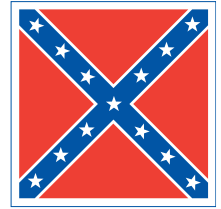


# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXXI, Number 9

Chicago, Illinois

May 2011



## 701st REGULAR MEETING

Tom Schott  
on

“Alexander Stephens”

★★★★★

Friday, May 13

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

*Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.*

*Dinner at 6:30 p.m.*

**\$45 - Members/Non-members**

*Entrée: Chicken Casserole,  
Baked Orange Roughy,  
Vegetarian Plate or  
Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, May 9 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please call the number before 9 a.m. Thursday.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$12 with a validated parking sticker.

## Tom Schott on “Alexander Stephens and Jefferson Davis: a Marriage Made in Hell”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

Political expediency dictated the selection of Alexander H. Stephens as vice president of the Confederacy. A former Whig from Georgia, the Empire State of the South and one which could not be ignored for top offices in the new nation, he vehemently opposed secession right up until passage of the secession ordinance. Jefferson Davis was his political opposite: a Democrat who favored secession. The two men did share some personality traits, but this only served to exacerbate the differences between them. The period of cooperation between them after their election lasted only a few months. Thereafter, Stephens stayed at his home in Georgia and away from Richmond.

For him, the war was about “constitutional liberty” above all else. Therefore Stephens opposed virtually everything the Davis administration did in its efforts to win the war: conscription, impressment, financial policy, and especially suspension of writ of habeas corpus. In 1864, the vice president delivered a speech to the Georgia legislature publicly attacking the administration’s policies. He actively



Tom Schott

supported various peace plans being proposed in the South in the latter stages of the war. He was the worst possible choice for the office he held in the Confederacy.

On May 13th, 2011, Tom Schott will examine the interplay between the public and private Stephens and between the state and national politics during his contradictory career as vice president.

Thomas E. Schott was raised in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He has a Ph.D in American history from Louisiana State University, with a raft of history-connected publications, including a prize winning

biography of Alexander H. Stephens. He recently retired from a long career as a historian for various Air Force organizations and the U.S. Operations Command. Tom loves reading, baseball in general and the Texas Rangers in particular, Cajun cooking, history, writing poetry, playing chess, good wine, laughter, music and ideas on the edge. He lives in Norman, Oklahoma, where his grandkids are.



## Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

The Civil War Trust recently sent a letter from Jim Lighthizer thanking all the great folks at the Chicago CWRT for the 1,000 check from us. The battlefield preservation committee selected Resaca with a nearly \$67.00 to \$1.00 match of our donation dollars to maximize our contributions to help save Resaca and Dallas battlefields in Georgia. Railroad workers named Resaca, Georgia in the 1850s for the Mexican War battle of Resaca de la Palma. This village on the north bank of where the Western and Atlantic railroad crossed the Oostanaula River was the first major battle of the Atlanta campaign. The President of the Georgia Battlefield Association Charlie Crawford describing the battle of Resaca stated if McPherson could have seized Resaca the Union army would have been astride the Western and Atlantic Railroad eighteen miles south of Dalton, breaking the Confederate supply line and forcing Johnston's army to retreat to the east in even more difficult terrain. The battle of Resaca could have been the decisive battle of the Atlanta campaign but the missed opportunity by the Union army resulted in this being the first of many battles of the Atlanta campaign.

The preservation of the Resaca battlefield began on September 24, 2002 when the state of Georgia acquired the corridor for the battlefield park. On October 27th, 2008 ground was broke on the Resaca battlefield. The Friends of Resaca battlefield is dedicated to the historic integrity and educational use of the battlefield sites where the battle of Resaca took place in May 1864. The goal is to protect and preserve a 500 acre state park at Resaca. The Friends of Resaca website is [www.Resacabattlefield.org](http://www.Resacabattlefield.org).

The Friends of Resaca battlefield

also works with the Georgia Battlefields Association ([georgiabattlefields.org](http://georgiabattlefields.org)) on Resaca. GBA is a private non profit organization working with other preservation groups on Civil War sites in Georgia that are being damaged and adversely affected by development. Go to this site for selected scenes from the Resaca battlefield historic site.

Another group working for the preservation of Resaca is the Trust for Public Land (TPL). The TPL preservation model is to buy land that faces an immediate threat and subsequently sell it to a preservation-minded buyer as quickly as possible. To learn more about the preservation efforts at Resaca and Dallas please go to [www.Civilwar.org/Resaca11](http://www.Civilwar.org/Resaca11) for information about that site and [www.civilwar.org/Dallas11](http://www.civilwar.org/Dallas11) to learn more about the preservation efforts there. Thank you to all CWRT of Chicago members for your continued support of battlefield preservation.

### Letter from Civil War Trust to CWRT of Chicago

Dear Friends,

Thank you for helping save land in the state of Georgia!

