



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXXV, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April 2026

846th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, April 10th, 2026

The Nevins-Freeman Address

Wayne Motts on

"Illinois Civil War Artifacts in the Collection of the National Civil War Museum"

Live Meeting. Time: April 10th, 2026, 07:30 PM CST.



Join historian, author, and National Civil War Museum CEO Wayne E. Motts for a dynamic PowerPoint presentation showcasing significant original Civil War artifacts connected to Illinois soldiers and leaders. He highlights items tied to notable Illinois personalities, including Abraham Lincoln, Union General John Buford, and cavalry officer Benjamin H. Grierson to name only a few. These rare historical items and stories illuminate the state's important role during the war. Wayne explores each artifact and brings to life the stories of the

individuals behind these remarkable Civil War treasures.

Wayne E. Motts serves as the CEO of the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He has led three non-profit historical organizations, including the Adams

County Historical Society in Gettysburg and the Gettysburg Foundation. For 38 years, he has guided visitors as a licensed battlefield guide at the Gettysburg National Military Park. He has also authored two published works on the Civil War.

The Nevins-Freeman Award

In 1974, The Civil War Round Table of Chicago established the Nevins-Freeman Award, and bestows it annually on an individual whose advancement of American Civil War scholarship and support for the Round Table movement warrant special recognition. The award itself is designed as a generous financial donation to a historical preservation project chosen by the recipient.

This award is named for two men whose legacies have come to be synonymous with the Civil War era: Allan Nevins, and Douglas Southall Freeman.

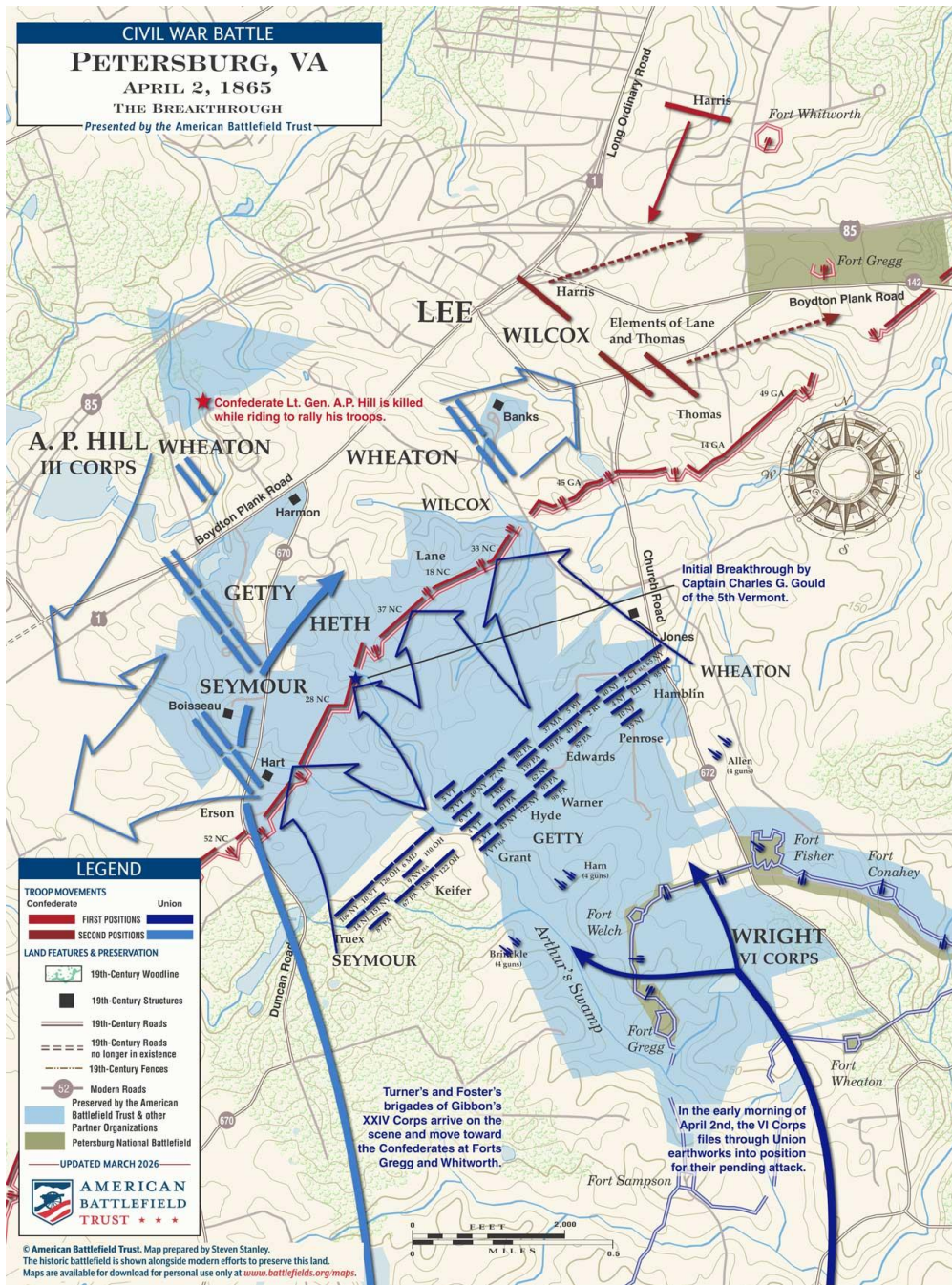
A list of past Nevins-Freeman Awardees can be viewed at the CWRT's website.

