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.Meets @ Civic Center Library

.3839 N Drinkwater Blvd Scottsdale

.on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

6:45 PM—8:45 PM

.September thru May

.\$35 Annual Dues (individual)

.\$45 Annual Dues (family)

.Everyone Welcome



BROOKS SIMPSON

-presents-

The Unpronounceable Man: The Ulysses S. Grant You Don't Know

November 17th, 2009

6:45 PM Civic Center Library

Brooks Simpson is Foundation Professor of History at Arizona State University. Born in Freeport, New York and educated at the Phillips Exeter Academy, he graduated in 1975; four years later he graduated from the University of Virginia. Receiving his M.A. in history at the University of Wisconsin—Madison in 1982, he earned his Ph.D. in 1989. After working three years as an assistant editor for *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, based at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville, Simpson joined the faculty at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, in 1987. Three years later, in 1990, he migrated west to Arizona State University. Simpson is the author, coauthor, editor or coeditor of several books. He is perhaps best known for his work on Ulysses S. Grant. *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph over Adversity, 1822-1885* which was a New York Times Notable Book and a Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 2000. Appearing several times on C-SPAN, as well as on PBS's *American Experience*, in 2009 the U. S. State Department asked him to travel to Turkey for two weeks to lecture on Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama in historical context. Currently he is one of the contributors to the prize-winning "Civil Warriors" blog.



FROM WES' DEN...It was really nice to be back in our regular auditorium for our October meeting. AND Terry Winschel gave us a terrific lecture on Joe Johnston & his Vicksburg campaign. The 45 minutes of Q & A were equally fascinating. Realize that we present at every lecture the authority on that subject. To miss one meeting is to miss something very special. Next month the authority on Grant is here. Mark your calendar now.....My wife and I are just back from Nebraska. We visited the only purely CW Museum in the state. Near the lower SE corner is Nebraska City and a rare original GAR Hall. Over 100 Union veterans joined that Post and a lot of medals, badges & memorabilia was donated. A devoted staff keeps it in good shape. If you are in Nebraska, see it.....Our book table has the best selection ever. \$137 was donated last month by the 97 attendance. Thank you for your support and you got a bargain besides, helping battlefield preservation....*The Gettysburg Magazine* collection is a terrific item on Silent Auction right now. It is the last word in current research and this prize can be purchased at around \$3 per issue. The opening bid is \$110. With no advertising & the first article always by Ed Bearss, it is currently at \$10 per issue by subscription. This is a class production! Think about it as a Christmas present to yourself.



I remain your most obedient servant..... *Wes Schmidt*

DID YOU KNOW?

.Surgeons never washed their hands after an operation because all of the blood was assumed to be the same.

.The average American in the 1860's could not afford to paint his house and a painted house was a sign of affluence. In order to keep up appearances, they used cedar clapboards.

.The artillery barrage at The Battle of Gettysburg, during Pickett's charge, was heard over 100 miles away in Pittsburg.

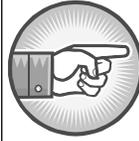
.General Robert E. Lee traveled with a pet hen that laid one egg under his cot every morning.

.The first civilian killed by the abolitionist John Brown and his cohorts at Harper's Ferry, was a free black man.

BOOK REVIEW

reviewed by

Don Swanson, SCWRT Member



We are happy to report that 71 of our Membership have agreed to receive their *Grapeshot* by e-mail. We are hoping the remainder will get on board and agree to receive their *Grapeshot* by e-mail, as well saving the Scottsdale Civil War Round Table postage, time and money. As we have stated in the past...Membership dues and donations go to quality speakers and donations to battlefield and historic preservation. Any one using "snail mail" that wants to change over to "e-mail", please e-mail Karen. Thank you!

kkbecraft@q.com

Master of War: The Life of General George H. Thomas by Benson Bobrick. Published by Simon & Schuster. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. 2009. 432 pp. \$28.00

In his biography of General George H. Thomas, author Benson Bobrick describes him as "America's greatest soldier-patriot since George Washington was laid to rest." This description might warrant some level of real consideration if Bobrick had used more careful battlefield analysis and explanation to support his claim and less overwrought language throughout his biography that only succeeds in distracting the reader from his point. As one example, while discussing Thomas's victory at the December 1864 Battle of Nashville, Bobrick writes "In the end, it would be judged one of the two perfect battles ever fought – the other being Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz." While Thomas certainly deserves credit for this significant victory, the author's comparison smacks of hyperbole to Civil War buffs fully aware of Grant's Vicksburg Campaign or Lee's division of his army at Chancellorsville.

