

GENERAL ORDERS



The Newsletter of the

**Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.
and The Iron Brigade Association**



January 12, 2017

Richard J. Sommers

RICHMOND REDEEMED:

Enduring Lessons from the Siege of Petersburg

We must destroy this army of Grant's before he gets to the James River. If he gets there, it will become a siege and then it will be a mere question of time.

Robert E. Lee

Our experience of to-day proves that fortifications come near holding themselves without troops. With a reasonable amount of artillery and one infantry man to six feet, I am confident either party could hold their lines against a direct attack on the other.

Ulysses S. Grant

August 1, 1864 – Two days after the Battle of the Crater

At our January meeting, our speaker Richard Sommers, will discuss the Siege of Petersburg and the differing leadership styles of Grant and Lee.

The Siege of Petersburg was the longest campaign of the Civil War, nine-and-a-half months. It centered on the Northern attack and Southern defense of the Confederate capital, Richmond, and its crucial line-of-communications center, Petersburg. The campaign pitted the foremost general of each nation – Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant for the United States and General Robert E. Lee for the Confederate States – directly against each other. It demonstrated how, despite overwhelming odds, the great Virginian prolonged the life of his army, his capital, and his country by almost a year. And it also disclosed how the great Federal commander converted advantages into achievements and eventually destroyed the once mighty Army of Northern Virginia and, with it the Confederacy itself.

Sommers' presentation highlights enduring lessons in leadership at corps, army, army group, theater, and national levels of command which General Grant, General Lee, and their senior subordinates demonstrated in the Siege of Petersburg.

Dr. Richard J. Sommers is retired as the Senior Historian of the Army Heritage and Education Center, where he served for more than forty years. He has authored, in addition to *Richmond Redeemed*, more than 100 chapters, articles, entries, and reviews on various Civil War topics. Sommers received the Bell Wiley Prize for best Civil War book published in 1981-82, the Harrisburg Civil War Round Table General John F. Hartranft Award given for "meritorious service," the Houston Civil War Round Table Frank E. Vandiver Award "for merit," and the Army Heritage Center Foundation General John Armstrong Award for "significant contributions." He was designated a "Distinguished Fellow" by the Army War College in 2015.

Sommers was born in Indiana and received his B.A. from Carleton College and his Ph.D. from Rice University. Dr. Sommers lives in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Tracy.

General Orders No. 1-17

January 2017

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January Meeting at a Glance

[Jackets required for the dining room.]

Wisconsin Club

9th and Wisconsin Avenue

6:15 p.m. - Registration/Social Hour

6:45 p.m. - Dinner

[\$30 by reservation, please]

Reservations are accepted until

Monday, January 9, 2017

7:30 p.m. - Program

Speaker and topic are subject to change. In case of inclement weather, listen to WTMJ or WISN for meeting status.

2016-2017 Speaker Schedule

Find the speaker schedule on page 7.

Abraham Lincoln Book Shop

The Abraham Lincoln Book Shop is now officially re-opened at its new location only ½ mile from their previous location.

Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, Inc
824 West Superior Street, Suite 100
(corner of Green St. just off Chicago & Halsted)
Chicago, IL. 60642

312-944-3085

ALincolnBookShop.com



At the January 1947 meeting, M. F. Cockrell's presentation to the Round Table was "The Battle of Corinth."

In January 1957, E. B. Long talked to the membership on "Trivia in Travail."

S. I. Neiman was our Round Table speaker in January 1967, speaking on "Judah P. Benjamin."

"The Maryland Campaign of 1862" was the topic of John W. Schildt's presentation to the Round Table in January 1977.

Harriet A. Engler spoke to the Round Table in January 1987 about "The Art of Historical Costuming."

In January 1997, Kurt Carlson discussed "Major General Patrick Cleburne: The Stonewall of the West."

"Dixie Betrayed" was the topic of David Eicher's talk to the Round Table in January 2007.

At last year's January meeting, our Round Table speaker was Dave Moore who spoke about "William S. Rosecrans."

Other Kenosha Civil War Museum Events

Mercy Street, Season 2 Sneak Preview
Wednesday, January 18, 2017

Doors open at 6 pm; program begins at 7 pm

Join the museum and Milwaukee Public Television as they preview Season 2 of Mercy Street. Dr. Gordon Dammann, founder of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine and historical consultant for Mercy Street, will provide historical context for the preview. Also in attendance will be medical reenactors from the 17th Medical Corps who will provide demonstrations of different aspects of Civil War medical care and techniques.

The Origins of the First World War: Europe 1914
Sunday, January 29, 2017, 1 pm

Presenter: Dr. Laura Gellott, Professor of History, Emeritus, University of Wisconsin – Parkside

This talk will examine the long-term causes of World War I: nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and the entangling alliance system between the Great Powers. It will also look at the immediate causes of the war. This presentation is in conjunction with the *From Civil War to Great War* exhibit.

milwaukeecwrt.org

Kenosha Civil War Museum Second Friday Lunchbox Series

The series is a free program sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and Iron Brigade Association.

