



GENERAL ORDERS

The Newsletter of the
Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.
Our 62nd Year
and The Iron Brigade Association



MAY 13, 2010

WILLIAM W. FREEHLING

The Strange, Difficult Triumph of Southern Secession

In popular imagination, our Founders, consumed by countless other problems, compromised on the issue of slavery in the aftermath of the Revolution, thus ultimately pitting Northern abolitionists against Southern slaveholders. Finally, down the decades, Lincoln was elected and the South rebelled. For many Americans, the war seems to have been inevitable, the great middle act of our national story, the moral reckoning of a republic founded in both liberty and hypocrisy.



Professor William W. Freehling makes note that most Northerners were not fond of abolitionists and in 1860 did not vote for Lincoln as an emancipator, while most Southerners were not fond of fire-eaters and did not regard slavery as a “permanent blessing.”

So, why did war come? For Freehling, “the peculiarity lay not in enslavement itself (a most unpeculiar institution in almost every human culture’s history). Rather, the oddity lay in the entrenchment of the New World’s most powerful slavery system inside the Western World’s most egalitarian (for whites) republic.

In his May talk to our Round Table, Professor Freehling will examine both the crucial role of human forces over and against larger, more impersonal ones, including geography and the economy, which were essential too in the triumph of Southern secession.

In 2007, the Oxford University Press published the second and concluding volume of Professor Freehling’s *Road to Disunion. Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861*. Together with the previously-published sequel volume, *The South versus the South: How the Southern Anti-Confederates Shaped the Course of the Civil War*, the newest publication completes a trilogy of books, offering a major reinterpretation of the causes of the Civil War and of Confederate defeat. The latest book brings to a climax a lifetime’s work on the Old South and the Civil War, begun forty years ago with the publication of *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina* (winner of the Nevins and Bancroft Prizes).

Professor Freehling grew up in Chicago, received his BA degree Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Harvard College, and his MA and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. He has taught at Berkeley and Harvard, held full professorships at Michigan and Hopkins, and endowed chairs at SUNY Buffalo and at Kentucky. Freehling is now retired from his university career and currently writes full time at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities as a permanent Senior Fellow. Freehling and his wife Alison live in Charlottesville with their five Norwich terriers and close to their two adult children (both journalists).

GENERAL ORDERS NO. 10-05
May 2010

IN THIS ISSUE

CWRT News	2
Announcements	2
From the Field.....	3
May Meeting Reservation	5
CWRT Calendar.....	6

MAY MEETING AT A GLANCE

May 13, 2010

William W. Freehling
“The Strange, Difficult Triumph of Southern Secession”

Military or civilian Civil War attire is always welcome at our May meeting.

Wisconsin Club
9th & Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee
(Jackets required for dining room)

5:30 p.m. – Staff Meeting
(Open to all members)

6:15 p.m. – Registration & Social Hour

6:45 p.m. – Dinner

7:30 p.m. – Program

Dinner – \$23 by reservation.

Deadline: Monday, May 10, 2010

See page 5.

Speaker and topic are subject to change.
In case of inclement weather, listen to WTMJ or WISN radio.

NEW! FIND THE MILWAUKEE CWRT ON FACEBOOK!

2010 Board of Directors Nominees

In accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, the Nominating Committee of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee recommends the following slate of nominees for the upcoming election of members to the Board of Directors:

Donna Agnelly • Tom Arliskas • Crain Bliwas
Roman Blenski • Paul Eilbes

The slate will be voted on at the election held during the May meeting. Newly elected directors begin their duties upon election and typically serve three-year terms.

