



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXXII, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June 2023

819th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Mark Zimmerman on "The Brutal Retreat from Nashville 1864"

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: June 9th, 2023, 07:30 PM CST.  
Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed**



Mark Zimmerman, a member of the Nashville Civil War Round Table, will present an hour-long slideshow, *The Brutal Retreat from Nashville 1864*, based on his self-published book, Mud, Blood and Cold Steel. The presentation details the 10-day, 100-mile retreat by John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee from Compton's Hill in Nashville to the Tennessee River in northern Alabama. The Confederates were pursued by the infantry and cavalry of George Henry Thomas, including the cavalry of James Harrison Wilson, which was armed with

repeating rifles. The harrowing retreat was conducted in the dead of winter through rugged and inhospitable terrain.

Mark is a retired newspaperman who belongs to numerous Civil War and historic preservation organizations. He has self-published eight non-fiction books, including four on "the late unpleasantness." His latest book, Fortress Nashville, was named a Top Ten Book of 2022 by Civil War Books & Authors. He is also a Tennessee Squire with modest landholdings in Lynchburg. He was born and raised in Rockford, the gritty city at the top of Illinois, and spent seven years as a Packers fan in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He is

also an avid fan of the University of Tennessee Volunteers. He has led tours of historic sites in Nashville and has presented at Shiloh National Military Park, Johnsonville State Historic Park, Fort Defiance Interpretive Center, and Fort Negley Interpretive Center.

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## **Battlefield Preservation**

### **Help Us Save Hallowed Ground in Tennessee and Kentucky**

The American Battlefield Trust wants to save a total of 24 acres at the battlefields of Franklin, Nashville, Belmont and Richmond. They are publicizing a \$117-\$1 match on any donations.

“Your generous support over the years is exactly why there is matching grant funding today in states like Kentucky and Tennessee. Generous grant programs were established by state officials because of the Trust’s stellar record in raising the balance of funds when opportunities like these became available.

**Please help seize this moment. There is no way we’d be able to save these 24 acres by ourselves.**

With matching funds from federal, state, and local governments and other partner groups, we only need to raise the remaining \$118,000 to generate an astonishing \$117-to-\$1 match — one of the largest matches we’ve ever had. Please don’t delay, make your gift today.

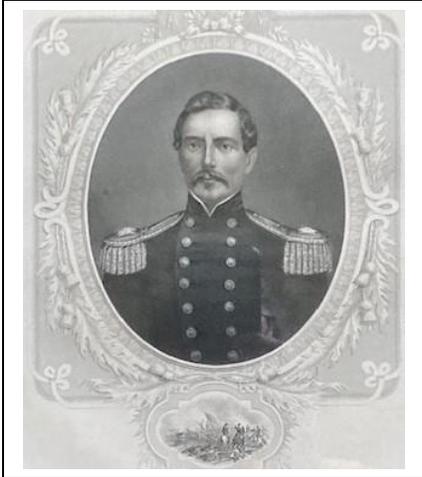
David Duncan, President, American Battlefield Trust”

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## **May Talk**

**By Mark Matranga**

The 818<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table featured **Sean Michael Chick** on “Dreams of Victory: General P.G.T Beauregard in the Civil War.” Beauregard, born into Louisiana’s elite Creole society, rejected the life of a planter in favor of a military career. But Chick points out, as skilled as the general was in the military arts, he was fatally flawed in politics. Beauregard started the war a great hero of the Confederacy but ended his life derided by former leaders and colleagues, his great aspirations and designs unfulfilled.



Beauregard was born on his parents' plantation near New Orleans in May 1818. He attended a private academy and then studied in New York under two French Napoleonic War veterans who stirred a passion in him for Bonaparte. He determined to attend West Point, enrolling there in 1834 and graduating second in his class in 1838. After a first brief posting he was transferred to Louisiana, surveying the coastline and working on fortifications.

Frustrated over his failure to be promoted, his luck changed when war with Mexico came. His work on port fortifications in Tampico landed him a position on General Scott's staff as the army set out for Mexico City. He performed with distinction during the siege of Veracruz and scouting at Cerro Gordo. At Mexico City, Scott accepted Beauregard's daring plan to attack Chapultepec over the objection of his generals. He was wounded during the attack but accepted the surrender of the city. Brevetted to major, Beauregard nonetheless felt slighted as others were given more recognition.

