



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXXII, Number 3

Chicago, Illinois

November 2022

813th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## The Nevins-Freeman Address:

### Mary Abroe on

## *"Historic Preservation and Civil War Battlefields: An American Story"*

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Nov. 11th, 2022, 07:30 PM CST.**

**NOTE: The November meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Oak Brook, 17W 350 22nd St., Oakbrook Terrace.**

**Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed**



Founded by Congress in August 1890, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park is our first federal battlefield park. Later that same month, passage of legislation that set aside funding for preserving battle lines and buying land to mark troop positions provided the basis for what became Antietam National Battlefield Site. Rounding out the five "granddaddies" that constitute the nucleus of our national battlefield park network are Shiloh (1894), Gettysburg (1895), and Vicksburg (1899). At a time when there was no National Park Service as we

know it and only a few other "national parks"--like Yellowstone and Yosemite, both of which were western wilderness parks--the Civil War preserves of the 1890s set the precedent for all national historical parks (of whatever designation) going forward. As a result, those turn-of-the-century military establishments are among the premier historical

properties of the entire National Park System.

Additional Civil War sites joined their predecessors over the next 120-plus years, but whether we consider Chickamauga or Mill Springs (KY)--in 2020 the most recent addition to the System--the immediate thought for many, if not most, is "killing fields." And so they were. But, over time, as men and women lived, worked, and remembered on those grounds, layers of human motives and actions also shaped them. In that way, preserved battlefields have plenty to reveal about Americans' understanding of the Civil War and their resulting urge to preserve its sites as memorials, patriotic symbols, tourist destinations, documentary evidence, and outdoor classrooms. The battlefields also are full of stories about local communities, whose people, through no choice of their own, became witnesses to history and neighbors of the places where it happened.

This presentation focuses on what modern Civil War parks tell us about their meaning and preservation at the hands of successive generations of Americans, ourselves included--those who, over the decades between the 1890s and the early twenty-first century, have continued to shape those landscapes.

Mary Abroe holds a BA in history from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana and a PhD from Loyola University Chicago. She is retired from teaching at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois. Dr. Abroe is vice chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Battlefield Trust and a director of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. She also is past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago.

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## **Battlefield Preservation**

Hi:

I guess you could say that music is on the brain ... because we are the (preservation) champions, my friend. Your support provided the push we needed to secure 498 acres at the [Champion Hill Battlefield](#) in Hinds County, Miss. This acquisition acreage, which includes 144 acres we previously protected with a conservation easement and now own outright, brings our total saved land at this Magnolia State site to over 1,200 acres! And looking from an eagle's eye perspective, this means we have saved approximately 2,091 acres associated with the [Vicksburg Campaign](#). ...

***Family Legacy***

During the [Battle of Champion Hill](#), the fighting unfolded on land owned by Sid and Matilda Champion. Still located in the area, the Champion family agreed to sell their entire holdings after building a multi-year relationship with the Trust. These 498 acres, critical to understanding the Vicksburg Campaign, would've never been acquired had it not been for the Champion family's dedication to battlefield preservation.

### ***The Difference You've Made***

Ever since the [Vicksburg National Military Park](#) boundary was expanded to include the Champion Hill Battlefield, the Trust and the National Park Service have had their sights set on acquiring ownership of this very land so that the public may one day step foot upon it. Boosting support granted by the [American Battlefield Protection Program](#), [State of Mississippi](#) and the HTR Foundation, YOU brought this 498-acre project across the finish line.

I hope you know that you are OUR key to battlefield preservation — like Vicksburg was the key to controlling the Mississippi river.

David Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

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## **October Meeting**

**By Mark Matranga**

**Bruce Allardice** gave a most interesting and informative presentation at the 812<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table on October 14, 2022, on “The Mysteries of the *Hunley*.” Allardice offered a splendid display of art, graphic designs and artifacts from the submarine as well as updated information on the salvage and restoration efforts on this unique piece of our Civil War heritage. He also delved into the numerous theories of what caused the demise of the Hunley after its first – and last – wartime engagement.

Allardice noted that the idea of a submersible machine was not new at the time of the Civil War. There is a depiction dated 331 BC of Alexander the Great being lowered in a Glass submersible. During the Revolutionary War, Thomas Bushnell built the *Turtle*, an unsuccessful one-man device; Robert Fulton created the submarine *Nautilus*, for Napoleon Bonaparte. The Union Navy developed the *USS Alligator* at the time of the Civil War but abandoned the idea when the navy decided there weren't enough Confederate ships to warrant using submarines.

