



GENERAL ORDERS

The Newsletter of the
Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.
Our 62nd Year
and The Iron Brigade Association



JUNE 17, 2010

ROBERT I. GIRARDI

Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign

William T. Sherman knew that the 1864 Atlanta Campaign was all about railroads. Sherman later wrote, "The great question of the campaign was one of supplies." Sherman knew his army was large enough to take Atlanta but even if he did not lack for soldiers, an army of 100,000 would have to be sustained on the march. Sherman began amassing the food and ammunition his troops would require to live in the field. Railroad locomotives and boxcars were confiscated by military authorities, and rations issued to pro-Union Tennesseans were diverted to the army. The Confederates knew the importance of the railroad line too, and made several efforts to cut the supply line that was vital to Sherman. Yet Sherman was prepared to live off the land if the supply line was cut and wrote to Grant, "Georgia has a million inhabitants. If they can live, we should not starve."

The Round Table welcomes Robert I. Girardi as our June speaker. Girardi will discuss how Sherman kept his vital supply system in operation during the course of this important 1864 Campaign. During the campaign Sherman assigned thousands of Union soldiers to guard the railroads, to rebuild burned bridges, and to fend off raids by Nathan Bedford Forrest and Joe Wheeler. He launched raids by more Union forces into Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia to keep the Confederate cavalry busy and away from his supply lines.

Robert Girardi is a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago. He earned his M.A. in Public History from Loyola University in Chicago in 1991. Girardi has studied the war from all sides, and has tramped over many of the battlefields and related sites. He is both an author and historian and is a well traveled speaker and consultant on the American Civil War. He is a fellow of the Company of Military Historians and is an associate member of the Sons of Union Veterans.

Girardi has authored or edited seven books including: *Campaigning with Uncle Billy: The Civil War Memoirs of Sgt. Lyman S. Widney, 34th Illinois Volunteer Infantry* (2008); *The New Annals of the Civil War* (2004); *The Memoirs of Brigadier General William Passmore Carlin, U.S.A.* (1999); and *The Military Memoirs of General John Pope* (1998). Mr. Girardi's most current publication is *The Civil War Art of Keith Rocco* (2009).

Robert Girardi lives in Chicago and currently works as a homicide detective for the Chicago Police Department. He is on the editorial review board of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* and has consulted for the Chicago Historical Society on its Civil War exhibits.

2010 Board of Directors Election

At the May meeting the following board members were reelected: Tom Arliskas, Crain Bliwas and Paul Eilbes. In addition, new board members elected were: Donna Agnelly and Roman Blenski. The newly elected directors begin their duties in May, and will serve three-year terms.

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JUNE MEETING AT A GLANCE

June 17, 2010

Robert I. Girardi

"Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign"

Wisconsin Club

9th & Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee
(Jackets required for dining room)

5:30 p.m. – Staff Meeting
(Open to all members)

6:15 p.m. – Registration & Social Hour

6:45 p.m. – Dinner

7:30 p.m. – Program

Dinner – \$23 by reservation.

Deadline: Monday, June 14, 2010

See page 5.

Speaker and topic are subject to change.

In case of inclement weather, listen to
WTMJ or WISN radio.

ANNOUNCEMENTS • EVENTS • MEETINGS

July 17 & 18, 2010

Civil War Encampment and Battle Reenactment
Old Falls Village, Menomonee Falls
For information please visit: www.oldfallsvillage.com
Or call: 262-552-4662

August 7 & 8, 2010

18th Annual Muskets and Memories Civil War Era Reenactment
and GAR Heritage Encampment, Boscobel
www.musketsandmemories.net

August 21 & 22, 2010

The Civil War Remembered
Pinecrest Village, Manitowoc
For event information visit: www.mchistsoc.org

September 9, 2010

Meeting of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table
Speaker and Topic TBA

Summer Events at the Kenosha Civil War Museum

Second Friday Lectures
12 noon, Freedom Hall, The Civil War Museum
Free of Charge

Friday, July 9, 2010 Margaret Berres and Tom Ludka No Soldier Forgotten

Civil War soldiers who volunteered, served their time, and survived to muster out, returned to 19th-century society. This was the case with Albert Melm, musician in the 24th Illinois Infantry. Albert's story was forgotten – even by descendants of the Melms family – until researchers Berres and Ludka went looking for his final resting place. What they found is a snapshot of how treatment of mental illness developed in 19th-century America.

