

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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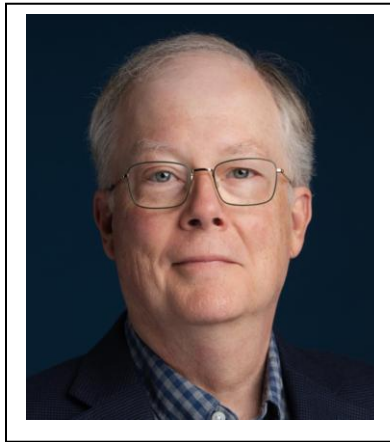
Chicago, Illinois

September 2026

850th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, September 11th, 2026, at the Blossom Café. Menu choices: Lemon chicken piccata or rigatoni carbonara

James Marten on “*The Sixth Wisconsin and the Long Civil War*”

Live Meeting. Time: September 11th, 2026, 7:30 PM CST.



As one of the original regiments in the Iron Brigade, the Sixth Wisconsin fought in virtually all of the major campaigns of the Army of the Potomac from Second Bull Run through Appomattox, from the Cornfield at Antietam and the Unfinished Railroad Cut at Gettysburg through the confusing bloodbath of the Wilderness and the frustrating siege at Petersburg. After the war veterans struggled with the aftermaths of wounds and disease, commemorated their contributions, and remembered their fallen comrades. Prof. Marten's talk will sample the war-time and post-war experiences of volunteers like Rufus

Dawes, Captain of Company K and future commander of the Sixth, as well as draftees like Gottlieb Torke, one of hundreds of mostly German-immigrants who finished the war.

James Marten is professor of history emeritus at Marquette University, where he taught for thirty-six years. He is author, editor, or co-editor, of two dozen books, including [The Children's Civil War](#), [Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America](#), and his latest, [The Sixth Wisconsin and the Long Civil War: The Biography of a Regiment](#). He was president of the Society of Civil War Historians from 2013 to 2015.

Battlefield Preservation

The American Battlefield Trust's *Boom Goes the History* podcast is here! Dive into the stories, personalities, and surprising moments that shaped American history—from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War and beyond. No battlefield—or historical rabbit hole—is off limits.

This isn't your typical history lecture. Our hosts go behind the scenes of how the Trust creates its videos, maps, and content, sharing stories from the road, battlefield visits, and the occasional historical mishap. If you love great stories, fascinating history, and a bit of fun, grab your headphones and join us.

Now Available in Video Format! Now you can watch the conversation unfold. *Boom Goes the History* is officially available in video, bringing you face-to-face with hosts Kris White, Garry Adelman, Andy Poulton and a lineup of engaging guests. See the stories, reactions and behind-the-scenes moments as they happen—adding a whole new dimension to the history you love.

June Presentation

By Mark Matranga

Alex Rossino offered an intriguing examination of General Robert E. Lee's strategic vision in the Civil War's early years at the 849th Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table on June 10, 2026. In his talk, "Before September: The Origins of the 1862 Maryland Campaign," Rossino provided an overview of Confederate strategy during the period June 1861 to July 1862, namely, whether and when to take the war north of the Potomac River. The Maryland invasion of September 1862 is commonly considered to have been Lee's idea but Rossini considers this incorrect; rather, he asserts this had been proposed previously by aggressive commanders who argued that moving north was the best method of achieving a swift end to the conflict. Lee, a principal advisor to Jefferson Davis until he took command of the army in June 1862, did not support this strategy.

The first to pose this idea to President Davis was Isaac Trimble who on June 4, 1861, proposed to take the Harper's Ferry garrison, attack Hagerstown, and move on

Baltimore to interdict federal troops moving through that city to Washington. He and other generals looked to 'revolutionize' Maryland, who many considered not a northern state, and use it as a springboard for moving into Pennsylvania. Rossino pointed out that President Davis and others held similar views and proposed them early in the war. In May 1861, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson argued for occupying Maryland Heights and moving toward isolating Washington, cutting it off from the northern states. But Lee declined to approve this move as Virginia Governor Letcher was waiting for Maryland to secede. Even earlier, Davis had voiced the idea that the war would be fought on the enemy's soil.

Beauregard proposed a plan to consolidate his and Johnston's armies and move into Maryland to Davis, Lee, and Inspector General Samuel Cooper on July 14, 1861, when Lee advised that the time was not ripe for this strategy. Rather, Lee recommended drawing the Federals out of Washington for battle. On October 1, 1861, General G.W. Smith proposed moving north, maneuvering behind Washington, drawing the enemy out to battle and then moving north to Pennsylvania, all before the federal army could organize, a plan endorsed by Beauregard and Johnston. Davis was enthusiastic but the idea failed for logistical reasons: the Confederate army was lacking enough trained men as well as line and regimental officers. The high command considered such a move would be an "organized mob."

