

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXXV, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June 2026

848th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, June 12th, 2026, at the Blossom Cafe

Alex Rossino on

“Before September: The Origin of the 1862 Maryland Campaign”

Live Meeting. Time: June 12th, 2026, 7:30 PM CST.



History records the September 1862 Confederate operation in Maryland as a military campaign designed and initiated solely by General Robert E. Lee, but what if Lee's crossing of the Potomac River had been planned much further in advance? In addition, what if the motives for the invasion commonly ascribed to Lee are only partially correct? In this talk, Dr. Alex Rossino provides extensive evidence documenting the true origin of Lee's Maryland operation in the summer of 1861, and the role in its evolution played by other key individuals,

such as Confederate President Jefferson Davis, General Joe Johnston, and General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. The result is a re-evaluation of the origin of the 1862 Maryland Campaign that reveals Lee's actual reasons for crossing the Potomac and clarifies the invasion's place in the development of Confederate grand strategy during the first year and a half of the American Civil War.

A resident of historic Charles Town, West Virginia, Dr. Alex Rossino is an independent historian and author. He earned Master's and Doctoral degrees in History at Syracuse University before working for nine years as a historian at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial

Museum in Washington, DC. Dr. Rossino turned his attention to the American Civil War in 2011 and after several years of research, he produced Six Days in September: A Novel of Lee's Army in Maryland, September 1862. The book proved to be popular among historians and enthusiasts alike, leading to a sequel titled The Guns of September: A Novel of McClellan's Army in Maryland, September 1862, which came out in September 2024. Dr. Rossino also returned to writing history, producing Their Maryland: The Army of Northern Virginia from the Potomac Crossing to Sharpsburg in September 1862 and co-authoring with Gene Thorp The Tale Untwisted: General George B. McClellan, The Maryland Campaign, and the Discovery of Lee's Lost Orders, which came out in January 2023. His most recent history, Calamity at Frederick: Robert E. Lee, Special Orders No. 191, and Confederate Misfortune on the Road to Antietam (October 2023), completed his in-depth study of the Lost Orders saga from the Confederate perspective, along with an ebook on the document's handwriting to identify the author, titled, Who Wrote the Lost Copy of Robert E. Lee's Special Orders No. 191: A Handwriting Analysis Companion to Calamity at Frederick in October 2025.

Battlefield Preservation

Right now, there is a rare opportunity to protect 438 acres of sacred battlefield land across seven connected battlefields — from Glorieta Pass in New Mexico to Resaca in Georgia, and from Perryville and Richmond in Kentucky to Hoover's Gap, Corinth, and Newtonia.

These are not isolated places. They are part of one vast, interwoven story — where what happened on one battlefield shaped what followed on another.

Without action, this hallowed ground could be lost to development — warehouses, subdivisions, and commercial projects — erasing forever the landscapes where the course of the war, and the nation's future, were shaped.

Just \$374,900 must be raised to secure these irreplaceable acres — land valued at more than \$3.8 million. Preservation succeeds only when action is taken in time. This is one of those moments.

Visit <https://www.battlefields.org/give/save-battlefields/save-438-acres-across-these-seven-battlefields?ms=webhome&ms=googlepaid&ms=googlepaid> for more.

David N. Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

May Presentation

By Mark Matranga

Chris Mackowski gave an impressive rendition of the battles for Spotsylvania Court House at the 847th Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table on May 8, 2026. His presentation, "A Tempest of Iron and Lead: The Battle of Spotsylvania Court House" describes events of May 1864 as General Ulysses Grant, now commander of all Federal armies, with George Meade commanding the Army of the Potomac, grappled with Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia in a series of massive engagements unprecedented in the war.

It began in the Wilderness on May 5 and 6 when Grant first attempted to outflank Lee but was halted after taking considerable casualties. Rather than retreat as expected, Grant decided not to return to his base in Culpepper to resupply and reequip but continued on, intending to steal a march on Lee. He ordered Meade to Spotsylvania, but Confederate cavalry blocked the Brock Road. When Meade found his cavalry camped for the night and not finding Sheridan, he ordered it forward. This caused a rift with the cavalry commander who petitioned Grant who allowed him to proceed on a long-distance raid. Meanwhile, Richard Anderson, now in command of Longstreet's Corps after 'Old Pete' was wounded, had a four-hour head start on the march toward Spotsylvania.

