



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXXII, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April 2023

817th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, April 14th, 2023

Richard Holloway on

"Arrested, Promoted and Transferred: Richard Taylor's End to the Red River Campaign"

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Apr. 14th, 2023, 07:30 PM CST.
Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed**



The Chicago CWRT's 2023 annual Battlefield Tour will visit the Red River Campaign, the first time our CWRT has toured the area.

As the American Battlefield Trust says of this campaign:

"At the time of the Red River Campaign in April 1864, the outcome of the Civil War appeared to be decided. The agricultural South had fought long and hard against the industrial North, but the zeal and military prowess of the Confederates was not enough to prevail against the

vast resources of the North. The Red River Campaign, which included the largest combined army-navy operation of the war, was the last decisive Confederate victory of the war. ... One of the North's leading generals was so incensed with the errors of his fellow officers that he called it, "one damn blunder from beginning to end."

Our April presenter, Richard H. Holloway, is currently the director of the Forts Randolph and Buhlow State Historic Site in Pineville, LA. He also serves on the Editorial Advisory

Board of *America's Civil War* magazine and has been president of the Civil War Round Table of Central Louisiana since 2008.

Richard has written essays on Richard Taylor, Hamilton P. Bee and William Robertson Boggs for University of Tennessee Press' *Confederate Generals of the Trans-Mississippi* Volume 3, edited by Lawrence Hewitt and Thomas Schott. He also published an essay on Louisiana troops during the Siege of Jackson, Mississippi for the University of Southern Illinois Press' *Vicksburg Besieged* and another essay on a *Command Comparison between General Grant and General Tilghman at Fort Henry, TN*, for the Forts Henry and Donelson volume, both edited by Steven Woodworth and Charles Grear. He recently completed an essay on the *Revitalization of the Confederate Army of Tennessee at Dalton, Ga.* for an Atlanta Campaign book edited by Stephen Davis for Savas Beatie Publishing. He has published dozens of articles for *America's Civil War* and *Civil War Times*.

Battlefield Preservation

“Today I want to tell you about the ultimate fate, the full-circle moment for a 29-acre property at White Oak Road that we bought in 2001. I was only in my third year with the Trust, and the organization looked much different than it does now: smaller staff, fewer members and a much smaller preservation footprint in terms of acres, sites and states. When we first bought that land, we couldn't have transferred it to the National Park Service. But with patience and an act of Congress expanding the authorized boundary beyond the siege to include the broader campaign, it is now – 22 years later! – a part of Petersburg National Battlefield. All told, in the last few months, we've seen four properties totaling 44 acres integrated into three different national parks.

Strategic Advance – White Oak Road. On March 31, 1865, in combination with Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan's cavalry thrust via Dinwiddie Court House, Maj. Gen. Gouverneur Warren directed his V Corps against Confederate entrenchments along White Oak Road, hoping to cut General Robert E. Lee's communications with his men at Five Forks.

The 29 acres now owned by the National Park Service are crucial to understanding and interpreting the initial phases of the battle where severe fighting occurred and three undersized Confederate brigades managed to turn the Federal left flank and drive two Union divisions from the field in what historian A. Wilson Green calls “a remarkable tactical achievement.” When the Union's counterattack succeeded, Confederate forces retreated across this very land.

In their push forward, the Union troops had gained possession of White Oak Road west of the Confederate entrenchments and successfully cut off Lee's ability to later support Maj. Gen. George Pickett and Maj. Gen. W.H. Fitzhugh Lee at Five Forks, setting the stage for a Union victory there on April 1.

Securing Shiloh. Two victories in Shiloh, Tenn., total nearly 8 acres transferred to the National Park service in October. They include a 1.88-acre tract that played a role on the first day of the Battle of Shiloh, when Mississippi Regiments from Brig. Gen. James Chalmers' brigade advanced over this tract to engage elements of Col. David Stuart's brigade of Brig. Gen. William T. Sherman's division. The federals managed to hold on against the Confederate onslaught for about 90 minutes before they withdrew.

The larger, 5.81-acre property is in the rear area where the initial Union camp was established at Pittsburg Landing prior to the battle. On the night of April 6, 1862, exhausted Union soldiers took refuge here behind Union Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Last Line, even as they general pledged he would "Lick 'em tomorrow though."

A Stones Throw. Also now part of a national park is a little over 6 acres associated with fighting on the final day of the Battle of Stones River January 2, 1863. As a Confederate attack pushed toward the ford, they came within range of 57 Union cannon massed on the west side of the Stones River. General George Crittenden watched as his guns went to work, later reporting: "[Brig. Gen. Horatio] Van Cleve's Division of my command was retiring down the opposite slope, before overwhelming numbers of the enemy, when the guns...opened upon the swarming enemy. The very forest seemed to fall...and not a Confederate reached the river."

