



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXX1, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June 2022

809th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

***Lauren Szady on***

## ***"Politicians in Petticoats: The Women of the Abolitionist Movement"***

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: June 10th, 2022, 07:30 PM CST**

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



While not originally admitted to the earliest abolitionist societies, women were always an important part of the movement. Some names, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Sojourner Truth have been remembered by history as influential ladies in the anti-slavery movement, both with their words and actions. However, women from all walks of life-- rich and poor, black and white, northern and southern-- spoke up about this issue that started out as a male political opinion but turned into a hotly contested social matter for all. Their opinions were not without contest though. Many were seen as "stirring up trouble on the slavery issue" while others divided groups by breaking with convention. Throughout

women's history, only the most vocal or "politically correct" women are remembered as having an influence but during the abolitionist movement, many women took a stand and raised their voices to help bring light to those with even less rights than they had. On June 10th, Lauren Szady will explore some of these women and how their voices changed the course of the anti-slavery movement.

Lauren Szady is a museum professional with over 10-years experience in education at several small to mid-size organizations over the course of her career. She earned a

bachelor's degree with honors in Public History from DePaul University and a master's degree in Museum Studies through Johns Hopkins University. In true historian style, the earliest written evidence that Lauren has about her chosen career is from when she was in 3rd grade announcing that she wanted to be a reenactor when she grew up. Her passion for museum education is a step forward in this childhood dream--while also proving her mother wrong that historical reenacting, or in this case interpretation and presentation, is a "real" career option!

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## Battlefield Preservation

**Jackson's Flank Attack:** We have an urgent opportunity to save three historic tracts of land across which the Battle of Chancellorsville raged. Taken together, these three parcels of hallowed ground add up to 45 acres and total \$1,656,000 in transaction value. Through anticipated federal and state matching grants and other gifts, we have secured nearly 90% of the funding, but we must raise the final 10% before it's too late.

Your generous support can help save these truly historic lands today for only \$157,500 — a \$10.50-to-1 match of any gift you make today.

**The first and largest of the three tracts** is 42 acres and includes the site of the historic Dowdall's Tavern.

In May of 1863, the Tavern served as the home of Reverend Melzi A. Chancellor, pastor of Wilderness Baptist Church. The tavern was a prominent landmark during the battle, with Union General Oliver O. Howard, commander of the Union's 11th Corps, establishing his headquarters at the house, and Buschbeck's men positioned in entrenchments on the southern edge of the property. Late on May 2nd, four Georgia regiments of Doles's Brigade charged violently across the tract. Kirk Bissell of the 4th Georgia described attacking Federal guns near Dowdall's Tavern: "a yell and a dash and over and around and on we flew."

In the aftermath of the Confederates' attack, Dowdall's Tavern, like every other home, barn, or church for miles around, became a field hospital.

Given its size and prime location on the Orange Turnpike (now the dangerously busy Virginia State Route 3), it's a miracle this tract hasn't already been developed.

Robert K. Krick, who probably knows more about this battle and Jackson's Flank Attack than anyone alive today, said "the survival, undeveloped, of a tract this large in this crucial location is nothing short of miraculous. Saving it would be a spectacular preservation coup."

