

## ECHOES

April 1994

### Joshua Chamberlain

John Peterson of Gettysburg, Penn., an expert on the Civil War's battles at Gettysburg which became the turning point of the war, will be the speaker at the April 14 dinner meeting of the Civil War Round Table. His topic is: "Killer Angel: The Life and Civil War Times of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain."

The meeting will be earlier in the month than usual to take advantage of Peterson's visit to California. It will begin at 7 p.m. at the Remington restaurant on Clovis Avenue just south of Kings Canyon Avenue.

Reservations may be made by sending a check for \$13 for each meal to: Civil War Round Table, 8665 N. Cedar, No. 112, Fresno CA. 93720. Deadline for reservations is Tuesday, April 12. Those without reservations will not be guaranteed seating.

Killer Angel, refers to the award-winning novel, "Killer Angels," which was made into the instant classic movie, "Gettysburg," which was released last winter. Chamberlain, who commanded the Union forces on Little Round Top, the extreme left flank of the Union Armies, was a hero of Gettysburg for which he received

### Spencer Repeating Rifles

Roy Marcot of San Ramon, author of Civil War books, will be the speaker at the May 26 meeting of the Civil War Round Table at the Remington.

Marcot's topic will be "The Impact of the Spencer Repeating Rifles on the War's Outcome." One of his books is "The Spencer Repeating Rifle." Additional details will be in the next edition of this newsletter.



the Medal of Honor. He was prominently portrayed in both the novel and movie.

Peterson received a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in 1963. Following graduation he attended Navy Officers' Training School, was graduated and served aboard ship during the Dominican Republic crises and the Vietnam War.

During the last several years he has been a bookseller specializing in military history. Since 1989 he has managed the Farnsworth House book shop in Gettysburg. He has written for a number of national periodicals, including Harper's Magazine, the Los Angeles Times and the Blue and Gray Magazine.

During the past winter he wrote a foreword for a new reprint of Joshua Chamberlain's "The Passing of the Armies," which will be published in May. He recently spoke at the Long Beach Civil War Round Table.

## Draft Riots (Continued)

Earning a meager living became a struggle for survival. Vicious fights were common on the docks when Irish and Negroes vied for the jobs. Poor white laborers bitterly resented the fact that the Negroes were not even subject to the draft. This resentment was displayed in violence toward the Negroes.

As Sunday evening approached, agitated crowds gathered in the streets of the poorer neighborhoods. There was heavy drinking and the crowd was becoming mean with curses against the draft and the Negroes. Hundreds of angry men vowed to attack the draft offices the next morning when they opened.

Monday morning they made good that threat, setting off four days of escalating mob violence that terrorized the city. The mobs indulged in indiscriminate looting and destruction and also targeted their hostility toward the draft offices and other federal property. They attempted to seize the Second Avenue Armory but were stopped by a detachment of New York City Militia. As the mob increased in size, the militia was reinforced by regular troops. As night came fires lit up the sky.

That Monday evening, a detachment of veterans in the Invalid Corps, while attempting to resist the mob, were routed and scattered, The Colored Orphan Asylum was gutted and burned. The children were allowed to leave before the fires were set.

### Program tapes

Audio tapes of all C.W.R.T. luncheon and dinner programs since February 1993 are available to members. If you missed a program presentation, or just want to hear it again, contact Rick Kubiak at 251-1505. The tapes can be loaned for not more than 30 days.

The rioters attacked the offices of Republican newspapers and managed to burn out the ground floor of the New York Tribune while howling for Horace Greeley's blood. Many rioters hated Greeley, the sharp-penned editor of the Tribune.

He had condemned the Copperheads, describing them as traitors, and had written in support of the draft. Greeley was warned of the approaching mob and fled down the

## Fall Conference Speaker

Robert K. Krick, chief historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, will be the keynote speaker at the West Coast Civil War Conference to be held at the Tenaya Lodge at Fish Camp, three miles from the entrance to Yosemite National Park, next November 4-6.