The prototype for the *Hunley* was developed by James McClintock, who designed his *Pioneer* as a privateer and tested his ship on Lake Pontchartrain. Horace L. Hunley came on board as financier and when New Orleans was captured the project moved to Mobile Bay where the *Hunley* was designed and built. Originally, batteries were proposed for propulsion, but these were not powerful enough to move the ship against the tides, so the decision was made to use manpower. Meanwhile, General Beauregard got wind of McClintock and Hunley's work, whereupon the ship was transported by rail to Charleston in August 1863. Upon arrival and its maiden voyage there, the *Hunley* immediately sunk with five crewmen all lost, apparently capsized by the wake of a passing ship.

At this point, Hunley assumed the helm, but he too met with disaster. On his attempt to submerge the ship on October 15, 1863, he dove at too extreme an angle and lost his life and his crew's; the *Hunley* was stuck in deep mud in the harbor. Command passed to Lt. George E. Dixon, who was shot in the leg at Shiloh but saved by a \$20 gold piece he held in his breast pocket. Dixon led his crew of seven men and sortied out to sea from an inlet on Sullivan's Island the night of February 19, 1864, to confront the United States naval blockade.

The *Hunley* was a small craft, some 40 feet (12 meters) long whose hull was a mere 4.25 feet high. But as Allardice pointed out, its design was more sophisticated than one would have thought. The hull was sleek, with countersunk rivets. She was designed for a crew of eight, seven to turn the hand-crank propeller and one to steer. The benches on which the crew sat angled downward for better leverage while pumping. It featured a highly efficient gear train and flywheel. There were two ballast tanks that could be flooded by valves and pumped dry with hand pumps. There were two watertight hatches for but these were rather narrow – 16.5 inches wide. A copper cylinder containing 135 pounds of black powder was attached to a 22 feet long hinged spar that extended at a downward angle from the bow; this 'spar torpedo' was in turn supported by a line that extended down from a bow pole which extended straight out from the ship. The torpedo was fitted with a contact fuse designed to explode on contact with an enemy vessel.

The *Hunley* made way for the 1,260-ton sloop *USS Housatonic* anchored off Charleston harbor. Although detected at the last moment, the *Hunley's* torpedo was successfully placed below the waterline near the stern on the starboard side of the *Housatonic*. The contact fuse worked as designed; the *Housatonic* went down in five minutes. As soon as the torpedo detonated, Lt. Dixon signaled that she had completed her mission and was returning to shore. A fire was lit to guide the *Hunley* back to land, but she disappeared. What happened to the *Hunley*?

Theories abound but none have been officially accepted. That the explosion caused leaks in the hull, that the *Hunley* was rammed by another ship, or that the seacocks or snorkel box were somehow damaged are all unlikely causes as it appears water entered the ship only after the crew was dead. Allardice theorizes that the crew may have miscalculated, trying to stay on the harbor side of the Housatonic but could not overcome the force of the receding tide and, exhausted, simply ran out of oxygen. He regards the current theory that the crew was killed by the concussive force of the blast with some skepticism. He argues that the blast would have travelled upward and not out toward the *Hunley*.

When the *Hunley* was finally found, 131 years after it sunk, it was located, oddly, on the ocean side of the *Housatonic* in 30 feet of water. The *Hunley* performed well – the first successful combat submarine - but was undone. By the forces of physics perhaps, or maybe just the limits of human endurance. Either way, Bruce Allardice offers a fresh view to an old story and reminds us that the *Hunley*, probably the most tangible physical artifact from our Civil War, no longer resides under the sea.



*Our in-person meetings are (usually) held at:*

**Holiday Inn O'Hare**

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago, IL 60631

*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.

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

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

**Friday, November 11, noon. "The Civil War Nursing Service of Sister Anthony O'Connell and the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati," Presented by Judith Metz**

Sister Anthony O'Connell (1814-1897), a Sister of Charity, ministered in Cincinnati, Ohio, for sixty years. Typical of thousands of nineteenth century Irish Catholic immigrant women, she entered a religious community when she was barely out of her teens and spent her life serving in Catholic sponsored ministries. She distinguished herself by her intelligence, leadership and uncommon virtue. Her work in the hospitals of Ohio, Tennessee and Kentucky as a U.S. Army nurse during the Civil War brought her fame and the undying admiration of the soldiers she treated.

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

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**Rob Girardi** will present "The Murder of Major General William Nelson" Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> at the Cobb County (GA) CWRT.

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**Bruce Allardice** has had two articles published recently in Civil War News, in collaboration with Wayne Wolf: "The Delay in Operations Has Been Unavoidable," Civil War News, November 2022; and "We Can Defeat Them at Any Point," Civil War News, October 2022. Plus his article on "Who Needs Ultra? Irresponsible Newspaper Reporting of the Burnside Expedition" will run in America's Civil War in early 2023.

