

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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823rd REGULAR MEETING, Friday, December 8th, 2023

Scott Mingus on "Texans at Chickamauga"

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Dec. 8th, 2023, 07:30 PM CST.
Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed**



Although the Civil War's second-largest battle in terms of casualties, Chickamauga has had far fewer books written about it than the thousands of books penned about the war's bloodiest battle, Gettysburg. What has been remarkable has been the dearth of books about specific brigades, regiments, or state troops at Chickamauga, unlike Gettysburg which has a plethora of specialty books. Scott Mingus's and Joe Owen's Unceasing Fury: Texans at the Battle of Chickamauga, September 18-20, 1863, is the first full-length book to examine in detail the role of troops from the Lone Star State.

Chickamauga was deemed as "the soldiers' battle" because of the perception in the ranks of a lack of direct involvement of senior-level leadership. More than 4,400 of these soldiers were from the state of Texas. One out of every four of the Lone Star boys who fought at Chickamauga fell there. The surviving Texans gave us vivid descriptions of battle action, the anguish of losing friends, the pain and loneliness of being so far away from home, and their often-colorful opinions of their generals.

Texans fought in almost every major sector of the sprawling Chickamauga battlefield, from the first attacks on September 18 on the bridges spanning the creek to the final attack on Snodgrass Hill on the third day of fighting. Ultimately, Union mistakes led to a

tactical Confederate victory, one that was marred by the strategic mistake of not aggressively pursuing the retreating Federals and seizing the vital transportation hub at Chattanooga.

York County, PA resident Scott Mingus is a retired scientist and executive in the global specialty paper industry. The Ohio native graduated from Miami University. He has written more than 30 Civil War and Underground Railroad books and numerous articles for *Gettysburg Magazine* and other historical journals. The Gettysburg Civil War Round Table recently presented Scott and co-author Eric Wittenberg with the 2023 Bachelder-Coddington Award for the best new book on the Gettysburg Campaign, [If We Are Striking for Pennsylvania](#).

Battlefield Preservation

Dear ____:

At the Trust, we've spent the last few months working to secure highly-threatened tracts of land and funding for one of our [most critical Western Theater campaigns](#) in Tennessee at the Battle of Shiloh and the Battle of Stones River.

This is one of the best chances we will ever have to hold the developers at bay and secure two decisive preservation victories!

Last year, Tennessee had its largest population growth in 15 years, placing a major strain on Western Theater battlefields, including the two I'm sharing more about today.

For example, in Murfreesboro, where the Battle of Stones River took place, there are new housing tracts and shopping centers sprouting up everywhere in one of the fastest growing areas in the country.

Seeing hallowed ground lost to development rends our hearts.

Without question, the land at Stones River [32 acres on the Union left in the first day's battle] will be lost to commercial or high-density apartments if it is not preserved. And the acreage at Shiloh [152 acres on the extreme Confederate right] is attractive for development, too!

When you give bulldozers to developers, it seems like nothing is sacred.

The lands where men fought, bled, and died, and the places where America's history was shaped and defined, are deeply sacred to me, and I know they're sacred to you.

Besides, history teaches that the opening days of a battle don't always determine the victor. That's true of Shiloh, and it's true of Stones River as well.

The two large parcels of land we are working to acquire and preserve right now both played crucial roles in those early hours and days when no one knew what the outcome of the battles, and the Civil War itself, would be!

We must act now!

With more than \$8 million in anticipated government grants and pledged gifts, we have \$421,000 to raise to see this land preserved forever. This means your gift to save this at-risk land in Tennessee will be multiplied by a factor of 20!

Help preserve 184 acres of hallowed ground at two of the bloodiest battles of the entire Civil War by making donation today.

'Til the battle is won,

David Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

November Presentation

By Mark Matranga

The Civil War Round Table featured **Ernest Dollar** at its 822nd Regular Meeting on November 10, 2023, when he presented ideas from his book *Hearts Torn Asunder: Trauma in the Civil War's Final Campaign in North Carolina*. Essentially a deep dive into the emotional and psychological effects of the long period of warfare on both soldiers and civilians, Dollar approaches the subject knowing that the Victorian age did not acknowledge what society later came to understand was "shell shock," "battle fatigue," or more commonly today, post-traumatic stress disorder.

Part of Dollar's story includes the relatively unknown story of the Carolinas Campaign that ended some weeks after the surrender at Appomattox. While the latter event is subject to multiple romantic accounts, the surrender in North Carolina is somewhat an afterthought. Yet the tens of thousands of soldiers who endured the final campaigns in the Carolinas had been engaged in operations in Tennessee, for control for Chattanooga, and the campaign for Atlanta, and were physically and mentally exhausted after over three years of war.

This affected both sides but especially confederate soldiers demoralized by defeat and retreat and having seen their homes and heartland devastated by Sherman's

marauders. Dollar also pointed out another factor that sapped the will of the southern soldier, namely, the horde of paroled prisoners from General Lee's army who after mid-April 1865 drifted southward. These former soldiers were a burden on those in Joe Johnston's army fighting Sherman but also placed civilians in the unfortunate position between an advancing army menacing their homes and an undisciplined retreating group that could not be considered friendly.