Stones River National Battlefield can be viewed as an island surrounded by sprawl, making each acquisition there, and each addition to the park, precious. We're especially pleased because the Trust protected an adjacent 42-acre tract that will also help ensure the preservation of this section of the battlefield.

I am so grateful for the supporters who make this work possible. So many of you are with us for the "long haul" -- even if it takes us two decades for a preservation story to reach its conclusion! And we do have plenty more work ahead of us: right now, we're seeking to save 343 acres spread across the crucial battlefields at Chickamauga, Brice's Cross Roads, Wyse Fork, Bentonville, and Shiloh. Learn more about the exceptional matching funds that will help us tell the full story of the Civil War on the land where it unfolded.

Til the Battle, etc.

March Meeting

By Mark Matranga

Dwight S. Hughes presented a fresh take on a familiar story to The Civil War Round Table at its 816th Regular Meeting on March 10, 2023, “*Unlike Anything That Ever Floated,*” the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* and the Battle of Hampton Roads, March 8-9, 1862. While all may be familiar with the encounter between the two ironclads, Hughes provided details on the construction and armaments of both vessels as well as providing interesting vignettes on the principal actors in the historic drama on the waters off Fortress Monroe.

As Hughes pointed out, the *Monitor* is not only half of a classic naval battle but a cultural icon of the American Industrial Revolution. Product of an Ironclad Board determined to strengthen the blockade and retake southern harbors, *Monitor* was small (179 by 41.5 feet, crew of 50), with a limited target area. Coined ‘a cheesebox on a raft,’ its low profile rendered it unseaworthy, but a turret that rotated 360 degrees made it formidable in battle conditions; a shallow draft made it maneuverable in waters other ships dared not enter.

Monitor’s innovative design was the brainchild of John Ericsson, an engineer who completed the project in 101 days. *Monitor* was launched at the Brooklyn Naval Yard on January 30 and commissioned on February 25, 1862. She did not leave New York harbor until March 6, 1862, when, under tow, her paymaster William F. Keeler wrote his wife, “We have just parted with our pilot & may consider ourselves at sea.”

Her destination was Hampton Roads where the converted frigate *USS Merrimack*, scuttled when the US Navy evacuated Portsmouth Navy Yard, awaited. Work began July 11, 1861, under the direction of Lt. John L. Porter. The ship was commissioned albeit not completed on February 17, 1862, and sallied forth under the command of Flag Officer Franklin Buchanan into the roads on March 8 with workmen still aboard, her object the blockading fleet. *Virginia* first attacked the *USS Cumberland* which sank after a massive cannonade and being rammed; the confederate then destroyed the *USS Congress* which soon was ablaze and then exploded. The *USS Minnesota* ran aground and was out of the battle by nightfall.

Reports of this engagement reached Washington immediately. John Hay reported that the next day's emergency cabinet meeting was "perhaps the most excited and impressive of the whole war." The administration was consumed with fear that the entire fleet would be destroyed, and that northern cities would soon be bombarded. The group had little confidence in their two-gun vessel. But the *Monitor*, Lt. John L. Worden in command, was already engaged as the conference was taking place.

Upon renewing hostilities on March 9, *Virginia* sailed toward the *Minnesota*, unaware that *Monitor* lay hidden behind the stranded ship. To the astonishment of *Minnesota's* captain, *Monitor* made straight for the 'monster' *Virginia* (263 feet by 51 feet, 2 inches; 14 guns and a crew of 250), commencing a fight that lasted over three hours. As the rebel's broadsides began to strike the *Monitor*, Lt. Worden became concerned that direct hits could affect the structural integrity of the turret and destroy its ability to rotate. The concussive force and smoke made conditions virtually impossible inside; sailors improvised by rotating the turret in order to deny *Virginia's* gunners the opportunity to shoot into *Monitor's* open gun ports during reloading.

As the battle progressed, *Virginia* attempted to ram the *Monitor* but was herself damaged. However, a shell which struck *Monitor's* pilothouse blinded Lt. Worden and compelled her to move to shallow water under the command of Executive Officer Lt. Greene. *Virginia*, now commanded by Lt. Jones after Buchanan's wounding, with her ram and other structures damaged and facing a falling tide, retreated.

Thus ended the world's first battle between ironclads. Hughes provided information on design, engineering, and ordnance that warrant separate essays on each. But this is not what brings us to the Battle of the Ironclads. Rather, it is the human drama best expressed by Lt. Greene, who after the battle wrote, "I had been up so long...that my nervous system was completely run down.... Every bone in my body ached.... My nerves and muscles twitched....I thought my brain would come right out over my eye brows. I lay down and tried to sleep – I might as well have tried to fly."



