

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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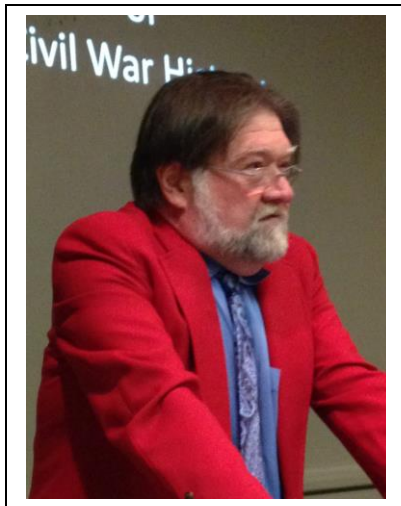
Chicago, Illinois

October 2024

830th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, October 11th, 2024

Larry Hewitt on "Port Hudson and the Birth of Combat Photography"

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Oct. 11th, 2024, 07:30 PM CST.
Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed**



Larry Hewitt will present the who, what, where, when, why, and how the firm of McPherson & Oliver made photographic history. Between June 14 and July 9, 1863, the final 25 days of the 48- day siege of Port Hudson, McPherson & Oliver moved about the battlefield memorializing soldiers in action--and in combat! In the process of making this visual record of opposing armies actively engaged, an image of Union soldiers sharpshooting opposite the Priest Cap was not these two artists only claim to photographic fame. Other images include one taken at midnight (the first ever taken in the dark), one converted into a composite print (created by combining portions of two negatives), the Confederate

army at the surrender ceremony, and examples of time-lapse photography. McPherson & Oliver also produced the most widely circulated *cartes-de-visite* of the Civil War, three different views of "Whipped Peter." But the duo seldom receives credit for these images of an abused slave. Other studios, including Matthew Brady's, published them as their own work. As with the battlefield they immortalized, McPherson and Oliver deserve better.

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Lawrence Lee Hewitt received his B.A. (1974) from the University of Kentucky and his M.A. (1977) and Ph.D. (1984) from Louisiana State University. He was the manager of the Port Hudson (1978- 1982) and Camp Moore (1982-1986) Historic Sites in Louisiana and taught at Southeastern Louisiana University (1985-1996). He was a tenured full professor when he resigned to marry a native of Chicago, where he currently resides. The 1991 recipient of SLU's President's Award for Excellence in Research, the 1991 Charles L. Dufour Award, the 2011 Dr. Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr. Award, and the 2013 Nevins-Freeman Award, he is a past president of the Baton Rouge Civil War Round Table.

Hewitt's publications include Port Hudson, Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi (1987). Andrew J. Wagenhoffer's blog Civil War Books and Authors named Hewitt's Port Hudson: The Most Significant Battlefield Photographs of the Civil War 2021 Book of the Year.

Battlefield Preservation

Since our inception in 1987, we have not rested on our laurels. We're here to save battlefield land: as much of it as we can. Since that date we've seen some tremendous preservation victories at Slaughter Pen Farm, Gettysburg, Shiloh, Chancellorsville (to name just a brief few). But today I want to announce a landmark milestone for the Trust and you — the preservation of land at **our 160th battlefield at Goldsborough Bridge, North Carolina!**

We can't thank you enough for helping us get here! The support of our friends and partners makes this work possible.

Like our own unique milestone, the Battle of Goldsborough Bridge has its own distinctive history.

In some of the final fighting for the year 1862, Confederate forces clashed with Union forces under Maj. Gen. John G. Foster who were tasked with destroying the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad Bridge. This bridge was a crucial part of the Confederate supply line and cutting it off would deny Confederate supplies from entering into Virginia from the Deep South.

The Battle of Goldsborough Bridge erupted on December 17, 1862. It was the final engagement in what is known as **Foster's Raid**, a series of four battles and several small skirmishes in eastern North Carolina.

The 54 acres we've now saved forever are the site of the heaviest fighting during the battle, hosting more than 10,600 Union soldiers and cavalymen as they faced off against 2,000 Confederate infantry.