Civil War Corps Command: A Study in Leadership
Friday, January 13, 2017, Noon

Presenter: Rob Girardi

Corps commanders in the Civil War were the senior generals working directly with army commanders and were the ones chosen to replace commanders when necessary. A number of the war's most important generals served as corps commanders, some capably, others not. Rob Girardi's talk will discuss the nature of corps command and rate some of the more prominent generals in that capacity.

Where Soldiers Fought and Slaves Slept:
Civil War Student Adventures

Friday, February 10, 2017, Noon

Presenter: Chris Lese and students from Marquette University High School

Lese and his students have been taking immersive Civil War trips for the past several years. In their travels, they met interesting people, stayed at unique locations, and had outstanding Civil War adventures. Chris Lese and his students will describe these trips and might give you some ideas for a Civil War adventure of your own.



Emancipation: Conspiracy, Politics, or Providence?

Saturday, January 14, 2017, 2 pm

Presenter: James M. Cornelius, Ph.D. curator, Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois

In light of Lincoln's comment in February, 1861 that he was "accidentally" elected president, and his obligation in March 1861 to forward a pro-slavery Thirteenth Amendment to the states for consideration, how can we conclude what forces actually led to his Emancipation policy only 15 months later? Lincoln himself was not above believing that "conspiracy" was sometimes at work in Washington; yet he was also a consummate and subtle leader of opinion, while personally believing in providence. This talk will weigh and balance those historical forces. This program is offered in conjunction with the *Changing America* exhibit.





Correspondent of the Sentinel
Fort Monroe, Jan. 3, 1862

The steamship George Washington left Old Point at 11 o'clock this morning and proceeded up James River, about nine miles above Newport News, when the rebel steamer Northampton was met with Union prisoners from Richmond; then stepped on board under the protection of the National flag.

As their names were called, such happy looking men are seldom seen. Cheer after cheer arose from each boat as they approached, and the band of the Fourth Artillery played "Home Sweet Home," which added to the enthusiasm. As the boat passed Newport News, the crews of the Union frigates Cumberland and Congress manned the rigging, and the troops at Camp Butler crowded the beach and the wharves, and sent over the water their shouts of welcome.

The George Washington arrived on her return about half past five o'clock, and the Baltimore boat, which was detained for the purpose, took the released prisoners to Baltimore. The prisoners left Richmond about seven o'clock this morning. The number released is 240 nearly all of whom were taken at the battle of Bull Run.

On arriving here, all who needed clothing were immediately supplied by the Quartermaster's Department.

Letter from Washington

Prisoners from Richmond – Rations – Cabinet Meeting – Forward Defenses of Richmond
Correspondence of the Sentinel
Washington, Jan. 10, 1862

It is to be hoped you are having no such weather in Wisconsin as the denizens of this city are just now enjoying, but enduring. The fog is so dense as to totally obscure any object at twenty rods distance and the mud is infinitely more dense than the fog.

Our very worst November weather is no comparison with it.

Those prisoners taken at Manassas who were lately exchanged are not in the city. I saw them this morning and found among them twenty-one of the Wisconsin Second. There was thirty-two of the Second who were unwounded and taken prisoners at that fight, and some twenty-five who were wounded. Those released are from the ones who were unwounded with one exception. There are some twenty-five or thirty still alive who are yet prisoners at Richmond. You have already published the names and I need not repeat them.

They were tolerably well clad and seemed generally well and in good spirits. They concur in the statement that they were very badly treated as prisoners, being kept in a condition of semi-starvation, and compelled to endure every possible indignity. They had two meals a day; the one in the morning consisting of a little strip, about three inches by one and a half of boiled beef (cold) with a half of a three-cent loaf with a half pint of such a matter of soup from the beef to be served up next morning. Mr. Holdridge of Columbia County, one of the company, informed me that five soldiers were shot in the room where he was confined while looking out from the bars which covered the windows for nothing under heaven but to gratify the wantonness and ambition of the guard to shoot a "d-d Yankee," as the prisoners were uniformly termed. They come back with a personal interest in this war and only ask for the opportunity to pay off the score they feel the rebels have earned. I found Judge Potter among them listening to their wants and what they thought were their claims of the Government, among the chief of which was for their rations during the five months and a half they were prisoners.

The judge got a list of the men and immediately started in the effort of accomplishing what was desired. The War Department at once met him with a flat refusal. It stated that we furnished our rebel prisoners with food while the rebels furnished their prisoners (our men) and one was considered an offset to the other. The Judge however would not take a refusal but followed the thing up pertinaciously requisitioning for all he asked, amounting to over \$30 to each man. Being so successful with reference to the Wisconsin men, he endeavored to have the principle applied to the whole of them but the department told him that it must stop where it was for the present. It cannot, however, stop there and the success in this particular will, of course, involve all the prisoners if some equally determined and pertinacious friend shall take hold of it for them. The boys as may well be supposed were vastly pleased and equally grateful. It was only justice however. We feed their prisoners well but there is very small propriety in trying to offset the starvation rations which they got down there with the rations due them here. It is a righteous precedent which has been set; which will no doubt be followed up. Judge Potter deserves the thanks of all interested in having the soldiers dealt with justly and liberally. But it is only a specimen, not only of his interest in the soldiers, but of his way of doing business.