Dollar related the account of Cornelia Phelps Spencer of Chapel Hill, "A True History of the Civil War," wherein she described union depredations across the state but also related confederate ones. However, she temporized on southern atrocities, attributing them to "desperation of want," essentially forgiving them. A biased piece, but indicative of the tension of loss and the pressure of a rampaging union force in the aftermath of President Lincoln's assassination is the example of the 11th Texas Cavalry trooper accused of looting who had said "I hate Yankees and wish they were dead in a pile." When General Kilpatrick learned that a group of his men had been found executed and heaped in a pile, he ordered the man hung. That men could commit such atrocities showed how fractured their psyches had become.

How could men do such things to each other, Dollar asks? Emphasizing that the Carolinas campaign was as effective a psychological as a military one, he offers Sherman's dictum that once a churchgoing boy is turned into a soldier, he "will gradually lose all principles." But the grinding war these men experienced exacted a price. Doctors recognized this emotional trauma, terming it initially "irritable heart." Later, the diagnosis was changed to post bellum neurokinesis characterized by flashbacks, avoidance or emotional numbing and hyperarousal-difficulty concentrating and insomnia. Post-war, survivor guilt became an entry in this panoply of symptoms.

There were no big battles in North Carolina, but the soldiers "brought battles and trauma with them," Dollar said. He cited examples of soldiers who exemplified this and who in turn brought the war home. After the war, John A. Cundiff, 99th Indiana, refused to remain inside. Captain Daniel M. Stearns, who returned to the 104th Ohio after his wounding at Etoy Creek, would associate only with his dog post-war; his family eventually placed him in an asylum. Newell Gleason, 87th Indiana, who fought at Snodgrass Hill, raged "don't leave a living thing alive in South Carolina," committed suicide by throwing himself down a flight of stairs. During battle at Petersburg, Confederate Homer Bolden exposed himself, defying his opponents to kill him. John W. Rabb, 11th Texas Cavalry, carved a notch in his pistol for each man he killed; Rabb committed suicide after the war. Confederate General Thomas Clingman, who was known to scalp his union enemies, was in and out of asylums after the war.

The North Carolina Insane Asylum, founded in 1856 to care for Mexican War veterans, saw admissions mushroom after the war. More generally, the post-war press publicized veterans' suicides and trauma. And Dollar adds that the home front was not immune,

citing Lucy Battle who lost two sons in the war: she felt she could not survive without laudanum. He posits that America's saw its first opioid crisis after the Civil War. Considering the timing of his talk, we were reminded that soldiers in combat suffer in ways we have only recently begun to comprehend.



BULLETIN BOARD

Our in-person meetings are currently held at:

Holiday Inn O'Hare

5615 N. Cumberland Ave, Chicago

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:

On Friday Dec. 8th at noon, Dr. Steven Goldman will talk on "The Veteran Reserve Corps in the Civil War and Reconstruction."

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

The CWRT's **Winter Board Meeting** will be January 27th, 2024 at Camp Girardi (Rob Girardi's house), 4532 N. Forest View, Chicago, starting at 9:30 a.m.

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

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

Dec. 1st, Northern Illinois CWRT: Rob Girardi on "Stonewall Jackson"

Dec. 4th, Rock Valley CWRT: Rob Girardi on "Stonewall Jackson"

Dec. 6th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: TBA

Dec. 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Steve Alban on "How Did Lincoln Get Elected in 1864?"

Dec. 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: Memorabilia Show

Dec. 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Charles Knight on "Robert E. Lee"

Dec. 21st, South Suburban CWRT: Holiday Party

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

Jan. 12th, 2024: Pat and Dylan Brennan on "Gettysburg in Color"

Feb. 9th: Carolyn Ivanoff on "The 17th Connecticut at Gettysburg"

March 8th: Chris Bryan on "The Union XII Corps"

April 12th: Will Greene on "The Cracker Line and Chattanooga"

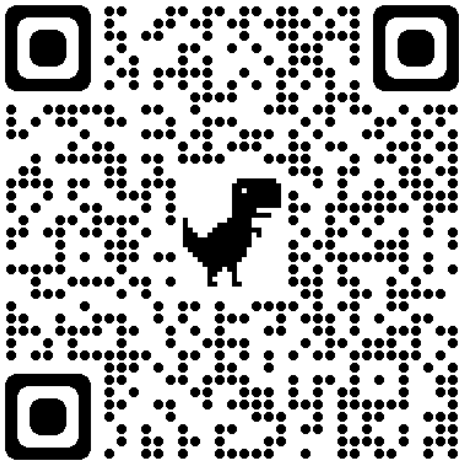
May 10th: Lynn and Julianne Herman on "The Allegheny Arsenal Explosion"

June 14th: Tim Smith (Nevins-Freeman Award) on "Vicksburg"

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. For more, visit

<https://alincolinbookshop.com/>

Happy Holidays!



CWRT QR Code for instant access to the website