Friday, August 13, 2010 Kerck Kelsey The Remarkable Washburn Brothers – In War and Peace

Almost every family in America was affected by the Civil War, but few matched the record of the seven sons raised by Israel Washburn. One son, Cadwallader Washburn, raised his own regiment in Wisconsin and ended the war battling cotton speculators and Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Kerck Kelsey, a Washburn descendant himself, has spent the past fifteen years or more studying and writing about the Washburn family.

Reenactor Groups at the Kenosha Civil War Museum

July 31, 2010, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.
The 154th Tennessee

August 7, 2010
12 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Company F, 29th United States Colored Troops

☆☆☆☆☆☆ IN THIS MONTH • JUNE ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

June 17, 1861 • After capturing the state capital at Jefferson City, Missouri, on June 15, Nathaniel Lyon and his forces pressed deeper into Missouri, following a retreating Governor Claiborne Jackson. One Federal soldier wrote that in Missouri:

We were both missionaries and musketeers. When we captured a man we talked him nearly to death; in other respects we treated him humanely. The Civil War was a battle of ideas interrupted by artillery.

In Washington, balloonist Thaddeus Sobieski Lowe and others ascended a short distance in the air to demonstrate the observation usefulness of balloons. Communications were made with Lincoln from the balloon by telegraph.

June 12, 1862 • “Gentlemen, in ten minutes every man must be in his saddle!” With those words, Brigadier General J.E.B. Stuart prepared to lead his twelve hundred cavalymen along with some artillery on an expedition that turned into his famous ride around the entire Federal army on the Peninsula. The four-day reconnaissance covered some twenty-two miles from Richmond on the first day, and encamped near the South Ana River at Winston Farm that night.

June 15, 1862 • A triumphant Stuart arrived in Richmond and reported personally to Lee. Stuart's exploit was a great morale-booster for the South.

June 15, 1863 • In Pittsburgh, business was suspended and bars and saloons were closed in alarm over Lee's invasion.

June 15, 1863 • At Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a reporter described the scene as “perfect panic.” “Every woman in the place seemed anxious to leave.” People loaded down with luggage were crowding the trains. At the state Capitol books, papers, paintings, and valuables were packed for evacuation.

June 17, 1864 • At 8:30 a.m. a blast, followed by fire, rocked the cartridge-making building of the Washington Arsenal; eighteen were killed or fatally injured and fifteen to twenty were injured.

The tragedy was reported on the following day in the *Daily National Intelligence*:

The community was shocked yesterday by one of those calamities that appall the mind by their suddenness and terrible consequences...

The scene was horrible beyond description. Under the metal roof of the building were seething bodies and limbs, mangled, scorched, and charred beyond the possibility of identification. Most of those who escaped – about two hundred and fifty persons, mainly females, were employed in that building – had fled shrieking away. Some fainted, and were with difficulty, restored, and some had after the first shock, returned to shriek over the fate of their companions; while an agonized crowd of relatives rushed to the spot to learn tidings of their daughters or sisters who were known to have been in the fated building.

At Petersburg, the assaults continued. Federal troops of the Ninth Corps made a surprise attack at the Shand House with limited results. Beauregard's Confederates launched a successful counterattack later in the day.



FROM THE FIELD

Kennesaw Mountain

And I well remember a group that gathered that night about a camp chest under the shadows of the pines to eat a scanty supper by the light of a single tallow candle.