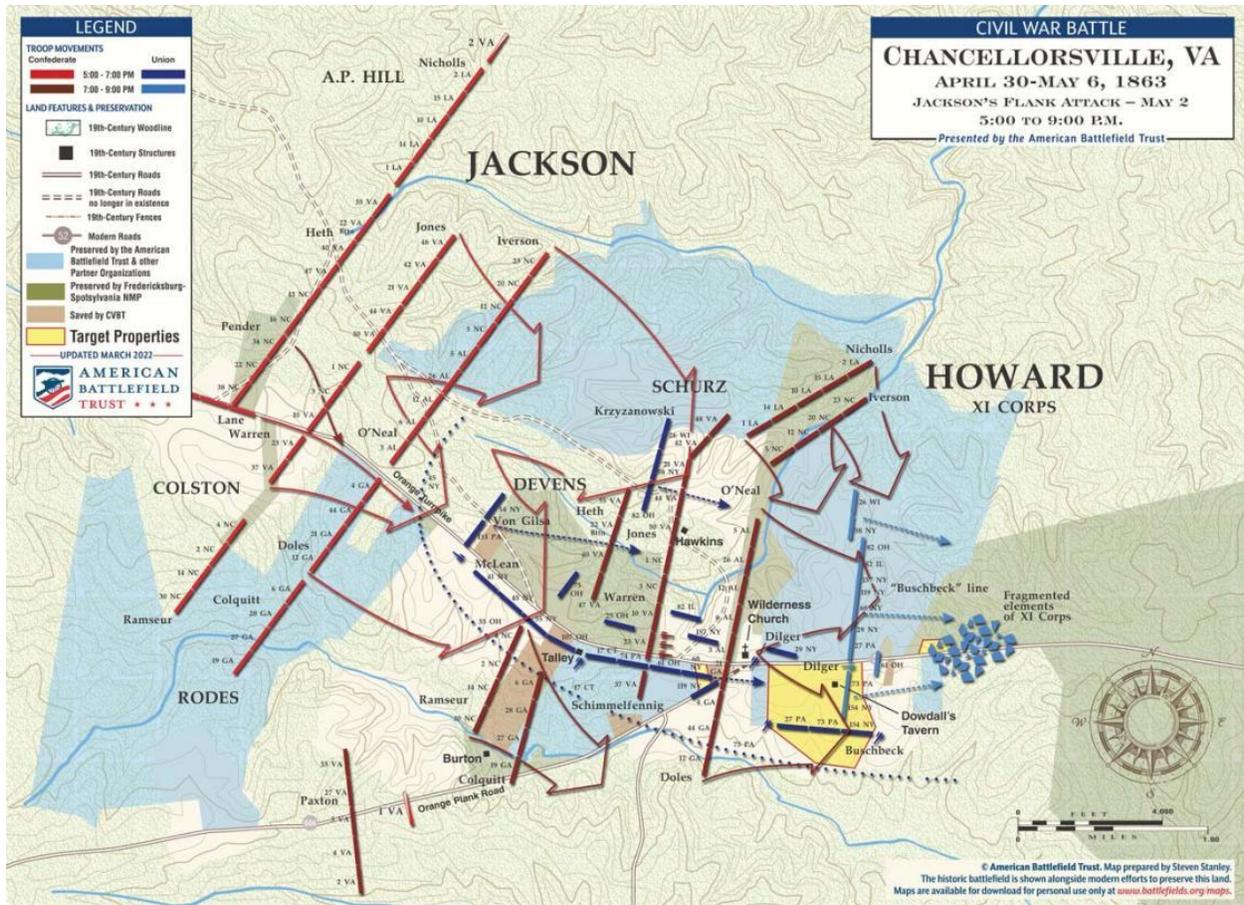
The additional two tracts are smaller but no less important, for they help fill in key gaps and extend the areas of the battlefield we can preserve.

A nearly 2-acre tract, surrounded by land preserved by the Trust, partner organizations, and the National Park Service, is a critical puzzle piece of preservation. An Alabamian in O'Neal's Brigade, which stormed through this tract, described a jubilant advance so overpowering that "Lucifer with his host" could not have halted it.

Finally, the small one-acre tract highlighted on your map between the Orange Turnpike and the Orange Plank Road is a key project by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, and they have asked for our help in funding the transaction.

By securing these two additional puzzle pieces, we will succeed in preserving a contiguous stretch of preserved battle land that will be saved forever.

*The American Battlefield Trust*



## May Meeting

By Mark Matranga

The Civil War Round Table hosted James S. Pula at its 809<sup>th</sup> Regular meeting on May 13, 2022, when he presented “The Eleventh Corps at Gettysburg: A Reappraisal.” Pula, history professor at Purdue University North Central and past editor of *Gettysburg Magazine*, has chronicled the contributions of German Americans in the Civil War and is the author of “Under the Crescent Moon: With the XI Corps in the Civil War.”