Battlefield Preservation

Dear __:

Last year, I asked for your help as we embarked on one of the largest preservation projects in the American Battlefield Trust's history. More than 400 acres at Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier have been enjoyed and appreciated by heritage tourists and countless school students for decades... but were not fully protected for future generations. **Until now.**

Our window of opportunity was brief, with just a few months to raise private funds to complete the massive transaction. But once again, the Trust's extraordinary members rose to the occasion. [Thanks to you, 417 acres at the Petersburg Breakthrough are now saved forever!](#) This creates an 857-acre swath of protected land associated with one of the Civil War's most significant battlefields.



This victory was made possible through the largest-ever matching grant from the federal American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), dedicating more than \$10 million to protect this critical land. America's most successful heritage land conservation program, the ABPP has helped the Trust save more than 36,000 acres of land in 20 states.

But that's not the only milestone this victory represents.

Last summer, we celebrated our 60,000th acre saved. Now, less than a year later, this victory at the Breakthrough brings our **total tally of hallowed ground to more than 61,000 acres** and pushes the amount saved across the Commonwealth of Virginia past 31,000. Such success in the Old Dominion is the result of more than its concentration of battlefields; the support of state government agencies – like the Virginia Department of Historic Resources – and officials are also necessary.

This victory is a prime example of what we, with our state and federal partners, can accomplish together. **But make no mistake: Trust members like you were the lynchpin.** Without you, and your long-term commitment to preserving our nation’s irreplaceable historic landscapes, we would not be able to save a single acre. Time and again, you carry us to victory, and we could not be more thankful.

'Til the battle is won,

David N. Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

March Presentation

By Mark Matranga

The Civil War Round Table featured **Cliff Roberts** at its 845th Regular Meeting on March 13, 2025, on “Castle Pinckney and the Confederate Defense of Charleston Harbor.” Roberts is co-author of *Holding Charleston by the Bridle: Castle Pinckney and the Civil War*, the first book to treat this subject. As president of the Fort Sumter Civil War Round Table and vice-president of Friends of the Charleston National Parks, he is uniquely situated to share his knowledge of this long-forgotten fort and its role in the Civil War.

It is generally accepted that the Civil War erupted after Lincoln was elected in November 1860 and when seven southern states, led by South Carolina, seceded from the union, fire eating rebels fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor on April 12, 1861. But the first action of the war in fact took place when elements of South Carolina militia forced the surrender of the garrison at Castle Pinckney, making it the first Federal military installation seized by a Southern state. Castle Pinckney lies on Shutes Folly, an irregularly shaped marshy island about a mile off the Charleston shore, where the Cooper River merges into the harbor. Initially, an earthen log fort named for Revolutionary War hero Charles Cotesworth Pinckney was completed there in 1804. Destroyed by a hurricane that September, a brick-and-mortar horseshoe shaped fort,

“Castle Pinckney,” erected in 1809 replaced it but was soon abandoned as obsolete and fell into disrepair. By the Civil War, its modern counterparts, Forts Sumter, situated closer to where the harbor opens to the sea, and Moultrie, located across the harbor on Sullivan’s Island, overshadowed it.

