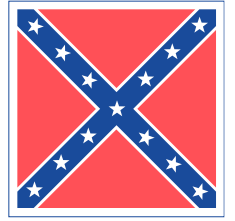


# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



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## Steve Quick on *The CSS Hunley*



On Feb. 17, 1864, the Confederate submarine the *H. L. Hunley* became the first submarine to sink a warship when it attacked the USS *Housatonic* in Charleston Harbor, creating an explosion that sank the *Housatonic* and killed five of its crew members, but that also resulted in the *Hunley* and its crew of eight sinking, too. Though the search for the *Hunley* began in 1864, it was not until May 3, 1995 that it was found by a group of divers hired by best-selling author Clive Cussler. The submarine is now on display in Charleston. The legend of the *Hunley* has sparked a movie and countless books.

Often drawing on stories and struggles from his own family, some dating back to Jamestown in the 1630s, Steve Quick has developed and presented the American narrative for over 20 years. From our pre-revolutionary roots through the flag raising on Iwo Jima, Steve has created close to a dozen engaging historical programs tailor-made for schools, libraries, museums, and historical events. Credits include the Chicago Historical Society, the Kenosha Civil War Museum, a PBS interview on Camp Douglas, Naper Settlement, and dozens of schools, libraries, reenactments and other events. Born in Durham N.C. just miles from where Johnston surrendered to Sherman, he now lives in northern Illinois and is currently working on a Civil War novel about his Confederate namesake who surrendered with Lees' army at Appomattox.



### 754th REGULAR MEETING

★★★★★

Friday, September 9th

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN O'HARE

5615 N. CUMBERLAND, CHICAGO

*Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.*

*Dinner at 6:30 p.m.*

**\$50 - Members/Non-members**

**ENTRÉE**

**FLANK STEAK OR TILAPIA**

## CIVIL WAR TRUST-BATTLEFIELD RESTORATION AT LEE'S HEADQUARTERS

From July *Civil War News*

The Civil War Trust moves forward with its restoration of a key portion of the Gettysburg Battlefield known as General Lee's headquarters.

For decades, the site of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's headquarters at Gettysburg was a sort of lost attraction, outside the boundary of Gettysburg National Military Park and surrounded by hotels and restaurants. Yet the one-and-a-half story Mary Thompson house and the 4-acre surrounding plot was central to the three-day battle in July 1863. With the help of thousands of members and supporters, the Civil War Trust acquired the site in 2014 with the intent to restore the property to its wartime appearance and craft a new interpretive experience. Nearly two years later, the Lee's Headquarters site looks more like 1863 than it has in a century. ...

As Union troops retreated from McPherson Ridge to the west, they formed a new defensive line on Seminary Ridge. ...The position around Mary Thompson's house was the last to fall before a general Union retreat through the town to high ground on Cemetery Hill.

Even as the fighting raged, General Lee's staff selected the Thompson house as the Confederate chieftain's command post. Soon Lee's sprawling headquarters complex dominated the ground around the stone house. Confederate guns also unlimbered just east of the house, taking advantage of its height and central location.

Throughout the rest of the battle the Thompson house and the tents around it served as the headquarters of the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee is known to have used the house and the grounds around it to direct Confederate

efforts during the battle. All of the early maps denote the Thompson house as General Lee's Headquarters.

Mary Thompson's own role throughout the battle is also noteworthy. Although she sympathized with the Union, she responded to the crisis unfolding literally all around her by offering her home as a hospital to wounded Union and Confederate soldiers after the fighting of July 1. Using her clothes and bedding as bandages, she cared for the wounded and wrapped the dead in her carpets. Her own sacrifice may have saved many men from needless death. ...

The home has a varied post-war history. A fire consumed its contents in 1896, but the stone structure was undamaged. In 1907, its proprietor, Emma Feister, was arrested for running a "bawdy house." Later stories claimed the house was not the site of Lee's Headquarters at all, and a marker still stands across the Lincoln Highway claiming that distinction. Tourism associated with the battle made it a popular visitor attraction. The house became the General Lee's Headquarters Museum in 1921, with cottages and a hotel later built on the adjoining property.

