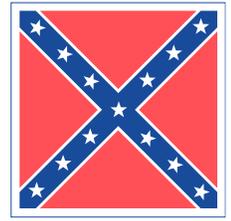


# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXXVIII, Number 1

Chicago, Illinois

September 2017

## Ed Bonekemper:

### *“False Remembrance of the Civil War: The Myth of the Lost Cause”*



The former Confederate states have continually mythologized the South’s defeat to the North, depicting the Civil War as unnecessary, or as a fight over states’ Constitutional rights, or as a David v. Goliath struggle in which the North waged “total war” against an underdog, outnumbered South. In The Myth of the Lost Cause, historian Edward Bonekemper attempts to deconstruct what he considers a multi-faceted myth, revealing the truth about the war that nearly tore the nation apart 150 years ago.

In his September presentation historian Ed Bonekemper examines how this “myth” has impacted our modern day perceptions of slavery, states’ rights, the cause of the Civil War, and our evaluations of the military performance of generals such as Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, and James Longstreet. The fulcrum of his presentation is whether slavery was the primary cause of secession. He will discuss other aspects of the “myth,” including whether the South could have won the Civil War and

whether the North won by waging “total war.”

Edward H. Bonekemper, III earned a B.A. in history from Muhlenberg College, an M.A. in history at Old Dominion University, and graduated from Yale Law School. He has authored numerous books on the Civil War, including Grant and Lee: Victorious American and Vanquished Virginian, McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War

Fear, Incompetence and Worse, A Victor, Not a Butcher: Ulysses S. Grant’s Overlooked Military Genius, How Robert E. Lee Lost the Civil

War, and Lincoln and Grant: The Westerners Who Won the Civil War. His latest book, The Myth of the Lost Cause: Why the South fought the Civil War and Why the North Won, is the subject of his Sept. 8th Chicago talk. Ed has taught courses in U.S. Military history, the American Civil War, and World War II at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania. He served from 2010-2016 as book review editor of Civil War News.



### **764th REGULAR MEETING**

★★★★★

Friday, September 8th

★★★★★

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.**

**SEE NOTICE ON PAGE 3.**

## CVBT ACQUIRES KEY PROPERTY AT CHANCELLORSVILLE

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) is pleased to announce that another part of the Flank Attack sector at Chancellorsville has been acquired. The area on the south side of the Orange Turnpike (modern State Route 3) has been a focus of our efforts since we acquired a portion of the Talley Farm in 1999. Since then, we have stitched together a growing section of that battleground, parcel by parcel, and have also removed visual intrusions such as a decrepit residential trailer and a souvenir/relic shop built to look like a castle. This latest acquisition, with frontage on two roads, finally closes off the potential for any new commercial development within that battlefield terrain.

The former owner, a gentleman named David B. Kinney, had a deep interest in history, which he shared with his children. We had talked with them for years, always on friendly terms, but not coming to terms on a price, as the land was zoned for commercial use and thus a bit more expensive than what we were then paying for other nearby acreage. As that part of the Flank Attack sector became a more cohesive assemblage of protected land, however, it became time to renew our discussions with Mr. Kinney's family.

In late 2016, we came to an agreement to acquire his 1.18 acre parcel for \$130,000, which is below its appraised value, but which the Kinney family accepted as a fair price. We are pleased to call this property the David B. Kinney tract in honor of a man who happily took his kids to this area's battlefields and instilled in them a love of history. We hope our

members will recognize in him a kindred spirit and help to pay off this purchase so we can press on to the next one. (from CVBT Spring 2017 newsletter)

### Civil War Trust and National Park Foundation join Interior Secretary Zinke in announcing President Trump's donation to Antietam plus \$7.2 million for battlefield sites nationwide

(Sharpsburg, Md., July 5, 2017) -

During a news conference today on the historic Antietam Battlefield in Maryland, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced that President Donald J. Trump's first quarter salary donation would benefit restoration and maintenance projects at Antietam National Battlefield. Secretary Zinke also announced \$7.2 million in federal matching grants to preserve battlefield lands associated with the American Revolution, War of 1812 and Civil War.

"As both the Secretary of the Interior and a military veteran, I'm deeply honored and humbled to deliver the donation to Antietam National Battlefield on behalf of President Trump," stated Secretary Zinke. "Visiting the hallowed ground the day after Independence Day is incredibly moving and it underscores the importance of why we must preserve these historic grounds."

"It is a privilege to be standing here today with Secretary Zinke on one of America's most famous battlefields," noted [Civil War Trust president James] Lighthizer, whose interest in battlefield preservation was kindled by visits to Antietam. "We are proud of our long-standing partnership with the

## THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940  
1039 Hinswood  
Darien, Illinois 60561  
Phone: 630-460-1865  
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.



Department of the Interior to protect America's endangered battlefield parks, and we look forward to working with President Trump and Secretary Zinke to preserve these irreplaceable national treasures."