But Castle Pinckney did play a role in the war, first being a prisoner of war camp housing union soldiers captured at First Manassas. This use was short lived, and by October 1861 the fort was upgraded with additional embankments and artillery to augment its original complement of some 30 guns; the fort housed up to 105 soldiers. The fort did not see action during the long period Charleston was under siege. Although subjected to a naval blockade early in the war and attacks on the harbor and outlying areas, Charleston’s defenses were not directly attacked. But Union combined operations commenced in July 1863 and lasted until the city surrendered.

Charleston’s main seaward defenses were placed on Fort Johnson on James Island and Fort Gregg on Morris Island, as well as Sumter and Moultrie and multiple batteries guarding the approaches to Charleston Harbor. But Castle Pinckney was well positioned to repel ships making their way into the inner harbor or land-based troops attempting to attack the city from across the river. Eventually, Union forces constructed their own batteries, pounding Forts Wagner and Gregg; Charleston and Fort Sumter were bombarded. Eventually, Sherman’s army marched into the state, moving toward Columbia; with Federal troops menacing the city from the north, the Charleston garrison evacuated on February 17, 1865. Federal forces occupied Castle Pinckney the next day.

In 1890 Castle Pinckney was refitted for use as a lighthouse which resulted in casement and parapet walls being destroyed; this controversial use continued into the 20th century, ending in 1917. It was also converted for use in the Spanish-American War but was not placed in action. There was a movement to turn the island into a veterans’ retirement home, an effort that did not materialize. Castle Pinckney was declared a National Monument in 1924 by Presidential proclamation; that designation was repealed by Congress in 1951 when the island was turned over to the Corps of Engineers. The island was eventually acquired by the State of Carolina and subjected to various ideas and schemes, including a museum, none of which were practical. The site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, under the care of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Fort Sumter Camp 1269.

The SCV purchased the island for a nominal sum in 2011 and has engaged in historic preservation efforts and cleanup of vegetation on the site. Two Civil War cannon, Columbiads, remain in situ. It is indeed ironic that with all the effort put into Castle Pickney, the fort may never have fired a shot in battle. Nonetheless, it is an important site: George Washington first recognized its strategic value and is, according to

Roberts, a great example of the Second System of Coastal Defenses. It has been called a “Silent Sentinel,” a witness to several centuries of history, whose intriguing story is now being told.



BULLETIN BOARD

Our in-person meetings are currently held at:

Blossom Cafe

8349 West Lawrence, Chicago

Parking at the Blossom Cafe is FREE

Dinner \$50.00 Members and Non-Members

Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30

Dinner choices are Chicken Kabob or Rigatoni

Carbonara. dinnerreservations@cwrt.org

The Kenosha Civil War Museum will feature **Ted Karamanski** on April 10th, presenting on “How the Great Lakes Caused the Civil War.” The event is part of their Friday lunchbox series and will run from noon to one.

The Museum is also partnering with Carthage College for its annual the Lincoln Symposium, taking place this year on **Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25**. They are excited to once again offer a lineup of outstanding speakers and timely discussions.

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

On April 13th **Rob Girardi** will speak on “‘The Very Spirit of War.’ General John A. Logan” to the Ann Arbor CWRT. On April 6th he will present “Chicago's Memory of the Civil War” to the Sedgebrook Lincolnshire. On April 16 at the Evergreen Park Library, he’ll speak on “Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier.”

On April 30th **Dennis Doyle** will speak on “Plainfield and Will County During the Civil War” at the Plainfield Public Library.

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Apr. 1st, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Gordon Ramsey on "Hot Air Balloons at the Beginning of the Civil War"
Apr. 3rd, Northern Illinois CWRT: Laurie Schiller on "U.S. Cavalry"
Apr. 6th, Rock Valley CWRT: Laura Keyes on "Mary Lincoln's Photo Album"
Apr. 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: Wayne Motts, Nevins-Freeman Address, "Wisconsin Civil War Artifacts in the Collection of the National Civil War Museum"
Apr. 13th, Gail Borden Library in Elgin: Armchair General Discussion Group
Apr. 14th, Southwest Michigan CWRT: Ben Bever on "If This Desirable Station Could Talk"
Apr. 14th, McHenry County CWRT: Bob Grenier on "General Edmund Kirby Smith"
Apr. 18th, Du Page Annual Civil War and Militaria Show
Apr. 21st, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Bob Grenier on "The Swamp Fox of the Confederacy"
Apr. 23rd, South Suburban CWRT: **Dennis Doyle** on "Plainfield and Will County During the Civil War"
Apr. 25th, Salt Creek CWRT: Charlie Banks on "General Nathaniel P. Banks"