In July 2014, the Civil War Trust publicly announced an ambitious fundraising campaign to acquire the site for \$ 5.5 million, and the Trust's members and supporters from coast to coast responded with generosity and enthusiasm. Their donations were matched with financial support from the American Battlefield Protection Program, corporate donors such as FedEx, and other leadership gifts including a commitment to cover the cost of the property's restoration made by John and Bobbie Nau of Houston,

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The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or editor@chicagocwrt.org.



Texas. With the home and surrounding grounds under the stewardship of the Civil War Trust, the site and house will be faithfully restored to their wartime appearance. Partnerships with the National Park Service, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Gettysburg Foundation and local officials will help guide the restoration process.

As of spring 2016, the Trust has secured permits and completed asbestos abatement. All of the modern structures adjacent to the property have been removed, including a restaurant, the 1960s-era hotel and its swimming pool, and a putting green. Restoration has begun on the Thompson house itself. ...

By the fall of 2016 the Civil War Trust aims to complete and open to the public a new interpretive loop trail that will tell the story of the battle, the role of the property as Lee's Headquarters, and the fascinating postwar history of the site. The restoration of the house, apple orchard, period fencing, and original landscape grade will add a serenity that belies the ferocity of the battle and the momentous decisions made during the Civil War's bloodiest battle.

For updates on the Lee's Headquarters restoration project, visit [Civilwar.org/LeesHQ](http://Civilwar.org/LeesHQ).

## JUNE MEETING

By Mark Matranga

Dale Phillips returned to the role of New Orleans in the Civil War on June 10, 2016, when he presented *Ben Butler and the Federal Occupation of New Orleans* to the 753rd Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table. A controversial character throughout the war, Butler began his political career as a staunch Democrat but changed parties and became a radical abolitionist Republican once hostilities began. This may have been responsible for his being promoted to Major General and being assigned to lead union forces in the attack on New Orleans in April 1862.

New Orleans was the South's largest city, with a wealth of cotton passing through its port. In addition, it was a major banking and manufacturing center vital to the Confederacy. The Lincoln administration deemed it necessary to take New Orleans as early as possible in the war. Southern strategy was misguided: many of Louisiana's soldiers were serving elsewhere, and the city's defenses were oriented upriver, the prevailing wisdom being that New Orleans was safe from attack by sea. Thus the attack on Forts Jackson and St. Phillip by the union fleet under Admiral Farragut on April 24, 1862, easily bypassed the forts and left the city defenseless. New Orleans surrendered on April 29th, but Butler's troops had to trek through swamps to finally overcome the forts.

Upon taking command in New Orleans on May 1, 1862, Butler commenced what the locals considered a harsh rule. He ordered a recalcitrant Mayor Monroe to disperse a mob in Jackson Square, threatening to open fire with artillery. He ordered all

local newspapers to publish the order of occupation; one that refused was intimidated by Butler into complying. And with the Confiscation Act, he seized cotton and raided foreign consulates for alleged contraband. Within weeks he imposed martial law.

Butler's most notorious act was Order 28, his reaction to the ladies of New Orleans who repeatedly insulted and assaulted northern troops. Under this order, any female showing contempt for union soldiers of all ranks would be considered "a woman of the town plying her avocation." This infuriated an already hostile populace whose mayor called the order a "reproach to civilization"; Governor Moore called Butler a "panderer to lust and desecrator of virtue." The policy provoked negative reactions in European capitols and produced outrage North and South, but it worked.

Mary Chesnut termed Butler a "hideous cross-eyed beast," a sobriquet which stuck. Alternatively, he was known as "Spoons Butler" for his apparent habit of confiscating the locals' personal property. Phillips recounted the 'ballast' valued in the millions of dollars which docked in Boston harbor during Butler's tenure.

But, Phillips submits, no civil war general was given a more difficult task, military or civilian. When he entered New Orleans, the city was in shambles, its docks in flames. Southerners thought Butler would have to abandon the city in summer when yellow fever struck. Butler introduced public health measures, designed systems for bringing food into the city, and arranged for steamers to bring in

supplies, thus virtually eliminating disease and avoiding widespread starvation. Unfortunately, he also issued permits allowing the seizure of supplies which allowed favored individuals, including his brother, to amass huge profits. On the military side, Butler was a failure. After the fleet's initial foray up to a relatively unprotected Vicksburg, he withdrew into the defenses of New Orleans.