Confederate cavalry delaying actions having forced Federal infantry to continuously deploy, Warren's Fifth Corps did not approach Spotsylvania until the morning of May 8, when action against Anderson's Corps began near the Spindle Farm. What started in the early morning hours with attacks by Lyle and Denison from Robinson's Division extended into an affair involving all four of Warren's divisions and, eventually, substantial elements of Sedgewick's VI Corps that ended after sunset. These were thwarted by counterattacks by reinforcements from Ewell's Corps. The II Corps arrived after nightfall, and the lines began to stabilize.

In the interim, Grant ordered IX Corps to move on roads around the Confederate position, where Burnside established a new supply line via Fredericksburg Road. The enemy line was a concave salient resembling a 'Muleshoe' which permitted converging Union artillery fire; while Lee's line followed topography, a breakthrough would render it untenable, and reconnaissance revealed an attacking force could approach it within 300 yards undetected. Horatio Wright, now commanding VI Corps, was convinced by his generals that an attack in depth could succeed, and Grant agreed. On the Confederate side, Lee conferred with Ewell, who agreed the Muleshoe position could hold if strongly

reinforced with artillery. Lee then had his chief engineer M.L. Smith place 30 guns on Ewell's line.

Grant's plan for May 10 called for Emery Upton, leading a 12-brigade, 12-thousand-man, column to assault aimed at the western face of the Muleshoe line; this force would not fire but would advance at the quick with fixed bayonets and puncture the enemy line. At the same time, Warren and Burnside would initiate holding attacks on Upton's left and right flanks, and Mott's division would follow, reinforcing Upton. Unfortunately, Warren stepped off an hour early and was repulsed; Burnside was initially successful, but Lee was able to bring reinforcements from his now unendangered left and the IX Corps could not hold. Mott, not knowing of Warren's delay and Upton's agreement to give V Corps additional time to reorganize and to delay his attack, set off alone and was decimated. Upton's force breached the Confederate line in Doles' sector but could not sustain its hold without the planned support.

The May 10 assault having failed, Grant ordered a second for the II and VI Corps for May 12: an early morning attack of 20 thousand men aimed at the apex of Lee's line. The II Corps penetrated the line, destroying "Allegheny" Johnson's division; 3,000 were captured, the entire Muleshoe evaporated. Lee abetted this when, sensing a move to his right, he removed the artillery previously placed at the base the Muleshoe. Johnson's premonition upon perceiving the pending attack, "a calamity is coming" had been fulfilled.

Confederate fortunes were assisted by pre-dawn fog and drizzle and then driving rain. Lee funneled brigades of Ramseur, Gordon, Lane, and others into the maw, engaging the Federals, which now included VI Corps troops, in vicious hand-to-hand combat, a "panoply of horror" in thick mud that lasted until the next day, until finally his line fixed. Fighting continued until the next day in the Muleshoe, now known as the Bloody Angle.

This was, Mackowski reminds us, the most sustained combat of the Civil War, and most of it at point blank range, 17,000 casualties. The Wilderness and fighting all along the Spotsylvania line until May 19 Mackowski calls a turning point – in Virginia and in the war. With the advantage of numbers, Grant was aware he could bleed the Southern army and would not retreat. Due to incessant rain, he cancelled another assault set for May 18. Not able to annihilate Lee at Spotsylvania, he began to move south on May 20, and the war continued.



BULLETIN BOARD

Our in-person meetings are currently held at:
Blossom Café, 8349 West Lawrence, Chicago
Parking at the Blossom Cafe is FREE
Dinner and meeting: \$50.00 Members and Non-Members
Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30
Menu choices: beef kabob or rigatoni carbonara
dinnerreservations@cwrt.org

The Kenosha Civil War Museum will feature **Bruce Allardice** on June 12th, presenting on “Aloha Oe! Hawaii in the Civil War” The event is part of their Friday lunchbox series and will run from noon to one.

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

On June 20th **Rob Girardi** will speak at the Abraham Lincoln Association Symposium at Cantigny on “Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier.”

On July 27 at the Linda Sokol Francis Library in Brookfield, Rob will present “Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier.”