Davis maintained he favored an invasion after being pilloried in the Richmond press. Meanwhile, in late October 1861 Jackson also saw the advantages in going forward. Do not wait to invade, he argued. Transfer troops from areas not being pressed by the enemy; he insisted McClellan would not move, thus permitting him to cut off Washington and move on Pennsylvania's coal fields. He discussed this with Smith who informed him that this idea had already been rejected due to "material weaknesses." This was despite Jackson's prescient warning, "We are ready at present for active operation in the field, and they are not."

President Davis met with Generals Lee, Longstreet, Jackson, G.W. Smith, and Secretary of War Randolph on April 14, 1862, to discuss the upcoming campaign season. One was defensive: bring Jackson and all troops from Carolina to Richmond and attack McClellan. A second plan was offensive: take the larger portion of Jackson's Shenandoah army north and invade Maryland. Davis ordered Jackson to Richmond per advice from Lee and Randolph. Jackson balked at this, writing Lee "We are engaged in a species of warfare at which we can never win." He told Lee, "McClellan will depend on arts and engineering. We can compete with him in neither."

In early July 1862, shortly after the Seven Days Campaign, Jackson again recommended invasion to Davis, arguing that McClellan was thoroughly defeated; but Lee declined, claiming he did not have enough men for such a campaign. Rossino maintains that reinforcements arriving at that time were probably more than sufficient.

On July 13, 1862, Davis held a conference of war in Richmond with Lee, Longstreet, and Jackson when an invasion plan was settled. Rossino contends that an offensive into Maryland was the objective, not Pope's army. This was coincidental with a previous idea Beauregard advanced, to make the Ohio River the base for western operations.

After the Seven Days, Davis wrote Lee that he must "drive the invader from your soil and... carry your standards beyond the boundaries of the Confederacy." Jackson, of course, promoted a highly mobile and scorched earth form of warfare. Davis endorsed, writing his wife, Varina, of his wish to inflict the "pains of invasion" on the north. Rossino noted that Lee concurred with Jackson that the Confederacy could not contend with the north's industrial advantages but was perplexed as to how to meet the threat. However, in July 1862 he was "more fully persuaded" that an invasion was feasible.

Rossino puts Lee in perspective relative to early Confederate strategy that seemed to emphasize isolating Washington, freeing Maryland from Yankee domination, and forcing battle north of the Potomac. He reminds us that Lee's concern always was of Virginia, his "country." Did this limit his vision? Perhaps another look at Gettysburg may be in order.



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: Lemon chicken piccata or rigatoni carbonara

dinnerreservations@cwrt.org

The **Kenosha Civil War Museum** will feature Larry McClellan on September 11th, presenting on "Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad in Illinois and on Lake Michigan." The event is part of their Friday lunchbox series and will run from noon to one.

The Museum will host its annual **Great Lakes Civil War Forum** Sept. 12th. And it has an ongoing exhibit on the "8th Illinois Cavalry," featuring the collections of our CWRT's past president, the late Marshall Krolick.

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

The **Elk Grove Historical Museum** is having its "Pioneer Day" event Saturday, September 12th, from 1-3 p.m. 399 Biesterfield Rd., Elk Grove Village.

On 1 p.m. on September 10th, at the North Shore Senior Center, **Bruce Allardice** will speak on "Who the Heck is Abner Doubleday? Baseball During the Civil War."

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

Dennis Doyle presented "Ashtabula County During the Civil War" to the Ashtabula, Ohio CWRT on August 20th. On September 12th he'll speak on "The 11th New York Light Artillery During the Civil War" to the Capital district (Albany, NY) CWRT. On September 29th he'll speak to the South Bay (San Jose) CWRT on "Irish Americans During the Civil War." Professor Doyle also presents on World War 2 and Rev War topics.

