



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXX1, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

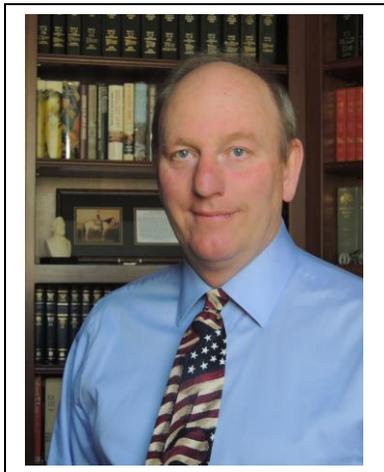
April 2022

809th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, April 8th, 2022

Jeffrey Hunt on "Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station and Mine Run"

Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Apr. 8th, 2022, 07:30 PM CST

Zoom Option ID 898 4099 2845; No Passcode needed



The Civil War in the Eastern Theater during the late summer and fall of 1863 was anything but inconsequential. Generals Meade and Lee continued where they had left off, executing daring marches while boldly maneuvering the chess pieces of war in an effort to gain decisive strategic and tactical advantage. Cavalry actions crisscrossed the rolling landscape; bloody battle revealed to both sides the command deficiencies left in the wake of Gettysburg. It was the first and only time in the war Meade exercised control of the Army of the Potomac on his own terms.

That fall, Meade launched a risky offensive to carry Lee's Rappahannock defenses and bring on a decisive battle. The dramatic fighting included a stunning Federal triumph at Rappahannock Station—which destroyed two entire Confederate brigades—that gave Meade the upper hand and the initiative in his deadly duel with Lee, who retreated south to a new position behind the Rapidan River. The inconclusive Mine Run Campaign followed.

Jeffrey William Hunt is Director of the Texas Military Forces Museum, the official museum of the Texas National Guard, located at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, and is

an Adjunct Professor of History at Austin Community College, where he has taught since 1988. Prior to taking the post at the Texas Military Forces Museum, he was the Curator of Collections and Director of the Living History Program at the Admiral Nimitz National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas for 11 years. He holds a Master's Degree in History from the University of Texas at Austin.

Mr. Hunt's writing credits include his book, The Last Battle of the Civil War: Palmetto Ranch, and his three volumes on the aftermath of the Gettysburg Campaign, Meade and Lee After Gettysburg: From Falling Waters to Culpeper Court House, Meade and Lee at Bristoe Station, and his latest book, Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station.

Battlefield Preservation

A year ago, we announced a fundraising campaign to protect 108 acres of property where two significant Civil War battles were fought, and where men on both sides, Federal and Confederate, stood their ground, engaged in fierce firefights, and lost their lives. We called this project "Pickett's Charge Five Times as Large." Thanks to your support we can now move to next phase of this landmark effort.

There are few opportunities to save the hallowed ground where two battles occurred. But given the support and generosity of fellow Trust members, were we able to raise sufficient funds for the one-acre tract where fighting occurred two years apart. Now we have the opportunity to secure **99 additional acres at what we call "The Intersection," around the site of the original McGhee farmhouse that will allow us to unite these properties.** This is an unprecedented opportunity to preserve contiguous battlefield property for prosperity.

Because of the size of the property that encompasses these two battles, the Trust has divided up the project into a multi-year campaign we are calling the *Gaines' Mill & Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign*. Our efforts to secure the 99 acres at the property amount to Phase Two. We now need to raise \$529,429 to match the \$1,192,430 that has already been committed by generous benefactors.

While engaging in Phase Two, we were also alerted to the opportunity to **secure 51 acres where Second Deep Bottom was fought southeast of Richmond.** This purchase opportunity will help us unite already protected land encompassing at this important battlefield site also known as Fussell's Mill. The funds needed for Phase Two of the Saved Forever Campaign include the cost of the Second Deep Bottom site because the opportunity to get these properties at the same time is too enticing to miss.

The significance of the land where so many pertinent battles were fought north of Richmond cannot be understated. And the threat that we face — the loss of historic property where men fought and died — to encroaching suburban development, retail, and other projects is very real.

