



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXIX, Number 9

Chicago, Illinois

May 2020

792nd REGULAR MEETING, Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## **The May Meeting of the CWRT has been Cancelled, Due to the Government Shutdown Orders**

### **We hope to see everyone in June.**

#### **APRIL MEETING**

The CWRT's April meeting had to be cancelled. Our April speaker, Mike Shaffer, has been kind enough to send us an excerpt of the talk he was scheduled to give:

Facing uncertainty amid the coronavirus outbreak, most organizations throughout the nation have postponed events. For all the members of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago, I deeply regret conditions will prevent you from gathering in April. I am saddened at the turn of events, as I have anticipated speaking with you for more than a year.

Substituting a message within this newsletter does not offer a suitable replacement for a gathering. Still, I applaud the leadership of the round table for seeking to continue the flow of information via a method, which will hopefully keep everyone healthy and safe.

The following offers a brief synopsis on the subject of my talk. Corporal Thomas Wallace Colley of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry. Colley had an active military career, one producing three wounds before the final ended his wartime experience. However, many folks who have read the book believe the most exciting part of his story actually begins with his postwar accounts.

Born in 1837, outside Abingdon, Virginia, young Tom grew up around the hard work of farm life. He hardened his stamina and developed a solid work ethic. In May 1861, along with members of the Washington Mounted Rifles, he left his home and reported to camp in Richmond. During the Battle of Haw's Shop on May 28 1864, Tom received a wound, which resulted in the amputation of his left foot and ended his wartime service.

While the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) did not enter the popular lexicon until 1970, several Civil War veterans displayed PTSD-like symptoms. Perhaps, Colley struggled too, but participating in religious activity helped him to cope with everyday life. Churches took on added importance, as they raised money to help needy veteran families, and provided a welcoming environment for all in the communities they served. Tom wrote of the church and his faith. Recalling a revival in 1872, he stated: "I was soundly 'converted' and cleansed from all my past sins and was made to feel and know that 'God' for Christ's sake has power to cleanse a sinners heart and that he can feel and know it for himself."

Colley sought to enhance his education, so in 1870, he enrolled in the Bryant and Stratton College in Baltimore, where he took courses in penmanship. A lifetime love of writing developed, leading to his multi-

volume journals. Getting affairs in order allowed him to marry on Christmas Day 1872, and he and wife Ann Eliza had reared 12 children.

Thomas Wallace Colley died on September 24, 1919. A comrade penned his obituary, noting: "He was one of the most daring Confederate soldiers in the cavalry service. He was a man of powerful physique and was conspicuous in any crowd, clad, as he always was, in a suit of gray. He took great interest in looking after the welfare of all his comrades and of every man who was a true Confederate." In the end, after struggling to overcome lingering physical and mental residue of war, Colley developed a degree of steadfast determination to make the best of his situation in life. When compiling his biographical sketches, writing of himself, he simply stated, "Let someone else speak for him."

I hope to speak with you in the not too distant future. In the interim, those interested in purchasing a copy of the book, *In Memory of Self and Comrades: Thomas Wallace Colley's Recollections of Civil War Service in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry*, can practice social distancing and order a copy from any online bookstore. ISBN #9781621904304.

Until we can join together, face to face, stay safe!

## Battlefield Tour Date Changed!

The **2020 Battlefield Tour** of West Virginia will be Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Updated tour information has already been sent to members. The tour will be headquartered at the Isaac Jackson Hotel in downtown Elkins.

Late August will be warmer, and hopefully by then, the virus will be under control. I know not everyone will still be able to attend. If so, please contact Rae Radovich, tour chair, and you will be sent a refund check.

## BULLETIN BOARD



The **Kenosha Civil War Museum** is putting on a bunch of programs which can be watched on facebook:

The Petersburg Regiment in the Civil War:  
A History of the 12th Virginia Infantry From John Brown's Hanging to Appomattox, 1859-1865

**Available Now** | [Watch on Facebook](#)

**Presented by John Horn.**

I've Heard of Her: Belle Boyd

**Available Now** | [Watch on Facebook](#)

**Presented by Jenn Edginton & Samantha Machalik.**

Medical Innovations of the Civil War

**Wednesday, April 29 | 12pm** | [Watch LIVE on Facebook](#)

**Presented by Trevor Steinbach.**

Illinois Regiments at Gettysburg: July 1863

**Friday, May 8 | 12pm** | [Watch LIVE on Facebook](#)

**Presented by Dennis Doyle.**

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

## Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Due to government-ordered shutdowns, CWRT events are being or have been cancelled on an ad hoc basis. Contact the sponsoring organization for up to date details. Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional upcoming events, and cancellations.

## Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

**June 12th:** Brian Wills on *George Henry Thomas*

Address all communications regarding this newsletter, or membership, to the editor, at [editor@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:editor@chicagocwrt.org).

Reminder: Stay healthy!

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