The theme for the conference, which is sponsored by this Round Table, will be "Gettysburg." The conference will attract members from most of the Round Tables in California, Oregon and Washington. A panel of nationally known authors and experts on the Civil War will be a feature of the conference. Information regarding registration will be mailed in June.

Krick is the author of "Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain," which was a History Book Club Selection; winner of the 1990 Douglas Southall Freeman Award; winner of the 1990 Richard Barksdale Harwell Award and winner of 1990 ENP & MA Author's Award. Krick also is the author of "Lee's Colonels," "Parker's Virginia Battery," "The 30th Virginia Infantry," "The Fredericksburg Artillery," and "The 9th Virginia Cavalry." He co-authored "Gettysburg: The First Day," and "Gettysburg, The Second Day." He also was co-author of "Antietam: Essays on the 1862 Maryland Campaign," and "The Struggle for the Shenandoah: Essays on the 1864 Valley Campaign."

He appears regularly on television's A&E Channel "The Civil War Journal," and is a frequent speaker at Civil War conferences across America.

back stairs of the Tribune and hid in the restaurant of a nearby hotel until the rioters were dispersed.

Not so fortunate were many of the Negroes who were pursued by the mobs. Rioters beat anyone they could catch, regardless of age or gender. At least six Negroes were known to have been lynched. Others had their property smashed and their homes set ablaze. In panic, many fled to Brooklyn, Westchester and New Jersey.

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# New York City Draft Riots Stain Union War Efforts

By Rick Kubiak

It was exactly at 9 a.m. Saturday July 11, 1863 at the Draft Office for the 9th District of New York City. The Provost Marshal made a sign to his chief clerk to turn a crank that set a drum spinning. When the drum stopped, another clerk, who was blindfolded, reached into the drum and pulled out a slip of paper and read the name and address of a man from the 9th District who became the first person in the history of the United States to have been drafted into the Army.

The National Conscription Act had been signed on March 3, 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln. It was a desperate measure deemed necessary because of the critical need for additional manpower. Originally, volunteers signed up for three months or nine months or some other such short term. When their enlistments expired, many went home. Many others had deserted, been killed in battle or died from disease.

By the beginning of 1863 war weariness and the grim realities of army life discouraged further volunteering. The men most likely to enlist for patriotic reasons or for the adventure, were already in the Army. The Enrollment Act of 1863 was designed as a device to stimulate volunteering by the use of the threat of being drafted. As a threat it worked, but with a good deal of inefficiency,

corruption, and what was viewed as injustice. It consequently became one of the Union's most disruptive issues of the Civil War.

That hot Saturday morning several hundred names were drawn and announced without any special incident. Saturday noon the Provost Marshal closed the drawing for the day. This peaceful beginning had been a relief to those who knew of recent warnings that if the draft was enforced there would be violence. On Sunday, the newspapers published the names of the men drafted into the

Army and thousands of men faced the fear that their names would be called next.

Many of these men were Irish immigrants who had fled to the United States during the potato famine of

the 1850's. A great number of them lived in unrelieved misery in squalid tenements or disease-infected shanties and worked in low-paying jobs as longshoremen and dock workers.

Miserable as many were, it seemed better than "marching off to war and getting their heads blown off in combat." They called it "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." This sentiment developed from a special clause in the Conscription Act which permitted exemption from service for any man who paid \$300 to the Provost Marshal or provide a substitute at the time he was called for military service.

The \$300 for the exemption or the price of hiring a substitute was no hardship to a wealthy man but was a considerable fortune to the average working man who was paid \$1.50 for a nine-hour working day.

Competing with the Irish immigrants for those \$1.50 a day jobs were free Negroes. Southern sympathizers called Copperheads (named by loyal Unionists after the deadly snake) were very active in New York City telling the Irish that this was a war "to free the niggers," and describing the city swarming with freed slaves who would glut the labor market and take jobs from the Irish.