As Bobrick sees it, Ulysses Grant and William Sherman are Thomas tormentors during the war by overstating their own accomplishments while minimizing his and fail to cooperate with him seemingly at every opportunity. Even after Thomas's death they continue their relentless attacks in their memoirs. The author surprisingly concludes his examination of Thomas by focusing on Grant and Sherman rather than the notable accomplishments of his own subject. "It cannot be denied that Grant and Sherman falsified the record and gave critical events their own mendacious 'spin.' They did so toward the end of the war, in backbiting correspondence, in its aftermath, when they used their political authority to suppress damaging material and facts; and ultimately in their memoirs, in which they endeavored to reinforce each other's version of events."

Apparently this biographer of George Thomas felt it necessary to malign the reputation of Ulysses Grant, the man ranked by most modern historians (most recently the esteemed British historian John Keegan) as the Civil War's greatest general in order to make his case for Thomas. In that, this biography falls flat.



UPCOMING ROUND TABLES

- Dec 15th...Members Only Christmas Party
Location To Be Announced
- Jan 19th...Thomas Cartwright...*He Shone Like A Meteor On A Cloudy Sky: Pat Cleburne*
- Feb 16th...Chris Kolakowski...*Perryville: Battle for Kentucky*
- Mar 16th...Eric Mink...*Our Beau-ideal Of An Educator, Gentleman and Drill-master: Colonel William Gilham Of The Virginia Military Institute*
- Apr 20th...Howard Strouse...*Amazing Grace: Champions Of Abolition*
- May 18th...Dave Smith...*He Always Stops To Quarrel With His Generals: The Mystery of Braxton Bragg*

McDowell Sonoran Month

The Scottsdale Civil War Round Table was invited by the Scottsdale Historical Commission to participate in the Mayor's Breakfast honoring McDowell Sonoran Month on October 15, 2009 at the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. This was commemorating the birth of General Irvin McDowell, the person whose name graces 1/3 of the area of our city.

Dr. John Bamberl, representing The Scottsdale Civil War Round Table, gave a presentation on the life of General McDowell.

The SCWRT arranged and paid for the color guard of Union Civil War re-enactors. Hopefully, this commemoration will become a Scottsdale tradition during McDowell Sonoran Week.

Scottsdale Mayor, Jim Lane, personally asked Dr. Bamberl for the Scottsdale Civil War Round Table to stay actively involved in the Scottsdale Historical Preservation and the Stoneman Military Road Project.



CIVIL WAR DAYS AT PIONEER VILLAGE

The second annual civil war days at Pioneer will be held at Pioneer Village (north of Phoenix) on November 21st and 22nd, 2009. There will be two Civil War battles. This is the Southwest Civil War Association's biggest Arizona event.



For more info:
www.swcwa.com
www.pioneeraz.org

PROGRAM CHANGE

You might have noticed that we have a program change for November. Gordon Rhea was scheduled to speak but a case he is working on goes to court, resulting in his cancellation. Hopefully, he will be our speaker at a later date.

Mack Stanley, our program chairman, has been trying to get Brooks Simpson to be our key note speaker for some time. He has succeeded for our November program and we are the lucky ones! Those of us who remember Brooks' programs on U.S. Grant and W.T. Sherman will welcome his return to our Round Table. For those who have not heard him...you will really enjoy his presentation. Bring a friend!