We are in a race against time and deep pockets to ensure that America's hallowed ground is preserved for current and future generations to enjoy. Please make your most generous gift today to help us raise \$529,429 and save 150 critical acres of land where two hard-fought battles provided temporary victories to Confederate forces.

The American Battlefield Trust

March Meeting

By Mark Matranga

The Civil War Round Table's March 11, 2022, 809th Regular Meeting featured **Mark Laubacher** and an informative lecture on ***"A Hospital of Firsts: USS Red Rover."*** This former Confederate ship, damaged during the battle of Island Number 10 in March 1862 and captured thereafter, was converted and saw service in the Army's Western Gunboat Flotilla and later in the U.S. Navy. It became the first naval hospital ship and would go on to contribute to many Civil War innovations.

The *Red Rover*, a Mississippi merchant steamer converted to a barracks ship and floating battery by the Confederate Navy, came under fire at Island Number 10 in March 1862 and was badly damaged and abandoned near New Madrid, Missouri. Following the battle, it was captured by the Ironclad *Mound City* on April 7 and refitted as a hospital ship. This came about when Captain George Wise saw the *Red Rover* as a 'floating hotel' that could be reconfigured as a hospital ship. Wise sought permission from Flag Officer Andrew Foote to "procure a good comfortable steamer" for use as a hospital ship. Permission was granted effective May 10, 1862; work to refit the *Red Rover* began at St. Louis and was completed at Cairo on June 10.

Under command of Captain McDaniel and Assistant Surgeon George Bixby, *Red Rover* received its first patient the next day, June 11, 1862 – Seaman David Sans from the *USS Benton* who suffered from cholera. Her case load soon expanded to 56 patients, and a week later she took on 37 trauma cases, sailors with extreme burns, scalded when the *Mound City's* boiler exploded. Thus was christened the first hospital ship in American history.

Although the Union had been using river boats to move casualties north to hospitals, these were not equipped to treat the sick and wounded. *Red Rover* was the first ship designed to treat illness and injury afloat: facilities such as an operating theater, an elevator to transfer the sick from lower to upper decks, gauze blinds for protection from cinders and smoke, and separate galley, kitchen and laundry facilities and bathrooms for patients. According to Captain Pennock, Commander of the Cairo Naval Depot, *Red Rover* was “supplied with everything necessary for the restoration to health of sick and disable seamen.” Captain Wise added that “all the conveniences and appliances of a hospital are fully provided, and to these are added the neatness and order essential to so large and establishment.”

Red Rover's staff consisted of 12 officers, 25 crew, and 30 plus medical personnel. It could accommodate 200 patients; average daily census was 50. The ship took on non-military crew in Memphis after the *Mound City* explosion, among them a nun, Sister M. Angela of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Eight nuns eventually served, receiving 50 cents a day in wages - Sister M. Adela served throughout *Red Rover's* entire period of active duty. Other civilians served as nurses, laundresses, and chambermaids at pay ranging from seven to twenty dollars per month. One, Ann Graves, was on the payroll as a chambermaid effective April 1862 at 20 dollars a month. Five former slaves were hired as nurses, including Ann Bradford Stokes whose initial status was ‘contraband’ but who later received a pension for her service.

Red Rover was purchased by the Navy on September 30, 1862 and commissioned in the U.S Navy on December 20 as part of the Mississippi Squadron. It had two engines and five boilers; for defense it mounted a 32-pound cannon and had small arms aboard. Cruising speed was up to 9 knots; average was 5 knots. In addition to serving as a surgical center, the ship delivered medical supplies and evacuated soldiers from the front.

Red Rover was at the fall of Memphis (June 6, 1862), participated in the Arkansas Post expedition in January 1863, in operations near Vicksburg, and assisted in the Red River Campaign and at Fort Pillow in 1864. The ship eventually found its way to New Orleans before the end of the war. Of the 1,697 patients admitted through March 31, 1865, she achieved a 93% survival rate; *Red Rover* admitted additional patients thereafter (780) until decommissioned in November 1865.

