



THE drum roll

Volume 32 303d Regular Meeting
Number 2 October 4, 2013

Victory sealed the doom of the Confederacy

Friday, October 4, 2013, 7:30 p.m.

Arlington Heights Historical Museum
110 West Fremont Street, Arlington Heights, Illinois

The Winning Combination



Terry Winschel

The Civil War produced many remarkable and successful tandems, the most famous of whom were Robert E. Lee and Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson for the Confederacy and Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman for the Union. A tandem at least equally successful, if not more significantly so, was Ulysses S. Grant and David Dixon Porter. This winning combination gained a victory at Vicksburg in 1863 that split the Confederacy in two along the line of the Mississippi River and severed major Confederate supply and communication lines. These commanders wielded the might of Union land and naval forces with a degree of harmony and cooperation that set the standard for modern combined,

or joint, operations as they are called today, and in so doing achieved a major objective of the Anaconda Plan and effectively sealed the doom of Richmond and the Confederacy.

Retired National Park Service historian Terry Winschel will examine the professional and personal relationship forged by these men as they battled together in common cause to preserve the union. His program will focus on the harmony of action that prevailed throughout the Vicksburg campaign that resulted in the fall of the Confederate bastion on the Mississippi River on July 4, 1863.

Winschel is a native of Pittsburgh, PA, and a graduate of The Pennsylvania State University. He holds master of social science and education specialist degrees from Mississippi College. He is a 35-year veteran of the National Park Service, having served at Gettysburg National Military Park, Fredericksburg National Military Park, Valley Forge National Historical Park, and Vicksburg National Military Park.

Winschel has written 75 articles on the Civil War and more than 125 book reviews. He is author of *Triumph & Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign, Volume II*; *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River*; *The Civil War Diary of a Common Soldier*; *Vicksburg: Fall of the Confederate Gibraltar*; and *Triumph & Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign*. He has won numerous awards from Civil War organizations.

All who would like to join us for dinner with Terry Winschel at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting on October 4 at Sam’s of Arlington restaurant, 1863 West Central Road, Arlington Heights, please contact me at dlimburg@prodigy.net or (847) 382-1022 by Wednesday, October 2. — *Denise Limburg*

Please note change in location for the Friday, October 4, 2013, meeting

Birth of a War-Winning Effort Forts Henry and Donelson

By Tom DeFranco

On Friday night, September 6, 2013 (General William S. Rosecrans's 194th birthday), the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table began the new meeting season with a presentation by Greg Biggs. Biggs spoke about the beginnings of a campaign that was to provide Federal forces with years of success — the fighting along the rivers on the Western Front.

To understand the campaigns in the West it helps to know the geography (political as well as topographical) of the area. In Virginia, the Confederates benefitted from the fact that the rivers there flowed in an east-west direction. In what was to become the Western Theater, the rivers ran north-south. That difference favored Union thrusts southward into the western Confederate states.

Before entertaining any forays south, however, Federal forces needed to quell anti-Union sentiment in the Illinois river town of Cairo. Cairo, of course, sits at the extreme southern tip of the state. It should be noted that while the northernmost latitude of Illinois is about as far north as Boston, the southernmost tip is about the same latitude as the Virginia–North Carolina border. Accordingly, there were a significant number of people in Cairo who harbored pro-slavery and secessionist leanings. This situation was understood by Governor Richard Yates, who sent the 21st Illinois Infantry Regiment led by then-Colonel (and soon to be brigadier general) U. S. Grant to quell the unrest there. Grant turned a city infested with mosquitoes (as noted by English novelist Charles Dickens during an antebellum visit) and Confederate sentiment into his headquarters in mid-1861.

Grant, however, had no intention of sitting there throughout the war. First he had to deal with troublesome superiors. General John C. Fremont, who made Grant district commander in Cairo, got into trouble with the Lincoln administration for prematurely freeing the slaves in his department (and for allegedly lining his pockets). Then there was General Henry Wager Halleck, who rode a

desk (known in 20th Century terms as a desk jockey) and who distrusted Grant and any ideas that Grant had in conducting the war from his perch in Cairo.

But if the Northerners had command problems in the West in 1861, the Confederates had a looming disaster on their hands. Enter the major Confederate players in the drama. In theater command was General Albert Sidney Johnston, then the number-two ranking man in Southern gray. His immediate subordinates included generals Gideon Pillow and Leonidas Polk. Neither of these two men could be considered anything more than a mediocre general at best. Pillow's main claim to fame was that he was a Mexican War general, and Leonidas Polk is best remembered as an Episcopalian bishop.

In early September 1861, Polk entered Kentucky and occupied Columbus. He was not, however, the one who first violated Kentucky neutrality (that dubious honor belonged to the Federals at Camp Dick Robinson in east-central Kentucky). Meanwhile, Johnston stayed put in Bowling Green.

Just two days after Polk took Columbus, Grant occupied Paducah. He had nothing more than open orders from Fremont to conduct demonstrations in the Belmont-Columbus area. On November 7, Grant attacked at Belmont, Mo., successfully but was eventually counterattacked by Polk's forces. Despite the results at Belmont, confidence in Grant grew enough for Henry Halleck to allow Grant to move on Fort Henry. Halleck stipulated that Grant must work in conjunction with naval forces under naval Flag Officer Andrew Foote. Grant also had to work with Brigadier General C. F. Smith. Grant worked well with both of them. Fort Henry was quickly seized, as the fort was poorly placed on very low ground that made it susceptible to flooding, rendering it an untenable position. It was primarily the Navy that deserves the credit for the capture of Fort Henry.

