

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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Chicago, Illinois

October 2022

812th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, October 14th, 2022

Bruce Allardice on "Myths and Mysteries of the CSS Hunley"

Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Oct. 14th, 2022, 07:30 PM CST

Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed



The Confederate submarine Hunley, the first submarine to ever sink an enemy warship, has fascinated us ever since its mysterious disappearance in 1864. Movies have been made dramatizing its almost suicidal nature and its tragic end. Myths and legends have grown up about it. The Hunley was re-discovered in 1995 off Charleston Harbor, and rescued from the bottom of the sea, to sit today in a museum in Charleston. Yet over a decade after its rescue, questions still linger about the submarine, how it operated, why it was lost, what happened to the crew. In this presentation, Professor Allardice will relate the latest discoveries, discoveries that answer at least some of the mysteries surrounding the vessel.

Bruce S. Allardice is a longtime (35 years) (has it really been that long?) member and past president of the Chicago CWRT. Professor Allardice teaches European and American History, as well as Political Science, at South Suburban College. He has authored, or co-authored, 7 books, and numerous articles, on the Civil War and on Baseball history. He is past president of the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table, and a current member of five Chicago-area CWRTs.

Prof. Allardice gives presentations around the country on history, on political science, and baseball history--65 presentations in the last 5 years--in such venues as Civil War Round Tables, the Society of American Baseball Research (SABR) national convention, the Illinois State Historical Society, and the Kenosha Civil War Museum.

Battlefield Preservation

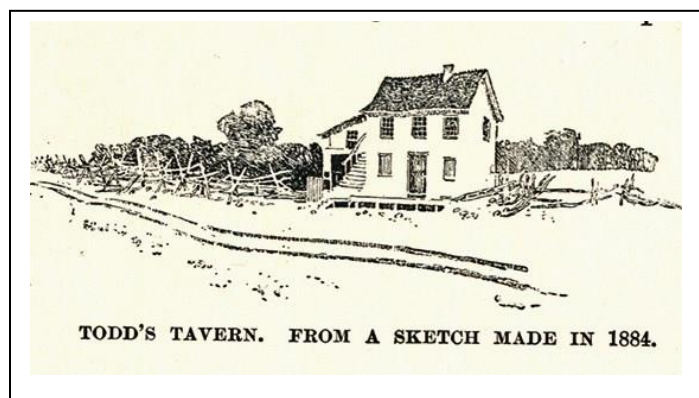
Todd's Tavern Acreage Saved!

Today I encourage you to raise a glass and join our toast to the preservation of 137 acres at the site of Todd's Tavern, which sat at the intersection of the Brock and Catharpin Roads — an important road junction connecting the Wilderness to Spotsylvania Court House. You may be asking: Why a toast? Well, it is National Drink Beer Day, and you can bet the establishment that lent its name to the May 15, 1864, battle served its fair share of the malty elixir!

The Trust recognizes that this celebratory news wouldn't have been possible had it not been for the support of the American Battlefield Protection Program, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund and our friends at the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust. Working hand-in-hand with these entities has saved not only this versatile site — but numerous hallowed acres across Virginia.

But it's all due to YOUR generosity — with you on the side of battlefield preservation, we can charge forward with confidence that significant places like Todd's Tavern remain a reminder of our country's powerful, multifaceted past. ...

Following in the footsteps of the legendary Lafayette, Union Generals Ulysses S. Grant and George Gordon Meade rode south along Brock Road on the night of May 7, 1864, skirting the 137-acre tract and stopping briefly at the one-and-a-half story inn known as Todd's Tavern. A few days later, on May 14, Confederate General Thomas Rosser's cavalry brigade spent the night at the tavern. The following day, Rosser marched east on Catharpin Road and engaged the 2nd Ohio Cavalry and 23rd USCT. Within this encounter, Union



General Philip Sheridan and Confederate General Fitzhugh “Fitz” Lee waged one of the most intense and important cavalry battles of the Overland Campaign.