This little group consisted of Col. A.V. Rice, commanding the 57th Regiment; Lt Col. S. R. Mott, Adjutant M.M. Newell, Quartermaster T. L. Parker and myself. The meal was nearly finished when an orderly was heard inquiring for Col. Rice. On being directed to him he delivered an envelope, gave a salute and rode away into the darkness...It was an order for the brigade to move silently out of the works and proceed to a designated spot near the gap, or depression between Big and Little Kennesaw mountains...Gen. Smith had established his headquarters under a hickory tree with a small, circular grass plot about 40 feet in diameter to the south of it...Gen. Giles Smith had sent an order requiring the three ranking officers of each regiment of the brigade to report at his headquarters...Gen. Smith addressed us as follows...This column has been selected as a 'forlorn hope' and we are expected to carry the enemy's works in our front...Gentlemen, this will be serious business and some of us must go down...

No event of the war has left a more vivid or lasting memory in my mind than that meeting at early dawn under that hickory tree at the foot of Kennesaw. But for how many was it their last meeting on earth, and how few of those who met for that brief consultation are now living and how many of the living are maimed and crippled for life? – Captain Alvah S. Skilton, 57th Ohio Infantry, G. Smith's Brigade

Less than a month after surviving the charge at Kennesaw Mountain, Captain Skilton and 90 others from his regiment were captured at the Battle of Atlanta. Skilton escaped from a South Carolina prison but was recaptured and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, VA. He survived the war and died on July 27, 1887.

The brigade made three attempts to come across, but was driven back with severe losses every time. At point-blank range for grape and canister in solid column, company front, no troops could endure such a slaughter. In the meantime our own muskets were worked as never before. From where I lay by looking through between the rails I could see the enemy reinforcing their line. A traverse was in my front, over which they had to climb like a flock of sheep over a fence. Here was a fine chance to test my marksmanship. My right hand had not forgotten its cunning. Three of the boys loaded and passed me their muskets. While thus engaged one of them misfired. I drew it back and proceeded to recap it. I was compelled to shift my position to kneeling. Just then a bullet found a weak spot in the rail and struck me fairly on top of the head. For a brief period there was a blank spot in my memory. I lay there long enough to be reported among the slain in a dispatch sent to a Cleveland newspaper. – Lieutenant Ralsa C. Rice, 125th Ohio Infantry, Harker's Brigade

Lt. Rice had survived every fight without a scratch until Kennesaw. Fortunately the bullet that found him only creased his head

but it was enough to knock him out and have him left for dead on the battlefield. He survived the war.

Well, on the fatal morning of June 27th, the sun rose clear and cloudless, the heavens seemed made of brass, and the earth of iron, and as the sun began to mount toward the zenith, everything became quiet, and no sound was heard save a peckerwood on a neighboring tree, tapping on its old trunk, trying to find a worm for his dinner. We all knew it was but the dead calm that precedes the storm...We could hear but the rumbling sound of heavy guns, and the distant tread of a marching army, as a faint roar of the coming storm, which was soon to break the ominous silence with the sound of conflict, such as was scarcely ever before heard on this earth. It seemed that the arch-angel of Death stood and looked on with outstretched wings, while all the earth was silent, when all at once a hundred guns from the Federal line opened upon us...

Talk about other battles, victories, shouts, cheers, and triumphs, but in comparison with this day's fight, all others dwarf in insignificance. The sun beaming down on our uncovered heads, the thermometer being one hundred and ten degrees in the shade, and a solid line of blazing fire right from the muzzles of the Yankee guns being poured right into our very faces, singeing our hair and clothes, the hot blood of our dead and wounded spurting on us, the blinding smoke and stifling atmosphere filling our eyes and mouths, and the awful concussion causing the blood to gush out of our noses and ears, and above all, the roar of battle, made it a perfect pandemonium. Afterward I heard a soldier express himself by saying that he thought 'Hell had broke loose in Georgia, sure enough.' – Private Sam R. Watkins, 1st Tennessee (C.S.) Infantry, Maney's Brigade

Watkins claimed that he "always shot at privates," since "it was they that did all the shooting and killing." He guessed that by the time the fighting at Kennesaw was over, he had fired his musket 120 times, leaving his arm "bruised and bloodshot from my wrist to my shoulder." Watkins survived the war to write *Co Aytch*.

Next day General Johnston sent a flag of truce to Sherman, in order to give time to carry off the wounded and bury the dead, who were festering in front of their lines.