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### **More Upcoming Local Civil War Events**

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

Nov. 2nd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Podcast on the Summer of 1864

Nov. 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Phil Angelo on "Morgan's Raid" (zoom only)

Nov. 7th, Rockford CWRT: Bob Presman on "Could the South Have Won the Civil War?"

Nov. 8th, McHenry County CWRT: Doug Dammann on "Benjamin Franklin White, Surgeon 1st Wisconsin Infantry"

Nov. 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: Mary Abroe on "Historic Preservation and Civil War Battlefields: An American Story"

Nov. 15th, Southwest Michigan CWRT: Tim Hodge on "Robert Smalls and the Daring Escape with the Steamship Planter"

Nov. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: John Horn on "Lee Besieged"

Nov. 17th, South Suburban CWRT: Diana Dretske on "The 96th Illinois"

Nov. 18th, Salt Creek CWRT: Bruce Allardice on "The Election of 1864"

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### **Future Chicago CWRT Meetings**

**Dec. 9th:** Garry Adelman, "Midwest Civil War Photo Extravaganza"  
**Jan. 13th, 2023:** Rob Girardi, "POWs at Camp Douglas"  
**Feb. 10th:** Charlie Knight on "Robert E. Lee"  
**Mar. 10th:** Dwight Hughes on "Unlike Anything That Ever Floated"  
**Apr. 14th:** Richard Holloway on "The Red River Campaign"  
**May 12th:** Sean Michael Chick on "Grant's Left Hook: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign"  
**June 9th:** Tom Cartwright, topic TBA

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On Nov. 23rd, at 3:30 CST, the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop's** "House Divided" series of facebook interviews will feature Gary Gallagher talking about his new book, *Bruce Catton: The Army of the Potomac Trilogy*. For more, visit <https://alincolnbookshop.com/a-house-divided-upcoming-shows/>

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**Ed Bearss Book award: Nominations Sought.** This Chicago CWRT award is for a new book or body of work of recent vintage that breaks new ground in our study of the Civil War.

The committee is seeking nominations that meet these criteria from the general membership. The committee consists of Rob Girardi as chairman, Mark Matranga, and Kurt Carlson. Several books have been put forth but we are seeking additional nominees prior to making a determination.

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## Special Meeting Giveaway

The CWRT will be giving away a **free Civil War book or item** to anyone attending the November meeting in person. A bonus for attending. And a way of saying thank you to our members.

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## The Annual Nevins - Freeman Award

In 1974, The Civil War Round Table of Chicago established the Nevins-Freeman Award, and bestows it annually on an individual whose advancement of American Civil War scholarship and support for the Round Table movement warrant special



recognition. The award itself is designed as a generous financial donation to a historical preservation project chosen by the recipient.

This award is named for two historians whose legacies have come to be synonymous with the Civil War era: multi-Pulitzer Prize winners **Allan Nevins** and **Douglas Southall Freeman**.

The list of distinguished winners is below:

1974: Bruce Catton	2000: Charles P. Roland
1975: Ralph G. Newman	2001: J. Brooks Davis
1976: T. Harry Williams	2002: Harold Holzer
1977: Lloyd D. Miller	2003: Jerry L. Russell
1978: Bell I. Wiley	2004: Terry Winschel
1979: E.B. (Pete) Long	2005: Richard McMurry
1980: Edwin C. Bearss	2006: Gordon Dammann
1981: James I. (Bud) Robertson, Jr.	2007: Horace Mewborn
1982: Frank E. Vandiver	2008: Bruce Allardice
1983: John Hope Franklin	2009: Craig Symonds
1984: Richard B. Harwell	2010: Robert I. Girardi
1985: John Y. Simon	2011: A. Wilson Greene
1986: Harold M. Hyman	2012: Tom Schwartz
1987: James T. Hickey	2013: Lawrence Hewitt
1988: Robert K. Krick	2014: Jim Ogden
1989: Mark E. Neely, Jr.	2015: Dennis Frye
1990: Marshall D. Krolick	2016: Lance Herdegen
1991: Gary Gallagher	2017: John Marszalek
1992: Shelby Foote	2018: Greg Biggs
1993: Stephen B. Oates	2019: Jim Lighthizer
1994: Alan T. Nolan	2020: Interregnum
1995: Richard Nelson Current	2021: Tom Clemens
1996: James M. McPherson	<b>2022: Mary Abroe</b>
1997: Wiley Sword	
1998: William C. (Jack) Davis	
1999: David Herbert Donald	



**Nevins**



**Freeman**



**Bruce Catton**