ANNOUNCEMENTS • EVENTS • MEETINGS

May 10, 2010

Manitowoc Civil War Round Table, 7 p.m.
Manitowoc County Historical Society Heritage Center

May 18, 2010

Prairieville Irregulars, 7 p.m.
Student Center Building, Carroll University
Dave Wege: Pugnacious and Pertinacious "Old Pat"

May 30, 2010

Service of Remembrance
Decoration of Graves of Union Soldiers, 1 p.m.
Forest Home Cemetery, Section 31
West Side Soldiers Aid Society

May 31, 2010

Memorial Day Service, Cavalry Cemetery, 10 a.m.
Catholic Mass followed by Patriotic Program
and Decoration of Graves
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

June 5-6, 2010

Reclaiming Our Heritage
Veteran Tribute Event and Multi-Era Encampment
Salute to Vietnam Veterans
Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center grounds
www.forohmilwaukee.org or call 414-902-5599

PERIOD DRESS WELCOME AT OUR MAY 13 MEETING



May 13, 1861 • William T. Sherman, his son Willy, and his brother-in-law witnessed the St. Louis riot. Sherman wrote to his friend David F. Boyd, Professor of Ancient History at Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy:

Already Missouri is humbled. I have witnessed it; my personal friends here, many of them Southern, admit that Missouri's fate is sealed. I have no doubt 100,000 disciplined men will be in Louisiana by Christmas next. The Mississippi River will be a grand theater of war....It is horrible to contemplate but it cannot be avoided. I know that I individually would not do any human being a wrong, take from him a cent or molest any of his rights or property, yet I admit fully the fact that Lincoln was bound to call on the country to rally and save our constitution and government. Had I responded to his call for volunteers I know that I would now be a Major-General. But my feelings prompted me to forbear and the consequence is my family and friends are almost cold to me and they feel and say that I have failed at the critical moment of my life. It may be I am but a chip on the whirling tide of time destined to be cast on the shore as a worthless weed.

Sherman would return to the army on May 14, accepting a commission as a commander of the newly formed 13th Infantry.

May 14, 1862 • Pvt. Day, Co. B, 25th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, wrote home about picket duty.

I was out in the woods yesterday and last night on picket duty and picket duty is simply lying around in the brush watching the approach of outside parties. Parties approaching in the night time and failing to promptly respond to the hail of the picket are given an instantaneous passport to a land that is fairer than this. A picket is composed of three or more men stationed at convenient distances from each other along the roads, horse paths, and anywhere an enemy might be supposed to come. One keeps watch while the others sleep, but with the hooting of the owls, sand fleas, wood ticks, lizards, and mosquitoes, their repose is a good deal disturbed.

May 6, 1863 • Lincoln receives news of the defeat at Chancellorsville from Hood and the Richmond newspapers.

A.P. Hill was assigned Jackson's old corps.

Clement L. Vallandigham, arrested the previous day, was taken before a military tribunal in Cincinnati and tried for treason. Denied the writ of habeas corpus, he was sentenced to two years' confinement in a military prison.

May 5, 1864 • The Battle of the Wilderness begins. A Confederate private in the Army of Northern Virginia wrote:

It is a beautiful day on which all this blood work is being done.

At the close of the day, both armies entrenched their positions and waited for morning.

FROM THE FIELD

The Wilderness

The trees swayed and sighed gently in the soft wind. One veteran told the story of the burning of some of the Union soldiers who were wounded during Hooker's fight around the Wilderness, as they lay helpless in the woods. It was a ghastly and awe-inspiring tale as he vividly told it to us as we sat among the dead. This man finished his story by saying shudderingly: 'This region,' indicating the woods beyond us with a wave of his arm, 'is an awful place to fight in. The utmost extent of vision is about one hundred yards. Artillery cannot be used effectively. The wounded are liable to be burned to death. I am willing to take my chances of getting killed, but I dread to have a leg broken and then to be burned slowly; and these woods will surely be burned if we fight here. I hope we will get through this chapparal without fighting,' and he took off his cap and meditatively rubbed the dust off of the red clover leaf which indicated the division and corps he belonged to.

Private Frank Wilkeson
11th Battery, New York Light Artillery

This field was less than a quarter of a mile across, had been planted with corn the year before, and was now dry and dusty. We could see the spurts of dust started up all over the field by the bullets of the enemy, as they spattered on it like the big drops of a coming shower you have so often seen along a dusty road. But that was not the thing that troubled us. It was the dropping of our comrades from the charging line as they rushed across the fatal field with breasts bared to the terrible storm of leaden hail, and we knew that it would soon be our turn to run this fire.

