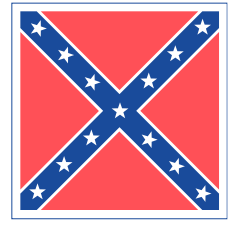


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



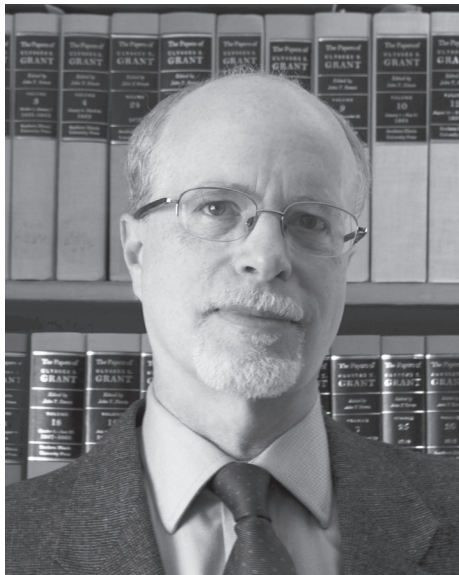
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Joseph Rose on "Grant Under Fire"



The recent publication of Ron Chernow's massive biography of U.S. Grant culminates the modern historical trend to laud Grant as a general and as a president. The latter proposition has attracted critics. Not so Grant's reputation as a general, which authors such as Ed Bonekemper have praised.

On May 11th, author Joseph Rose will contend that General U.S. Grant's vaunted military reputation is, in large part, undeserved. As opposed to his Personal Memoirs and the writings of his staff and other supporters, contemporary first person accounts and correspondence (often from Grant himself) convincingly show how he often blundered on the battlefield and then covered it up later. His extreme bias for or against various Union commander also damaged the country's war effort.

Declarations that Grant was not tactically surprised at Shiloh or that he ordered the Army of the Cumberland to ascend Missionary Ridge at Chattanooga sent the author to the New York Public Library in search of primary source materials on these and other battles. The talk will contend that Grant, and the numerous defenders of his generalship and character, have distorted the historical record.

Joseph A. Rose grew up reading his father's collection of military works (especially the West Point Atlas of American Wars), and other non-fiction. This began a life-long love of history and geography. During a career in healthcare management, he took a cross-country trip and visited battlefields of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Nothing was out of the ordinary, until internet discussions and debates on the Civil War Western Theater Discussion Board, demonstrated how history, especially in Ulysses S. Grant's case, could be terribly miswritten. Twelve years of research and writing have culminated in a groundbreaking book, Grant Under Fire, that comprehensively analyzes the controversies of the General's military career and after.

Rigorously based on primary sources (and letting Grant convict himself by his own writing), the book is a necessary antidote to the ahistorical perspectives assumed by many past and current historians, both popular and academic.

Living in New York City, Mr. Rose holds a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from the State University of New York at Albany (now the University at Albany) and a Master of Science in Industrial and Labor Relations from a joint program of Cornell University and Baruch College.



772nd REGULAR MEETING

★★★★★

Friday, May 11th

★★★★★

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 - TWO ACRE PLOT AT GETTYSBURG SAVED BY CIVIL WAR TRUST!

The Battle of Gettysburg had been underway for several hours when General Alfred Iverson's brigade of North Carolina troops arrived on Oak Hill. The Tar Heels stepped out of Forney Woods with a Rebel yell, unaware they were walking into a trap—Union soldiers, including men who had fired some of the first shots of the battle, lay concealed in woods on the slope in front of them, Oak Ridge. Many Yankees held their fire, waiting until the Southerners were within 50 yards before blazing away with deadly accuracy. Struck in front and flank, Iverson's men were caught in the open, helpless. Those not killed in the ensuing carnage either surrendered or hugged the ground until their comrades could sweep the Federals from the field. When he later surveyed the field, General Iverson saw his men lying dead "on a line as straight as a dress parade." Iverson lost 65% of his brigade in this brief action—the highest percentage of any Confederate brigade at Gettysburg.

