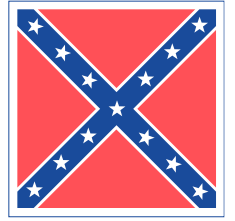


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



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Paul Kahan on "The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant"



In The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant, Professor Paul Kahan tackles a presidency vilified as one of the all-time worst, and shows its circumstances, accomplishments, and failures equally and fairly. Unlike most (all?) political leaders, Grant was less than obsessed with becoming president, announcing to his wife the day after the election, he was afraid he'd won. He did it because of all the suffering of the Civil War. He did not want to let the wartime accomplishments slide away.

Either way, Grant "failed."

President Grant seemed to have had no vision beyond saving his accomplishments in the Civil War. He personally was honest, straightforward, plain spoken and untainted. But the events of his era swept him into the dustbin of history, unjustifiably according to historian Kahan. He says the critics were unfair, and the many accomplishments minimized. (h/t review at medium.com)

Paul Kahan is a lecturer at Ohlone College in Fremont, California. Dr. Kahan earned a Ph.D. in U.S. history from Temple University, an M.A. in Modern

The Grant Administration was buffeted by three storms: Reconstruction, Economic Depression, and internal corruption. Grant seemed not to be up to dealing with all three at once.



For the time, President Grant was considered quite active in enforcing civil rights laws. Until recently, the thought was Reconstruction of the south was a mistake altogether, that America should have left things alone to evolve for themselves. Nowadays, the thinking is Grant didn't go far enough with strong laws and harsh enforcement that would have dealt racial discrimination a harder blow.

American History & Literature from Drew University and B.A.s in history and English (with minors in medieval/ Renaissance studies and music) from Alfred University. His 2016 book, Amiable Scoundrel: Simon Cameron, Lincoln's Scandalous Secretary of War, was praised as "Essential for any Civil War historian's library. Kahan talked to our Round Table in March 2017 on Cameron. His most recent book, on U.S. Grant's presidency, is the subject of this presentation.



776th REGULAR MEETING

★★★★★

Friday, November 9th

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN O'HARE

5615 N. CUMBERLAND, CHICAGO

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$40 - Members/Non-members

**ENTRÉE
BUFFET STYLE.**

PRESERVATION NEWS

American Battlefield Trust Honors Legislator

(Franklin, Tennessee) — Charles Sargent, a veteran leader of the Tennessee House of Representatives, will receive the American Battlefield Trust's State Leadership Award for his enduring contributions to battlefield preservation during more than two decades of service as a state legislator.

The honor from the Trust was announced Saturday during the national nonprofit group's autumn Grand Review event for its members in Franklin, Tennessee, which Sargent has long represented in the statehouse.

O. James Lighthizer, president of the Trust, which is dedicated to preserving America's battlefields and educating the public about their unique role in our nation's history, told attendees that the Trust would present the leadership award to Sargent.

"The Trust is pleased to present Representative Sargent with this award in grateful recognition of his leadership in helping to create the Tennessee Civil War or War Between the States Site Preservation Fund, the first program of its kind in the nation to guarantee money for Civil War site preservation each year," Lighthizer said.

"You couldn't ask for a better champion of historic preservation all across the Volunteer State than Charles Sargent, especially in the Franklin community," he said. "To cite just one example of many, he helped the Franklin battlefield's historic Carter House get state funding for a new visitor center."

On Nov. 30, 1864, the town of Franklin witnessed some of the heaviest fighting of the entire Civil War, with a

Confederate assault that was deadlier than Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. The bloody assault cost the Southern army nearly 7,000 casualties, including the loss of six Confederate generals — more than were killed in any other battle of the four-year-long war.

As chairman of the state's House Finance, Ways and Means Committee and a member of other key committees, Sargent was vital to the founding of Tennessee's Civil War preservation fund in 2013 as well as to securing subsequent enhancements to the program. The first fund in the nation to set aside dedicated monies to save Civil War land each year, it was inspired by the highly effective Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund.

Sargent worked closely with Deputy House Speaker Steve McDaniel, another preservation-minded lawmaker, in developing the fund. Both men will be retiring at year's end after decades spent serving together in the General Assembly.