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS

Year end contributions are 100% tax deductible because this Scottsdale Civil War Round Table is a "tax exempt" organization. Unlike other organizations, the officers and board members take no salaries and 100% of the money goes for the speaker's expenses and for the publishing of *The Grapeshot*.

A THANK YOU TO SCWRT FROM CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST

David Duncan, Director of Membership & Development, at Civil War Preservation Trust sent a big "thank you" to all of our members for the \$2,500 donation our group sent to them. "Please tell the Round Table members "thank you" and that we will designate their generosity to help match the Virginia grant money that expires at the end of this year, helping to save crucial acres at places like Chancellorsville, Malvern Hill, The Wilderness and Appomattox Station. Because of the match, your \$2,500 gift will actually help save \$3,750 worth of hallowed ground - a 50% return on your investment! We would also like to recognize The SCWRT as an honorary Color Bearer at the Brigade level, for this generous gift."

Without your membership dues and donations, this would not have been possible. Keep up the good work SCWRT Members!

IRVIN McDOWELL

by Dr. John Bamberl
SCWRT Member

Irvin McDowell was born on October 15, 1818 in Franklinton, Ohio. He attended school in nearby Columbus and upon the suggestion of a French tutor, attended a private school in France in 1833. He returned to the United States in 1834 and received an appointment to West Point where he graduated in 1838 and ranked twenty-third in his class.

He remained in the military for the next forty-four years. His first assignment as a second Lieutenant of artillery was along the U.S. - Canadian border in Maine. The next year he returned to West Point as an assistant instructor in military tactics. By the end of the U.S. - Mexican War, he was the Assistant Adjutant General of the Army of Occupation. Between 1848 and 1861 he served as a staff officer to higher ranking military leaders and developed a close friendship with General Winfield Scott while serving on his staff.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, McDowell quickly moved to a role of leadership in the Union Army.

In 1861, President Lincoln appointed McDowell the Commander of the Army in Washington D.C. The politicians in Washington wanted a quick resolution to the war and demanded that the North take the offensive. The President yielded to the popular clamor for an advance. General McDowell was called upon to submit a plan of campaign and it was accepted by the President, his Cabinet and the War Department.

General McDowell complained he was not allowed to test his equipment or to see if it worked. There was no one in the Army who had maneuvered large bodies of troops. He wanted a little time. Here was an army of 28,000 men who had never drilled in lines and were compelled to advance against a force of equal numbers that had been entrenched for three months.

The President and Cabinet were convinced that once the Confederates saw the Union troops they would turn and run. The result was the first Union loss. According to Sherman "it was one of the best planned battles but one of the worst fought".

Despite the defeat at the first Battle of Bull Run or Manassas, McDowell remained with the Army of the Potomac as Corps Commander. President Lincoln assigned him to the defense of Washington D.C.

General McDowell's life was one of redemption. He was held in high regards by both President Lincoln

and General Grant. He held several high commands after the war. Because of this exceptional administrative skills, General Grant assigned him to the Division of the Pacific until his retirement on October 15, 1882.

General McDowell had a fondness of landscape gardening and was one of the park commissioners in San Francisco who was in charge of construction of the beautiful Presidio Gardens and The Golden Gate Park. He would be very proud to know that this beautiful Sonoran Preserve was named after him.



BOOKS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED

(older books about the Civil War that I think might be worth your time)

By: Don Swanson
SCWRT Member

Make Me a Map of the Valley: The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson's Topographer

by Jedediah Hotchkiss; edited by Archie P. McDonald. 1973. Available in trade paperback for \$19.95.

Jedediah Hotchkiss, a native New Yorker who joined the Confederate Army, reported to Stonewall Jackson's headquarters on March 26th, 1862 where the general famously told him "I want you to make me a map of the Valley..." So began the author's storied career as "Stonewall's Mapmaker" – a career that would continue on after the general's death at Chancellorsville to Gettysburg, Early's raid on Washington and to Lynchburg where he learned of the surrender of Lee's Army. Hotchkiss's daily journal entries provide personal insight into his wartime contributions, perspectives on the war and observations of those commanders he served. *Recommended.*