Lieutenant Holman S. Melcher
20th Maine Infantry, Bartlett's Brigade

I saw General Ewell, who was still a superb horseman, notwithstanding the loss of his leg, riding in furious gallop toward me, his thoroughbred charger bounding like a deer through the dense underbrush. With a quick jerk of his bridle-rein just as his wooden leg was about to come into unwelcome collision with my knee, he checked his horse and rapped out his few words with characteristic impetuosity. He did not stop to explain the situation; there was no need of explanation. The disalignment, the confusion, the rapid retreat of our troops, and the raining of Union bullets as they whizzed and rattled through the scruboaks and pines, rendered explanations superfluous, even had there been time to make them. The rapid words he did utter were electric and charged with tremendous significance. 'General Gordon, the fate of the day depends on you, sir,' he said. 'These men will save it, sir,' I replied, more with the purpose of arousing the enthusiasm of my men than with any well-defined idea as to how we were to save it.

Brigadier General John B. Gordon
Brigade Commander, Second Corps

The battle now becomes close and bloody. Charges and counter-charges are made in quick succession. Five times we traversed the same ground, led by General Wadsworth, who sits on his horse with hat in hand, bringing it down on the pommel of his saddle

with every bound, as he rides at the head of the column. Then as the bullets strike among his men like hail, and they begin to recoil, he rides slowly back in their midst, speaking kindly to them, with ever a smile on his pleasant countenance, which shows no concern for the storm of lead and iron raging around him.

Private Charles A. Frey
150th Pennsylvania Infantry, Stone's Brigade

A general officer came in from his command at this juncture, and said to the general-in-chief, speaking rapidly and laboring under considerable excitement: 'General Grant, this is a crisis that cannot be looked upon too seriously. I know Lee's methods well by past experience; he will throw his whole army between us and the Rapidan, and cut us off completely from our communications.' The general rose to his feet, took his cigar out of his mouth, turned to the officer, and replied, with a degree of animation which he seldom manifested: 'Oh, I am heartily tired of hearing about what Lee is going to do. Some of you always seem to think he is suddenly going to turn a double somersault, and land in our rear and on both of our flanks at the same time. Go back to your command, and try to think what we are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do.' The officer retired rather crestfallen, and without saying a word in reply.

Lieutenant Colonel Horace Porter
Staff, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant.



Wounded from the Battle of the Wilderness, from a stereograph, May 1864, Library of Congress: LC-B811-2507A.

Kenosha Civil War Museum Events

There are three summertime lectures being sponsored by the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee and the Iron Brigade Association. All three events are free of charge and will take place in Freedom Hall at the Civil War Museum.

A New Constellation, Symbol of Freedom

Saturday, July 3, 2010, 1 p.m.
Tom Schiera

Who is credited with the design of the first flag? What do the colors, stars and stripes symbolize? How can the present design of the flag be traced back through the history of the United States? Flag collector Tom Schiera presents a lecture on the history and uses of the greatest symbol of America, the flag.

Those Splendid Banners

Saturday, July 24, 2010, 1 p.m.
Lance Herdegen

Flags took on significant importance during the Civil War. The banners were often presented by community groups to the various units as they left their hometowns. Each Federal regiment carried a National Color as well as a State Flag. The regimental banners came to not only represent cause and unit but hometowns as well. The emotional attachment lasted long after the war when veterans returned to reunions with their old comrades for a chance to once again march under their old flags.

The Dakota Uprising

Saturday, August 7, 2010, 1 p.m.
Jan Rasmussen, Vice President,
Salt Creek Civil War Round Table

In August of 1862 the Minnesota frontier exploded in violence. Provoked by a corrupt treaty system, waves of immigration, forced cultural changes and dishonest government agents and traders, the Santee Sioux killed at least 500 settlers. The uprising was one of the worst in American history and launched a series of wars on the plains that did not end until Wounded Knee in 1890.

OTHER UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

Salute to Freedom

Sponsored by The Civil War Round Table of Chicago
Chicago and the Civil War
Saturday, June 12, 2010, 1 p.m.
Ted Karamanski, Loyola of Chicago Professor

Wisconsin and Shiloh

Saturday, June 12, 3 p.m.
Bjorn Skaptason of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop

Fathers, Sons, and the Army of the American Eagle

Sunday, June 13, 2010, 2 p.m.
Dr. James Marten

Contact the museum for additional details: 262-653-4140.