While this tavern — a combination residence, tavern, post office and store — was destroyed sometime before 1884, the land alone speaks volumes to its place in American history. Without your help, this pristine acreage could have been lost to a residential subdivision or utility-scale solar farm. I thank you again for making this preservation dream into a reality.

Sincerely,

David N. Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust

September Meeting

By Mark Matranga

Steve Cowie spoke to The Civil War Round Table at its 811th Regular meeting on September 9, 2022, presenting “When Hell Came to Sharpsburg,” the horrific aftereffects of the battle on the civilian population of Sharpsburg and its surrounding environs. Cowie’s emphasized his research into claims for property losses made by 150 families living within a five-mile radius of the battlefield and two dozen families who lived in Sharpsburg and Keedysville. He identified 250 claims as well as sworn testimony and legal depositions supporting these claims.

Unlike other battles where armies fought and moved on, after Antietam only General Lee’s army retreated to safety in Virginia; the Federal army remained in the vicinity of Sharpsburg for some six weeks post-battle. Encamping across a wide area from Bakersville north of the town, to Keedysville east of Antietam creek and south to Harpers Ferry, the Federal army wreaked havoc on the human and physical environment during and after the hostilities along Antietam Creek on September 17, 1862.

Many buildings were destroyed during the battle, notably the Mumma barn, burned by Confederate infantry. But more were damaged by artillery; some 50,000 rounds were fired by 520 cannons. For example, the barns of Samuel and David Reel burned due to Federal fire and the Lutheran church was also damaged. Both the Miller Gristmill and the Newcomer Mill were destroyed during Burnside’s attack. Union artillery overshot rebel positions on Cemetery Hill, striking almost every building in town. The homes of

two widows burned. Looking back, Elizabeth Miller Blackford remembered, “That night I thought the whole town was on fire.”

Mumma Farm, Antietam



Crucially, the fall harvest was at hand: the movements and fighting over the battlefield destroyed crops – corn, potatoes, apples and other fruits. After the battle, with a 75,000 strong army camped in the area and beset with supply problems no farmstead’s crops were safe. And despite General McClellan’s directive prohibiting it, troops began to loot – cattle, hogs, chickens, hams from

smokehouses, and other food from directly from homes. Cowie’s research reveals a loss of 1,600 cattle, sheep, and swine; 4,200 tons of corn, hay, and grain; 3,000 chickens, geese, and ducks; and many scores of horses and mules. After weeks of encampments, a farmhand, Alex Davis, commented, “The farmers didn’t have no chickens to crow.”

The depredations did not stop with livestock. Although the citizens of Sharpsburg initially provided meals and housed wounded soldiers, their household goods – silverware, pots and pans - were fair game. Worse, virtually all fencing in the area was broken up and used for firewood or shelter when the weather turned in October; this included fences along the roads as well as between neighboring fields, an estimated 600,000 in all. The soldiers then turned to wood lots in the area, felling 5,000 trees of choice hardwood varieties. Soldiers “built a city” with William Blackford’s 33 acres of hardwood, “cutting everything in the shape of trees.”

The crisis in the immediate aftermath of the battle was lack of medical supplies. Every available object that could be used for bandages – clothing, linens – was commandeered. With well over 12,500 wounded and dying, barns, outbuildings, churches, and homes were seized by union forces for hospital uses. Conditions were less than sanitary, leading to the outbreak of disease. Diarrhea, dysentery, and typhoid soon ran rampant through the camps, abetted by poor sanitation: latrine ‘sinks’ soon filled and overflowed, and together with toxins from human and equine corpses lying on the battlefield for days leached into the shallow water table, polluting local wells and spreading the ‘soldiers’ disease’ to the community. The medical records of Dr. Augustin Biggs, who served the community before and after the battle, document the spike in illnesses and deaths from these diseases during the occupation; his work continued well after the army left on October 26, 1862.