Anything of benefit to the soldiers out of the usual routine of the army regulations may vastly better be entrusted to Judge Potter or any one of our delegation than to any State Agent who can be sent here.

The Cabinet has had its usual Friday meeting to day. Gen McClellan was present and there is reason for believing that the meeting was an exciting one.

An incautious remark subsequently made by a member of the Cabinet that he feared we should not have a fight with the rebels very speedily is thought by some to throw light on the character or results of the deliberation. It seems rather a dim few days since, that we shall have active operation before a great while. The opinion seems universal that Burnside's fleet is not to leave Chesapeake Bay but is to turn the flank of the enemy by passing up the Rappahannock. Forney's Press of today, in the letter of its editor from Washington, goes in strong for a forward movement. This may be considered significant as Forney is deemed to be into the secrets of the Administration to some extent and would not probably speak of a forward movement at all points as in all respects desirable and necessary unless he thought such a movement probable.

I ought to have added in the proper place that our boys say there were not soldiers enough in and about Richmond for the prison guards. The city was well fortified but few or no soldiers in the fortifications. They are probably nearer our lines.

GENERAL ORDERS

submitted by Peter Jacobsohn

GENERAL ORDERS, NO. 100

Additional Draft of Two Hundred Thousand Men

WAR DEPARTMENT

Adjutant General's Office

Washington, March 15, 1864

The following is an Order by the President of the United States:

EXECUTIVE MANSION

Washington, March 14, 1864.

In order to supply the force required to be drafted for the Navy, and to provide an adequate reserve force for all contingencies, in addition to the five hundred thousand men called for February 1, 1864, a call is hereby made and a draft ordered for two hundred thousand men for the military service (Army, Navy, and Marine Corps) of the United States.

The proportional quotas for the different wards, towns, townships, precincts, or election districts, or counties, will be made known through the Provost Marshal General's Bureau, and account will be taken of the credits and deficiencies on former quotas.

The 15th day of April, 1864, is designated as the time up to which the numbers required from each ward of a city, town, &c., may be raised by voluntary enlistment, and drafts will be made in each ward of a city, town, &c., which shall not have filled the quota assigned to it within the time designated for the number required to fill said quotas. The drafts will be commenced as soon after the 15th of April as practicable.

The Government bounties, as now paid, continue until April 1, 1864, at which time the additional bounties cease. On and after that date, one hundred dollars bounty only will be paid, as provided by the act approved July 22, 1861.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

OFFICIAL:

E. D. TOWNSEND,

Assistant Adjutant General

GENERAL ORDERS, NO. 232
For Five Hundred Thousand Volunteers

WAR DEPARTMENT
Adjutant General's Office
Washington, July 19, 1864

By the President of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, by the act approved July 4, 1864, entitled "An act further to regulate and provide for the enrolling and calling out the national forces, and for other purposes," it is provided that the President of the United States may, "at his discretion, at any time hereafter, call for any number of men, as volunteers, for the respective terms of one, two, and three years, for military service," and "that in case the quota of, [or] any part thereof, of any town, township, ward of a city, precinct, or election district, or of a county not so subdivided, shall not be filled within the space of fifty days after such a call, then the President shall immediately order a draft for one year, to fill such quota, or any part thereof, which may be unfilled.;"

And whereas the new enrollment heretofore ordered is so far completed as that the aforementioned act of Congress may now be put in operation, for recruiting and keeping up the strength of the armies in the field, for garrisons, and such military operations as may be required for the purpose of suppressing the rebellion, and restoring the authority of the United States Government in the insurgent States:

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, do issue this my call for five hundred thousand volunteers for the military service; provided, nevertheless, that this call shall be reduced by all credits which may be established under section eight of the aforesaid act, on account of persons who have entered the naval service during the present rebellion, and by credits for men furnished to the military service in excess of calls heretofore made.

Volunteers will be accepted under this call for one, two, or three years, as they may elect, and will be entitled to the bounty provided by the law for the period of service for which they enlist.