On April 19th, The Civil War Trust announced that they had successfully preserved a two-acre tract of hallowed ground on Oak Ridge. Here, on July 1, Yankees from Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania repelled a charge by Col. Alfred Iverson's North Carolinians. "Unable to advance, unwilling to retreat," the survivors of Iverson's brigade hugged the ground for safety, waiting for a renewed Confederate assault to sweep the Federals from Oak Ridge.

Trust Eyes Cold Harbor Property

I recently wrote to you to share news of the Civil War Trust's successful preservation of two out of five key tracts of sacred battlefield at Cold Harbor, and to ask for your help in saving an additional piece of hallowed ground where men fought one of the Civil War's most momentous battles.

As successful Civil War generals well understood, nothing can be gained by resting on our laurels. We have momentum, and we need to keep it going.

Our new 28-acre target property represents one of the locations that saw some of the heaviest bloodletting during the tragic Battle of Cold Harbor.

It was here, on June 3, 1864, that General Robert Tyler's New York brigade attacked the Confederate line. The men of the Empire State suffered staggering losses. One later remarked, "We felt it was murder, not war, or at best a very serious mistake had been made."

This same property also includes land over which Confederate forces passed while attacking the Army of the Potomac at the Battle of Gaines' Mill in 1862. By saving this land, we can help connect the Gaines' Mill Battlefield with that of Cold Harbor, getting us one step closer to preserving both supremely hallowed grounds.

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.



This precious land played key roles in two different Civil War battles. If we want to keep this hallowed ground out of the hands of developers, we need your help.

The combined cost of our current target properties at Cold Harbor is now \$2,722,000 for 81 acres. This is valuable real estate, and it is not just historic preservationists who would like to acquire it. Thankfully, an extremely generous donor has pledged \$1,200,000 to the cause! That leaves us with a current fundraising goal of \$1,522,000.

I know that is a daunting number, and the task before us will not be easy. But if you'll stay by my side, I know we can succeed. Please join me in this momentous opportunity and help save Cold Harbor today.

'Til the Battle is Won,

Jim Lighthizer,
President, Civil War Trust

APRIL MEETING

By Mark Matranga

Professor John F. Marszalek delivered the Nevins-Freeman address to The Civil War Round Table at its 771st Regular Meeting on April 13, 2018, presenting *The History of the Memoirs of General Ulysses S. Grant*. Given his stature as Executive Director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association and *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* project, now completed and located at Mississippi State University, Professor Marszalek comes to the subject with impeccable credentials. He described how over time, many who participated in the Civil War published memoirs chronicling their experiences. Some were self-serving but nonetheless influential. Marszalek gives as examples Jubal Early, who advanced the interpretation that the South may have lost the war but was the virtuous side, and Jefferson Davis, for whom the war was not about slavery. Both Davis and Early helped generate the “Lost Cause” theory of the Civil War.

On the Northern side, Sherman memoirs positioned the general as second only to Grant in the Union military pantheon. For his part, Grant had no desire to write of his role in the war – he was a humble man whose wartime reputation was secure. By the time he did write the *Memoirs*, Grant was not only a venerated military genius who with Lincoln saved the Union, but had been a two-term president. He was immensely popular, a highly accomplished and respected man, who Marszalek argues, was the first modern president who set the stage for the 20th century Presidency. After his presidency, he toured the globe, taking democracy to the world.

Grant wrote his memoirs for one very basic reason – money. He had been solicited to write articles for *Century Magazine* at the request of Richard

Gilder, Robert U. Johnson, and Roswell Smith, who had been publishing material written by veterans. These influential men importuned Grant to write for the periodical, but Grant, at the time a wealthy man, resisted. However, Grant suffered severe financial reverse which resulted from a pyramid scheme involving his son Ulysses S. ‘Buck’ Grant Jr., and Ferdinand Ward, the ‘Wizard of Wall Street.’ Grant made substantial investments in Grant & Ward, which went bankrupt, ruining Grant financially. Although Grant had previously rejected *Century Magazine’s* overtures, his now penurious state compelled him to agree to write four articles for \$2,000. Upon submitting the first, on Shiloh, the editors realized Grant was no writer. But after conferring with him on his experience at Shiloh, Johnson convinced him to write in the same manner as he related his stories orally. This formula met with success, and Grant appeared on his way to literary success.