A truce followed, and Rebels and Federals freely participated in the work of charity. It was a strange sight to see friends, to see old acquaintances, and in some instances brothers, who had been separated for years, and now pitted in deadly hostility, meet and have a good talk over old times, and home scenes, and connections. They drank together, smoked together, appeared on the best possible terms, though the next day they were sure to meet in deadly conflict again. – Captain David P. Conyngham, Volunteer Aide-De-Camp, Federal Staff

Conyngham served, for a time, with Meagher's Irish Brigade before ultimately becoming a Union Army correspondent for the *New York Herald*.

10 MOST ENDANGERED BATTLEFIELDS

Civil War Preservation Trust

2010 Report

Every year the Civil War Preservation Trust publishes their annual report *History Under Siege*. The report lists the Top 10 Endangered Battlefields along with 15 additional sites at risk. In 2009, CWPT rescued 2,777 acres of hallowed ground. Since its inception, more than 29,000 acres of battlefields in 20 states have been protected through their efforts. Here is the 2010 list.

Camp Allegheny, WV • Threat: The lush nature of this battlefield stands to be compromised by a field of 19 massive wind turbines along a nearby ridgeline. Each unit would stand 40 stories high – 100 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty – and have a footprint stretching the length of a football field.

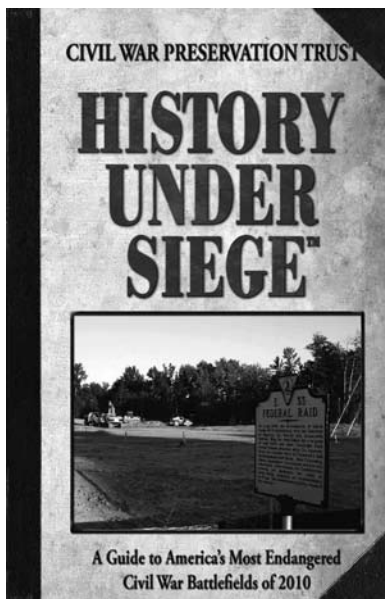
Cedar Creek, VA • Threat: In 2008 the Frederick County Board of Supervisors approved a massive expansion of the mine operating adjacent to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park; this allows the destruction of nearly 400 acres of the battlefield through limestone extraction and came despite significant public opposition and the recommendation of the county Planning Commission.

Fort Stevens, DC • Threat: As the nation's capital has grown, the forts that once stood at its fringes, ringing the city, have been absorbed into neighborhoods. Some have been destroyed, but those that remain, like Fort Stevens, face significant difficulties as urban historic sites.

Gettysburg, PA • Threat: In 2006, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board rejected a proposal to build a massive slots parlor at the intersection of Routes 15 and 30, near East Cavalry Field. Early this year, the state legislature passed a measure allowing gambling to expand to table games and reopening the application period for the final available gaming license. On April 7, the same local investor who had previously attempted to bring a casino to Gettysburg was one of five developers who submitted an application for consideration.

Picacho Peak, AZ • Threat: No state park system has been harder hit than Arizona's, which lost 61 percent of its park funding last summer and has laid off half of its employees in the last three years. The budgetary situation has forced the shuttering of several state parks. In the case of Picacho Peak State Park, unless an interim solution can be found, the site will close to the public on June 3, 2010, without any definitive plans in place for its reopening.

Pickett's Mill, GA • Threat: Pickett's Mill Battlefield State Historic Site is widely regarded as one of the most thoroughly preserved and interpreted battlefields of the Atlanta Campaign. Yet, following the most recent round of budget cuts last July, the park



was forced to reduce its hours significantly, and is now open only three days a week. Additionally, last autumn it was inundated by flood waters that stood up to 15-foot deep in some areas.

Richmond, KY • Threat: Although the Battle of Richmond Association has done great work protecting land associated with the first and second phases of the battle and interpreting it for visitors, future preservation efforts will be complicated by the addition of a new highway interchange off of Interstate 75 near the battlefield. The new roadway has opened the possibility of significant commercial growth and tracts that may have been potential opportunities for future preservation have been subdivided and for sale signs have begun to appear.

