripts in the Northern Virginia area. The collection is largely Confederate in nature, and includes several wartime diaries and letters from members of the Stonewall Brigade as well as Jackson's Division. Examples of items in this collection include transcripts of diaries from John P. Hite, 33rd VA; Major Frank B. Jones, 2nd VA; Samuel Angus Firebaugh, 10th VA; James Bradfield, 17th VA; and Lt. John H. Grabill, 33rd VA. In addition to the unpublished manuscript collection, the Handley Library Archives room also houses a rare photograph and newspaper collection and a thorough collection of published Civil War primary and secondary accounts - particularly from the Confederate ranks. The collection is accessible free to the public.

Handley Library suffers from the lack of state and local funding and has produced an itemized "wish list" for items to preserve their manuscript collection. This includes boxes, folders, shelves, staffing, and conservation work. Our Executive Committee has unanimously decided that a \$150 donation will go a long way to preserve this collection for public use in years to come.

The next step is to put the proposal to a vote by our membership. On April 14, we will take a vote during the Thursday meeting for approval of this donation. If you know you will be unable to attend this meeting and would like to register an opinion and a vote for or against this proposal, you may do so by calling the Round Table Secretary, Gary Ecelbarger, on weeknights between 6:00 and 9:00 pm at 703/406-4933. He will log your votes and add those numbers to our meeting counts.

CURRENT EVENTS

Submitted by Ralph G. Swanson

Each month this calendar will feature events occurring locally that may be of interest to Round Table members. We encourage anyone who attends an event to write a brief review for publication in the newsletter for the benefit and enjoyment of our readers. If readers become aware of an event that should appear on these pages, please notify the newsletter editor by the 20th of each month. Reviews and notices can be mailed to the BRCWRT, P.O. Box 951, Manassas, VA 22211.

April 8, 9,10 - Sailor's Creek Battle Celebration - a variety of Civil War activities are planned for the 129th anniversary of the last major battle preceding Lee's surrender. A 10-mile "Run Through History" in Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park starts at 8 am on the 9th; battle reenactment, vendors, civil war sutlers, preservation group representatives, encampment, living history, and more. Proceeds to benefit the State Park For information call Bob Johnson 1-800-752-7520 (x77682).

April 9- Relic and Book Show - Probably the finest relic and paper show in our immediate area is this one at the Kena Shrine Temple in Fairfax. All the finest east coast exhibitors are here. Over 200 tables. The educational exhibits alone are worth the admission. Even if you're not interested in buying, you will meet CW enthusiasts and experts in your area of interest. 9001 Arlington Blvd. 9-5 pm. (703) 823-1958. \$3.

April 16 - Children's Program - "To Arms! To Arms! Children's Activity Day" at the Museum of the Confederacy. Note: April is the last month to see the exhibit on the Confederate battle flags here at the museum. 1201 E. Clay St., Richmond, 10 am - 3 pm. (804) 649-1861. Children \$1. Aults \$4.

April 19 - Reschedule of Board Meeting - see Preservation Update for Details

April 30 - Ben Lomond Manor House - The Ben Lomond Manor House Commission and the Prince William County Park Authority will sponsor a living history day at the Ben Lomond House across from the Sudley Community Center on Sudley Manor Drive. The Civil War living history demonstrations will be provided by the 42nd VA Infantry and the 1st Medical Corp. Musket firing, drills, haversack displays, and medical demonstrations will be featured. 10am-4pm Free Donations greatly appreciated.

Belle Boyd House - The Berkeley County Historical Society has renovated the only house in Martinsburg, W. Va. known to be occupied by "LaBelle Rebelle." It is now a Civil War and County museum open for visitation Fridays and Saturdays 10am-4pm. 126 E. Race St., Martinsburg. (304) 267-4713. Free.

