



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXX1, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March 2022

809th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## ***Mark Laubacher on***

# ***"The U.S.S. Red Rover: Hospital of Firsts"***

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

**Zoom Option ID 898 4099 2845; No Passcode needed**



To adequately treat illness and trauma afflicted upon military personnel during the US Civil War, a true military hospital ship for use on internal waterways was built. Originally, USS Red Rover was a hospital ship for the Union Army's Western Gunboat Flotilla operating on the Mississippi River. Red Rover would go on to become the first US Naval hospital ship in late December 1862. This was a hospital of many firsts, commencing with females who served as nurses aboard Red Rover. They were paid crew members, working in various capacities comprised of African Americans and a group Sisters of the Holy Cross of St. Mary from Notre Dame in Indiana. Ultimately, 8

African American women were on the Navy payroll by the end of the war, including Ann Stokes, who would eventually earn the title of "nurse," and go on to draw a pension from the Federal government following the war. The success of the Red Rover was a direct result of the contribution of civilian women working as nurses aboard the vessel. From June 11, 1862 to March 31, 1865, Red Rover admitted 1697 patients and touted a survival rate of over 90%. The injuries and illnesses of the sailors of the gunboats ran a broad spectrum. Such women pioneers would ultimately lead to the creation of the US Navy Nurse Corps in 1908.

Mark Laubacher is a RN and paramedic working as a Certified Specialist in Poison Information since 1992 at the Central Ohio Poison Center located at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio. Prior to this, he was a full-time staff nurse at Children's Emergency Department for 4 years. He received his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Capital University in 1989. He is also currently a faculty member for Grant Medical Center Paramedic Program in Columbus, Ohio. Having delivered over 500 presentations, he routinely presents at the state and national levels on various topics of toxicological emergencies.

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## **Battlefield Preservation**

Dear \_\_\_\_.

I have to tell you about an historic opportunity that can become the second-largest private-sector preservation transaction in the history of the battlefield preservation movement:

The purchase and preservation of 245 acres of land including the James Custis Farm where the 1862 Battle of Williamsburg took place.

The Civil War Fortification Study Group said that “[the James Custis Farm] witnessed some of the most desperate fighting during the Battle of Williamsburg.” It’s easy to understand why. It was fought in almost unceasing rain that turned roads into streams of mud, and rivers and creeks into bottomless swamps. It was also on this land where Union General Winfield Scott Hancock earned the sobriquet, “Hancock, the Superb”.

In the end, both sides declared victory with casualty counts numbering 1,703 for the South and 2,239 for the North. Many of those lost in battle were interred where they fell on the Custis Farm site, making the property a sacred and hallowed battlefield site, indeed. ...

You get a sense of the significance of this battlefield ground, I’m sure. But let me tell you what makes this opportunity even more historic for the Trust and for battlefield preservation: Three separate partners have joined us to save and protect the Williamsburg battlefield land: ...

The total value of these awards and other sources is nearly an unprecedented \$9.4 million dollars. If you and your friends who love history as much as I do can help us raise just \$57,000 to complete the funding, you can take credit for saving the largest unprotected and at-risk property associated with the Williamsburg Battlefield.

Please don't miss this incredible opportunity. For every \$1 you contribute, our partners will match it with \$163. Help us make history with this purchase and save the Custis Farm and the invaluable land where the Battle of Williamsburg took place.

Yours, 'til the battle is won,

David N. Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

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## February Meeting

By Mark Matranga

**Anne Durkin Keating** offered an interesting glimpse into the intersection of Chicago and Civil War history in her talk at the 808<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table on February 11, 2022, on “Juliette Kinzie, the Civil War, and the Making of Chicago.” Born in 1806 into a privileged Connecticut family, Juliette Magill was lured westward by her uncle who served as Indian Agent in Chicago. He described romantic images of the West for Juliette; more important, he introduced her to John H. Kinzie who she married in 1830.

Kinzie was agent to the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) at the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers portage. Juliette loved life on the frontier. In her book “Wau-Bun: The Early Day in the Northwest” she gave detailed, respectful descriptions of Ho-Chunk leaders and their culture. She also made interesting connections while there, meeting Jefferson Davis and her future brother-in-law David Hunter, both of whom were posted in the territory during the Black Hawk War. She would put these connections to good use once war came.

Juliette and John moved to Chicago in 1833 when it remained a small settlement. Recent treaties permitted Kinzie to claim land in Chicago, whereupon he and Juliette built a home at Cass and Michigan (Wabash and Hubbard). They were instrumental in developing the city's first religious, cultural, and social institutions, most notably its first Episcopal church and the Chicago Historical Society. The Kinzies made a fortune and lost it in the 1837 Panic, but slowly regained economic prosperity by the 1850's.