And I hereby proclaim, order, and direct that, immediately after the fifth day of September, 1864, being fifty days from the date of this call, a draft for troops to serve for one year shall be had in every town, township, ward of a city, precinct, or election district, or county not so subdivided, to fill the quota which shall be assigned to it under this call, or any part thereof which may be unfilled by volunteers on the said fifth day of September, 1864.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this eighteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-ninth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

E. D. TOWNSEND
Assistant Adjutant General

OFFICIAL:

**MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
2016-2017 SPEAKER SCHEDULE**

September 8, 2016

David Eicher
Tales of the Civil War High Commands

October 13, 2016

Lance Herdegen - Nevins-Freeman Award Winner
"And the baby had red hair." Music of the Iron Brigade

November 10, 2016

Dave Connon
Iowa Copperheads

December 8, 2016

Bjorn Skaptason
Ambrose Bierce at Shiloh

January 12, 2017

Richard Sommers
Lessons in Leadership in the Petersburg Campaign

February 9, 2017

Bob O'Neill
Stuart's Christmas Raid of 1862

March 9, 2017

Paul Kahan
Simon Cameron, Lincoln's First Secretary of War

April 20, 2017

Diane Smith
Command Conflict in the Overland Campaign

May 11, 2017

Reverend Robert Miller
Faith of the Fathers

June 8, 2017

Donald Sender
Untold Facts of the Custer Debacle

Speakers remain subject to change.

**Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.
2016 – 2017 Board of Directors**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office/Position</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Donna Agnelly	Editor, General Orders	2019
Thomas Arliskas	First Vice President	2019
Terry Arliskas	Secretary	
Michael K. Benton	Second Vice President	2017
Roman Blenski	Quartermaster	2019
Crain Bliwas	Member	2019
Paul A. Eilbes	Treasurer/Membership	2019
A. William Finke	Member	2017
Van Harl	President	2017
James J. Heinz	Member	2017
Grant Johnson	Past President	2018
Bruce Klem	Member	2018
Daniel Nettesheim	Member	2018
Frank Rislser	Program Chair	2018
Tom Thompson	Member	2017
David Wege	Layout, General Orders	2018

**~ CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE NEWS EMAIL
NOTIFICATIONS ~**

Would you like to receive an email reminder before each meeting? How about an email telling you about a special or upcoming Civil War event in our area? If you are interested in receiving an email reminder/notification please send your email address to Grant Johnson at: grant.johnson@responsory.com

Grant will be creating a database with email reminders set to go out a week before the scheduled event. This is a purely optional choice on each member's part. If you have any questions please talk to Grant at a Round Table meeting or email him at the listed email address.

Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for January 12, 2017

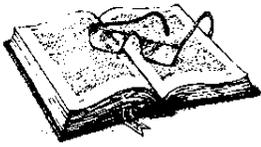
Mail your reservations by Monday, January 9, 2017, to:

Paul Eilbes
1809 Washington Ave
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

ALSO, call in reservations to: Paul Eilbes (262) 376-0568
peilbes@gmail.com

Enclosed is \$ ____ (meal price \$30.00 per person) for ____ reservations for the January 12, 2017, meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. (Make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)

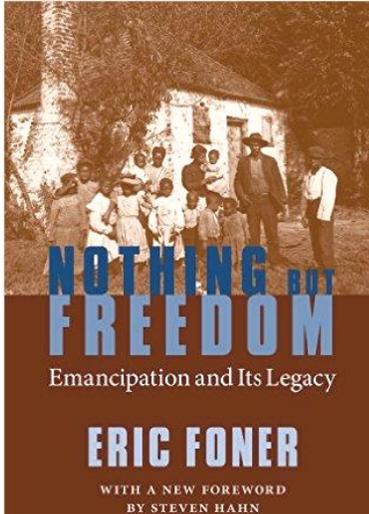
Name of Member _____



BETWEEN THE COVERS

Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy

by Eric Foner



This past June I attended the 5-day Civil War Institute's Summer Conference at Gettysburg College.

The focus of the conference was on Reconstruction.

Reconstruction is an area I haven't read much about so I thought it would be a new and interesting area of Civil War study for me to pursue. I wasn't wrong in my initial assessment and as a result, I came back with an arm load of books on the subject and a new area of study to delve into. One of the books in that arm load is the subject of this review – *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* by Eric Foner.

Mr. Foner is a noted author on the subject of Reconstruction and is probably best known for his award winning book, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution – 1863-1877*. I will be reviewing that book at a later date.

In *Nothing But Freedom*, Mr. Foner examines what happens after emancipation has been established in the South. The focus in his writing is on what the

emancipation process was, instead of focusing on the slaver and emancipation; he looked at the meaning of freedom in former slave societies. In this work, he compares the Southern experience with the experience of Haiti, a violent slave revolt which was followed by the establishment of an undemocratic government and forced labor. Foner also compares the British Caribbean, where a colonial government oversaw an orderly transition from slavery, to the creation of an almost totally dependent work force.

The author paints the picture of how emancipation had an effect internationally, regionally and locally. The labor question, he argues, riveted all past emancipation societies. Plantation owners argued that they didn't seem to think they could run a plantation successfully without coercive mechanisms. Former slaves widely associated full time work on plantations with slavery and struggled mightily to obtain their own land where they could cultivate on their own account.

The big issue becomes what is a fair wage for the work demanded by the plantation owners. I think they were surprised to find that perhaps, the work they were looking to have done was more expensive than a reasonable man would work for. The past working conditions mattered little when the owners had slaves that could be brutalized into working. Now that it was a choice freemen could make based on the conditions and the wage offered, workers became harder to come by.

