

GENERAL ORDERS



The Newsletter of the

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



January 8, 2026

Guy Fraker

Lincoln the Lawyer

Abraham Lincoln was a successful and respected lawyer in Illinois for 25 years, known for his honesty, common sense, and strong legal skills, though he never attended law school. He handled a wide variety of civil and criminal cases, including representing railroads, defending clients in murder trials like the "Almanac Trial," and taking on debt and patent cases. His legal career was characterized by a general practice approach that he felt prepared him for his later role as President.

Mr. Fraker's presentation is about Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit, where he practiced from 1837 to 1860. His focus will be on Lincoln's contemporaries on the Circuit and their stories after his election in 1860.

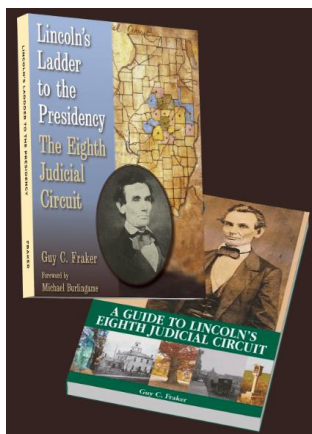
Fraker graduated from the University of Illinois Law School in 1962. He settled in Bloomington, where he practiced law for over 50 years. His lifelong interest in Lincoln led to the publication of two books by Southern Illinois University Press. The first was *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency – the Eighth Judicial Circuit*. This book has been described as "the only book in print that highlights Lincoln's historic rise to the presidency through networking in Central Illinois."

The second was *A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit*. Fraker has spoken at numerous venues around the country and has written articles for a variety of publications.

Currently Guy is acting as Chairman of the New Salem Committee of the Abraham Lincoln Association, which is working with other partners to rejuvenate and revitalize the iconic Lincoln site.



Please join us at the Wisconsin Club for our January 8 meeting as we take a look at the man Mr. Lincoln was before he became the first Republican candidate for the highest office in the land.



General Orders No. 1-26

January 2026

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January Meeting at a Glance The Wisconsin Club 9th and Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Jackets are required for dining room.

5:30 p.m. - Registration/Social Hour
6:30 p.m. - Dinner
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.

2025-2026 Speaker Schedule p. 7

milwaukeeecwrt.org

Civil War Round Table News

MCWRT Mission Statement

The purposes of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee shall be to promote study of personalities and events leading to or associated with the American Civil War; to provide a forum for members and guests to exchange views; and to support study and remembrance of our own nation's history.

When Reservations are Cancelled

Please be aware that cancellations of dinner reservations within 48 hours of the meeting are subject to payment in full. The MCWRT is charged for these dinners whether they are used or not!

Your Cooperation is Appreciated

"Walk-in dinner" requests are sometimes difficult to honor. Remember, dinner reservations are to be made at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date. We are always happy to accommodate where possible, but we cannot always guarantee a dinner that evening if you have not called in or emailed your reservation. Thank you for your understanding.

Special Dietary Needs

We have quite a number of regular members who have opted for special entrees as options to the regular dinner being served. The Wisconsin Club and the Round Table will make every effort to meet any special dietary needs you may have. As a courtesy, **please give a reminder when making your reservations**, so we don't forget to serve you what you're expecting!

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, creed, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, gender identity or expression, veteran status, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other legally protected status in its educational programs, activities, or membership.

Please remember to mail your reservations early. The volume of mail experienced by the post office is heavy during the holiday season.

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It seems that the months and years are rolling by more quickly. Wishing you and yours good health and even greater experiences as we enter 2026. May you have wonderful times that create great memories. Enjoy a most happy and blessed 2026!

The Muster Roll: NEW MEMBERS

TABLE II--CONSOLIDATED LIST of all persons of Class II, subject to the military duty in the _____ Organizational District, residing in the Counties of _____ and _____, Wisconsin, during the month of _____, 1907, under _____

NUMBER	NAME	RESIDENCE	PLACE OF BIRTH	ARMED SERVICES	REMARKS
1	Constitutional School 11	White, Geneva	Belgium		Has filed declaration of war
2	Carpenter, Robert 34	Chicago			Has not filed declaration of war
3	Carpenter, Charles 21	Chicago	England		Has filed declaration of war
4	Carly, Benjamin 43				
5	Case, Aaron P. 28				
6	Case, Benjamin 11	Belgium			

MCWRT Annual Fund

The following members have made a generous commitment to the MCWRT by investing in that fund. This list reflects those donations made July 1, 2025 through October 31, 2025.