South Mountain, MD • Threat: In December 2008, Dominion Power purchased 135 acres near Fox's Gap, including the well-preserved Fox's Tavern. Upon taking ownership of the land, Dominion Power submitted plans for a \$55 million natural gas compression station to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for consideration. After significant outcry, the process was suspended but Dominion could re-file at any time. Currently zoned for agricultural uses, the land is part of a Maryland Priority Preservation Area and lies within the Mid-Maryland Rural Legacy Area. In March, Fox's Tavern was listed by Preservation Maryland as one of the state's 11 most endangered sites.

Thoroughfare Gap, VA • Threat: In February, Advantage Environmental Consultants began seeking comments from the preservation community regarding a proposal to build a 150-foot-tall T-Mobile cellular communications tower within the core battlefield area at Thoroughfare Gap. Preservationists fear that a cell tower hovering above this most famous of all Bull Run Mountain gaps would dramatically malign the setting. Historians also believe that there may yet be unidentified Civil War graves in the immediate vicinity.

Wilderness, VA • Threat: In August 2009, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved a massive commercial center featuring a Walmart and four other retailers at the gateway to the battlefield. Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield, The National Trust for Historic Preservation and local residents filed a lawsuit against the county. The Civil War Preservation Trust, together with the National Parks Conservation Association, has filed an *amicus curiae* brief in support of the litigation.

For the complete report, which also lists 15 more at-risk sites and a review of the past year's success stories please visit: www.civilwar.org



14TH WISCONSIN WAITING FOR BATTLE

Submitted by: Jim Johnson

The Night before our First Battle

There is a night-scene only one
But others I could find
Like panorama pictured views
They are passing in my mind
This one – described in full detail
I have not the time tonight
But will briefly sketch the scene I see
From memory's fading light
A Regiment of men I see
Before me now so plain

At Pittsburg landing on the bluff
They stand there in the rain
Were ordered up that afternoon
From camp ten miles below
And are waiting for the dawn of day
To meet a conquering foe
Forced back the Union line that day
Our front – Our left – Our right –
Around on every side we see
Wars deadly fearful sight –
Stragglers line the River bank

The dead so near at hand
As the cry from wounded pierce our ear
That long – long night we stand
There waiting for our next command
We stand in Companies now at rest
With Belgian Rifles muzzle down
Close under right arm rest
To keep them dry from drenching rain
That still in torrents fell
We listen to the Cannons boom
And watch the circling hell

Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for June 17, 2010

Mail your reservations by Monday, June 14, to:

Paul Eilbes
1809 Washington Ave.
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

ALSO, call in reservations to:

(262) 376-0568

Enclosed is \$ _____ (meal price \$23.00 per person) for _____ reservations for June 17, 2010, meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. (Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)

Name of Member _____

General Orders, the official publication of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., is produced September through May and upon request of the Board of Directors.

Send submissions to **Donna Agnelly, Editor**, 420 Racine St., Unit 110, Waterford, WI 53185 or email to **dagnelly@tds.net** with "Civil War Round Table" in the subject line of your message. All submissions must be received by the Editor no later than the 10th of the month prior to the next issue. The Editor reserves the right to select articles and to edit submissions for style and length.

All address changes or problems receiving your *General Orders* should be directed through Membership Chairman Paul Eilbes.

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Yearly memberships available: Individual (\$35), Family (\$45), and Non-Resident (\$20).

Contact Paul Eilbes for information: (262) 376-0568.

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., admits members of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges and activities of the Round Table.



On June 18, 1947, Parker Webb spoke on the Battle of Chickamauga.

Otto Eisenschiml spoke on "The Story of Shiloh" at the June 1949 meeting.

The topic in June 1956 for speaker Kenneth P. Williams was "Buell's Advance on Chattanooga."

In June 1965, members heard Avery Craven speak about "The Meaning of the Civil War."

"Medicine at Camp Randall" was William S. Middleton's topic in June 1972.

In June 1992 Lance Herdegen spoke to the Round Table about the Panorama Painters of Milwaukee.

Jeffrey Wert visited our Round Table in June 2000. The topic that evening was "The Iron Brigade and The Stonewall Brigade."