Mr. Foner looks to the South Carolina rice farming region to draw his comparisons between Haiti, the British and the U.S. experiences. The main issue he identifies, I think, is the labor/wage issue as the basic sticking point between paid labor and not having slave labor. The cost issue of production may point to the fact that the market may have been artificially low because labor costs were never part of the equation. Without slave labor, the plantation owner is now faced with the unpleasant fact that perhaps his production costs are well over any profit he may make. So, as he points out, the situation now becomes a classic fight over labor and political power.

I found this book to be a very interesting read. It is a short book in length, only 110 pages, but I think it provides an excellent analysis of the problems of emancipation and how the struggle of developing a new society was accomplished in their distinct countries. The reading spurred some serious thought on an area that is often passed over in Civil War studies and this book provides a great opening work for anyone interested in the Civil War and its' effect on the nation. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking to get a basic read on the aftermath of emancipation and the problems that were left for the nation to solve.

submitted by Bruce Klem



Rain began our journey, rain ended our trip and Hurricane Matthew interrupted our travels but we were blessed by a majority of sunny, warm days in North Carolina and Virginia during our annual Civil War Symposium at Pamplin Park in Petersburg, Virginia.

As we drove through Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, we were amazed at the thousands of Trump/Pence signs in yards. At times, it almost seemed as if every home and barn had campaign signs posted on their property. A big part of our love of travel is listening to the people we meet and hearing their stories. We met thoughtful individuals who were concerned about our country and never once were we engaged in heated arguments.

As we continued south, Richmond, Kentucky and Knoxville, Tennessee were stops for Civil War exploration. Knoxville sites are in the city and even with massive construction we managed to locate Longstreet's Headquarters used during the November 17 – December 4, 1863 Siege and Battle of Knoxville. Fort Dickerson, a major factor in the defense of Knoxville, can still be visited in the hills overlooking the Tennessee River. It was one of the sixteen Federal forts constructed around Knoxville during the Civil War.

October was beautiful in the Smokies and Blue Ridge. After reaching Ashville we enjoyed five days slowly driving on the Blue Ridge Parkway to Little Switzerland, Spruce Pine, West Jefferson and Hillsville, staying at small lodges along the parkway. One of the spectacular sights was the Linn Cove Viaduct. An amazing feat of engineering, the viaduct is a bridge-like structure hanging from the side of Grandfather Mountain. It makes you feel as though you are "flying off" or "floating" in space.

On to Petersburg, Virginia - saying good-bye to the mountains. On our way, we spent a day at Staunton River Bridge Battlefield near South Boston, Virginia. In late June 1864, General U.S. Grant sent Generals James Wilson and August Kautz west from Petersburg to destroy track on the Richmond and Danville Railroad and to burn the Staunton River Bridge. A battalion of 296 Confederate reserves under the command of Capt. Benjamin Farinholt was stationed at the bridge. Within days, his command was bolstered by 642 reinforcements under the command of Col. Henry Coleman. On the hot afternoon of June 25, 1864, the Union cavalry arrived. Though badly outnumbered, Farinholt's forces, following Coleman's strategy, successfully repulsed four separate Union assaults and saved the bridge.

Two of our major trip projects this year had been to study the Wilson-Kautz Raid in Virginia and Stoneman's Raid sites in Tennessee and North Carolina. Continuing on toward Petersburg we were able to visit several more Wilson-Kautz sites.

Upon arrival in Petersburg but before the conference started, we explored the Eastern Front and the Forks as well as having our car serviced and checked. At a local garage at Dinwiddie Court House, what a lively political conversation we had with several local men. Derrick Temple and Ernest Lee became friends after spending four hours with them. Derrick invited us to his home to meet his elderly father who had a huge "War Between the States" collection.

The Pamplin Park Civil War Symposium began Friday with a field trip of Petersburg guided by A. Wilson Greene and concluded that evening with William Blair speaking on the 14th Amendment. The entire day on Saturday was highlighted by a variety of topics. Chicago's Rob Girardi spoke about Gouverneur K. Warren – a Quest for Redemption. A favorite of ours, Earl Hess, discussed Civil War Infantry Tactics. William Marvel gave us insight on Edwin Stanton. Lincoln's Last Days at City Point was the focus of Noah Andre Trudeau's presentation while Dr. Dennis Rasbach gave a passionate talk on his relative, Joshua Chamberlain at Petersburg. Another day dawned on Sunday with an absolutely super lecture on Reconstruction by Mark Summers followed by George Rable speaking on "Damn Yankees" – the title of his new book.

After another successful conference we planned to spend time in North Carolina – New Bern, Morehead City and Wilmington. However, Hurricane Matthew had other plans! In Fayetteville, the Cape Fear River rose 20 feet, the Tar River overflowed its banks at Greenville and the Neuse River flooded the cities of Kinston and Goldsboro. Lumberton was under water. Needless to say, because of flooding and evacuations all over the eastern and central sections of North Carolina, we changed our itinerary and travelled back to Richmond, Virginia, spending five days seeing Civil War sites.