Major Contributor (\$500 and above)

Paul Eilbes, Gerald Frangesch, Doug Haag, Van & Dawn Harl, Rebecca & Charles Jarvis, Grant Johnson

Patron (\$200 - \$499)

Mike Deeken, George Geanon, Gene & Jane Jamrozy, Dan Nettesheim, Andrew Platta, Laura Rinaldi, Brad & Kathy Schotanus, Dave & Kay Wege

Associate (\$100 - \$199)

Don & Amy Bauer, Mike Benton, Crain Bliwas, Ellen & Jerry DeMers, Gary & Judy Ertel, Bill & Claudette Finke, Jim Heinz, Peter & Jean Jacobsohn, Bruce Klem, Steve Leopold, Kathy McNally, Jim & Monica Millane, Dennis Slater, Dan Tanty, Justin Tolomeo

Contributor (up to \$99)

George Affeldt, Gordon Dammann, Thomas Doyle, Lori Duginski, John Durr, Julian Gonzalez, Leon & Margaret Harris, Christopher Johnson, Rich Kallan, Jerome Kowalski, Jay Lauck, Fred Madsen, Rod Malinowski, Seth Maxfield, Paul & Susan Miller, Thomas Olsen, John Rodahl, Rick Schultz, Diana Smurawa, Anne & Dave Steinhilb, Dan VanGrunsvan, Paul Zehren

Speaker Enhancement Fund

George Affeldt, Don and Amy Bauer, Jerry & Ellen DeMers, Thomas Doyle, Lori Duginski, John Durr, Paul Eilbes, Gary & Judy Ertel, Gerald Frangesch, George Geanon, Julian Gonzalez, Jim Heinz, John Helmenstine, Tom Hesse, Don & Laverna Hilbig, Peter & Jean Jacobsohn, Gene & Jane Jamrozy, Dan Jones, Rich Kallan, Allan Kasprzak, John Lencheck, Steve Leopold, Rod Malinowski, Robin & Tom Martin, Kathy McNally, Jim & Monica Millane, Paul & Susan Miller, Thomas Olsen, John & Susan Petty, Laura Rinaldi, Diana Smurawa, Dan Tanty, Paul Zehren



Previous January meetings of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table featured these speakers and topics.

- 2005 Terry Winschel: "Stephen D. Lee and the Making of the Post-War South"
- 2007 Dave Eicher: "Dixie Betrayed"
- 2008 Edward Cotham: "The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine"
- 2011 Lawrence Lee Hewitt: "Slandered Heroes: Deserters Who Didn't"
- 2012 Parker Hills: "Chickamauga"
- 2014 Robert Girardi: "The Murder of Major General William 'Bull' Nelson"
- 2015 Father Robert Miller: "The Most Christian Nation in the World: Religion in Society"
- 2016 Dave Moore: "William S. Rosecrans"
- 2017 Richard J. Sommers: "Richmond Redeemed"
- 2019 Bjorn Skaptason: "Shiloh in the Footsteps of Henry Morton Stanley"
- 2020 Pamela Toler: "From Unwanted to Indispensable: Civil War Nurses"
- 2021 Christopher Kolakowski: "Battle of Stones River"
- 2022 Garry Adelman: "Civil War Myths and Mistakes"
- 2023 Robert Girardi: "Union Prisoners of War at Camp Douglas"
- 2024 Bjorn Skaptason: "Milwaukee and Shiloh"



The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee was established in 1947 and is the second oldest of the more than 200 Civil War Round Tables still in existence in the United States and abroad. Current membership of the MCWRT is approximately 200.

Kenosha Civil War Museum

Second Friday Lecture Series

Sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and the Iron Brigade Association. Free and open to the public.

Lee Besieged

Friday, January 9 | 12pm – 1 pm

Presented by John Horn

The nine-month siege of Petersburg was the longest continuous operation of the Civil War. Large-scale Union "offensives"—grand maneuvers that triggered some of the large-scale battles—broke the monotony of siege warfare. John Horn's program and book, *Lee Besieged*, provide explanations for the context and consequences of every decision and are grounded in hundreds of primary sources and supported by 40 original maps. His new book is the first to put Grant's second effort into its proper perspective—not only in the context of Petersburg's siege and the Civil War, but in the context of warfare's history.