Pula maintains that the XI Corps’ reputation as the ‘Flying Dutchmen’ is unfair, that its rout at Chancellorsville was not indicative of the fighting spirit of the German soldier. He made the case that the Corps’ overall performance at Gettysburg reflected that spirit. Some may consider this a difficult proposition but in the broad perspective it can be fairly said that the rank and file and the leader of the XI Corps made an important contribution to Union victory at Gettysburg.

The XI Corps’ major problem was political: it was an outsider in the Army of the Potomac. Many soldiers of the XIth spoke a foreign language. Native-born soldiers blamed its German speakers for the disaster at Chancellorsville. Francis C. Barlow, the West Point trained Harvard Law graduate commander of the First Division of the Corps expressed his “disgust & indignation” with his German soldiers, writing after Chancellorsville, “I have always been down on the ‘Dutch’ & I do not abate my contempt now.”

Notwithstanding this, Barlow was a competent commander, as were his brigade commanders Leopold von Gilsa and Adelbert Ames. Adolph von Steinwehr (2<sup>nd</sup> Division) hailed from an old-world military family. Carl Schurz (3<sup>rd</sup> Division), prominent German political leader, friend of the President, and his brigade commanders Alexander Schimmelfennig and Krzyzanowski all possessed reasonable military skills. The dilemma for Corps commander O.O. Howard was that shortly after arriving at Gettysburg on July 1, he found himself in command of all Union forces on the field.

Howard arrived ahead of his troops and learned that John Reynolds was dead. He directed Schurz to take command of the Corps with Schimmelfennig to take his division. Howard’s initial plan was to have Third and First and Divisions to reinforce and extend the right of the First Corps on Oak Hill, but the enemy already occupied that position. Union cavalry warned of Confederates massing between the Carlisle and York roads north of Gettysburg; Schurz thereupon put Schimmelfennig at right angles to the First Corps at Oak Hill, with Barlow lining up on his right at the Carlisle Road. However, Barlow disobeyed this order, moving out to Blocher’s Knoll, exposing both of his flanks.

The Corps left performed admirably, especially the 45<sup>th</sup> New York and Dilger's and Wheeler's batteries which pummeled the Confederates on Oak Hill. Third Division was set out in a long skirmish line with Krzyzanowski's brigade in reserve. But when Doles Brigade attacked from the north and the brigades of Gordon, Hays and Avery from the northeast, neither von Gilsa nor Ames could hold. Notwithstanding relative strengths of the opposing forces, at the vital points of contact Union forces were outnumbered and flanked. Krzyzanowski's brigade and the 157<sup>th</sup> New York sent to reinforce Barlow were dealt with in detail; Coster's Brigade, sent from Cemetery Hill to reinforce the line north of town, was inadequate to stem the force of the assault.

Pula makes a point regarding 'missing and captured' casualties which he argues do not necessarily imply massive surrender, as many missing were later found to have died. True, but considering that the Eleventh Corps fight was far shorter than the First's, its casualties were comparatively high (the First had far more missing/captured, however). As Pula concedes, casualties do not tell the whole story. Regarding the retreat through town, it appears both Corps retreated at approximately the same time; neither 'gave way' forcing the other to retreat.

The fighting qualities of the XI Corps are not at the heart of the controversies of July 1, 1863. Pula points out the role the Eleventh played in the assaults on Cemetery and East Cemetery as well as Culp's Hills later in the battle. Rather it is the decisions made by its leaders. Howard's overall handling of the battle was beyond the scope of Pula's talk but placing von Steinwehr's Division on Cemetery Hill was crucial as it provided a rallying point for both Corps and, more important, the decisive defensive position which determined the outcome of the battle. A shorter more compact line north of town would likely have proved more resistant to the Confederate assault, but Barlow's move precluded that result. But had Howard committed his last division north of town on July 1, there may have been a Gettysburg disaster. Pula tells us why that did not happen: the Eleventh Corps was defeated, but not routed on that day.



## BULLETIN BOARD

*Our in-person meetings are held at:*

**Holiday Inn O'Hare**

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago, IL 60631

*Parking at the Holiday Inn is FREE*

Dinner \$40.00 Members and Non- Members

Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30

Presentation only is \$10 per person.