Driving west and stopping at Appomattox Court House, was a more patriotic feeling this time. A new film about unity, significance of peace terms and Lincoln's views of bringing the nation together brought our thoughts to what is needed in our country at this time.

One of the greatest experiences of this trip was to spend a day with historian, Chris Calkins, at Sailor's Creek Battlefield. Chris, former National Park historian at Petersburg National Battlefield, was instrumental in developing the park and is well known by every Civil War author and military expert in the U.S. Many of us know him from his detailed articles in Blue and Gray magazine. At the conclusion of our visit, he presented us with a book on Staunton River Bridge from his personal collection. The book, no longer in print and unattainable, is a treasure. We explained we had spent a day exploring Staunton River Bridge Battlefield, tramped through brush and woods, walked the bridge etc. Chris replied, "Anyone who took the time to investigate a little known area deserves a gift." This is indeed a prized addition to our Civil War book collection.

As we began our trek back to Wisconsin we decided to enjoy more sightseeing in the southwestern counties of Virginia and the wine country of the Yadkin Valley in western North Carolina. Along the winding back roads of Patrick County we stopped near Mt. Airy (Andy Griffith's hometown) to visit Laurel Hill Farm, birthplace and boyhood home of J.E.B. Stuart.

Nearby Wilkesboro, North Carolina, was a wonderful walk through history. The Old Wilkes Heritage Museum was great – one of the best book stores in a small county museum we've ever seen. Jennifer, the administrator and Marilyn, a guide, showed us through their museum, guided us through the jail and the 1770 Robert Cleveland House on the Over Mountain Trail. Wilkesboro was also one of the communities raided by Major General George Stoneman in Spring 1865. Following our two days in Wilkesboro we discovered more Stoneman Raid sites – the Rocky Ford Engagement at Morganton, Carson House at Marion and Swannanoa Gap at Ridgecrest.

Finally home with our Pamplin Park Symposium completed we look forward to next year's conference on "Generals We Love to Hate" and think back on all the wonderful memories of the exceptional individuals we met this year on our 3200 mile journey.

**A Correction to December's Through the Looking Glass
Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey and the Thanks of Congress**

In the December issue of the *General Orders*, it was noted that Joseph Bailey was one of only fourteen men to receive the Thanks of Congress during the Civil War. Round Table board member, Crain Bliwas, provides the following correction:

The Thanks of Congress was awarded to more than fourteen men. Depending on where the information is obtained, it was given to at least 30 men (Crain counted 35) not including general awards to the army and navy and to soldiers and crew of ships under command of the men named. Admiral Porter was given the Thanks four times.

During the Civil War, 15 army and 15 navy officers including William B. Cushing were given the award.

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

Send submission to **Donna Agnelly, Editor**, 420 Racine St. Unit 110, Waterford, WI 53185 or email dagnelly@tds.net or donnaagnelly@gmail.com 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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General Orders design & layout by Dave Wege.

Yearly memberships available: Individual (\$40), family (\$50), non-resident (\$25), attending an educational institution (\$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.



Through the Looking Glass features are intended to tell the stories of common folks of the Civil War, whether they are civilians or military personnel. If you have access to the story of an ordinary Wisconsin citizen of this war-torn era, and are willing to share it with our Round Table, please consider submitting it to Donna Agnelly, editor of our General Orders. Thank you!

DISASTROUS BEGINNING

The Third Wisconsin Cavalry

A regiment of 1,184 bright-eyed, mostly young men assembled at Janesville where they prepared to make war. The Third Wisconsin Cavalry had completed muster, training, and maneuvers during a harsh winter where temperatures had sometimes dipped to twenty degrees below zero. The winter of 1862 was one that old timers considered as one of the worst in memory. Not all preparations were complete. The blue-uniformed equestrian warriors still lacked adequate mounts and arms. Regardless, orders to rendezvous with a massive Union Army engaged in a civil war with rebellious states were issued in late March. Their immediate destination was Chicago. Their intermediate destination was St. Louis. Their ultimate destination was some unknown battlefield.

Officers had been “treated to a sumptuous feast” by local businessmen who had hosted the regiment for the past three months. The train ride to war would be an adventure filled with anticipation and excitement for all the freshly minted cavalymen. An adoring crowd of well-wishers were there to see them off. The new soldiers, anxious to save the Union, had yet to even see a real rebel, but they would see casualties. Just before five in the afternoon, the regiment embarked from Janesville’s train depot on March 26, 1862, aboard two *Chicago and Northwestern* trains bound for St. Louis. The forward locomotive pulled six baggage cars followed by eleven passenger coaches; seventeen cars in all. A second, smaller train of seven cars occupied by officers, staff and equipage followed about one mile distant. Company I was assigned the first passenger car in the first train. The honor was only in its numerical designation. The car they boarded was an old, second-class conveyance that was loaned from the *Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien Railway*. Companies A, E and G (approximately 275 men) were assigned the second through fourth coaches respectively.

