



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXX, Number 6

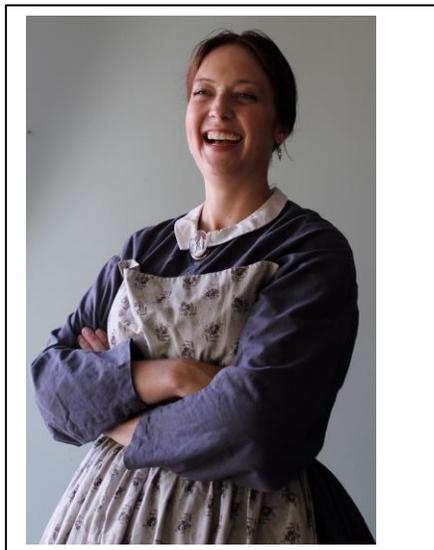
Chicago, Illinois

February 2021

799th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## Leslie Goddard presents: "Clara Barton, Civil War Nurse"

**Zoom Meeting. Time: Feb. 12, 2021 07:30 PM CST**



History will come alive in the talented hands of historian Leslie Goddard, who will introduce Barton, the first woman to serve as a nurse on the front lines of a battlefield, as a tireless worker who faced remarkable challenges in her quest to care for wounded soldiers. Learn about the medical conditions during the American Civil War and about the courage required for a woman who dared to brave the war's front lines.

Leslie Goddard, Ph.D., is an award-winning actress and scholar who has been portraying famous women and presenting history lectures for nearly 20 years. Her portrayals, including Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt, Queen Elizabeth II, and Louisa May Alcott, have been seen by audiences in 18 states. She holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University specializing in U.S. history and American Studies, as well as master's degrees in both theater and museum studies. A former museum director, she is the author of two books on Chicago history and currently works full-time as a historical interpreter, author, and public speaker. Leslie is past Secretary of the Chicago CWRT.

**Zoom Meeting ID: 849 2088 7271**  
**Passcode: 024273**

## Battlefield Preservation

### New \$5.5M building to house Gettysburg battlefield artifacts, fossils and more



An artist's rendering of the new building

Historical items hanging from fossilized dinosaur footprints to a program from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address will soon find a new home in Gettysburg.

The Adams County Historical Society (ACHS) has announced that, in order to provide a long-term home for their collection, they will begin construction on a new facility starting next year. The 29,000 square foot project is projected to cost \$5.5 million and to be finished in the fall of 2022.

The new location will be on Biglerville Road, north of the borough of Gettysburg and adjoining a portion of the battlefield, moving from the current Springs Avenue location within Gettysburg. The aging of their current facility, which had always been intended as a temporary home, was cited as a major reason for the move.

"Our current facility lacks important temperature and humidity controls, and there is no fire suppression system," said ACHS Capital Campaign Chair Jacqueline White in a press release. "We worry every day that these incredible resources—the very soul of Gettysburg and Adams County—could deteriorate further or be lost if we don't act now."

The goal of the new facility will be to expand upon the history of Adams County and its residents, which includes the pivotal Civil War battle, as well as offering new hands-on programming and a historical archive.

The fundraising began with a digital campaign event announcing over \$2.7 million in gifts and pledges towards the new facility. The event included endorsements from noted Civil War documentarian Ken Burns, "Gods and Generals" novelist Jeff Shaara and "Gettysburg" actor Stephen Lang.

According to Burns “the history of Gettysburg and Adams County is not just local history—it’s a microcosm of United States history.”

“Not only will we save this incredible collection, we are creating a home for this community’s remarkable story,” said ACHS executive director Andrew Dalton in a press release. “From prehistoric times to the days of Eisenhower and beyond, this will be an experience unlike any other.” (h/t Pennlive)

The proposed new building has drawn criticism, as the location (near Barlow’s Knoll, site of much fighting on Day 1 of the battle) lies on areas that were part of the battlefield. Critics want the property to become part of the battlefield park, with the new building to be located on non-battlefield property.

## **January Meeting**

**By Mark Matranga**

Dr. Jennifer M. Murray spoke to The Civil War Round Table at its 798<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting on January 8, 2021, on “General George Meade.” Murray, who specializes in military history, at Oklahoma State University, has authored numerous articles on General Meade. She is currently working on a biography of the general.

George Gordon Meade was born in Cadiz, Spain in 1815. After graduating from West Point in 1835, he was assigned to the artillery; he remained in the service for only a year, after which he worked as a civil engineer. He reentered military service in 1842 and was assigned to the Topographical Engineers. Following the Mexican War, he built lighthouses and headed the Survey of the Great Lakes. When war came, Meade was appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers, to command a brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves working in the defenses of Washington. His brigade was detached to the Peninsula where it saw heavy action at Glendale during the Seven Days Battles where Meade was severely wounded. He recuperated in time to participate in Second Manassas, and then assumed division command for the Antietam Campaign.

The Pennsylvania Reserves performed brilliantly during that campaign. Under Meade’s leadership, it captured Turner’s Gap at South Mountain on September 14, 1862, and three days later fought in the Cornfield at Antietam. Meade, who took command of the Corps upon Hooker’s wounding, wrote his wife, “I was in the thick of it. I was hit by a spent grape shot, giving me a severe contusion.” Promoted to Major General in November 1862, he and his division soldiered on: The Reserves pierced Stonewall Jackson’s line on Prospect Hill at Fredericksburg in December, an assault that ultimately failed due to lack of support.