Tainted by corruption and vilified by his provocative acts and attacks on the consulates, Butler was removed by Lincoln in December 1862. Phillips is no apologist, but cautions us to consider how Butler conceived of his role in dealing with a people "captured but not surrendered, conquered but not orderly." On his terms - "The union must and shall be preserved" - Butler likely considered himself a success.



On September 10, the Ninth Annual Great Lakes Civil War Forum will be held at the **Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI**. Heroes Tried and True: The Iron Brigade is the theme of the forum.

Speakers include Tom Clemens on Black Hat Memories of Antietam; Eric Mink on Molding a Legend: The Iron Brigade and the 1862 Occupation of Fredericksburg; Lance Herdegen on Four Long Hours: The Iron Brigade and the Gettysburg Campaign; and James Hibbard on Iron Brigade Chaplain: The Story of Samuel and Catharine Eaton. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., first lecture at 9:30 a.m.; \$60/\$50 Friends of the Museum, includes lunch.

## GRAPESHOT



As part of its 2nd Friday lecture series, the **Civil War Museum of Kenosha** will have Brian Kangas speaking on "Slavery, Secession, and the Voyage of the Lady Elgin." The event is free and open to the public, Sept. 9th, noon. On the evenings of Sept. 21st and 28th, Dan Nettesheim will speak on "The Evolution of Grants Leadership." This event is \$25 (\$20 for museum members).

**Rob Girardi** will be speaking Oct. 3rd at Harper College on "The Memory of the Civil War in Chicago"

On Sept. 10th **Leslie Goddard** will present "Clara Barton" at the Oswego Public Library.

The **Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference**, Aug. 31-Sept. 3 in Springfield, will feature several presentations on finding your ancestor's Civil War records. Visit <http://fgsconference.org> for more.

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at [editor@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:editor@chicagocwrt.org) or (630) 297-8046.

### PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservations by Sunday, September 4, by emailing [dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org), or calling 630 460-1865 with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please email us at [dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org) and/or call us at 630-460-1865.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:15 p.m., for a charge of \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is FREE.

### More Upcoming Civil War Events

Sept. 2nd, Northern Illinois CWRT:

Lance Herdegen on "The Iron Brigade"

Sept. 7th, Kankakee Valley CWRT:

Mike Cornwell on "Genealogy and the Civil War"

Sept. 8th, Milwaukee CWRT: David

Eicher on "Tales of the Civil War High Commands"

Sept. 13th, McHenry County CWRT:

Frank Crawford on "Jennie Hodges"

Sept. 16th, Salt Creek CWRT: Jerry

Allen on "Black Hawk War Veterans in the Civil War"

Sept. 20th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Ed

Bonekemper on "Civil War Myths"

Sept. 22nd, South Suburban CWRT:

Jim Heinz on "The Life of Alonzo Cushing"

### Bulletin Board



### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn O'Hare, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated.*

Oct. 14th: Lance Herdegen, Nevins-Freeman Address

Nov. 11th: Dave Connon on "Iowa Copperheads"

Dec. 9th: Bjorn Skaptasan on "Ambrose Bierce at Shiloh"

Jan. 13th, 2017: Richard Sommers on "Lessons in Leadership in the Petersburg Campaign"

Feb. 10th: Bob O'Neil on "Cavalry During the Peninsula Campaign"

Mar. 10th: Paul Kahan on "Simon Cameron, Lincoln's First Secretary of War"

Apr. 14th: Diane Smith on "Command Conflict in the Overland Campaign"

May 12th: Connie Hansen presents a "First Person Portrayal of Jennie Wade's mother"

June 9th: Don Sender on "Custer and the Little Big Horn Campaign"

### Abraham Lincoln Bookshop Has Moved!

Their new address is 824 W. Superior St., Suite 100, Chicago. They expect to be open to the public shortly after Labor Day. Look for announcements on their web page.