Thanks to your recent gift of \$ 1,000 to the Civil War Trust we are well on our way to reaching our \$51, 585 goal to save land at the Resaca and Dallas battlefields in Georgia. These 473.5 core acres of land at Resaca are on the key northern part of the battlefield, where much of the heaviest fighting occurred on May 14 and 15, 1864 in the opening weeks of William Tecumseh Sherman's "Atlanta Campaign." Best of all, these acres will be added to the

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The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or [editor@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:editor@chicagocwrt.org).

565 acres of battlefield land that Trust members like you have already saved at Resaca!

Your gift also helps to save 64.4 acres at the Dallas battlefield. The battle at Dallas on May 28, 1864, as well as associated fighting at New Hope Church and Pickett's Mill, proved a savage and bloody obstacle to Sherman's advance on Atlanta. These acres are essential core battlefield land that was threatened by modern development.

The combined 537.9 acres of endangered Georgian battlefield land are worth an astounding \$ 3,450,000. Working with key partners like the Trust for Public Land, the Georgia Battlefields Association and Paulding County, we were able to save this land for less than \$ 52,000 from the Civil War Trust—effectively multiplying every \$ 1 of your donation into \$ 67! You clearly know a good deal when you see one!

You have my deepest and most heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely,  
Jim Lighthizer  
President Civil War Trust

## April Meeting

BY JACKIE WILSON

At the 700th meeting of the Chicago Civil War Round Table, on April 8, 2011, **Richard McMurray** gave an engaging talk on “the most hated man in Atlanta.”

According to McMurray, any school child from 1870 to 1970 would be taught that there are 21 despicable men in Atlanta. Nine belonged to the Birmingham Barons and another nine belonged to the Nashville Balls. The nineteenth was football coach Wally Butts who created a scandal in conjunction with his fellow coach from Alabama, Bear Bryant. Notice all 19 of these men are from the field of sports. The last two however are Civil War Generals – John Bell Hood and Sherman. Hood is hated because he lost Atlanta to Sherman and Sherman for taking it and then his March to the Sea.

Thus began McMurray’s description of Sherman’s reputation and the reality of his actions. Georgians believed that Sherman was responsible for every fire that occurred even if it was 200 miles away from his route through the state. He was blamed for all fires between 1733 and 1946 – quite a feat since he died in 1891! Every house that burned but had chimneys left standing were called Sherman chimneys. That is 213 years as a fire starter!

What was Sherman really like as a general? Sherman’s adult life before the war found him in the South and California and thus most of his political convictions agreed with the southern point of view with one exception: he did not believe in

secession. His 13 years in the army did not teach him to be a good combat general, but it did teach him to be a great mind when it came to logistics, supplies and looking at the big picture. However, he was a grand strategist.

When Sherman reached Atlanta it was already in flames thanks to the Confederates. He did not destroy Macon, Augusta or Albany. He states that if the house was occupied, it probably was not destroyed – unless the owner fired on the Union soldiers. As he marched through Georgia with his army in four columns with 60 miles between each side thus covering only 12% of the state. McMurray questions the reports that he burned everything in the state by asking the question: Where did all those antebellum mansions come from if he destroyed every house in the state?

One interesting point is that the white pro-secession population of Georgia was in the minority and the slaves welcomed Sherman as their savior. However, he attempted to turn them away and did not encourage them to follow his army. In fact, he would destroy a bridge so that the slaves could not follow.

In conclusion, McMurray opines that it was Joe Johnston that lost Atlanta based on a horrible campaign, not Hood who had good plans to defend the city but the execution was poor and his physical condition did not help. Hood looks good next to Braxton Bragg who lacked the moral courage to take risks. Neither Sherman nor Hood really belong

on the Georgian most hated list.

To hear the entire talk, there is a recording of the meeting (and every meeting) available from **Hal Ardell**, audio librarian. Contact Hal at (773) 774-6781 or hal229@ameritech.net. To view his slide presentations see <http://classic.kodakgallery.com/civilwar/main>.

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### New Publications

**Paula Walker** and **Rob Girardi** have finished their biography of General Gouverneur K. Warren. **Bruce Allardice** and **Wayne Wolf** have their book on the CHM’s “Charles F. Gunther” at a publisher for review. And the latest issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* features Civil War articles by **Kurt Carlson**, **Bjorn Skaptason**, **Roger Bohn**, **Rob Girardi** and **Bruce Allardice**.