Chicago native John Horn majored in English and Latin at New College (Sarasota, Florida) and has practiced law around Chicago since graduating Columbia Law School in New York in 1976. In addition to many articles, he has written three other books about Petersburg, Virginia's soldiers, and the siege of that city, and co-edited another.

Irish Americans During the Civil War

Friday, February 13 | 12pm – 1 pm

Presented by M. Dennis Doyle

Starting during the Irish Famine of the 1840's, millions of Irish citizens immigrated to the United States to escape British Unionist political rule and economic poverty.

Despite their lack of wealth and education, low social status, and native discrimination, Irish-Americans distinguished themselves in their new home and during the American Civil War. As many as 145,000 volunteered to serve in the Federal Army and over 40,000 would serve the Confederacy during the Civil War. These soldiers served on many battlefields and suffered heavy casualties. Seventy Irish-American Union soldiers received the Medal of Honor. Some of the outstanding Irish-American generals were Phil Sheridan for the North and Cleburne for the South.

A native of Chicago, Professor Doyle grew up in Joliet, where he resides. He has a master's degree in history from American University in Washington, D.C.; a master's degree in sociology from DePaul University in Chicago; and a bachelor's degree in history from Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Doyle recently retired from teaching history and sociology at Joliet Junior College in Joliet, Illinois. He is the current president of the 300-member Civil War Round Table of Chicago.



***From the Second
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 US 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 not 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 were 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.

From the Field continues on page 10.

**Thank you, Jim Johnson, for these
monthly *From the Field* features!**



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 citizen of this war-torn era and are willing to share it with our members, please consider submitting it to the General Orders. Thank you!

Bruce Catton's "Valley of Dry Bones"

"Valley of Dry Bones" is the title of the final chapter in Bruce Catton's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, A Stillness at Appomattox. It refers to the aftermath of the intense battles and the ultimate conclusion of the Civil War. The chapter reflects on the immense suffering, sacrifice, and horrible carnage of the war. Catton poses a profound question about the purpose of such a struggle for the nation. The question is answered as he describes the setting for Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which provided meaning and a renewed national purpose to the vast losses and dry bones of the battlefield. In this piece, Catton gives a "you are there" sense to that day in November 1863 when a common man, now risen to national prominence, helped the nation to come to grips with the sacrifices of the Civil War.

"There were thousands of people at this ceremony, and among them were certain wounded veterans who had come back to see all of this, and in a knot wandered away from the crowd around the speakers stand and strolled down along Cemetery Ridge, pausing when they reached a little clump of trees, and where they looked off toward the west and talked quietly about what they had seen and done there.

In front of them was the wide gentle valley of the shadow of death, brimming now with soft autumn light, and behind them the flags waved lazily about the speakers stand and the voice droned on, building up to a literary climax. The valley was a mile wide, and there was rolling ground where the Rebel guns had been ranked, and on the crest of this ridge was the space where a girlish artillery lieutenant had had a sergeant hold him up while he called for the last round of canister, the ground where file closers had gripped hands and dug in their heels to hold a wavering line together, the place where the noise of men desperately fighting had been heard as a great mournful roar; and the voice went on, and the governors looked dignified, and the veterans by the trees looked about them and saw again the fury and the smoke and the killing.

This then was the valley of dry bones, waiting for the word, which might or might not come in rhythmic prose that began with the customs of ancient Athens. The bones had laid there in the sun and rain and now were carefully arranged state by state under the new sod. They were the bones of men who had exulted in their youth, and some who had been unstained heroes while others had been scamps who had pillaged and robbed and ran away when they could, and they had died here, and that was the end of them. They had come here because of angry words and hot passions in which they had not shared. They had come too, because the drums had rolled and the bands had blared the swinging deceitful that piped men off to battle....three cheers for the red, white and blue, here's a long like back at the girl I left behind me, John Browns body lies a-moldering in the grave but we go marching on, and Yankee Doodle on his spotted pony goes riding off into the eternal smoky mist of war.