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Sept. 3rd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Brian Conroy on "The Fourth Illinois Cavalry"
Sept. 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Judge Raymond McCoski on "David Davis: Lincoln's Favorite Judge"
Sept. 8th, McHenry County CWRT: Judge Raymond McCoski on "David Davis: Lincoln's Favorite Judge"
Sept. 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: James Marten on "The Sixth Wisconsin and the Long Civil War"
Sept. 14th, Rock Valley CWRT: Raymond McKoski on "David Davis: Lincoln Loyalist and Impartial Jurist"
Sept. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: **Rob Girardi** on "General John Logan"
Sept. 19th: DuPage County Civil War and Militaria Show
Sept. 24th, South Suburban CWRT: Rachel Mellen on "55th Illinois Regiment"
Sept. 26th, Salt Creek CWRT: **Bjorn Skaptason** on "The Williams-Grant Canal: Using the River to Conquer Vicksburg"
Oct. 1st, Kankakee Valley CWRT: **Rob Girardi** on "The Real War will never get in the

Books"

Oct. 2nd, Northern Illinois CWRT: **Jerry Allen** on "The Prince and Princess Salm-Salm"

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

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

Oct. 9th: Joshua Lindamood on "Black Thursday: the Battle of Sailor's Creek"

Nov. 13th: Father Bob Miller on "Angels of the Battlefield: Catholic Nuns in the Civil War"

Dec. 11th: Stuart Dempsey on "'So outrageously and so persistently misrepresented': The 11th Corps at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg"

Jan. 8th, 2027: Dan Masters on "Hell By the Half Acre: The Stones River Campaign"

Feb. 12th: Rob Girardi on "Gouverneur K. Warren in the Gettysburg Campaign"

March 12th: Doug Dammann, Nevins-Freeman Address: "Tar-Heel and the Yankee: Civil War Veterans Who Played in the First Intercollegiate Football Game on November 6, 1869"

April 9th: Dave Powell on "Who Won the Battle of Chickamauga?"

May 14th: Lucas Wilder on "Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign"

June 11th: Kevin Donovan, topic TBA

The **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** in its "House Divided" series of author interviews, will feature Kevin M. Levin discussing his new biography of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (of Battery Wagner/54th Massachusetts fame), [A Glorious Fate](#). The podcast is September 29th at 3:30 CST.

For more, visit <https://alincolnbookshop.com/>

1860 Election Banner Restoration

"Dear ____

I am reaching out to the Chicago Illinois Civil War Civil War Round Table as a member of the Libertyville Historical Society board.

The Libertyville Historical Society is working to preserve an important piece of our community's history – a silk banner from 1860 connected to the Libertyville Wide Awakes, the local chapter of a nationwide, grassroots movement supporting the election of Abraham Lincoln.

This banner has been on display at the Ansel Cook Home for decades and is in fragile condition. Without proper conservation, it will continue to decline.

In 2025, the Society successfully raised the funds needed to begin the work by the Conservation Center of Chicago. When the banner was removed from its case for the first time in nearly 100 years, conservators discovered that a second Lincoln-Hamlin campaign panel was attached to the reverse of the Wide Awakes panel.

To preserve and display both panels, additional conservation and a custom display solution are required. This next phase will cost \$25,000 beyond what has already been raised.

I am reaching out to your organization because of a common interest in history and the Civil War era.

Would you be willing to share the attached Case for Support with the members of your organization? The case provides additional information and photographs of both panels of the impressive banner. Giving levels are outlined at <https://www.libertyvillehistory.org/wide-awakes>

Every contribution helps protect this piece of Libertyville's history.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather Johnson, Treasurer, Libertyville Historical Society"



September Meetings from the Past:

2021 (5 years ago)— Eric Wittenberg on “Seceding from Secession: The Creation of West Virginia”

2016 (10 years ago)— Steve Quick on “The CSS Hunley”

2011 (15 years ago)— Bruce Allardice on “Baseball and the Civil War”

1941 (75 years ago)— No September meeting

CWRT Summer Board Meeting Recap

The Board Meeting was held at Rob Girardi’s house on July 25th. Among the items discussed:

- Our CWRT made a healthy surplus on our last two battlefield tours, contributing to a healthy bank balance (which helps fund preservation donations);
- Battlefield/Preservation donations included money to the Libertyville Historical Society to help preserve a historical banner (see article, above), a similar amount to help fund the Kenosha Civil War Museum symposium, plus donations to the American Battlefield Trust, SHAF, The Curlee House in Corinth, and the Fisher’s Hill Battlefield;
- There was discussion on our CWRT hosting its own Civil War Symposium;

- Frank O'Reilly was named the Nevins-Freeman Award winner for 2028-29.

Chickamauga-Chattanooga 2027 Battlefield Tour

Reserve the dates: April 28-May 1, 2027. Jim Ogden and Dennis Powell will be our tour guides. More information to come later.