The scene was light and festive as the two trains departed for the seat of war. Many of the officers and a few of the privates were accompanied by wives or sisters for a portion of the trip. Among them, Private Walter Snell’s young wife and mother accompanied him for the first leg to Clinton Junction before saying goodbye. From all accounts the trip “passed gaily.” Guards were stationed on the platforms at the rear of each car. Private Peter Imig was among those chosen for duty. Sometime between 10-10:30 pm, and just three or four miles outside of Chicago, Imig stepped inside his car to warm up. It was a fortunate move. It saved his life.

Minutes later, “moving at almost lightening speed down a sloping grade,” the forward axle on the lead train’s first passenger car snapped. Engineer Nelson H. Barns was standing with his head outside the locomotive’s window when he felt a vicious jerk. He initially thought the train had derailed. Investigators concluded later that when the axle broke one wheel was forced underneath the car while the other remained on track. For roughly a mile the spasmodic car jolted forward as the broken wheel scraped along the cross ties. When the apparatus hit a cattle guard on a culvert the wheel jammed between the ties, throwing the car down on its forward end and in the process, uncoupling it from the cars ahead. The men of Company I certainly were terrorized for the brief interlude that their rattling coach vibrated out of control before smashing alongside the track. The convulsing engine dragged the fragmented, screeching train, still on track, for two hundred yards. Barns immediately directed that a red light signal be set up to warn the following train.

As the train “commenced bumping,” Private James Parker was standing at the back of the second passenger coach by a heat stove with Walter Snell. Snell, the guard for that car, had momentarily come in from the rear platform. Suddenly, the passenger compartment started shimmying before the car went into a severe tremor. In a flash, the occupants felt a tilting sensation as the coach careened off the track, tumbled on its side, followed by an enormous, jarring smash from the rear. Parker looked for Snell but he had disappeared, most likely returning to the platform. The broken wheel, bumper, and under-carriage were torn from the fastenings of the first passenger car, throwing it to the right. Miraculously, the passengers in that car escaped serious injury. The next three cars were hurled to the left; telescoping into each other. Three guards (including Snell), posted on the rear platforms, were killed instantly. The second car took the brunt of the impact as the third car smashed it to bits and both veered off track. The fourth was not as badly crushed as the others, but it also came to rest in the ditch full of water about three feet below the tracks. As the last seven cars in the train slammed into each other with vehement reverberations, the detached locomotive spurted down the tracks still attached to the six baggage cars.

“The groans of the dying, the summoning call of a soldier to his missing comrade, the sobbing of a wife or a sister over the loss of a loved companion,” as one correspondent described the scene, “...all contrasted with the joyous and merry crowd that might have been witnessed in the same wrecked cars a few minutes before.” Alerted to the disaster ahead, the second train pulled up behind the demolished forward train and the shocked passengers ran to aid their comrades.

Seven victims were pinned by the wreckage and drowned in mud. An examination of the corpse of Hospital Steward Elisha Sharp revealed no injuries that would have caused death had he not drowned. The unmarked bodies were recovered from their watery grave and laid upon the snow. A reporter commented that the makeshift morgue “lent its shroud-like whiteness to the ghastly scene.” Fate had been unkind: “Here was a soldier, tall, robust, in the full strength of manhood, quiet in the embrace of death, a smile upon his feature, and not a bruise or mark to be seen upon his person.” Amidst the calm repose of the dead, mayhem reigned. “The scene was heart-rending,” another witness grieved. “The groans of the injured and dying, the cries for help and calls for friends were a fearful scene.”

The detached engine, still on track and operational, was rushed to Chicago’s depot for help. Sounding the alarm, a gang of men was quickly gathered, but in the panic, the train returned to the scene without a number of doctors aroused from their sleep. A special train was prepared and came later with the surgical assistance. Meanwhile, the uninjured soldiers furiously dug through scrap and mud to save the wounded and recover the dead.

In one harrowing discovery, the body of Walter Snell was uncovered with both feet sheared off “just above the ankles.” A stunned witness described the gruesome appearance of the “frightfully disfigured” corpse: “His head and toes were smashed to a pulpy form utterly beyond recognition. One of his feet was crushed to jelly, splintered bones, mangled flesh, and torn sinews protruding from his bloody garments. The other foot was so nearly severed at the ankle that but a mere strip of [skin] held it. One of his legs was half cut through just below the knee. And this poor fellow, Walter H. Snell, only an hour or two before, had parted from his tearful wife who had accompanied him to Clinton Station. She had given him up to die, if need be, upon the battlefield of his country, little dreaming that a frightful and violent death was so near.”