PRESERVATION UPDATE

Submitted by Ralph G. Swanson

There is clearly a depth of interest in a vigorous battlefield preservation posture within the Round Table, as evidenced by the number of members who have volunteered to assist on individual issues. However, as stated in the November newsletter, our intent is to pursue preservation issues in a manner that best reflects the desires of the entire Round Table membership. We continue to solicit input from all members as to the course and advisability of our positions on battlefield preservation. The actions we take are in your name; therefore, please do not hesitate to express your opinions to us at the Preservation Table before each meeting. Alternatively, write us at P.O. Box 951, Manassas, VA 22111, or call us evenings at 703/709-7411 to discuss issues and offer your viewpoints.

Bristoe Station

April 19 - Reschedule of Board Meeting -Prince William County Board of Supervisors will hear public testimony and vote on the Comprehensive Plan Ammendment regarding Bristoe Station. This meeting was originally scheduled for April 5th. The Preservation Committee supports the Planning Commission's recommendation for a low-density zoning. All interested Round Table members are urged to attend. Prince William County Government Center, Davis Ford Road, 7:30 pm.

Progress of ISTEA (from ABPP "Battlefield Update")

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) contains numerous components designed to mitigate the adverse effects of highway transportation on the nation's natural and cultural resources. Most important for battlefield preservation is the highly flexible Surface Transportation Program. The TP can be used to fund a variety of activities, including acquisition of scenic easements, or scenic and historic sites, and historic preservation activities. Considering Congress authorized \$91 billion for ISTEA, that translates into a tremendous "pot" of money potentially available for battlefield acquisitions or other preservation objectives. State transportation departments have considerable flexibility in spending this enhancement money. The following local projects have been funded:

- * The State of Maryland has approved an agreement providing up to \$10.5 million for acquiring land and scenic easements on that State's Civil War sites and greenways. The State already has spent funds for land at Antietam National Battlefield and South Mountain battlefields.
- * West Virginia purchaed 365 acres at Rich Mountain Battlefield including earthworks, artillery emplacements and troop camping areas.

WHAT A DAY!

Submitted by Gary Ecelbarger

Yesterday, April 2, I was one of 85 fortunate people who spent a warm and sunny Saturday touring the Seven Days Battlefields near Richmond, Virginia. This tour was the brainchild of Bill Miller, BRCWRT founder and past president, who spent several months promoting and organizing the excursion to assist APCWS in their attempt to purchase never-before-seen battlefield property at Glendale and Malvern Hill. It was a grand success as over \$1800 was raised this day, solidifying us as part of the largest private Civil War preservation undertaking in American history.

What a day it was! Bill Miller led one bus to Richmond where a second bus of participants joined us at the Chimborazo Visitor Center. From there, the day was spent touring, in chronological order, the battles fought between June 26 - July 1, 1862. Our buses followed the same routes of the armies. Bill Miller, editor of a new Peninsula Journal, and Mike Andrus, Richmond National Battlefield Park historian, were both knowledgeable, engaging, and effective tour guides. Under their dual leadership, one could not help but live solely within the confines of the summer of 1862. We walked upon road traces and battleground that had never been previously publically accessible. I truly appreciated the swampiness of the Chickahominy and its tributaries, as well as the terrain features - particularly the elevated banks of Boatswain Creek at the Battle of Gaines Mill, the isolated open fields of Glendale, and the slowly rising wheatfields at the base of Malvern Hill. Miller and Andrus also took us to the now-developed area that used to be Savage Station. It was a sad example of what happens when aggressive attempts at preservation are not pursued.

Many thanks go to Mr. Miller and Andrus for treating us to a great day. I'm sure Bill accomplished his goal of converting many of us into "Peninsula Disciples." Perhaps the best part of the day for me was meeting with other tour members. I am convinced that Civil War enthusiasts are the friendliest group of people that exist. Hopefully, future tour opportunities offered by BRCWRT will allow those that missed this one the same pleasures we enjoyed on April 2, 1994.

ANTIETAM TOUR

To date, we have over ten members who have signed on for our Round Table tour of Antietam, to be held on Saturday, May 14, 1994. This will be our third tour of the self guided type, i.e., Round Table members will act as tour guides at selected stops. We still have plenty of space available for anyone interested in this campaign, as well as opportunities for anyone who wishes to present information at any of the tour stops. Sign up lists for participants, speakers, and drivers will be displayed at the April meeting. Keep in mind that this tour is free of charge. Those that join us only need to bring a bag lunch and to also be prepared to be entertained on this mid-spring Saturday!