Back of these men were innumerable long dusty roads reaching into the main street of a thousand youthful towns and villages where they had been bright flags overhead and people on the board sidewalks cheering and crying and waving a last good-by. It had seemed so once that there was some compelling reason to bring the men here-something so broad that it

would encompass all of the horrible contradictory manifestations of the country's pain and bewilderment, the riots and lynching's, the hysterical conspiracies with their oaths written in blood, the hard hand that had been laid upon the country-side, the scramble for riches and the scheming for high place and the carried by quiet folk who just wanted to live at peace by the faith they used to have.

Perhaps there was meaning to all of this somewhere. Perhaps everything that the nation was and meant to be had come to focus here, beyond the graves and the remembered echo of the guns and the wreckage of lived that were gone forever. Perhaps the whole of it somehow was greater than the sum of its tragic parts, and perhaps here on this windswept hill the thing could be said at last, so the dry bones of the country dreams could take on flesh.

The orator finished, and after the applause had died away the tall man in the black frock coat got to his feet, with two little sheets of paper in his hand, and he looked out over the valley and began to speak."



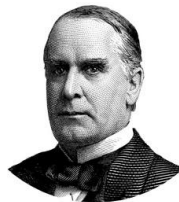
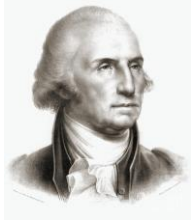
The Driftless Area Civil War Club

Programs are held monthly on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 1:00 at the Odd Fellow Lodge at 112 Front Street Mineral Point.

Contact John Helmenstine at helmenstine@att.net for more information.

Schedule of meetings for the Driftless Area Civil War Club

January 17, 2026	Charlie Banks – US Military Railroads in the War Effort
February 21, 2026	Show and Tell – Club Members will discuss their Civil War artifacts
March 14, 2026	Brian Conroy – Irish in the American Civil War
April 18, 2026	Chris Kolakowski – Civil War in New York
May 9, 2026	Reverend Miller – Both Prayed to the Same God
June 20, 2026	Jerry Allen – The 15 th Wisconsin Regiment
July 18, 2026	Mark Tully – Frontier Doctor
August 15, 2026	Bruce Allardice – Lincoln as a War Leader
September 19, 2026	Laura Schiller -Illinois Cavalry
October 17, 2026	Leslie Goddard – Clara Barton



56th Annual Patriotic Luncheon Saturday, February 7 at 12:30

A flyer with details is at the registration table.

The 56th annual Patriotic Luncheon, honoring Presidents Washington, Lincoln, and McKinley, will be held Saturday, February 7, 2025, at 12:30 pm, at Alioto's Restaurant, 3041 N. Mayfair Road.

It is hoped you'll make plans to join those patriots, representing over 30 organizations, for this welcome tradition. Enjoy fine food, fellowship, and guest speaker Doug Dammann from Kenosha's Civil War Museum, who speak about Colonel Elmer Ellsworth in a presentation entitled, *The Greatest Little Man I Ever Met*.

Reserve your place today and know that your participation supports veterans' relief, historic preservation and patriotic programming in southeast Wisconsin. Program sponsorships are always welcome!

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 submissions to **David Wege** at wegs1862@gmail.com. All submissions must be received by no later than the 10th of the month prior to the next issue. We reserve the right to select articles to be printed and to edit for content, style, and length.

All address changes or problem receiving your ***General Orders*** should be directed to **Treasurer Paul Eilbes**.

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Yearly Round Table membership available: Individual (\$50), family (\$65), non-resident (\$30), attending education institution (\$25). **Contact Paul Eilbes for information at (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.

MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE 2024-2025 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

September 11, 2025	Dr. James Pula <i>Overlooked and Underappreciated: Dan Butterfield</i>
October 9, 2025	Kim Harris <i>Libbie Bacon Custer</i>
November 13, 2025	Chris Kolakowski <i>Civil War to World War: Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. and Sr.</i>
December 11, 2025	Brian Jordan (At the Bavarian Bierhaus) <i>Marching Home: Union Veterans - Their Unending Civil War</i>
January 8, 2026	Guy Fraker <i>Lincoln the Lawyer</i>
February 12, 2026	Keith Bohannon <i>Topic to Be Determined</i>
March 12, 2026	Cliff Roberts <i>Castle Pinckney</i>
April 9, 2026	Wayne Motts <i>Nevins-Freeman Award Winner Topic to Be Determined</i>
May 7, 2026	Chris Mackowski <i>Topic to Be Determined</i>
June 11, 2026	Alex Rossino <i>Topic to Be Determined</i>