Upon returning from Mexico, Beauregard returned to his previous engineering duties until the coming of the Civil War. He also dabbled in politics, in 1852 supporting Franklin Pierce for President over his former mentor Scott. This led to his winning an important project, the completion of the Customs House. As war loomed, he was appointed Superintendent at West Point but was removed when Louisiana seceded; he served only three days. Personally opposed to secession, he chose to go with his state.

War made Beauregard one of the most famous men in the country. In command at Charleston when the first shot of the war was fired, the architect and hero of Manassas. But Beauregard quarreled with the administration. Among the reasons were his attempts to convince Davis to move on Washington, that Joseph Johnston outranked him, and that Manassas was his victory alone. He desired an independent command but rather was sent to serve under A.S. Johnston whose defensive line in Kentucky was untenable. He advised concentrating forces which Johnston rejected. However, after the army's retreat to Mississippi he relented; Beauregard achieved the concentration in stunning fashion, preparing the army for the attack at Shiloh.

At Shiloh, Beauregard made the biggest mistake of his career when he advised Davis that a great victory had been won. Thinking the federals would be finished off and unaware Grant was being reinforced, he erred; despite desperate fighting the next day they were compelled to retreat. He handled the siege at Corinth well, but after taking leave due to illness without permission, Davis relieved him. Returning to Charleston, he won the Confederacy's only real victory in 1863, and he performed excellently in the

Bermuda Hundred and before Petersburg where he warded off attacks in May and June 1864.

Postwar, Beauregard was active in New Orleans politics and most significantly with the corrupt Louisiana Lottery which, per Chick, he did not see or ignore. He took and lost high positions with railroads. Through all he remained a Democrat, saying Republicans should “drink from the poison chalice.” But as Chick emphasized, both pre- and post-war, Beauregard was ‘bad at politics.’

What to say about the Creole General? He was in fact far more successful than others who gained greater prominence such as the two Johnstons, Hood, Pemberton. Imagine Beauregard in command before Vicksburg: would he not have met Grant with his full strength at Champion Hill? Would he have been fooled at Tullahoma as was Bragg? Would he have performed better than Johnston in the Atlanta Campaign? All conjecture. But his ideas on concentration of forces were superior to those of Davis who determined to defend every inch of southern soil. This was emphatically so early in the war when the Lincoln administration was rudderless and the Confederacy flushed with victory. Davis simply did not like Beauregard, and that was enough. Chick gave the Round Table much to think about this man whose personality flaws perhaps denied him a greater place in history.



## BULLETIN BOARD

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*Our in-person meetings are currently held at:*

**Holiday Inn Oak Brook**

17W 350 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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

June 2nd, noon: Pat Brennan on “Gettysburg in Color.”

June 9<sup>th</sup>, noon: Dick Zimmermann on “More Than Just Grit: Civil War Leadership, Logistics and Teamwork in the West, 1862”

July 14<sup>th</sup>, noon: Calvin Watts on “Theodore Roosevelt and the Civil War”

Aug. 11<sup>th</sup>, noon: Dr. Gregory Burek on “Post-Civil War Veteran Mental Health”

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

**Bruce Allardice's** will speak on "Before the Chicago Cubs: Baseball Comes to the Windy City" June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the River Forest Public Library. See [www.civilwarbruce.com](http://www.civilwarbruce.com) for more.

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On June 21st **Leslie Goddard** will present "Clara Barton" to the Des Moines CWRT. For more on Leslie's presentations, visit [www.lesliegoddard.info](http://www.lesliegoddard.info)

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**Rob Girardi** will be speaking on "General Warren's Last Battle" June 3<sup>rd</sup>, to the Civil War Conference in Jacksonville, IL; June 28<sup>th</sup> to the Bernard Horwich JCC on "Chicago's Memory of the Civil War;" and July 21<sup>st</sup> to the Madison County CWRT (KY) on "The Union Prisoners of War at Camp Douglas." For more, visit [www.https://www.robertgirardi.com/](https://www.robertgirardi.com/).