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## Dues reminder

**Annual dues, which include the monthly newsletter, are \$25 of which \$5 goes to battle-field preservation. Newsletter subscriptions are \$10. Checks should be made out to C.W.R.T. and mailed to Tim Johnson, 8665 N. Cedar Ave. #112, Fresno, CA. 93720.**

**The San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table meets monthly, usually on the last Thursday or Friday of the month. Officers are:**

**Charles Jorgensen, President**

**John Taylor, Vice President**

**Tim Johnson, Treasurer**

**Verne Cole, Secretary & Newsletter Editor**

**Rick Kubiak, Historian & Contributing Editor**

**Other board members are Ed Ackley, Wayne Bowen, Jeff Ennis, Bill Head, Barbara Moats and Walter Rodgers.**

## Draft Riots (Continued)

Negro boarding houses were burned down. Tenements were gutted by men who brought carts to carry off the furniture. The New York Herald estimated that on Tuesday, the second day of the riots, 150 Negroes had been killed or badly beaten. Rioters also looted the homes of several prominent Republicans and abolitionists, while shouting "Down with the Rich!" Well-dressed men were attacked on the streets and many prosperous whites joined the Negroes in the exodus.

Tuesday, many shops closed and business came to a standstill. The mobs came against bands of troops and police attempting to patrol the streets, but neither were trained in mob control and had only limited success. The War Department sent several regiments of seasoned veterans from Pennsylvania who had been recuperating from the bloody battle of Gettysburg and finally law and order was restored.

On July 15 and 16 (Wednesday and Thursday), soldiers fired artillery shells and Minie balls into the mass of rioters. By July 17 an uneasy peace had returned to the city. Secretary of War Edward Stanton sent a total of 20,000 troops to New York City to enforce the calm. The draft, temporarily suspended, was resumed on Au-

gust 19, 1863. In less than four days 105 persons were known to have been killed and more than a million dollars worth of property had been destroyed.

Allan Nevins, in his book "The War For the Union: The Organized War 1863-1864," summed up the effects by saying: "New York bore on its shield the stain of the ugliest turbulence that ever disgraced the republic. It was another evidence of the growing fury of the age of hate, of the power of anger, violence and blood-lust . . . to seize upon and degrade a people."

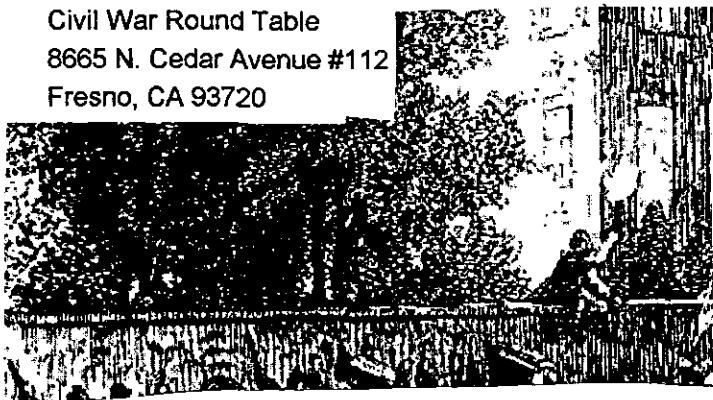
Sources used: "July 1863: The Incredible Story of the Bloody New York City Draft Riots," by Irving Werstein; "The American Conflict, 1862-1865, Volume II," by Horace Greeley; "The War For The Union: The Organized War 1863-1864," by Allan Nevins; "Battle Cry of Freedom, The Civil War Era," by James M. McPherson. Sketch below from Time-Life series on the Civil War, copied from the Museum of the City of New York

### Classified Ads

(For members only, and only for books and Civil War mementos).

For Sale: "Bold Dragoon --- The Life of J.E.B. Stuart," by Emory Thomas, 1988 hardcover reprint, \$20. Also "J.E.B. Stuart: The Last Cavalier," by Burke Davis, 1988 hardcover reprint, \$20. Phone 251-1505, ask for Rick.

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