"PERMISSION TO SPEAK FREELY"

Most Overrated and Underrated Civil War Generals

Submitted by Ralph Swanson

Most Overrated General - Albert Sydney Johnston, CSA

Zachary Taylor had called him the finest soldier he ever commanded. Jefferson Davis said he was "the greatest soldier, the ablest man, civil or military, Confederate or Federal, then living." He was the ranking Confederate General in the field at the time, and those high opinions were shared by the people of the region he commanded. Obviously, much was expected of Albert Sydney Johnston.

Johnson was given command of the most difficult theater of the war. His vastly undermanned defensive line stretched over 500 miles from the Mississippi River to Cumberland Gap. Since he could not receive more men, author Shelby Foote says that Johnston adopted a policy of psychological warfare by spreading false information to fool the Union into thinking his forces were larger than they actually were. Statements doubling and tripling his strength were published in southern newspapers he knew would be read in Washington.

Johnston's line began to unravel with the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson in the west, and the debacle at Logan's Crossroads (Mill Spring) in the east. He was forced to retreat south and abandoned Nashville, his main base of supply. Johnston's death at Shiloh naturally overshadowed his string of defeats and retreats, and probably preserved the southern image of his greatness. Jefferson Davis later wrote, "When he fell, I realized that our strongest pillar had been broken." U.S. Grant was probably closer to the truth when he wrote in his memoirs that he originally shared the nation's high opinion of Johnston's military ability. After Shiloh, however, he reassessed and concluded that Johnston was vastly overrated.

Most Underrated General - Benjamin Butler, USA

Benjamin Butler was no military genius--that is a given. He was a politician who no more belonged at the head of an army than I do. Nevertheless, his contribution to the Union cause was vitally more important than a host of battlefield victories.

Butler proved his worth in the opening days of the war- first by holding Baltimore with an iron hand, thus quenching the growing civil unrest that threatened to take the strategically important state of Maryland out of the Union. Butler's utility as a recruiter has also been largely overlooked. He enlisted 18,000 men - 18 regiments - in Massachusetts alone for the attack on New Orleans. His order pertaining to the women of New Orleans was infamous, abhorrent, and detestable. But it was obeyed.

It was Butler who introduced the word "contraband" to the vocabulary of the war, and with it the seminal strategy regarding slavery at the front lines that helped to cripple the southern war effort and eventually yielded the policy that may have sealed the doom of the rebel republic - emancipation. Fremont and Hunter also took precipitous action regarding slaves and were promptly reversed by Lincoln; Butler was sustained.

Like Johnston, Ben Butler presided over an almost unbroken series of failed military operations. After his inept performance at Fort Fisher, Lincoln was finally able to shelve him without serious political repercussions. Until then, however, Butler had displayed vision and initiative in certain key areas that were distinctly lacking in many Union generals with more military ability. His important contributions to the successful Union war effort have been long underrated.

FROM THE RANKS

The Battle of Shiloh, fought April 6 and 7, 1862, represented the first massive battle of the Civil War in which casualties were measured by the thousands rather than the hundreds. The following two accounts clearly indicate that the 1st day of the battle was a Confederate victory, while the 2nd day belonged to the Union. Interestingly, both correspondents did not shy away from criticizing their own troops.

From a Texas Ranger - Written to the Houston Triweekly Telegraph, April 10, 1862

To give your readers an idea of the position of the enemy, I would state he was in force at a point called "Shiloh," which is composed of an old church and a frame house, distant 3 1/2 miles from the Tennessee River, at Pittsburgh landing. ... The plan of battle is due, I learn, to the genius of General Beauregard, and is the strongest one known in military science. It was composed of three parallel lines... In this position our army moved upon the enemy at daybreak, and along a line of four miles the artillery made a most terrific fire. Steadily and firmly did our victorious columns drive him for four miles until he reached the river, finding protection under his heavy batteries upon the bank and upon his transports.