Cowie concluded by describing how claims were brought by the Sharpsburg citizens: the War Department systems overseen by General Meigs; the Bowman Act (1883); and the Tucker Act. Claims were adjudicated over the course of many decades, some into the next century. Along with reference to the officer to whom the claim was originally made, proof of loyalty was required, a test difficult to satisfy. Over half of all claims were rejected; of those accepted the average payment was 15% of the loss. Some losses could not be quantified: with an army living on their land, farmers were unable to plant seed for winter wheat before the first frost in October, and thus lost the crop.

The Battle of Antietam and its aftermath devastated Sharpsburg and its inhabitants. As early as October 2, a local paper *Herald of Freedom and Torchlight* wrote “Many of us are ruined.... Cannot the government make some provision for us?” Many were forced into bankruptcy. Some left to start anew. Historian Dennis Frye has said “Was is a human tornado.” Never was this so evident than at Antietam where not only loss of life but also the sources of material culture and wealth of a community were virtually eradicated. Cowie’s painstaking research lays out this position with great clarity. He has made a great contribution to the historiography of the Maryland Campaign and to our understanding of the effects of occupying armies on civilian populations.



Our in-person meetings are held at:

Holiday Inn O'Hare

5615 N. Cumberland, Chicago, IL 60631

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.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

Sunday, October 9, 1pm – 3pm | Instructor: Bjorn Skaptason | \$10 (\$25 non-members) | [Register Here](#)

A military frock coat belonging to Major Ephraim Cutler Dawes is on display at the Civil War Museum. Bjorn Skaptason of Abraham Lincoln Book Shop will tell Dawes’ story and the story of the coat – plus the stories of other artifacts on display – to demonstrate how the “stuff” of history can reveal details of the lives of the people left behind.

Friday, October 14 | 12pm – 1pm | Presenter: Pete Skully

Brother Joseph Dutton was born Ira Dutton in Storrs, Vermont, and grew up in Janesville, Wisconsin. He served for the duration of the Civil War in the 13th Wisconsin, rising from Quartermaster Sergeant to Lieutenant and District Quartermaster. He spent two decades after the war in his "lost years" then spent forty-four years ministering to the leper colony of Molokai Island, Hawaii.

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

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

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

- Oct. 5th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Forum on Civil War Innovations
- Oct. 7th, Northern Illinois CWRT: **Jerry Allen** on "The 8th Wisconsin"
- Oct. 11th, Southwest Michigan CWRT: Jen Murray on "George Gordon Meade and the Civil War"
- Oct. 11th, McHenry County CWRT: Charlie Banks on "Herman Haupt, Lincoln's Railroad Man"
- Oct. 13th, Milwaukee CWRT: 75th Anniversary Celebration
- Oct. 15th, Salt Creek CWRT: **Rob Girardi** on "General John E. Smith, Galena's Forgotten General"
- Oct. 18th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Gene Salecker on "Forrest's Railroad Raid"
- Oct. 27th, South Suburban CWRT: **Rob Girardi** on "Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier"

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

- Nov. 11th:** Mary Abroe, The Nevins-Freeman Address. "Historic Preservation and Civil War Battlefields: An American Story."
- Dec. 9th:** Garry Adelman, "Midwest Civil War Photo Extravaganza"
- Jan. 13th, 2023:** Rob Girardi, "POWs at Camp Douglas"
- Feb. 10th:** Charlie Knight on "Robert E. Lee"
- Mar. 10th:** Dwight Hughes on "Unlike Anything That Ever Floated"
- Apr. 14th:** Richard Holloway on "The Red River Campaign"
- May 12th:** Sean Michael Chick on "Grant's Left Hook: The Bermuda Hundred"

Campaign"

June 9th: Tom Cartwright, topic TBA

Zoom notice: For the remainder of the 2022-23 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.

On Oct. 6th, at 3:30 CST, the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop's** "House Divided" series of facebook interviews will feature William Styple talking about his new book, *Gen. Philip Kearny: A Very God of War*. For more, visit <https://alincolnbookshop.com/a-house-divided-upcoming-shows/>

Special Meeting Giveaway

The CWRT will be giving away a **free Civil War book or item** to anyone attending the October meetings in person. A bonus for attending. And a way of saying thank you to our members.