Although the Union forces enjoyed a brief victory, Confederate forces withstood the temporary loss of supplies and rebuilt the bridge in a matter of weeks.

Our victory, however — these 54 acres preserved on our 160th battlefield — will not be brief. The site of the heaviest fighting during the Battle of Goldsborough Bridge will now, thanks to you, remain a hallowed testament to the men who lived and died there, forever.

'Til the battle is won,
David Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

September Presentation

By Mark Matranga

John Horn addressed The Civil War Round Table at its 829th Regular Meeting on September 13, 2024, on “The Wilson-Kautz Raid, June-July 1864.” To avoid a stalemate in the wake of Cold Harbor, Grant put Richmond in the Union army's sights from a different direction, where the Army of the Potomac could interrupt the Southern capitol's logistical lifeline. An earlier attempt at Bermuda Hundred in May had failed; General Beauregard foiled the first attempt to take the Cockade City (Petersburg) at the Battle of Old Men and Young Boys on June 9.

Despite having crossed the James River and stolen a march on Lee, Grant was now halted before Petersburg following the First Offensive of June 15-18. He developed a plan to move infantry around the city, first to cut the Jerusalem Plank Road and then to send a corps north around the city to cut the South Side Railroad, the city's principal rail connection to the southwest. Unfortunately, Confederate counterthrusts foiled this maneuver, necessitating an alternative approach. Given that the campaign to take Richmond had stalled, with mounting casualties and expiring enlistments Grant sought

to avoid further grinding attrition-like battles by developing the idea to destroy Confederate lifelines with far reaching mobile cavalry forces.

Grant chose Brigadier General James H. Wilson to lead an extensive raid on Petersburg's connections to the rest of the Confederacy. A native of Shawneetown, Illinois and 27 years of age, Wilson was a junior brigadier in the service, a protégé of Grant and a soldier looking for glory. With a force of 5,500 and 16 artillery pieces, including 2,400 cavalrymen under Brigadier General August V. Kautz from the Army of the James, this was his first independent command. Born in Germany, Kautz came to America as a boy; like Wilson a West Point graduate, he was Mexican War veteran and saw action in the first battle of Petersburg.

The plan was for Wilson to range to the southwest toward Danville and Lynchburg with instructions to interrupt Lee's communications and supply lines, principally the junction of the South Side and Richmond & Danville Railroads at Burkeville. Ultimately, the goal would be to destroy the High Bridge over the Appomattox River and join with General Hunter; options were to continue to march south to join General Sherman in Georgia or to New Bern, North Carolina. If none of these were practicable, he was to return to the Army of the Potomac.

The Federals set out from army lines on June 22 and immediately tore up telegraph lines and burned the station at Reams Station, moving quickly west toward Dinwiddie Court House with Confederates under Rooney Lee in pursuit. Wilson's men then veered northwest toward the South Side Railroad between Sutherland and Ford's Stations. Arriving at Ford's Depot, they engaged in extensive destruction, burning the station and public buildings, tearing up tracks, and destroying several cars and locomotives. Wilson became engaged with Rooney Lee at The Grove on June 23; although outnumbered 2,000 to 800, Lee attacked and was eventually pushed back.

Kautz reached Burkeville on June 24 but was separated from Wilson's force which trailed behind following its recent sanguine engagement. Kautz's men tore up track along the Richmond & Danville and proceeded southwest, reuniting with Wilson on June 25 on the road to Roanoke Station where the major battle of the raid took place, at Staunton River Bridge. There, 1,000 dug in infantry held the Federals while Lee, reinforced by Barringer's Brigade, attacked Wilson's rear guard. Unable to destroy the bridge, Wilson disengaged and turned back toward Petersburg. Before reaching Federal lines, Wilson and Kautz fought battles at Sappony Church (June 28) where Wade Hampton's cavalry division blocked their path, and at Ream's Station (June 29) where they lost their artillery while under attack by Mahone's infantry. In this action, Union forces also abandoned their wagons and supplies.