Meade led the V Corps in the Chancellorsville Campaign in May 1863, where he argued for taking the offensive, to no avail. It then came as a shock when on June 30, 1863, as the army

maneuvered northward in pursuit of Lee's, he learned that Hooker had been relieved and he had been placed in command. This began a two-week period during which Meade conducted operations at Gettysburg and pursued Lee to the banks of the Potomac at Williamsport. Initially lauded as "Waterloo Eclipsed" by the press, Meade's reputation plummeted when critics claimed he let Lee escape.

Meade was undoubtedly a victim of political intrigue: The two Dans, Sickles and Butterfield, both Hooker loyalists, let it be known that Meade wanted to retreat but was overruled by his generals. He had issued the Pipe Creek circular which outlined a defensive contingency; however, he had previously sent Hancock to Gettysburg to assess the situation; he reported that Gettysburg was the place to make the fight. Nonetheless, Sickles wrote that the army won the battle not because of Meade, but despite him. This led to his being called before the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, an investigation that led nowhere.

Some continue to insist that Meade did not want to fight at Gettysburg, others conclude that Meade had determined to stay and was seeking confirmation from his generals. The pursuit from Gettysburg is more controversial. Some argue there was none, an exaggeration. Murray considers Pleasanton's handling of the cavalry "disjointed" which reflects on Meade, and it cannot be left unsaid that perhaps he called one too many Councils of War. There were reasons for not attacking at Williamsport: a damaged army with several new and unreliable corps commanders, logistical problems, his mission to protect the Capitol. The question may still be asked: Could Meade have misread how ardent was the administration's desire for a swift end to the conflict?

Meade's handling of the Army after the Gettysburg Campaign ended has recently been given overdue scholarly treatment, but he attempted, unsuccessfully, to deal with Lee at Bristoe Station and Mine Run in the autumn of 1863. Once Grant came east in 1864, Meade faded as Grant favored Sheridan and the press, no friend of Meade, gave all credit to the Westerners.

Murry notes that the "Victor of Gettysburg" will not be found in the Pantheon of Civil War greats. This is puzzling. By war's end, George Gordon Meade was one of the highest-ranking officers in the Army. He had excelled at all command levels. His performance on the second day at Gettysburg was exemplary, and he did win that pivotal battle of the Civil War. Perhaps Meade was victimized by the politics of the Army of the Potomac, his own prickly personality, a hostile press, and an administration that naively believed in the battle of annihilation. Professor Murray will no doubt address this issue and the others that swirl around the performance of this highly effective officer.



## BULLETIN BOARD

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

**Friday, February 12 | Noon | Reconstruction: A Revolution. Presenter: Victoria Smalls, Reconstruction Era National Historical Park | [Watch on Facebook](#)**

The Reconstruction Era, 1861-1900, was a historic period in which the United States grappled with the question of how to integrate millions of newly free African Americans into social, political, economic, and labor systems. Ranger Smalls's presentation focuses on aspects of education, citizenship, and land ownership for the Freedmen, on prominent figures and political leadership, on 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution and present a new timeline of Reconstruction.

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

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The **Congress of Civil War Round Tables** is sponsoring a series of virtual Civil War Lectures by some of the nation's leading historians.

Visit <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html> to view the complete schedule and register

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On Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, the **Abraham Lincoln Bookshop**'s "House Divided" series will feature an interview with author James Oakes, discussing his latest book, *The Crooked Path to Abolition*. The event starts at 3 p.m. CST. Visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/> for more.

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## More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Due to government-ordered shutdowns, CWRT events are being cancelled or going online 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 coming events.

Feb. 3rd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Bruce Allardice on "Infernal Machines"  
Feb. 5th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Mike Powell on "African-Americans in the U.S. Navy"  
Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, Milwaukee CWRT: Doug Dammann on "Benjamin Franklin White: the First Wisconsin's Surgeon"  
Feb. 12th, **Chicago CWRT**: Leslie Goddard presents "Clara Barton"  
Feb. 16th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Ken Rutherford on "America's Buried History: Landmines in the Civil War"  
Feb. 25th, South Suburban CWRT: John Horn on "The Petersburg Regiment: A History of the 12th Virginia Infantry"

## **Future Chicago CWRT Meetings (all Zoom until further notice)**

Mar. 12th: Greg Biggs, *The Nevin-Freeman Address*  
Apr. 9th: Ron Kirkwood on *Too Much for Human Endurance: The Spangler Farm Hospitals*  
May 14th: Michael Hardy on *General Lee's Immortals*  
June 11<sup>th</sup>: Wil Greene on *Petersburg*

### **From the Past Meetings of the CWRT of Chicago:**

**15 years ago, February 2006:** James McPherson presented "Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief"

**10 years ago, February 2011:** Dan Sutherland presented "Guerilla War"

**5 years ago, February 2016:** Don Doyle presented "An International History of the Civil War"

Have a great 2021!