Two large iron wheels had been propelled through the entire length of the car and had mangled three men; killing them instantly. Lieutenant Henry Goodsell, in the same car, unwittingly escaped injury. Seated next to Quartermaster Sergeant Loren Edwards, the two men attempted to leap through the window when they first heard the axle snap. Sergeant Edwards succeeded in jumping out but was crushed by the tumbling wreckage. Lieutenant Goodsell was prevented from following Edwards when his sword scabbard lodged in the window pane; keeping him inside and saving his life. The crushed, barely alive body of Edwards was taken to a hotel near the depot. With broken ribs and internal injuries, he was not expected to live. He did live, however, and after a lengthy convalescence, returned to duty.

A corporal from Company A related a harrowing ordeal. Trapped on top of a drowning man, he could only watch helplessly as the victim expired. His head was kept under water by the weight of the corporal who could render no assistance; not even the assurance of a spiritual home.

A fortunate but injured survivor related that he was seated next to Dr. Elijah Bemis who lost his life. He was wedged next to the dead man underneath a pile of wreckage. One of the man’s arms was disabled. He was able to pick away at the debris piece by piece; enough to lodge loose and rescue himself. Two young boys were feared trapped and presumed dead when a search for them came up empty. Searchers were relieved when the pair showed up hours later. They had accompanied the engine to Chicago for help.

Impervious to the dark, cold, and wet, the rescuers were “unheeded in their labors of humanity” as they furiously chopped and pried at the entanglement with axes and makeshift crowbars. Ends, sides, and roofs were dismantled to provide access. Twenty-eight soldiers sustained serious injuries. Six of the worst cases were sent to Camp Douglas Hospital.

Ten men had died and two other succumbed shortly afterward. The hearts of the rescuers poured out to cavalryman Bryon Wilcox. Still conscious as frantic comrades tried to extricate him under the crush of debris, the suffering young man said, “Both of my legs are broken – and in there somewhere.” Rescuers remarked that through the whole ordeal, the frightened but stoic soldier exhibited “heroic fortitude” and “never once complained.” He talked of meeting up with the regiment later; after he was better. His comrades, upon seeing the severity of his injuries, kept their dire misgivings to themselves. As he was transported to Camp Douglas Hospital with all the best wishes of the regiment, many suspected that it wouldn’t be long before news of his impending death officially reached them. Byron Wilcox, retrieved from the wreckage with two broken legs, was the last fatality of that fateful night when he died in the Chicago hospital three weeks later. Witnesses to the destruction were amazed that the death toll hadn’t been higher.

In a letter to his folks back home, a downcast cavalryman tried to describe the aftermath of the disaster illuminated by lantern light. “The ditch had in it a depth of about 18 inches of slush (snow and water mixed) and out of this slush, from underneath the pile of rubbish ---hats jammed into all shapes, sabers twisted and bent into every conceivable form, and all mixed in with bundles of clothing, blankets, haversacks, canteens, seats, cushions, loaded down with car fragments – I saw dragged out the lifeless remains of seven noble fellows who, but a few moments previous, perhaps, had been dreaming of friends and the scenes they were leaving behind.”

In Major Elias Calkin’s staccato assessment, “The disaster was equal to that of a battle. Twelve men were killed. More than two hundred were wounded to a greater or lesser extent. It was a scene of terror. We attended to the dead and wounded.”

“We could have surrendered our dead in battle without a murmur,” Calkins spoke for the subdued regiment, “and have blessed the cause in which they died. But it was mournful that they should find their death in a ditch by the railway, almost within sight of their desolated homes and with the parting murmurs of those whom they had loved still lingering in their ears. But their death was no more a less glorious one, and their ebbing blood was none the less poured out as a libation to liberty.” Due to the lamentable accident, a gala send-off scheduled to occur in Chicago was deemed inappropriate and cancelled.

submitted by Darwin Adams



Dan Nettesheim recently visited West Point as part of a trip East to celebrate his mother-in-law's 90th birthday. The Academy recently added a plaque commemorating Cushing's Congressional Medal of Honor. According to Dan, “It is a fitting tribute to a national hero.”



Alonzo Hereford Cushing was born on January 19, 1841 to Milton and Mary Cushing. Appointed to the United States Military Academy in 1857, he graduated twelfth in his class four years later.

On July 3rd, 1863 Cushing found himself in command of Battery A, 4th U.S. Artillery at the epicenter of Pickett’s Charge. At the height of that assault, Rebel troops poured through a gap in the Union lines at the infamous “Angle.” The 22-year-old Wisconsin native fought to the death, staying at his guns until his position was overwhelmed. He gave his life to help break up the Rebel forlorn hope.



On September 15th, 2014, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Cushing the Medal of Honor, our nation’s highest military honor, in recognition of Cushing’s service at Gettysburg. That ceremony came after a nearly thirty-year campaign conducted by citizens seeking to have the award bestowed upon him. One admirer said,

“On the field of Gettysburg, more than once I stood where the brave Cushing gave up his life, right at the peak of Pickett’s daring charge...History will not let that smiling, splendid boy die in vain; her dew will glisten forever over his record as earthly morning dew glistens on the fields. Fame loves the gentleman and the true-hearted, but her sweetheart is gallant youth.”

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You may also see Roman in person at the Monthly Meeting at the Book Raffle table.