Grant then was struck with his ultimate crisis: throat cancer. He had smoked up to 20 cigars daily since Fort Donelson, the likely cause for this illness. After delaying medical treatment for months, Grant was presented with a terminal diagnosis. The need to provide for his family spurred him to write the *Memoirs*. Grant was about to execute a contract with the *Century* editors when his friend Mark Twain interjected and proposed a more handsome proposition which Grant accepted. Marszalek rejects the myth that Twain ghost wrote the work – the manuscripts reflect Grant’s hand and style. Much of the writing was done at Mt. McGregor where Grant was offered a cool location away from the heat and humidity of New York. Shortly after completing the work, Grant died in July 1885.

The publication and sale of the *Memoirs* is an interesting story in itself. Twain arranged to have veterans in uniform sell the volumes door to door across cities and farms of America. This was a very successful technique, and spurred sales – in early 1886, Julia Grant received the then largest royalty check ever issued; ultimately Mrs. Grant received royalties exceeding \$11 million in present dollars. The *Memoirs* have never been out of print.

Now with publication of the Annotated *Memoirs*, Professor Marszalek indicates that one can more easily access Grant’s work. The *Memoirs* may be the greatest piece of American literature except for *Moby Dick*; Marszalek maintains it is the most significant work of non-fiction written by an American. For certain, one is impressed with Professor Marszalek’s citation to Gore Vidal, who observed, “It is simply not possible to read Grant’s *Memoirs* without realizing that the author is a man of first rate intelligence.” Walt Whitman feared that ‘the real war will never get in the books.’ Perhaps it did with the many letters, diaries and reminiscences of those who fought the war, and especially with Grant’s *Memoirs*.



2018 ED BEARSS AWARD

Once again the CWRT is soliciting donations to its Ed Bearss Fund. The money raised will be donated in Ed’s name to the battlefields and preservation agencies that Ed designates. And who knows more than Ed which projects are the most worthy? As in the past, anyone who donates to this fund will be acknowledged by having his/her name published in the newsletter.

GRAPESHOT



In April the **Civil War Museum in Kenosha** will feature the following fine events:

On May 11, part of the 2nd Friday Series at the Kenosha Civil War Museum, Doug Dammann will speak on "The Interesting Story of Surgeon Jacob Ebersole, 19th Indiana."

There's a "meet the author" event May 25, featuring Ron Larson, author of "Wisconsin and the Civil War."

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

May 25th, at the North Shore Senior Center, **Bruce Allardice** will present "Before the Chicago Cubs: Baseball Comes to the Windy City," a look at baseball in the Civil War era.

Leslie Goddard will portray Louisa May Alcott, Civil War Nurse, May 17 at the Eisenhower Branch Chicago Public Library, May 19 at the Berwyn Public Library, and May 30 at the Geneva Public Library.

For more information, visit her website at www.lesliegoddard.info.

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, May 6, 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

May 1-4th: Battlefield Balladeers perform at Midway Village Rockford, IL Civil War School Days

May 2nd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Pat Wolgamot on "Black Confederates: Myths and Realities"

May 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Jon Sebastian on "The 1862 Mid-Term Elections"

May 8th, McHenry County CWRT: Mary Abroe on "Preservation at Antietam"

May 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: Joseph Rose on "Grant Under Fire"

May 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Jonathan White on "Midnight in America: Civil War Dreams"

May 17th, South Suburban CWRT: Lester Lindsay on "The Dred Scott Case"

May 18th, Salt Creek CWRT: Dave Noe on "The Merrimac-Virginia Naval Battle"

May 19-20: Naper Settlement Civil War Days

Bulletin Board



FUTURE MEETINGS

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

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

Sept. 14th: Tim Smith, "U. S. Grant and the Vicksburg Campaign"

Oct. 12th: Ted Karamanski, "The Civil War as an Indian War"

Nov. 9th: Ethan Rafuse, "The Valley Campaign"

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

Rob Girardi will speak on "The Murder of Major General William Nelson" May 8th at the Indianapolis CWRT.

UPCOMING CWRT ELECTIONS IN JUNE

The Chicago CWRT will hold its annual election of officers at the June meeting. Any eligible member is encouraged to attend and vote. The Nomination Committee will present a slate of candidates. As always, nominations from the floor are welcomed.