After this most dreadful fight of 14 hours our weary troops came back to the enemy's deserted camps and enjoyed the abundance there found. Such a variety of supplies our brave men were not accustomed to seeing and indeed it was a rich treat after the dangers and fatigues of the day. When the call was made for the last vigorous charge, thousands were absent from their posts engaged in pillage. The interruptions of the labors and plans of Sunday was most hazardous to our army. General B. felt it and early the next morning he sent out reconnoitering parties, which suddenly came among the enemy's outposts, showing that he had not been idle, but had advanced his lines and had been largely re-inforced...

R.F. Bunting

P.S. The St. Louis Republican says: "Glorious Federal victory--200,000 Confederates on the field of Shiloh--40,000 left dead--a grand retreat--Corinth and all the military stores in our possession and their army annihilated--the rebellion will be quenched out in twenty days--the Federals had but 100,000." What Consummate Liars! - R.F.B.

From "NEMO" of the Tenth Brigade, Nelson's Division, Buell's Army

Exerpts of a letter written three days after the battle to the editor of the Cincinnati Daily Commercial

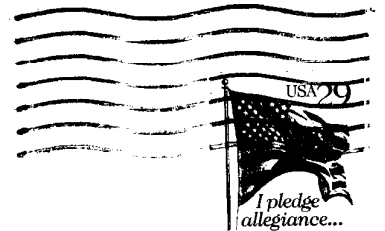
...I am a young soldier, and I know but little of war, and the scene which opened upon us at the river may be one of the concomitants of every battlefield - but, my God, as an American I blush to describe it. The entire bank of the river, for a mile up and down, was crowded with cowardly poltroops who were crowding down to be out of harm's way. A panic evidently pervaded all but the bravest. Our gunboats were pouring in broadside after broadside, just above us, and cannon and musket balls from the enemy's guns were whistling over our heads. When our boats landed, a crowd of the mob rushed aboard, but were driven back at the point of the bayonet... We dashed up the hill at a flank and formed in line of battle instantly... General Grant rode up and harangued us stating that the fate of the day depended on our brigade. General Nelson also spoke, but his speech was short: "Now give it to them, tenth brigade." A cheer loud and long was given and we rushed forward. This is what was wanted and

the enemy fell back. At that moment a six pound shot struck one of General Nelson's aides, or rather his trappings, carrying away part of his saddle, his coat tail, and a portion of his pants. Passing on, the ball struck a 36th Indianan, and took off his head. The officer who escaped so narrowly was Liet. Graves.

The enemy having retired and dark coming on, we rested in line of battle for the night. Rest? No; we could not, for it rained incessantly and we had not shelter -- not even blankets... We were in line by daylight on the morning of the 7th and prepared for the fight. Nor were we kept long in suspense for we were ordered to advance and bring on a general engagement.... At about six o'clock our skirmishers met those of the enemy and drove them in with terrific slaughter, our line still advancing upon them. About this time the action became general all along the line... In front of the 6th Ohio Regiment was a company of artillery from New Orleans, commanded by one who is well known in Cincinnati. Some years ago he left that city, the home of his boyhood, after swindling his creditors, and took up his abode in New Orleans. I refer to the drunken profligate renegade, William Miller Owen. Two of his pieces fell into our hands. Any man in our regiment would have given an arm for his life. Had he been captured by his old comrades, they would have hung him on the spot.

This has been the most stupendous battle ever fought upon the continent... Yesterday, having a few minutes leisure, I traversed a portion of the battlefield for the purpose of observing the effects of the two days' action. The sight is appalling. Dead are piled on every side. In one place ten men were stretched side by side compactly; one man, a Federal soldier, with his arm thrown lovingly over the neck of a Rebel, as though they had gone to sleep in a friendly embrace...

BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
P. O. BOX 951
MANASSAS, VA 22111



Mike Duggan
5214 Claudge Ct.
Fairfax, VA 22032