BULLETIN BOARD

Our in-person meetings are currently held at:

Holiday Inn Oak Brook

17W 350 22nd St., Oakbrook Terrace

Parking at the Holiday Inn is FREE

Dinner \$40.00 Members and Non- Members

Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30

Presentation only is \$10 per person.

The **Kenosha Civil War Museum** is putting on the following in-person/virtual programs:

“Johnson’s Island Prison Uncovered: An Archaeological Exploration of a Civil War Prison on Lake Erie” Saturday, April 8, 1:30pm-2:30pm. Presented by Amanda Manahan and Brandi Oswald, Co-Chairs of the friends and Descendants of Johnson’s Island

“Shaking Loose the Facts: Or, How I Came to Resent Herman Melville” The Second Friday Lecture Series Sponsored by the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. Friday, April 14, 12:00pm – 1:00pm. Speaker: Linda Stevens

In God’s Presence: The Bible and Faith in the Civil War Era Seminar. Saturday, April 22, 1:00pm – 3:30pm. Presented by: Dr. Mark Noll and **Reverend Robert Miller**

For more on programs at the museum, visit <https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/events/>

Bruce Allardice’s article on “Peter Baudy Garesche,” the head of the Confederate Naval Powder Works, will appear in the summer 2023 issue of the magazine “America’s Civil War.”

Rob Girardi will make two presentations this month.

April 3, at McHenry County College, on “John Eugene Smith, Galena's Forgotten General”

April 4, at the Niles Senior Center, on “Chicago's Memory of the Civil War”

Bruce Allardice will be speaking on "Baseball During the Civil War" April 10th, to the McHenry County Historical Society. On April 14th and 15th he'll be speaking in Springfield, on the 14th to the Lincoln Death Day Association on “Lincoln and the Election of 1864,” and the next day to the Illinois Sons of Union Veterans on “Lincoln as War Leader.”

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

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

Apr. 3rd, Rockford CWRT: Stanley Campbell, "The Abolitionists"

Apr. 5th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Nick Kaup on "The Watseka SUV"

Apr. 7th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Michael Wynne on "The Real Story of the Rock Island POW Camp" (zoom only)

Apr. 11th, McHenry County CWRT: Dave Powell on "Tullahoma"

Apr. 13th, Milwaukee CWRT: Richard Holloway on "Arrested, Promoted and Transferred: Richard Taylor's End to the Red River Campaign."

Apr. 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: Michael Goc presenting "Joseph Bailey, Hero of the Red River"

Apr. 18th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Charles Knight on "From Arlington to Appomattox"

Apr. 23rd, Annual DuPage County Civil War and Militaria Show

Apr. 27th, South Suburban CWRT: Gordon Ramsey on "The Role of Music in the Civil War"

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

May 12th: Sean Michael Chick on "Grant's Left Hook: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign"

June 9th: Mark Zimmerman on "The Retreat from Nashville"

Sept. 8th: Al Olives on "The Boy Generals. George Custer, Wesley Merritt and the Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac"

Oct. 13th: Carleton Young on "Two Vermont Brothers in the Army of the Potomac"

Nov. 10th: Ernest Dollar on "Hearts Torn Asunder: Trauma in the Civil War"

Dec. 8th: Scott Mingus on "Texans at Chickamauga"

The **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop's** facebook page airs "Take a Break with History", every first and third Friday of the month at 1 pm CST. Their next "House Divided" author interview is May 25th, 3:30 CST, with Pat Brennan discussing his new book, "Gettysburg in Color." For more, visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/>

Annual Bearss Fund

As Round Table members know, every year our group raises funds in memory of our beloved friend and Tour Guide extraordinaire, ED BEARSS, to donate during our annual battlefield tour to deserving groups. This year we will be touring battlefields in Louisiana connected with the Red River Campaign of 1864. So please dig deep and pledge a donation, or give right now, for our annual endeavor on Ed's behalf. Make checks payable to The Civil War Round Table and either donate at the meetings or mail checks to Mark Matranga, 201 N. Elmwood Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302.

Red River 2023 Tour Update....

The tour will be a one bus tour on a bus with a capacity for 56. After we have reached 56-person capacity there will be a wait list for the tour.

To register for the tour see Curt Thomasco at upcoming meetings for a copy of the Tour Itinerary and Tour Registration Form along with your deposit. Also please note that the Tour Itinerary and Tour Registration Form can be downloaded from the Chicago CWRT website. **Regarding tour meal options**, please contact Curt or fill out the online form at <https://chicagocwrt.org/Tours/Meal2023.pdf>

Save the Date!

June 17th, Cantigny in Wheaton, from 9-3:30: **Symposium of the Abraham Lincoln Association**. The distinguished list of speakers will include Michael Burlingame, Michelle Krowl, **Dan Weinberg**, Guy Fraker, **Robert I. Girardi**, William Griffing and Diana Dretske. More details when they become available.