**Speakers/topics remain subject to change.
We hope to have more details by October!**



Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. 2025 – 2026 Board of Directors

Name	Office/Position	Term Expires
Terry Arliskas	Secretary/Program Chair	2028
Thomas Arliskas	Past President	2028
Michael K. Benton	President	2026
Dale Bspalec	Member	2026
Roman Blenski	Second Vice President	2028
	Quartermaster	
Mike Deeken	Member	2028
Paul A. Eilbes	Treasurer	2028
Tom Hesse	Past President	2026
Grant Johnson	Membership/Webmaster	2027
	Past President	
Bruce Klem	Past President	2027
Daniel Nettesheim	Member	2027
Frank Risler	Member	2027
Justin Tolomeo	First Vice President	2026
David Wege	Editor, General Orders	2027

www.milwaukeeecwrt.org

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.

Milwaukee Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for January 8, 2026

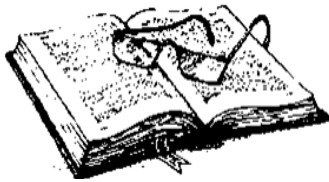
Mail your reservations by Friday, January 2 to:

Paul Eilbes
1809 Washington Avenue
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

Call or email reservations to:

(262) 376-0568
peilbes@gmail.com

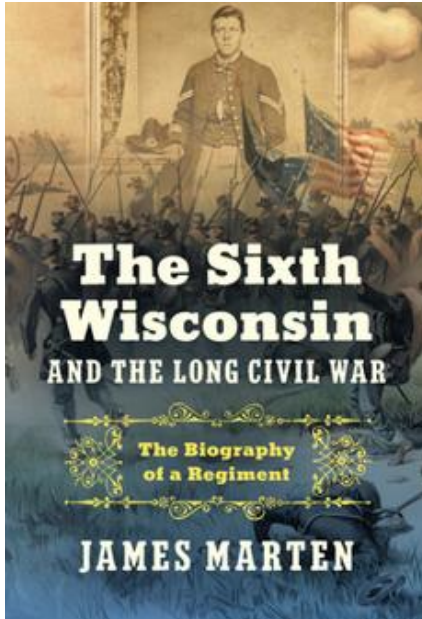
Enclosed is \$_____ (meal is \$35.00 per person) for _____ people for the
January 8, 2026 meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee.
(Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)



BETWEEN THE COVERS

The Sixth Wisconsin and the Long Civil War

James Marten



This review is on a recent book by Professor James Martin which he presented at Boswell Bookstore in April 2025. The book is The Sixth Wisconsin and the Long Civil War. The presentation by Dr. Martin was well attended and about 50 were present. The purpose of his book as he stated in this book was to provide a history of the Civil War era through the lens of a single regiment—the preparation for war, the conflict itself, the long-term effects on the men and their families and their personal stories. He asserts that the Civil War didn't end in 1865 for many of the men who fought it, or their families, and this book is meant to capture the wide variety of their experiences over several decades beyond 1865.

Dr. Marten's deep description of individuals' wartime experiences with their long-term lives makes up an important part of the work as he examines the experiences of war for the officers and the common soldier of the 6th Wisconsin. The author spent eight years researching the lives of nearly 2,000 men who served with the Sixth Wisconsin. Many of the chapters cover characters and episodes, that is an important part of which most students of the war are generally familiar; however, there is an introduction to little-known events and people. One human interest story concerns Rufus Dawes, who is a very important part of the narrative, and a compelling individual for the 6th Wisconsin Regiment. He is mentioned throughout and shows

significant leadership at the battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. A fascinating story is told about little known seventeen-year-old Madison Brower, who joined the regiment as a substitute in March of 1865, and tenure with the 6th ended with his death on the day of the Grand Review.

The Sixth Wisconsin regiment of the famed Iron Brigade comes colorfully to life in James Marten's meticulously researched and wonderfully written social history. It is so much more than a record of battles won and lost. The home front of anxious families and grieving communities, the misery of camp life in winter, the toll taken by disease and hard living as well as powder and ball, are background to famous engagements like Bull Run and Gettysburg. Through soldier letters, military records and lively newspaper accounts we follow these soldiers and their families through the remainder of their lives, including lifelong hardships inflicted by the war whether obvious or invisible.