For more on Rob’s presentations, visit <https://www.robertgirardi.com/>

On June 20th at the Abraham Lincoln Association Symposium, **Dennis Doyle** will speak on “Lincoln and the Irish.”

In addition to Rob and Dennis, this symposium (which runs from 9-1) features Michael Burlingame and a lineup of great speakers.

On Aug. 15th at the Driftless CWRT, **Bruce Allardice** will speak on “Lincoln as War Leader.”

On August 17th, he’ll present “Hollywood’s Civil War Movies” at the North Shore Senior Center.

For more on Bruce’s presentations (including non-CW ones), visit [Programs by Bruce Allardice](#)

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

June 3rd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Annual Dinner
June 5th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Pat McCormick on "General John A. Logan"
June 9th, McHenry County CWRT: Steve Alban on "The Confederacy's Secret Weapon"
June 11th, Milwaukee CWRT: Alex Rossino on "The Maryland Campaign of 1862"
June 16th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Valerie Gugula on "The Life of Mary Lincoln"
June 19th, Salt Creek CWRT: Annual Banquet: Mark Pohlad on "Abraham Lincoln and Chicago"
June 20th: Abraham Lincoln Symposium at Cantigny
July 6th, Rock Valley CWRT: John Cox on "U. S. Grant and the Efforts at Reconstruction"
July 13th, Gail Borden Library in Elgin: Armchair General Discussion Group
July 14th, McHenry County CWRT: **Bruce Allardice** on "Aloha Oe! Hawaii and the American Civil War"
July 21st, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: **John Horn** on "Lee Besieged"
Aug. 3rd, Rock Valley CWRT: Rachael Mellen on "From Camp Douglas to Vicksburg: The Civil War Letters of William J. Kennedy, 55th Ill. Infantry 1861-65"
Aug. 11th, McHenry County CWRT: TBA
Aug. 16th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Serena Ald on "The Underground Railroad in Illinois"
Aug. 27th, South Suburban CWRT: **John Horn** on "The Battle of Petersburg"
Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

Sept. 11th: James Marten on "The Iron Brigade"
Oct. 9th: Joshua Lindamood on "Black Thursday: the Battle of Sailor's Creek"
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** features an archive of past presentations. For more, visit <https://alincolnbookshop.com/>

Ed Bearss Fund

Every year at this time we ask for special donations to the Ed Bearss Fund, named in honor of the legendary “General” Bearss. The money collected is donated to battlefield preservation, the choice being up to the head guide of our battlefield tours. If you haven’t done so already, please consider giving.

June Meetings from the Past:

2021 (5 years ago)— A. Wilson Greene on “The First Petersburg Offensive”

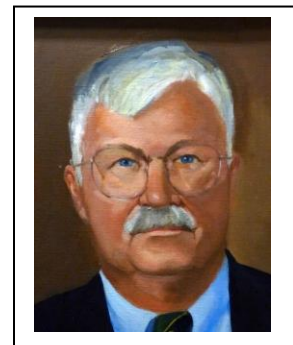
2016 (10 years ago)— Dale Phillips on “Ben Butler and the Federal Occupation of New Orleans”

2011 (15 years ago)— Pete Carmichael on “Robert E. Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation”

1941 (75 years ago)— No June meeting

Gordon Dammann

We just received the sad news that our friend and longtime member, Gordon Dammann, passed away. Among his many contributions to Civil War scholarship, the Civil War Medicine Museum in Frederick, MD stands out. Gordon presented numerous times to our CWRT and to other local CWRTS. He will be missed. Our sympathy to his son Doug (our Nevins-Freeman Awardee for next year) and the whole Dammann family.



Charleston-Savannah Tour Recap: Everybody had a great time on our CWRT’s tour. Perhaps the highlight was our visit to the Hunley Museum. For the first time in seven years, the tank holding the submarine was drained of liquid so that scientists could do

work on it. We were privileged to see the Hunley as perhaps no other visiting group had ever viewed it!

We also got a sneak peak at the Charleston Air Show, with the Blue Angels screaming overhead.

Lunch at the Pirate House in Savannah was the culinary highlight.

Next year, Chickamauga/Chattanooga!



The Hunley being worked on



Entering Fort Moultrie



Rick Hatcher Explaining Things