Originally a Whig, John helped organize the Republican Party in 1856 and supported Lincoln for President in 1860. Juliette attended the opening of the Wigwam Convention, writing daughter Nellie, "there was not a sound in the vast building except the voices of the speakers..." adding, "it takes Chicago to do up a thing splendidly." She met the future President during his visit to Chicago in December 1860.

Juliette supplied three sons to the Union Army, and, from her perspective, gave up Nellie to the South, where "slavery in all its glory" existed. Nellie married a Southerner involved in the cotton trade, William Gordon III, in 1855 and moved to his family home in Savannah, Georgia. Keating noted that Gordon's family refused to travel to Chicago for the wedding, citing their "principles." She wrote to Nellie with worry for the "unhappy families who are sundered by this unnatural contest." She was obviously referring to herself.

As war approached in April 1861, she wrote Nellie "Little did I think when I yielded a reluctant consent to give up my daughter to a distant home that...that home would become a foreign hostile one." Reminding Nellie that the Southern people "are our brethren still," she nonetheless foresaw destruction; she wrote Nellie in July 1861, "As it is sort of a family quarrel it will rage with twofold more bitterness than any other contest. The present differences will open the floodgates of expression."

The war interrupted the mail, causing Juliette to devise alternate means for her correspondence to reach Nellie. Son John, stationed at Cairo, used connections to send mail to Georgia. Later, she sent mail to friends and family in England, Havana and Canada who forwarded it. Son Arthur, stationed offshore from Savannah, sent mail into Savannah under flag of truce. In early 1864 Juliette wrote Lincoln for assistance, telling him her daughter was "a poor little prisoner of war...a citizen of Chicago...who loves her home and the old flag." The President helped her send a trunk to Nellie.

The entire Kinzie family participated in the war effort. Juliette worked with the Sanitary Fair; John was a paymaster stationed in Chicago and Detroit. Son John was mortally wounded during the Battle for Island No. 10. Arthur served as aide to General Hunter and on General Washburn's staff. George enlisted upon reaching age 18 and later joined his brother in Memphis. Both he and Arthur were captured and sent to an Alabama prison camp, prompting a letter writing campaign aimed at their release by both Juliette and Nellie. Juliette wrote President Davis; Nellie wrote her husband asking to see Davis and was travelling to Selma when her brothers were finally released in December 1864.

Juliette also wrote a family friend, Edward Colt, who served on Sherman's staff, asking him to help Nellie and her family leave Savannah. She relayed news from his wife, who "told us of your departure from Atlanta." "[W]e then knew that our daughter had the

pleasure in store...of seeing her old friend.” She congratulated him on the army’s recent success: “The country...is jubilant over your splendid March and its splendid termination. There is nothing like it on record.” General Sherman made a courteous visit to Nellie shortly after Christmas, bringing letters from home. He arranged for Nellie to return to Chicago and for her husband’s cotton to ship by way of New York. Despite his family having benefitted, General Gordon felt betrayed “that you should associate with my enemies;” Nellie was unrepentant - she wrote her mother that she “felt hurt but not ashamed.”

Neither John nor Juliette lived to see Chicago become the great metropolis of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. John died suddenly June 1865; Juliette was tragically poisoned accidentally and died in 1870. Keating, author of “The World of Juliette Kinzie: Chicago Before the Fire,” argues that Juliette may have seemingly disappeared in that conflagration along with the city she helped build but deserves recognition as a ‘founding father’ of early Chicago.



## BULLETIN BOARD

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

Friday, March 11, noon lunchbox lecture series  
Wayne D. Rhine presents “Chicago’s Mercantile Battery”

March 19-20: Civil War Medical Weekend

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 March 24<sup>th</sup>, starting at 3:30 CST, the **Abraham Lincoln Bookshop**'s "House Divided" series will feature an interview with author Roger Lowenstein, who will discuss his book on the Lincoln administration, *Ways and Means*. Visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/> for more.

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**Bruce Allardice** has been busy lately. His article on Confederate General R. C. Tyler, "Lost General is Finally Found" will appear in the "Emerging Civil War" website on March 2. His article "Twenty Days in the Life of a Common Soldier" appeared in the March issue of Civil War News. And his article on baseball during the Civil War era, "Runs, Runs and More Runs" which appeared in December's Baseball Research Journal has been nominated for The Society of American Baseball Research (SABR's ) baseball history article of the year. See [www.civilwarbruce.com](http://www.civilwarbruce.com) for more.

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**Leslie Goddard** will be presenting "Clara Barton, Civil War Nurse," March 5<sup>th</sup> to the Lake County Women's Coalition, and March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Carol Stream Public Library. The latter event is virtual and open to the public. See [www.lesliegoddard.info](http://www.lesliegoddard.info) for more information.

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The CWRT's **Winter Executive Committee** meeting will be held on March 5.