Sargent began his legislative career in Franklin in 1996, in the state's 61st District. A native of New York, he has made the South his home for 40 years. Upon moving to Williamson County, he became interested in politics through activism in his neighborhood homeowners association.

"We congratulate Chairman Sargent on more than 20 years of faithful service to the people of Tennessee and working with colleagues across the political spectrum to ensure a deservedly long and lasting legacy," Lighthizer said. "We know that he will continue to be a great advocate for historic preservation and the other causes he holds dear."

The American Battlefield Trust is

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1039 Hinswood
Darien, Illinois 60561
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www.chicagocwrt.org

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.

dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 50,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War, including 3,500 acres in Tennessee. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

Lincoln Presenter Kevin Wood

... will present the following programs this month:

Thurs., 11/01, 6:30 pm: Prairie Trails Public Library (Burbank), "From Obscurity to Greatness: Illinois and Lincoln, 1830 to 1861"

Thurs., 11/08, 7:00 pm: Prospect Heights Public Library, "Lincoln and Thanksgiving"

Sat., 11/10, 1:00 pm: Three Rivers Public Library (Minooka), "Lincoln and Thanksgiving"

Wed., 11/21, 11:00 am: Wheaton Public Library, "Lincoln and Thanksgiving"

Tues., 11/27, 7:00 pm: La Grange Public Library, "From Obscurity to Greatness: Illinois and Lincoln, 1830 to 1861"

OCTOBER MEETING

By Mark Matranga

Ted Karamanski addressed The Civil War Round Table at its 775th Regular Meeting on October 12, 2018, on “The Civil War as an Indian War.” Karamanski pointed out that there was, in fact, an Indian War within the Civil War, prominent examples being the Dakota War, Cherokee participation in the Battle of Pea Ridge, the Sand Creek massacre, and the lesser known but no less horrific ‘Long Walk’ of the Navajo.

But these examples, while significant, do not describe how the Civil War became an ‘Indian’ war. Karamanski asks how the Civil War was transformed from a conflict between ‘erring sisters’ into a ‘hard war’ of scorched earth. The Lincoln administration’s early policy was designed to preserve the union by keeping the border states in the union and allowing unionist sentiment in the south to prevail. But as defeats mounted and soldiers from northern armies came in contact with the slave system, this approach lost favor; soldiers from the Old Northwest became hardened against the south and slavery.

Karamanski posits that Sheridan’s dictum that the maximum punishment in war is not death “but rather reduction to poverty,” derives from the ‘American Way of War’ learned during the conquest of America. Americans learned a way of warfare during some 40 conflicts with native Americans as their antagonists modified theirs: with a virtual monopoly on firearms, Europeans forced the natives to develop a ‘skulking’ way of war, scattering in order to defuse their

opponents’ advantage. To counter this, Americans attacked and destroyed native villages, depriving them of lands and food sources.

The American strategy was evident early, during the 1637 Pequot War, and the destruction of Cherokee towns at the outset of the Revolution. Most notably, the Iroquois suffered total destruction and devastation of their villages during Sullivan’s campaign in 1778, which Sherman cited as inspiration for the March to the Sea. During Wayne’s 1794 campaign which culminated at Fallen Timbers, the Americans struck at the huge cornfields that supported the coalition of northwest tribes that heretofore had met with success against American forces. Attacking the economic base of the enemy in order to destroy the will to fight had become part of the American way of war.

Another approach the colonists took was to enlist the enemies of those tribes they set out to defeat. During the Pequot War, the colonists enlisted Narragansett and Mohegan enemies to aid them in a virtual massacre of a Pequot village. Karamanski provided other examples of this divide and conquer strategy: King Phillip’s War, Pontiac’s Uprising, and the Battle of the Thames where more Shawnee warriors fought with the Americans than with Tecumseh.

Karamanski argues that these concepts permeated the Civil War. Approximately 450,000 men from seceded and border states served in the union army. Just as natives were characterized as savages so

were southerners, the northern press citing atrocities committed by southern soldiers and bushwhackers. And Sherman’s pre-war experience taught him that destroying an enemy’s ability to live off the land was effective. Thus he determined after the capture of Atlanta to destroy the south’s capacity to wage war and to subject the southern population to the ‘hard hand of war. In the post-war period, this idea held fast in Custer’s campaigns. General Sheridan espoused the view that “all segments of society will experience war, not just warriors.”