Ed Bearss

August 3, 2010

Kenosha Civil War Museum "Spirit of Freedom" Series

Ed Bearss brings history alive as he shares colorful anecdotes and his encyclopedic knowledge of Civil War topics. His vast knowledge of the Civil War will provide an evening of scholarship and entertainment as he discusses the influence and impact of the Upper Middle West on the Civil War. Bearss will be available after the lecture to sign copies of his many books. *Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg* and *Fields of Honor* are available for purchase at the museum gift shop.

The Spirit of Freedom package includes a special tour of the Civil War Museum's Fiery Trial Gallery led by Ed Bearss at 4 p.m., Tuesday, August 3. After the tour, enjoy a private dinner with Bearss at 6 p.m. at the museum. After dinner, Bearss will present his lecture in a public program in Freedom Hall at 7:30 p.m.

The Spirit of Freedom package is available for \$50 for Friends of the Museum and \$65 for nonmembers. Advance registration is required. Tickets for the evening presentation only (tour and dinner not included) are available for \$10 for Friends of the Museum and \$15 for nonmembers. Seating is limited and unreserved. Advanced registration is recommended by calling the museum at: 262-653-4141.

Ed Bearss is *sui generis*. They broke the mold after he was created. —James McPherson

He has made himself into that legend with what the *Washington Post* reporter Phil McCombs has described as his "booming voice...full of passion for the history of our country."

Both excerpts are from *Edwin Cole Bearss: History's Pied Piper* by John C. Waugh, 2003.



In May 1948, J. L. Ferree spoke to the group on Belle Boyd. Roman T. Zorn spoke about "Lincoln and the Abolitionists" in May 1959.

Antietam was the topic of James V. Murfin's presentation in May 1963.

In May 1971, Jim Dan Hill spoke on "Jim Frey, Hard Luck Sailor and Confederate Ship Captain."

Jeffrey Wert visited the Round Table in May 1985 and spoke about "Old Jube and Little Phil: Generalship in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864."

"James Longstreet and the Writing of Southern History" was the topic of William Garrett Piston's talk in May 1993.

NEW RELEASES FROM SAVAS BEATIE

Valley Thunder: The Battle of New Market
Charles R. Knight, \$29.95

Charles R. Knight's book is the first full-length account in more than three decades to examine the combat at New Market on May 15, 1864 – the battle that opened the pivotal 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

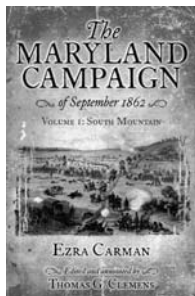
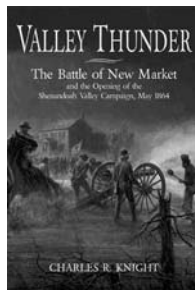
Knight's balanced and objective approach includes a detailed examination of the complex prelude leading up to the day of battle. His entertaining prose introduces a new generation of readers to a wide array of soldiers, civilians, and politicians who found themselves swept up in one of the war's most gripping engagements.

Charles R. Knight is a native of Richmond, Virginia. He is a former Historical Interpreter at New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, and currently serves as curator of the Douglas MacArthur Memorial.

The Maryland Campaign of September 1862
Volume 1: *South Mountain*, Ezra Carman,
edited by Thomas G. Clemens, \$37.50

Dr. Thomas Clemens (editor), recognized internationally as one of the foremost historians of the Maryland Campaign, has spent more than two decades studying Antietam and editing and richly annotating Carman's exhaustively written manuscript. The result is *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862*, Carman's magisterial account published for the first time in two volumes. Jammed with firsthand accounts, personal anecdotes, maps, photos, a biographical dictionary, and a database of veterans' accounts of the fighting, this long-awaited study will be read and appreciated as battle history at its finest.