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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.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Gordon Ramsey on "Balloons and the Civil War"

March 4<sup>th</sup>, Northern Illinois CWRT: Max and Donna Daniels as "Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln"

March 7<sup>th</sup>, Rock Valley (Rockford) CWRT: Alan Ovies on "The Boy Generals: George Custer, Wesley Merritt and the Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac"

March 8<sup>th</sup>, McHenry County CWRT: Gene Salecker on "Nathan Bedford Forrest's 1864 Railroad Raid"

March 10<sup>th</sup>, Milwaukee CWRT: Mark Laubacher on "The USS Red Rover: Hospital of Firsts"

March 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Neil Chatelein on "Defending the Arteries of Rebellion"

March 19th, Salt Creek CWRT: Steven Alban on "The Actual Causes of the Rebellion According to the Words of Joshua Giddings and Abraham Lincoln"

March 24th, South Suburban CWRT: Eric Lindblade on "The 26th North Carolina"

Apr. 1st, Northern Illinois CWRT: "General Robert E. Lee"

Apr. 2nd, Two Old Goats in Cedar Lake: David Keller on "Command at Antietam"

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## Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

Apr. 8th: Jeffrey Hunt on *Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station and Mine Run*

May 13th: Dr. Thomas Carson on *Lincoln as Moral Exemplar*

June 10th: Lauren Szady on *Civilian Life During the War*

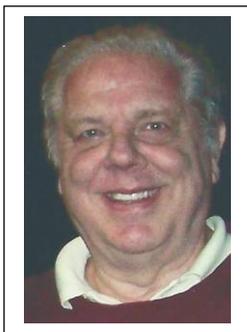
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**Zoom notice:** For the remainder of the 2021-22 year, a recurring zoom meeting has been set up. The Zoom option for viewing the presentation will use the same ID each time, and no passcode will be required.

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## West Virginia Battlefield Tour

Our annual battlefield tour is June 15-19 this year (a little later than usual), and will visit an area we've never been to before as a group—the battlefields of West Virginia. Tour information is on the CWRT's website.



Our friend Larry Gibbs passed away Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> at age 79.

He was a past president of the CWRT and a longtime fixture on the battlefield tours. We all remember him and Ed Bearss bantering back and forth on those tours, with Larry coming off 2<sup>nd</sup> best but never losing his humor.

The St. Louis Cardinals have lost their most devoted follower, and Leslie and my pugs have lost their beloved "Uncle Larry."

A graveside service will be held on Friday, March 4th 2022 at 11:00 AM at the Greenview Memorial Gardens (1201 Avenue of the Cities, East Moline, IL 61244).

## **A few more remembrances:**

One tour I believe it was our tour to DC and we were on the trail of John Wilkes Booth. It was absolutely pouring (a condition that never seem to faze Ed Bearss) Apparently Larry was edging towards getting on one of our nearby busses when Ed's booming voice was heard and he said "Gibbs don't even think about getting on that bus." Larry's other passion was the St. Louis Cardinals. It was Larry's mission in life to tell us how great they were and how mediocre your team was by comparison. At least one of the days of the tour you could count on Larry to be in full Cardinal regalia. I will miss my friend Mr. Gibbs a good friend and one of this organization's true characters. (Bob Stoller)

I remember that when Bruce and I first decided we wanted to adopt some dogs, Larry kindly stepped in to provide a reference for us. From then on, he always gave us a pug calendar every year and always stopped by to visit "his" pups when he was in the area. Once, when we were all on our way to a Civil War meeting, he stopped by, bringing along a change of clothes. They happily jumped all over him and covered him with fur, but he still looked sharp for the meeting. He was the one of a kind and will be deeply, deeply missed. (Leslie Goddard)

I am deeply saddened by his passing. He was a good friend who befriended me when I first joined the roundtable over 30 years ago. I miss him already. At least his memory will be a blessing for us all. (David Zucker)

Larry was the first person I met when I first attended the Round Table in 2010 when my wife insisted that I get a hobby. He went out of his way to make me comfortable and welcomed. When I realized he was a Cardinal fan, I began to think I knew why ... my name being Bob Gibson. But no!!! The real reason was his kindness and genuine interest in people. No wonder why Ed Bearss didn't want him away from the bus and the tour group. He will be missed. (Bob Gibson)

Larry had spoken with me several years ago about helping him put a tour like this together and I always remembered that, "Wow, he would choose me to help!" What a good friend! I am saddened that I didn't get to place a long-planned call to him sooner. He will always be remembered fondly. (Paul Estes)

I always looked forward to seeing him on the tours and enjoyed his good nature and good-natured targets of Ed's attention. I definitely missed him on recent tours. (Steve Thompson)

What sad news! He was a lot of fun. Now he and Ed can continue to banter back and forth in the afterlife! Ha! May God Bless Larry! (Karen Weber)