Fort Donelson would be a different animal altogether, however. It would require a fight by army troops to capture it. Foote's gunboats took the first stab at Fort Donelson, but were driven back. The Confederates then figured that they might need to break out of the fort by counterattacking Grant. This counterattack hit Grant's right flank (General John McClernand), sending it into retreat and forcing it to re-form.

Confederate command confusion reigned again, though. Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest insisted that General Bushrod Johnson push the attack, but Johnson refused, agreeing only to advance cautiously. Then an altercation began between generals Pillow and Simon Buckner about making sure that their troops were linked together. This dis-

agreement bought time for McClernand to regroup and also for General Lew Wallace to come up in support.

Confederate success was short lived and most of Fort Donelson's garrison surrendered the next day, with the notable exceptions of units under Bedford Forrest, General John Floyd, and Pillow. Buckner surrendered over 12,000 men. This victory was important to both the Union war effort and Grant's career. It opened the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers to Federal thrusts and gave Grant a reputation as a fighter. It also gave him a new moniker — Unconditional Surrender Grant.

On behalf of the round table, I wish to thank Greg Biggs for his excellent presentation on the early riverine fighting of the Civil War.

October Events

October 2, Lake County Civil War Round Table.

Don Jarrett will speak on How To Become a Reenactor.

October 5, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI.

Kevin and Patsy Alderson will present the Civil War Letters of Guy C. Taylor, 36th Wisconsin Volunteers. This program is sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and Iron Brigade Association. Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at (262) 653-4140 or www.thecivilwarmuseum.org.

October 5, 16th Civil War Symposium, Cantigny, Wheaton.

Symposium sponsored by the National Archives at Chicago will feature Michael Ballard, Mississippi State University, speaking on Atrocities at Milliken's Bend: U. S. Grant, Racism, and the Siege of Vicksburg; James Downs, Connecticut College, on Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War; Robert Girardi, on the Union High Command at Chancellorsville; and Stephen Towne, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, on Fighting Desertion and Disloyalty: The Rise of Army Intelligence Operations in the Midwest in 1863. More information is available at www.archives.gov/great-lakes/public/programs/calendar.html or (773) 948-9001. Registration re-

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quired, though there is no fee. Participants may bring a lunch or go out on their own.

October 8, McHenry County Civil War Round

Table. Dave Noe will speak on Sherman's March: Myths and Legends.

October 11, Chicago Civil War Round Table.

William Cooper will speak on We Have the War Upon Us.

October 11, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI.

Pete Skelly will discuss Lincoln in Wisconsin.

October 15, Lincoln-Davis Civil War Round Ta-

ble. Max and Donna Daniels will present Abe and Mary Lincoln: A Press Conference.

October 18, Salt Creek Civil War Round Table.

Harold Knudsen will speak on General James Longstreet.

October 20, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI.

Museum staff will lead a special tour of the Campaigns of '63 exhibit, and an actor will portray James P. Sullivan, focusing on his war experience, including the Battle of Gettysburg. Registration required; \$10/\$7 museum members.

October 30, Gail Borden Library, Elgin.

Bill Werst will discuss the impact of Lincoln, even in death, and the funeral train on the United States. Register at www.gailborden.info/register or at (847) 429-4597.



2013–14 Officers and Trustees

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Appointed Positions

Book Raffle	Charles Banks
Newsletter Editor	Sally Smith

In Memoriam

Word was received from Lois Didier that Madeleine Brennan passed away on June 24, 2013. She was a charter member and served for many years as the corresponding secretary.

Long-time member and former trustee Arlene Young passed away September 13, 2013. We send condolences to both families.

Book Discussion Group

The Civil War book discussion group at the Eisenhower Library, 4613 North Oketo, Harwood Heights, meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10 until 11:30 a.m. On October 5 they will discuss *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock* by Francis A. O'Reilly.

November Meeting

Bruce Kraig will discuss How the Civil War Changed Our Food Culture on November 1, 2013, at Arlington Heights Memorial Library.

September Raffle

The September raffle winners were Mary Banks, who won *Confederate Courier* by Helen Jones Campbell; Frank Crawford, who won *Gray Fox* by Burke Davis; Tom DeFranco, who won *The Day Richmond Died* by A. A. Hoehling and Mary Hoehling; Phillip Thornton, who won *Touched with Fire* by James M. Perry; Jan Rasmussen, who won *Twenty Days* by Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Phillip B. Kunhardt, Jr.; and Jeff Johnson, who won *Lee and Grant* by Gene Smith.

Congratulations to the winners and sincere thanks to the donors. To donate Civil War-related books or items, please contact Charlie Banks.

October Saturday Discussion

All members and guests are invited to participate in the session to be held at the Hoffman Estates Community Bank, 1375 Palatine Road, Hoffman Estates, on Saturday, October 19, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Attendees are asked to park in the adjacent lot rather than in spaces provided for bank customers. The discussion of the Vicksburg Campaign will continue, led by second vice president Pat McCormick. These discussions are generally held on the third Saturday of the month from September through June.

Roster Changes

New recruits

Alfred Kitch
171 East Burlington Street
Riverside, Illinois 60546-2147
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Mark Schmitz
1813 Forest Avenue
Des Plaines, Illinois 60018-1643
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Gerry Barry
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**To learn more about this Round Table call Ellen Allen at (847) 516-6429
or visit our website at www.northernilcwrt.org**