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

Friday, June 10, noon:

Steve Acker will present "Gettysburg Stories"

Saturday, June 25, 10-4:

Civil War Technology Living History Day

Friday, July 8, noon:

Steve Stuckey on "The Civil War's Impact on Cream City Brick Industry"

Friday, Aug. 12, noon:

Steve Magnusen on "Major Ephraim Dawes"

For more on programs at the museum, visit

<https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/events/>

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**Leslie Goddard** will present "Louisa May Alcott" Aug. 18th, at 7 p.m., in the DuPage County Historical Museum. For more information, visit <http://www.lesliegoddard.info/calendar.html>

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**Rob Girardi** will present "The Murder of General Bull Nelson" June 9<sup>th</sup>, to the Tennessee Valley CWRT.

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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.

June 3rd, Northern Illinois CWRT: Dave Powell on "The Tullahoma Campaign"

June 6th, Rock Valley (Rockford) CWRT: Dave Oberg on "Sons of Thunder: The History of Battery H, 1st Illinois Light Artillery"

June 14th, McHenry County CWRT: Jerry Allen on "Murphy's Law and the Peter Principle: The Holly Springs Raid"

June 17th, Salt Creek CWRT Annual Banquet: Theresa Kaminski on "Dr. Mary Walker"

June 21st, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Jerry Kowalski, topic TBA

July 11th, Rock Valley (Rockford) CWRT: Steve Acker on "The Life of a Soldier at Petersburg"

July 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Bruce Allardice on "Mysteries and Myths of the CSS"

Hunley"

July 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Father Bob Miller on "Father Sheeran CSA"

Aug. 9th, McHenry County CWRT: Dave Noe on "Merrimac: Lucky or Unlucky Ship"

Aug. 16th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Charles Knight on "From Arlington to Appomattox--  
Civil War Day by Day"

Aug. 25th, South Suburban CWRT: Bruce Allardice, topic TBA

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## Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

Sept. 9th: Sean Michael Chick on "Grant's Left Hook: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign"

Oct. 14th: Charlie Knight on "Robert E. Lee"

Nov. 11th: Mary Abroe, The Nevins-Freeman Address. Topic TBA

Dec. 9th: Garry Adelman, topic TBA

Jan. 13th, 2023: Rob Girardi, topic TBA

Feb. 10th: Bruce Allardice on "The Confederacy's 'Infernal Machines'"

Mar. 10th: Dwight Hughes on "Unlike Anything That Ever Floated"

Apr. 14th: Al Olives on "The Boy Generals. George Custer, Wesley Merritt and the Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac"

May 12th: Brian Swartz on "Passing Through Fire: Joshua Chamberlain in the Civil War"

June 9th: Tom Cartwright, topic TBA

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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.

A few slots are still available. **Sign up soon!**

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On June 23rd, at 3:30 CST, the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop's** "House Divided" series of facebook interviews will feature John Rhodehamel talking about his new book, [America's Original Sin](#). For more, visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/a-house-divided-upcoming-shows/>

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An **Ed Bearss memorial event** will be held at Gettysburg June 26<sup>th</sup>. See <https://www.battlefields.org/events/ed-bearss-memorial-event> for more.

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### **Book Sale**

More than 1,000 Civil War books donated to the CWRT, on all topics, will be sold June 25<sup>th</sup>, from 10-4, at Rob Girardi's house, 4532 N. Forestview Ave., Chicago. All proceeds will go to Battlefield Preservation. This is a great chance to pick up some great books and help the CWRT's battlefield preservation efforts.

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### **CWRT Election of Officers for 2022-2023**

The CWRT's election of officers for the next year will be held at the June meeting.

A slate of nominees will be presented at this meeting. As always, members are free to make nominations from the floor at the meeting.

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**The Congress of Civil War Round Tables** will hold its annual national meeting September 16-18 at the Kenosha Civil War Museum. This is a great chance for Round Table members to learn more about what's going on with the Civil War movement. Visit <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/2022.html> for more information.