"*The Maryland Campaign of September 1862*, first written by Ezra Carman and now edited and annotated by Thomas G. Clemens, makes available one of the most important sources for those momentous days. It also brings together two experts — Carman, who fought at Antietam and spent his life studying the battle, and Dr. Clemens, a modern authority who fights today to preserve the battlefield that remains. It is simply first-rate." *Lance Herdegen*



NEW IN PAPERBACK!

If you haven't added Lance Herdegen's latest book, *Those Damned Black Hats! The Iron Brigade in the Gettysburg Campaign* to your collection, now is the time! Sold out in hardcover, the book is now available in paperback. Lance's book is the first book-length account of an all-Western outfit famously branded The Iron Brigade of the West and their remarkable experiences in Pennsylvania during that fateful summer of 1863.

Lance was the 2008 winner of The Army Historical Foundation Distinguished Writing Award for Operational/Battle History for this book.

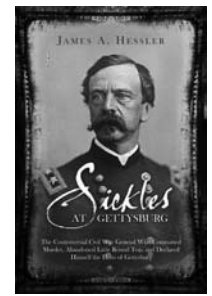
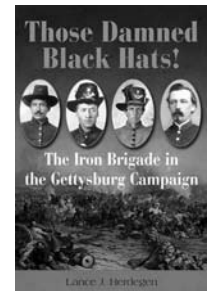
Sickles at Gettysburg: The Controversial Civil War General Who Committed Murder, Abandoned Little Round Top, and Declared Himself the Hero of Gettysburg
James A. Hessler, \$22.95

Written by licensed battlefield guide James Hessler, this book is the most deeply-researched, full-length biography to appear on Sickles.

No individual who fought at Gettysburg was more controversial, both personally and professionally, than Major General Daniel E. Sickles. By 1863, Sickles was notorious as a disgraced former Congressman who murdered his wife's lover on the streets of Washington and used America's first temporary insanity defense to escape justice.

No single action dictated the battlefield strategies of Meade and Lee more than Sickles' unauthorized advance to the Peach Orchard. The mythic defense of Little Round Top might have occurred quite differently were it not for Sickles. Sickles lost his leg on the field and thereafter worked to remove Meade from command of the army. He spent the remainder of his life declaring himself the true hero of Gettysburg.

Hessler's book is a balanced and entertaining account of Sickles' colorful life.



Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for May 13, 2010

Mail your reservations by Monday, May 10, to:
Paul Eilbes
1809 Washington Ave.
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

ALSO, call in reservations to:
(262) 376-0568

Enclosed is \$ _____ (meal price \$23.00 per person) for _____ reservations for May 13, 2010, meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. (Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)

Name of Member _____

General Orders, the official publication of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., is produced September through May and upon request of the Board of Directors.

Send submissions to **Donna Agnelly, Editor**, 420 Racine St., Unit 110, Waterford, WI 53185 or email to **dagnelly@tds.net** with "Civil War Round Table" in the subject line of your message. All submissions must be received by the Editor no later than the 10th of the month prior to the next issue. The Editor reserves the right to select articles and to edit submissions for style and length.

All address changes or problems receiving your *General Orders* should be directed through Membership Chairman Paul Eilbes.

Copyright © 2010 by the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. Permission is granted for use of the contents, in whole or in part, in non-for-profit Civil War Round Table newsletters only. All other rights are reserved.

General Orders design and layout by Patricia A. Lynch.

Yearly memberships available: Individual (\$35), Family (\$45), and Non-Resident (\$20).

Contact Paul Eilbes for information: (262) 376-0568.

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., admits members of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges and activities of the Round Table.

CWRT of Milwaukee, Inc. • 2010 Meetings

June 17, 2010

Robert Girardi, TBA

Originally scheduled for January 2010, the snowed-out meeting.

Speaker and topic are subject to change. In case of inclement weather, listen to WTMJ or WISN radio.



This annual veteran tribute and living history event on the grounds of Milwaukee's Civil War Soldiers' Home (VA Medical Center) will feature concerts by the 1st Brigade Band, David Corbett and Battlefield Balladeers, the Regimental Volunteer Band of Wisconsin, and more. as well as encampments spanning 1600 to the present.

It's family-friendly and positively-patriotic with free admission and parking!

*www.forohmilwaukee.org
414-902-5599
Also on Facebook!*