By that time, Laubacher instructs, the *USS Red Rover* had become a ‘Hospital of Firsts:’ first U.S. Hospital ship with medical doctors and first U.S. Navy Hospital ship; it was also the first to allow nuns to serve and the first to employ and pay female civilians and African Americans. These caregivers became the model for the US Navy Nurse Corps, eventually established in 1908. A remarkable achievement for a salvaged river steamer that earned Admiral Porter’s praise that a sailor, “sick and wounded, was cared for in a style never before dreamed of in the navy.”



BULLETIN BOARD

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

Friday, April 8th at noon. Drs. James R. Jewell and Eugene Van Sickle will present “The Questions Settled by ‘That Night at Fort Wagner’”

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

The **Congress of Civil War Round Tables** is sponsoring a series of virtual Civil War Lectures by some of the nation’s leading historians. Visit

<http://www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html> to view the complete schedule and register

Bruce Allardice’s article on baseball during the Civil War era, “Runs, Runs and More Runs,” which appeared in December’s Baseball Research Journal, has won for The Society of American Baseball Research (SABR’s) baseball history article of the year. The Award will be presented at SABR’s National Convention this August.

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.

Apr. 1st, Northern Illinois CWRT: Peter Woods as “General Robert E. Lee”

Apr. 2nd, Two Old Goats in Cedar Lake: Gene Salecker on "Forrest's Johnsonville Raid"

Apr. 4th, Rock Valley (Rockford) CWRT: Rick Schaus on "Lee is Trapped and Must Be Taken: Eleven Fateful Days After Gettysburg"

Apr. 6th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Roy Jackson on "Civil War Railroads"

Apr. 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: Jeffrey Hunt on "Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station and Mine Run"

Apr. 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Steve Alban on "The Actual Causes of the Rebellion According to the Words of Joshua Giddings and Abraham Lincoln"

Apr. 16th, Salt Creek CWRT: Gene Salecker on "Nathan Bedford Forrest's 1864 Railroad Raid"

Apr. 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Ken Rutherford on "America's Buried History: Landmines in the Civil War"

Apr. 28th, South Suburban CWRT: Gordon Dammann on "Civil War Medicine"

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

May 13th: Dr. Thomas Carson on *Lincoln as Moral Exemplar*

June 10th: Lauren Szady on *Politicians in Petticoats; Women in the Civil War*

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.

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.

Bearss Book Award

Edwin Cole Bearss, the Chief Historian Emeritus of the National Park service passed away in September 2020. Ed was a decorated Marine veteran of World War II, and a renowned historian, but most of us remember him as the legendary guide for our round table, leading us on some 60 tours. He was a prolific author and historian, and two of

his passions were preservation and scholarship. We already honor him each year with the Ed Bearss Fund for Battlefield Preservation, but upon his passing we decided to recognize new scholarship with an award given in his memory. The award recognizes either a new book or a body of work that enhances our understanding of the American Civil War in a meaningful way. The Edwin Cole Bearss Book Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Civil War History is being awarded for the first time on April 8, 2022 to historian Jeffrey Wm. Hunt for his series of books detailing the period between the aftermath of Gettysburg to the Mine Run Campaign in the late summer and fall of 1863.

Please send suggestions of worthy books to members of the Award Committee, Chairman Robert I. Girardi, Mark Matranga, or Jonathan Sebastian.

The Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin and the Rock County Historical Society (RCHS) invite the public to attend a lecture and discussion by author Ronald C. White on his newest book, *Lincoln in Private: What his Most Personal Reflections Tell Us About our Greatest President*. The free event is set for 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 23 at the Tallman Carriage House, 450 N. Jackson Street in Janesville.

Chicago Mayor Lightfoot and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) have announced the late-March reopening of the **Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Memorial Hall and Rotunda at the Chicago Cultural Center** following a year-long restoration.

Free public programming during a special Reopening Weekend, March 26–27, will include tours, talks, dance performances and more in addition to continuing exhibitions,

Audios of **past presentations** to the CWRT can be accessed at anchor.fm.