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### Douglas Assn. Luncheon

The Stephen A. Douglas Association will hold its annual luncheon Saturday, June 4. At 10 a.m. a memorial ceremony will be held at the Douglas Tomb, followed by reception at the Palmer House and (at noon) luncheon. This year’s keynote speaker is Robert Dick Douglas III, the great-great grandson of the famed senator. The cost is \$40 apiece. For reservations or more information, email Joe Wisheart at [jwisheart@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jwisheart@sbcglobal.net)



## GRAPESHOT



The **DuPage County Historical Museum** is hosting a series of Civil War events in May. On May 14 historian Terry Lynch will highlight a program on "The Underground Railroad." On May 18th author Cynthia Ogorek will present "Mary Todd Lincoln." And on May 25th **Bruce Allardice** will speak on "Baseball and the Civil War." Phone the museum at (630) 510-4941 for more details.

Terry Lynch will portray "U. S. Grant" at the **Des Plaines Public Library** on May 25th, starting at 7 p.m.

**Leslie Goddard** will present "Clara Barton" at Midway Village in Rockford on May 6, and at the Naper Settlement "Civil War Days" May 21 and 22. On May 1st she will portray "Louisa Mae Alcott" at the Joliet Public Library.

**Dave Corbett** and his "Battlefield Balladeers" will perform May 1, 3-6, 15 and 21-22 at the Des Plaines Public Library, Midway Village, Prospect Heights Public Library, and Naper Settlement respectively.

The **Elmhurst Public Library** is hosting a series of Civil War events this Spring. On May 3rd **Mike Weeks** will speak on "America's Civil War Historic Sites Today." On May 11th, **Leslie Goddard** will portray "Clara Barton." And on May 18, author David Maes discusses "DuPage County During the Civil War." See [www.elmhurstpubliclibrary.org](http://www.elmhurstpubliclibrary.org) for more details.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at [editor@chicagocwrt.org](mailto:editor@chicagocwrt.org) or (630) 297-8046.

### SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus years of audio recordings of CWRT lectures by distinguished historians are available and can be purchased in either audio cassette or CD format. For lecture lists, contact Hal Ardell at [hal229@ameritech.net](mailto:hal229@ameritech.net) or phone him at (773) 774-6781.

Each meeting features a book raffle, with proceeds going to battlefield preservation. There is also a silent auction for books donated by Ralph Newman and others, again with proceeds benefiting battlefield preservation.

### Upcoming Civil War Events

April 30th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Vintage Civil War Baseball game. Visit [www.thecivilwarmuseum.org](http://www.thecivilwarmuseum.org) for more details.

May 4th, Lake County CWRT: Dr. Ray Glick on "Horses of Civil War Leaders"

May 4th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Peg and Terry McCarty on "The Chatfield Story"

May 6th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Gail Stephens on "Gen. Jubal Early and his raid on Washington"

May 10, McHenry County CWRT: **Charlie Banks** slideshow on "Gettysburg, Harpers Ferry, Antietam"

May 12th, Milwaukee CWRT: Tom Schott on "Alexander Stephens"

May 15th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: Harold Holzer on "Lincoln as a Warrior"

May 17th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: David O. Stewart on "The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson"

May 20th, Salt Creek CWRT: **Jerry Allen** on "The 15th Wisconsin Infantry"

May 26th, South Suburban CWRT: **Frank Crawford** on "Medical Practices on the Mississippi River"

May 29th, Union League CWRT: Adam Goodheart on "1861. The Civil War Awakening."

June 4, Stephen A. Douglas Assn.: Annual luncheon

**Reminder: 2011 Tour** (Petersburg/Appomattox)—April 27-May 1, 2011

**2012 Tour** (Chickamauga/Chattanooga)—May 3-6, 2012

## Bulletin Board



### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated*.

May 13: Tom Schott, "Alexander Stephens and Jefferson Davis: A Marriage Made in Hell"

June 10: Peter Carmichael, "Robert E. Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation"

Sept. 9: Marshall Krolick, "8th Illinois Cavalry Troopers"

Oct. 14: Nora Titone, "The Bitter Rivalry between Edwin and John Wilkes Booth"

Nov. 11: Gail Stephens on "Early's 1864 Invasion of Maryland"

### CWRT Elections in May

At the May meeting the CWRT will hold its annual election for officers in the 2011-2012 year. The Nominations Committee has presented a slate, consisting of Bob Stoller (President); Brian Seiter (Sr. VP); Mark Matranga (1st VP); Paula Walker (2nd VP), Cindy Heckler (Treas.); Jon Sebastian (Asst. Treas.); John Kociolko (Sec.); and Mike Weeks (Asst. Sec.); Bob Gibson, Tom Murray and Rick Branham (Trustees). As always, nominations from the floor are welcome.

Bjorn Skaptason reminds us that the **Abraham Lincoln Book Store's** next Virtual Book Signing will be May 13, when **Harold Holzer** discusses three of his books: "Lincoln on War," "Father Abraham," and "Hearts Touched by Fire." On May 19, VBS will feature Adam Goodheart discussing his new book, "1861."