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

May 12th: Chris Mackowski on "A Tempest of Iron and Lead: The Battle of Spotsylvania Court House"

June 12th: Alex Rossino on "Confederate Plans for Maryland"

Sept. 11th: James Marten on "The Iron Brigade"

Oct. 9th: Ron White on "Joshua Chamberlain"

Nov. 13th: Father Bob Miller, topic TBA

Dec. 11th: Stuart Dempsey, topic TBA

Jan. 8th, 2027: Dan Masters, topic TBA

Feb. 12th: Rob Girardi, topic TBA

March 12th: Doug Dammann, Nevins-Freeman Address

Apr. 9th: Dave Powell, topic TBA

May 14th: Caroline Janney, topic TBA

June 11th: Kevin Donovan, topic TBA

The **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** will interview author Megan VanGorder 11 am CST on March 31st on her new book on *Mother Bickerdyke*. For more, visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/>

The 2026 Battlefield Tour

Mark your calendar: April 29-May 2, 2026, Charleston/Savannah. These beautiful tourist locations have a great Civil War history. Charleston Harbor's Fort Sumter is where the war started! Our CWRT last visited in 1995, and since then the Hunley Museum and lots of great Civil War venues have opened. We're HQ'd at the **Hampton Inn, Charleston Airport**.

Be sure and bring your **binoculars**. And if you have a **pass for the National Park Service**, bring that too. It will save Park entrance fees, which the tour fund would otherwise cover.

We are asking our members to donate to our CWRT's **Ed Bearss Award**, which provides money for battlefield preservation.



CSS Hunley sinks the USS Housatonic



Fort Pulaski today

April Meetings from the Past:

2021 (5 years ago)—Ron Kirkwood presented “Too Much for Human Endurance: The Spangler Farm Hospitals”

2016 (10 years ago)—Greg Biggs on “Nashville: Siren Song of the Confederacy”

2011 (15 years ago)—Richard McMurry on “A Georgian Looks at Sherman”

1941 (75 years ago)—John Curran on “The Trial of the Lincoln Conspirators”

50 Years Ago This Month: The Chicago CWRT Dedicates a Headstone for Marcellus E. Jones

Capt. Marcellus E. Jones has one of the best-known (if occasionally disputed) claims to fame in the Civil War: He fired the first shot at the Battle of Gettysburg, on July 1, 1863. He was also one of the more prominent citizens of his time in DuPage County, where he moved from his native Vermont in the 1850s. After the war, Jones served a stint as county sheriff and another as the Wheaton postmaster. His stately home has been preserved and still stands today on Illinois Street in downtown Wheaton, where it is used as law offices.

When Jones died at age 70 on October 9, 1900, his widow Naomi only had enough funds to pay for his funeral. While Jones was buried in Wheaton Cemetery, the final resting place for many of that city's founding settlers, Naomi could not afford a headstone. For more than 75 years after his death, Jones's gravesite was unmarked, found only through the cemetery's files.

Finally, in 1976, the Chicago Civil War Round Table stepped in to give Jones' final resting place an appropriate marker. On April 11, 1976, at 2 p.m., the Round Table hosted a ceremony dedicating a small rectangular stone at Jones' gravesite. Marshall Krolick, the CWRT's newsletter editor, wrote in the March 1976 CWRT newsletter: "It will not be an imposing monument, just a simple marker to tell the world that he is there and we care." The marker says:

Marcellus E. Jones

June 5, 1830 — Oct. 9, 1900

Capt. 8th Illinois Cavalry, 1861-1865

Fired first shot

Battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 1863

Erected by The Civil War Roundtable of Chicago, Apr. 11, 1976

You can see the headstone and more info about the Jones burial site at my listing on the Historical Marker Database: <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=228903>

--Sean Flynn