Hard war is not total war, Karamanski cautioned. And although he does not consider hard war to have originated in medieval warfare, he acknowledges that armies in that era wasted the land so as to deprive an enemy of its use. Rather, the wars of America have their ethos in the ‘Settler Colonial State’ whose goal was to erase the memory of those who may have had a higher claim to the land. How that idea impacts on the causes of the Civil War may be debatable, but unquestionably Karamanski provided an incisive view of how Americans fought to establish hegemony on the continent and how ultimately union armies reduced the southern confederacy.



SAVE THE DATE!

The 2019 Battlefield Tour of Vicksburg will be May 2-5, 2019. Ed Bearss and Terry Winschel will be our guides—and you can’t get better than those two! More information will be forthcoming.

GRAPESHOT



Bruce Allardice will present “Obnoxious to a Free People:’ Conscription and the Civil War” Nov. 14th at the Hamilton County (IN) CWRT.

On Nov. 28th, **Mary Abroe** will facilitate a discussion of James Oakes’ The Radical and the Republican at the Wilmette Public Library.

Leslie Goddard will present “Louisa May Alcott” Nov. 14th at the Palatine Public Library. She will present “Clara Barton” Nov. 13 at the Ela Township Community Center. For more information, visit her website at www.lesliegoddard.info.

The next “Friday Lunch Box” event at the **Kenosha Civil War Museum** will be at noon on Nov. 9th, with **Mary Abroe** presenting “Written on the Battlefield: Veterans Preserve Their Civil War, 1861-1900.” For more on programs at the museum, visit <https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/events/>

At Union Ridge Cemetery on Nov. 10th, and Rosehill Cemetery on Nov. 11th, the Sons of Union Veterans will co-sponsor ceremonies honoring our nation’s veterans.

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 or (630) 297-8046.

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservations by Sunday, Nov 4, by emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, or calling 630 460-1865 with the names of your party.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please email us at 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

Nov. 2nd, Northern Illinois CWRT:

Jerry Allen on “Wisconsin’s Secession”

Nov. 7th, Kankakee Valley CWRT:

Gary Wright and Don Chamberlain on “The Gettysburg Address”

Nov. 8th, Milwaukee CWRT: Paul

Kahan on “The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant: Preserving the Civil War’s Legacy”

Nov. 13th, McHenry County CWRT:

Gloria Swift on “Fort Pulaski”

Nov. 13th, Southwest Michigan

CWRT: Scott Adrian on “Cannon Fodder to Cannon Masters: The 6th Michigan Volunteer Infantry”

Nov. 15th, South Suburban CWRT:

Father Bob Miller on “The Faith of Our Fathers: Catholic Civil War Chaplains”

Nov. 20th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Jody

Giesburg on “Sex in the Civil War”

Nov. 28th, Starved Rock CWRT in

Ottawa: Dave Mathis on “Joshua Chamberlain”

Bulletin Board



FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Dec. 14th: David Hirsch and Dan Van Haften on “Abraham Lincoln and the Structure of Reason”

Jan. 11th, 2019: Bjorn Skaptasan on “Henry Morton Stanley at Shiloh”

Feb. 8th: Rob Girardi on “Gouverneur K. Warren’s Last Battle”

Mar. 8th: Horace Mewborn on “Col. Elijah White”

Apr. 12th: Brad Gottfried on “Maps of the Fredericksburg Campaign”

May 10th: John Horn on “The Petersburg Regiment: the 12th Virginia”

June 14th: Greg Biggs, “The Nevins-Freeman Address: Logistics of the Atlanta Campaign”

AUTHOR’S VOICE

Join us online on October 30th at 12:30 pm (Central) when we welcome Doris Kearns Goodwin to A House Divided. Daniel Weinberg, owner and president of Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, Inc. will talk with her about her latest book. Leadership in Turbulent Times. Visit <http://alincolinbookshop.com/> for more information on upcoming events.