Considering the number of books I've read on the Iron Brigade, and particularly on the 6th and Rufus Dawes, I found this to be a great read on the 6th. Dr. Martin has provided a deep dive into the feelings on the men in the unit and I feel tells the story of the character of the regiment. Dr. Martin describes his effort this way "Like any biography, this one traces the birth, education, maturation, aging and decline of its subject. The book is shaped by the notion that the regiment, throughout its long life was in a sense a living organism." He is not offering a regimental history like Lance Herdegen and Alan Nolan have but his work is a regimental biography. I believe he has hit the nail on the head with this book and I highly recommend anyone with interest in the Iron Brigade and particularly the 6th Wisconsin will find this a must have addition to your library. If there are other books out there that follow this format on a particular regiment, they may be worth reading.

submitted by Bruce Klem

"This will be, I think, a really happy new year. The great question will be finally settled between a free or despotic slave government before another year dawns upon us." – A Union perspective looking forward to 1864

A Hard Road to Travel



Once again, the Kenosha Civil War Museum and the Civil War Time Travelers had itineraries that overlapped each other in October of 2025. Both groups visited the Petersburg area as a part of their tours, encountering the same joys and frustrations as they navigated around government closures. There is so much to see in the Petersburg area, with national battlefield parks, state battlefields, and privately run sites! The Time Travelers enjoyed some of the same historians who, we are proud to say, described the Kenosha group and the Time Travelers as “Midwest nice.” That’s a label with which we can live.

The Time Travelers’ tour was an eight-day excursion into the waning days of the Civil War. At our August orientation meeting, the group was informed that a day and a half would be spent touring the monuments and sights in Washington, with a planned visit to Ford’s Theater included. Due to the shut-down, we were unable to visit Ford’s Theater or the Peterson House, where Lincoln was taken after the assassination. However, visiting the Lincoln Memorial, the incredible statuary in the National Mall, and, as high points, Arlington National Cemetery and the World War II Memorial, made for wonderful sight-seeing. In place of the visit to Ford’s Theater, our group visited the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers’ Office Museum. There author/historian Carolyn Ivanoff treated us to the story of not only Miss Barton, but also of the saving of the office building that was slated for demolition. An eagle-eyed inspector, noticing a trapdoor in the ceiling of a room, stumbled upon Barton’s offices and rooms, and immediately embarked upon a campaign to save the site.

Tredegar Iron Works and Brown’s Island were also included on the trip. Tredegar is worth a visit. Its many artifacts and solid interpretation of Richmond as the Confederate capital was interesting. A walk across a pedestrian bridge to Brown’s Island led us to the story of African American boatmen who plied Richmond’s rivers and canals. We also explored the Confederate government’s escape route across the James River, a story that is told on another walking bridge that traverses the rapids of the river itself.

Our next stop was Forts Harrison and Gilmer, two of the massive earthen fortifications that ringed Petersburg during the war. Historian Robert “Bert” Dunkerley was our guide as we learned the history of these forts and their place in the defense of the vital city of Petersburg and her transportation arteries.

With Petersburg National Battlefield closed, we spent more time at Pamplin Park. Our time there was extended an extra 90 minutes, and we needed every one of those minutes to see all that Pamplin offers. The impressive original trenches, including the site of the Union breakthrough, were a highlight of the day. Pamplin also has accurate recreated fortifications modeled to represent those of the Civil War. They were truly impressive and helped our group to understand why Petersburg held out for so long against repeated attempts by the Union’s Army of the Potomac to take them. During our entire time at Pamplin Park we were guided by Zachary Pittard, the Director of Education and Interpretation at Pamplin. He, too, was absolutely phenomenal.

The battlefield at Five Forks was our next stop. The motorcoach pulled off at a wayside marker at the spot for which the site was named. It was raining pretty hard there, so our speakers presented under umbrellas and the group huddled under the cover of trees and raincoats to hear about the fighting there. We also were given insights into three prominent figures of the clash there – Willie Pegram, George E. Pickett, and Gouverneur K. Warren.