President Trump's donation of \$78,333 for national battlefield park maintenance, first announced in April, will benefit two important restoration projects at Antietam: preservation of the historic Newcomer House near the Middle Bridge site on the battlefield, and replacement of 5,000 linear feet of deteriorated rail fencing along the Hagerstown Turnpike where some of the most intense fighting of the battle occurred. The President's gift will be matched by a \$185,880 donation from the Civil War Trust, the National Park Foundation, and the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, an outstanding local nonprofit involved in preservation at Antietam for more than three decades. Representatives of all three organizations presented a ceremonial check to Secretary Zinke and Superintendent Trail during the news conference. (from September's *Civil War News*)

## NEW DINNER POLICY

PLEASE NOTE: Beginning with the September meeting the CWRT has gone to a buffet style dinner. The buffet will include Caesar salad, pasta, garlic bread, two meats (grilled chicken, meat balls, or Italian sausage) and dessert. The dinner is \$40 payable by check or cash at the door and parking is free. The lecture only is \$10. Reservations are still required but you no longer have to indicate a choice of entrée.

Past president Mary Abroe offered an overview of the history and current state of Civil War battlefield preservation on May 16 to the Prairieville Irregulars, Waukesha, Wisconsin. She also was featured speaker at the 156th anniversary observance of the battle of Wilson's Creek in Republic, Missouri, on August 10; her presentation focused on the history of the movement to establish a national park at the battlefield.

## 2018 BATTLEFIELD TOUR

The 68th tour dates are April 26th-April 29th for the Atlanta Campaign Tour. The website will be updated soon. Please direct all questions via email using [cwrt2018tour@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:cwrt2018tour@chicagocwrt.org). Randy Doler 219-921-9532 and Brian Seiter 708-513-1865 are the tour co-

chairs. Ed Bearss and Jim Ogden are the guides.

The base hotel will be the Holiday Inn Express in Kennesaw, GA. The address to the hotel is 2485 George Bushee Parkway, NW, Kennesaw, GA 30144. The cost for the tour will be \$ 845.00 for double occupancy and \$ 1120.00 for single occupancy. The rest of the details will be published soon on the website. On to Atlanta!

## CWRT SPEAKERS LIST 1940 TO PRESENT

Tom Murray has put together a list of the CWRT's speakers and their topics, from 1940 to the present. It will soon be placed on the "Resources" part of our website and available for all to see.

For the curious, the all-time leader in presentations is (no surprise here) the legendary Ed Bearss, who's spoken to our group no less than 24 times. Elmer Gertz and Marshall Krolick have given 9 presentations apiece, T. Harry Williams 8, John Y. Simon and Otto Eisenschiml 7.

The Civil War Museum in Kenosha is sponsoring a tour of the Fredericksburg Campaign. The dates are Sunday, October 22 to Wednesday, October 25, 2017. The guides will be from the NPS.

Reservations for the trip can be made by mail, in person, or by phone at 262-653-4140 with a credit card.

The Great Lakes Civil War Forum will be held September 16 at the Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. This year's forum, "Tullahoma, Chickamauga, and Beyond," will feature Greg Biggs speaking on "Turning the Tide: The Union Cavalry in the Tullahoma Campaign;" David Powell presenting "Longstreet in the West;" Robert Girardi discussing "General William Passmore Carlin and the Chickamauga Campaign;" and Stephen Goldman covering "Wounded Warriors Come Home: The Union Soldier in Peace." Registration is at 8:30 a.m., first program at 9:30 a.m.; cost, \$60/\$50 for Friends of the Museum, includes lunch.

## CWRT ELECTION!

At the June meeting, the follow CWRT officers were elected: President, Marc Kunis; First Vice President, Randy Doler; Second Vice President, Jim Cunningham; Treasurer, Kurt Carlson; Asst. Treasurer, Bob Gibson; Secretary Dan Modes; Asst. Secretary, Jim Adducci. Trustees elected, terms to expire in 2019: Tom Murray, Rick Branham, Scott McIlvain, Randy Whitchurch.

## GRAPESHOT



Leslie Goddard presented “Clara Barton, Civil War Nurse” Aug. 8th at the Dyer Indiana Historical Society. Visit [www.lesliegoddard.info](http://www.lesliegoddard.info) for more information on upcoming presentations.

The Civil War Museum in Kenosha will host its Second Friday Lecture Series September 8, noon, with Steve Krolick speaking on “Hall Rifles and Carbines in the Civil War.”

Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at (262) 653-4140 or [www.thecivilwarmuseum.org](http://www.thecivilwarmuseum.org).

Rob Girardi will present “The Murder of General Bull Nelson” Sept. 8th to the Military Miniature Society of Illinois, and Sept. 19th to the Scottsdale (AZ) CWRT. He will speak Sept. 30th to the SUV, topic TBD. Visit <http://robertgirardi.com> for more details.

Bruce Allardice will speak on “Sherman’s March” Sept. 21st at the Champaign-Urbana CWRT.