In all, the Wilson-Kautz raid accomplished little. Despite destroying many miles of track and much property over some 350 miles, it did not hasten the end of the war. The two railroads were repaired and continued to function until the end of the war. Federal losses were 81 killed, 261 wounded, over 1,100 captured or missing, plus the loss of 16 artillery pieces. But the concept did show Grant's grasp of the larger strategic picture and in part led to his later detachment of Sheridan to the Valley, a move that garnered great results.

John Horn has a great grasp of the strategy and tactical operations of the Petersburg campaign, which was not one but many different battles and raids taking place over an eleven-month period. Wilson-Kautz was but one.



BULLETIN BOARD

Our in-person meetings are currently held at:

Holiday Inn Oakbrook

350 W 22nd St., Oakbrook Terrace

Parking at the Holiday Inn is FREE

Dinner \$40.00 Members and Non- Members

Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30

Presentation only is \$10 per person.

October 11th, noon at the **Kenosha Civil War Museum**, Bob Presman will speak on "John Brown: Hero or Terrorist? Martyr or Madman?"

Author and historian **Dave Powell** will be teaching a workshop at the Civil War Museum of Kenosha, WI, from 1-3 pm on Saturday, October 12, entitled "The Atlanta Campaign: Missed Opportunities."

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

On October 20th, **Garfield Farms Museum** in Campton Hills, Illinois is holding an "immersive event" on the Battle of Gettysburg, with Gary Adelman as featured speaker. For more information, visit garfieldfarm.org

Bruce Allardice is speaking Oct. 10th to the McHenry County Genealogical Society, on "Tracing Your Civil War Ancestor," and on Oct. 15th to the Shir Tikvah Congregation of Homewood on "Hollywood's Civil War Movies."

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Oct. 2nd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Phil Angelo on "The Lost Cause and the Confederate Defeat"
Oct. 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Charlie Banks on "General Herman Haupt"
Oct. 7th, Rock Valley CWRT: TBA
Oct. 8th, McHenry County CWRT: Don Hatch on "Custer, His Rebel Buddy, Harpers Ferry and John Yates Beall"
Oct. 8th, Southwest Michigan CWRT: "Major Delaney"
Oct. 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: Larry Hewitt on "The Birth of Combat Photography"
Oct. 13th, Northern Indiana CWRT: Gene Salecker on "The Sultana Disaster"
Oct. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Bjorn Skaptesen on "Shiloh"
Oct. 19th, Salt Creek CWRT: Annual Book Sale. Jeff Anderson will speak on "Joseph Medill, Abolitionist"
Oct. 24th, South Suburban CWRT: Phil Spaugy on "The 19th Indiana Regiment During the Civil War"

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

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

Nov. 8th: Allen Ottens on "The Grant-Rawlins Relationship"
Dec. 13th: Jon Sebastian on "We Are All in This War--the Northern Home Front"
Jan. 10th, 2025: Bjorn Skaptason on "Shiloh"
Feb. 14th: Hampton Newsome on "Gettysburg's Southern Front"
Mar. 14th: Gerry Prokopowicz on TBA
Apr. 9th (Wednesday): Phil Spaugy on "The 19th Indiana and the Iron Brigade"
May 9th: Steve Phan on "Asian and Pacific Islanders During the Civil War"
June 13th: Dave Powell (Nevins-Freeman Award) on "Lost Opportunities in the Atlanta Campaign"

The **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop's** facebook page airs "Take a Break with History", every first and third Friday of the month at 1 pm CST.

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

A friend to us all, **Dick McAdoo**, passed away September 14th.

Our CWRT's president 1989-90, Dick was a fixture on the CWRT's battlefield tours, which he enlivened with his humor and never-ending flow of wisecracks.

Some years back he left the Chicago area to live in North Carolina. He taught at a firefighters academy there. He will be missed.