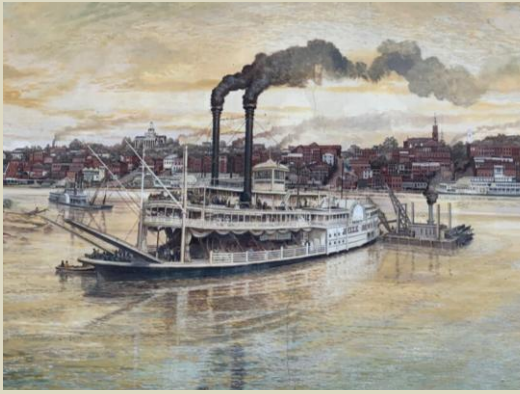
Our final day of Civil War touring took us to Sailor’s Creek, a state battlefield park not affected by closure. Park Ranger Joshua Lindamood introduced us to the events that occurred there with an informative talk in the Visitor Center. The next stop was the Hillsman House, a key location on the battlefield. As Joshua spoke about the battle and the home which became a hospital, the sun broke through the clouds. The entire area in all of its autumn splendor was spotlighted by that light. It was magnificent. Joshua had done some extra homework to prepare for us the story of Wisconsin men who were involved in the fight at Sailor’s Creek.

Following Sailor’s Creek, we were off to visit the Civil War Museum at Appomattox. Highlights included multiple uniforms, including that worn by Robert E. Lee at the surrender.

Before heading north to Wisconsin, we stopped at James Monroe’s “Highlands.” Though not as famous as Jefferson’s “Monticello,” the site is well worth a visit. Fabulous stories about Monroe, his relationship with Jefferson, and the intriguing tale of Monroe’s “lost daughter” Eliza fascinated our people. And, like a Wisconsin goodbye, we still weren’t done. On the way toward our hotel in Ohio we made one more stop. Our lunch was taken at the famous Michie Tavern. Established in 1784, the tavern hosted the likes of Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, and other statesmen and celebrities. The buffet featured Southern fried chicken served family style. No one left hungry.

Good history, good fellowship, and good eating – the Fall 2025 trip was a great success.

submitted by Dave Wege



Attacking the Arteries of Rebellion April 18-25, 2026

Final cost has not yet been determined, but will include deluxe coach transportation, all hotels and most meals, entrance to museums and parks, and fees for historians. The ballpark for this eight-day trip is \$1,275.00.

Join the Civil War Time Travelers for an eight-day trip exploring western waterways that shaped the rebellion and the Union's response to them. From the "Father of Waters" to the waters of Mobile Bay, we will investigate actions at Vicksburg, Fort Gaines, and Fort Blakeley.

A highlight of the tour will be a pontoon boat trip on the Tensaw River. Confederate defenses there guarded the back door to Mobile, and were an engineering feat of epic proportions. With park rangers, local historians, and the talents of our own CWTT, we will see how the Civil War story unfolded at these key sites.

Good eating - Good history - Good times lay ahead!

Travelling Where Heroes Trod

Contact: wegs1862@gmail.com

A Wisconsin Monument at Antietam?

A dedicated group of enthusiasts is working hard to have a Wisconsin monument placed on the Antietam battlefield. No memorial currently exists at Antietam National Battlefield specifically recognizing the contribution and sacrifice of the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin Infantry Regiments, leaving their memory insufficiently honored at the site of their bravery.

The group proposing the Wisconsin monument is in the process of drafting resolutions to be sent to the Wisconsin State Legislature. Two such documents, one from the Iron Brigade Association and one from the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table, will be forwarded to the Governor of Wisconsin, the Speaker of the Wisconsin State Assembly, the President of the Wisconsin State Senate, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Park Service for consideration and appropriate action.

In 1913, Wisconsin's legislature authorized a monument commission for Antietam and Gainesville, but that effort never came full circle. Now, over a century later, a promise to memorialize Wisconsin's sacrifice. It is time to remedy that. The State of Wisconsin holds a sacred duty to honor the legacy of its Civil War soldiers and ensure their sacrifices are remembered by future generations, particularly in connection with significant battles such as Antietam.

Perhaps this is the first time you have heard of this effort. If so, look to the pages of [General Orders](#) for periodic updates. Special thanks to Beverly Vaillancourt, Rich Kallan, and our Round Table Board of Directors for their involvement in and promotion of this important effort.

From the Field continues from page 4.

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 a 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 Administrations 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.

S



This month's Member Spotlight is on Paul Eilbes.

Blame it on Bruce Catton and David Greenspan, and the American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War. The writing of Catton and the intricate battle illustrations of Greenspan – the ones with all the tiny soldiers – was Paul's first exposure to the Civil War. Already a voracious reader, especially of military history, this was the spark that led Paul to focus on the Civil War.