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, Sept 3, by emailing [dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org](mailto: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](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. 1st, Northern Illinois CWRT: Jerry Allen on “General George H. Thomas”

Sept. 6th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Jack Klasey gives a guided tour of the Kankakee County Historical Museum

Sept. 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: Ed Bonekemper on “False Remembrance of the Civil War, The Myth of the Lost Cause”

Sept. 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Gene Salecker on “Ruben Hatch”

Sept. 14th, Lake County CWRT: Dave Dixon on “The Lost Gettysburg Address”

Sept. 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: Frank Crawford on “Andersonville”

Sept. 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Dave Dixon on “The Lost Gettysburg Address”

Sept. 21st, South Suburban CWRT: Dave Dixon on “President Lincoln and the Framing of the Gettysburg Address”

Sept. 23rd, Du Page County Fairgrounds: Chicagoland Civil War and Military Extravaganza

### Bulletin Board



### FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Oct. 13th: Dave Powell on “Chickamauga”

Nov. 10th: Tom Clemens on “Antietam”

Dec. 8th: David Dixon on “Lost Gettysburg Address”

Jan. 12th: Bruce Allardice on “The Battle of Ezra Church”

Feb. 9th: Larry Hewitt on “Confederate Generals”

Mar. 9th: Robert Jenkins on “Peach Tree Creek”

Apr. 13th: John Marszalek, Nevins-Freeman Address

May 11th: Joseph Rose on “Grant Under Fire”

June 8th: Dennis Rasbach on “Joshua Chamberlain and the Petersburg Campaign”

### Abraham Lincoln Bookshop

Their next Civil War related “Author’s Voice” is TBD.

Visit <http://alincolinbookshop.com/> for more information.

## **JUNE MEETING**

### **By MARK MATRANGA**

Don Sender addressed The Civil War Round Table on June 10, 2017, on "The Custer Debacle." The career of George Armstrong Custer has always been controversial. Graduating in time to participate in the first major battle of the war, Custer was promoted to Brigadier General at age 23, one of the youngest to reach that rank. Despite his meteoric rise, the loss of a large part of his command has made him an object of derision - an egomaniac and a poseur who squandered the lives of his soldiers, portrayed in film as a madman. Sender counters with an accurate account of what caused the defeat of the 7th Cavalry on June 26, 1876.

Custer graduated last in his West Point class, but with the outbreak of war the army needed lieutenants, He was attached to McDowell's army the day prior to First Bull Run. Despite the rout of the army, Custer performed well and was cited for bravery. Skilled at reconnaissance, he proved an aggressive combat leader. He distinguished himself in The Peninsula Campaign, Seven Days, Brandy Station, at Gettysburg and in the Shenandoah, where his command performed with distinction. He was promoted to Major General after Cedar Creek. Skilled at reconnaissance, he proved an aggressive combat leader. But with war's end he reverted in rank to Lt. Colonel.

The Grant administration was beset with corruption from low to high - Secretary of War Belknap was forced to resign in scandal over profiteering. Custer became embroiled in this controversy when he testified before Congress about unscrupulous Indian agents gouged and stole from the natives, and trading whiskey and guns to them as well. He implicated friends and relatives of President Grant, including his brother, causing Grant to call Custer a traitor and blocking him from joining his command for the 1876 campaign.

The army's role on the postwar western border was a challenging one. Sender argues that it provided insufficient resources to fulfill its mission. In 1875, the

government moved to force the natives to the reservations and in 1876 developed a campaign to fulfill this plan. Due to General Sturgis's absence, Custer was returned to the regiment at Ft. Lincoln. The army's estimate of the numbers joining Sitting Bull was woefully incorrect, due to falsified numbers of those on the reservations. Instead of hundreds Custer faced thousands of hostiles. And his command was armed with the single-shot Springfield, not the seven-shot Spencer carbine.

Coming into disputed ground near the Rosebud and Little Big Horn with 375 men, Custer planned his customary form of attack. He sent Captain Benteen with the pack trains and over his scouts' objections, ordered Major Reno to attack the camp. Reno halted short; the Indians said later they would have retreated if Reno had charged into the camp. They recovered and counter-attacked, surrounding Reno. After an all-day fight, Reno was finally reinforced and rescued by Benteen. Moving down Medicine Tail Coulee toward the center of the encampment, Custer's troops soon retreated. Horses broke and ran and weapons jammed. Sender opines that Custer have died early in the battle, creating confusion in the command.

Sender asks why Custer did not wait for Gibbon and Crook. He finds this in the pending Democratic Convention in St. Louis on June 29, 1876. If successful, Custer would have secured the nomination and, Sender believes, with his impeccable war record and name recognition, the presidency. But he needed to act fast.

Understanding the man, his motivations and the tools he had to use is essential to understanding the tragic conclusion at the Little Big Horn. Custer was vastly outnumbered, but Sender finds causes in insufficient training and ammunition and weaponry unsuited to the task. Most important, Custer's death early in the battle left his troops without his dynamic leadership. Sender suggests the outcome would have been different if Custer had survived to lead the charge into the Indian camp.