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## More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

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

June 1st, Rockford CWRT: John Cox, "Ulysses S. Grant: From Appomattox to the White House and After"

June 2nd, Northern Illinois CWRT: David Zarefsky on "The Strategy of Lincoln's First Inaugural Address"

June 7th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Annual dinner

June 8th, Milwaukee CWRT: Mark Zimmerman on "Mud, Blood and Cold Steel: The Retreat from Nashville"

June 13th, McHenry County CWRT: Larry Werline on "U.S. Grant at Champion Hill"

June 16th, Salt Creek CWRT Annual Banquet: **Larry Hewitt** on "The Birth of Combat Photography: McPherson and Oliver, 1863"

June 17th, Cantigny in Wheaton: Symposium of the Abraham Lincoln Association, featuring **Rob Girardi** on "The Detective as Historian"

June 20th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Steve Cowie on "When Hell Came to Sharpsburg"

July 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rockford CWRT: Steven Acker, "The Battle of Gettysburg As Told Through Its Monuments"

July 11th, McHenry County CWRT: **Jerry Allen** on "The 1st and 8th Wisconsin: Shadowy Secrets"

July 18th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Steve Knowlton on "13 Months in Dixie"

Aug. 5th, **Chicago CWRT Executive Committee Meeting**, 9:30 a.m. at Camp Girardi

Aug. 7th, Rockford CWRT: **Bruce Allardice** on "The Election of 1864"  
Aug. 15th, McHenry County CWRT: **Bruce Allardice** on "Charles Gunther, Mississippi River Confederate"  
Aug. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: TBA

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## Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

**Sept. 8th:** Al Olives on "The Boy Generals. George Custer, Wesley Merritt and the Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac"  
**Oct. 13th:** Carleton Young on "Two Vermont Brothers in the Army of the Potomac"  
**Nov. 10th:** Ernest Dollar on "Hearts Torn Asunder: Trauma in the Civil War"  
**Dec. 8th:** Scott Mingus on "Texans at Chickamauga"  
**Jan. 12th, 2024:** Pat and Dylan Brennan on "Gettysburg in Color"  
**Feb. 9th:** Harold Knudsen on "James Longstreet and the American Civil War"  
**March 8th:** Chris Bryan on "The Union XII Corps"  
**April 12th:** Steve Knowlton on "13 Months in Dixie"  
**May 10th:** Lynn and Julianne Herman on "The Allegheny Arsenal Explosion"  
**June 14th:** Tim Smith (Nevins-Freeman Award) on "Vicksburg"

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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. Their next "House Divided" author interview is July 13<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 CST, with C. W. Goodyear discussing his new book, [President Garfield: From Radical to Unifier](https://alincolnbookshop.com/). For more, visit <https://alincolnbookshop.com/>

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## Save the Date!

June 17th, Cantigny in Wheaton, from 9-3:30: **Symposium of the Abraham Lincoln Association**. The distinguished list of speakers will include Michael Burlingame, Michelle Krowl, **Dan Weinberg**, Guy Fraker, **Robert I. Girardi**, William Griffing and Diana Dretske. The symposium's theme will be the use of original and primary sources in historiography. The symposium is Free and open to the public.

RSVP to [kaysmith.ala@gmail.com](mailto:kaysmith.ala@gmail.com) or call: **217-LINCOLN**

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## RED RIVER TOUR BEARSS DONATIONS

The following individuals have made what has cumulatively amounted to the best year The Civil War Round Table has had in raising funds to support organizations dedicated to preserving battlefields and historical sites, this year relating to the Red River Campaign. These included Mansfield Battlefield, Fort DeRussy, and Kent Plantation, among others. Contributions totaled \$2,600. The Battlefield Preservation Committee would like to thank all who contributed to this effort and to all who participated in the nightly Book Raffles during the tour.

CHUCK ADAMS

BRUCE ALLARDICE

FAZIL BHIHAMI

ROGER BOHN

JEAN CAIRNS

KURT CARLSON

RANDY DOLER

PAUL ESTES

GARY FINE

TONY FLORES

MARY BETH FOLEY

ROB GIRARDI

CINDY HECKLER

JOHN HORN

JANET LINHART

FATHER BOB MILLER

GINNY PROCUNIER

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CURT THOMASCO

PHIL WALDRON

JOHN WILLIAMS

MARK MATRANGA