This interest, through an article in the Milwaukee Journal, led Paul to the Round Table. Paul joined the Round Table in 1997, thanks to a phone call to John "Jack" Thompson, and an introduction to Lance Herdegen at the first meeting he attended. Soon thereafter, he was assisting Jack with membership duties.

Upon Jack's passing, Paul took the helm of the Membership Committee, which led to a spot on the initial Board of Directors. Twenty-five years later, he's still there, working to make the Round Table the best it can be. While passing the Membership mantle on to Grant Johnson, Paul has been the Treasurer of the organization since 2001, with few signs of a change, you can expect to see Paul at the Registration table and looking for ways to make the Round Table an important part of education and preservation in the Civil War community.

Paul is married to Nancy, proud parents of daughters Molly and Maggie. He has been employed in both the public and private sector. Customer service and cost estimating with International Paper were the first thirty years of his work experience. This was followed by government finance with the Town of Jackson and the Village of Shorewood, where he is currently employed.

From Camp Douglas to Vicksburg: The Civil War Letters of William J. Kennedy, 55th Illinois Infantry, 1861-1863

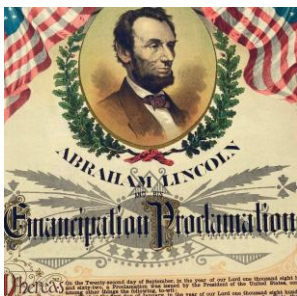
Friday, March 13 | 12pm – 1pm

Presented by Rachel Mellon

During her program, Rachael Mellen will discuss the new book that she and Dave Powell edited which is titled *From Camp Douglas to Vicksburg: The Civil War Letters of William J. Kennedy, 55th Illinois Infantry, 1861-1863*. In August 1861 William Kennedy was a harness-maker living in LaSalle, Illinois. Married with four young children, he volunteered to recruit a company in response to Lincoln's call for more troops. During the next two years, he saw action at Shiloh, Corinth, Chickasaw Bayou, and finally the Siege of Vicksburg. Observant, patriotic and sometimes cynical, Kennedy's letters give us an intriguing picture of how people of the North really experienced the war.

Mellen and Powell used their expertise to sift through genealogical records, histories of the war, and other regimental accounts to flesh out the people, places, and events that can now be shared with everyone. These documents have brought William Kennedy and his family back to life for their 21st-century relatives and a wider audience.

Rachael is a teacher, writer, genealogist, and historian. Educated at the University of London (UK), she earned a Master's in Humanities from California State University Dominguez Hills. She lives in Peru, Illinois, and is thrilled to share the story of William Kennedy with you.



President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free."

Despite this rather bold wording, the Emancipation Proclamation was limited in many ways. It applied only to states that had seceded from the United States, leaving slavery untouched in the loyal border states. It also expressly exempted parts of the Confederacy that had already come under Northern control. Most important, the freedom it promised depended upon Union military victory.

It would take a final Union military victory over the Confederacy to make Mr. Lincoln's vision into a reality. That final victory would only be achieved after two and a half more years of conflict. Ultimately, it did change the moral character of the fight, transforming the war's purpose and securing for our nation a future without slavery. That places the Emancipation Proclamation high in the ranks of consequential documents in United States' history.

MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE QUARTERMASTER'S REGALIA

What better way to show off your pride in our organization! All items are made of first-rate, quality materials, modestly embroidered with the Round Table/Iron Brigade log, along with your name or initials.

ITEM	COST
Hooded Sweatshirt in Northern Blue.....	\$35.00
Baseball Hat.....	\$10.00
Blue Brief Case.....	\$25.00
Blue Light-Weight Sweatshirt.....	\$30.00
Blue Izod Polo Shirt.....	\$40.00
Blue Dress Shirt.....	\$40.00
Blue Fleece-Lined Jacket.....	\$60.00
Iron Brigade Pin.....	\$5.00
CWRT Pin.....	\$5.00
Bugle Pin.....	\$5.00
Iron Brigade Medal.....	\$25.00
Red River Medal.....	\$25.00
CWRT 60 Year Medal.....	\$10.00

Contact Roman Blenski, Quartermaster

4601 W. Holt Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53219

(414) 327-2847 dbcpmilw@gmail.com

You may also see Roman in person at the monthly meeting at the Book Raffle table.

