

GENERAL ORDERS

The Newsletter of the

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



February 12, 2026

Keith Bohannon

General Joseph Wheeler and the Army of Tennessee's Cavalry Corps in the Atlanta Campaign

Joseph "Fighting Joe" Wheeler's cavalry played a crucial, though often criticized, role in the Atlanta Campaign by disrupting Union supply lines, screening Confederate movements, and engaging Union cavalry. He slowed William T. Sherman's advance through Georgia. Wheeler's aggressive tactics, together with challenges related to troop quality and discipline, led to mixed results and frequent clashes with Union cavalry commander Hugh Judson Kilpatrick. The talk will examine Wheeler's background and the operations of his command from May-September 1864. During much of this time, Wheeler's command guarded the flanks of the army and protected vital railroads from Union cavalry raids. Wheeler's decisive defeat of Union cavalry forces during the McCook-Stoneman Raid is arguably the high point of his career.

Keith Bohannon is professor of history and teaches courses on the history of Georgia, the antebellum South, Jacksonian American, and the U.S. Civil War & Reconstruction. He is the co-editor, with Randall Allen, of Campaigning with Old Stonewall in Virginia: The Letters of Ujanirtus Allen, Company F, 21st Regiment, Georgia Volunteer Infantry (LSU Press, 1998), and is the author of numerous essays, book reviews, and scholarly journal articles. His research focus is on the interaction during the Civil War between the soldiers and civilians on the battlefield and homefront, particularly in Georgia.



Prior to his appointment to the faculty of the University of West Georgia, Bohannon worked as an historian, interpreter, and living historian with the National Park Service at multiple Civil War sites. He is currently editing for publication the Civil War & Reconstruction memoirs of a Confederate Army officer and Klan leader from Georgia named John C. Reed. Keith is a native of Smyrna, Georgia.

General Orders No. 2-26

February 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

MCWRT News	page 2
From the Archives	page 3
Kenosha Civil War Museum	page 3
Area Events	page 3
From the Field	page 4
Through the Looking Glass	page 5
Driftless Area CW Club	page 6
Annual Patriotic Luncheon	page 6
Round Table News 2025-2026	page 7
• 2025-2026 Speaker Schedule	
• 2025-2026 Board of Directors	
• Meeting Reservation Form	
Between the Covers	page 8
Wanderings	pages 9
Educational Memberships	page 10
A Wisconsin Monument at Antietam?	page 10
Civil War Institute	page 10
Member Spotlight	page 11
More from the Kenosha Museum	page 11
Quartermaster's Regalia	page 12

February 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.

Antietam Monument Update

Early next month, Rep. Fitzgerald plans to introduce a bill that would authorize the establishment of a memorial at Antietam National Battlefield to the officers and men of the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin Infantry Regiments. The Wisconsin troops' tenacity and sacrifice contributed greatly to the pyrrhic Union victory there. That victory led to Lincoln's decision to announce the Emancipation Proclamation, changing the focus of the war entirely.

This is an exciting step forward as those involved seem to remember the sacrifice the Badger State made in defense of the Union. Thanks go to all involved.

Read more about this proposed, long overdue memorial project on page 10 of the General Orders.

The Muster Roll: NEW MEMBERS

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

- 2005 Robert J. Miller: "Both Prayed to the Same God"
- 2008 David E. Long: "Lincoln, Davis, and the Dahlgren Raid"
- 2009 Bruce Allardice: "Lincoln as a War Leader"
- 2011 Steven Rogstad: "Lincoln's Art of Persuasion"
- 2012 Dave Wege: "Pugnacious Pat Cleburne"
- 2014 Harold Knudsen: "General Longstreet"
- 2015 Leslie Goddard: "Why *Gone with the Wind* Still Matters"
- 2016 Don H. Doyle: "The Cause of All Nations"
- 2017 Bob O'Neill: "Stuart's Christmas Raid of 1862"
- 2018 Lawrence Hewitt: "Richard Heron Anderson"
- 2019 Robert Girardi: "Gouverneur Warren's Last Battle"
- 2020 Connie Langum: "Battle at Wilson's Creek"
- 2021 Doug Dammann: "Benjamin Franklin White: Wisconsin's First Surgeon"
- 2022 Steve Acker: "The 36th Wisconsin Infantry: All in a Year"
- 2023 Charles Knight: "From Arlington to Appomattox"
- 2024 Carolyn Ivanoff: "We Fought at Gettysburg"



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.

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.

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858

Tuesdays, February 17-March 13 6pm – 8pm

Presented by Steve Rogstad (\$48 (\$60 non-members))

The class will be conducted through Zoom meetings.

Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were political adversaries for nearly 30 years in the crucible of public debate as they argued the issue of slavery and development of the western lands. The 1858 senatorial debates have been held up the finest example of American debate style. This course will closely examine the political context for the debates, identify various Illinois voting blocks, and discuss the topics each candidate introduced into the discussion. It will also study the rhetorical ploys each candidate employed in attempts to further their positions. Learn what is the myth of the seven debates and how they differ from the historical record.

Register at the Museum website. Call 262-653-4140 for more information. The link for this **Zoom meeting** will be sent 48 hours before the class begins.



The State Journal
Saturday, Feb 1 1862

Good tempers in the Wisconsin regiments. Editors State Journal, I beg a brief space in your columns for the purpose of giving your readers a few extracts from a private letter just received from a captain in the 5th Wisconsin regiment, who is also worthy chief templar of a good tempur lodge in that regiment. Allow me to remark further that there are now lodges organized in the second, 5th, 7th, 8th, and 11th infantry regiments, and the first cavalry and others are about being formed in the 16th infantry and the second cavalry from the reports received from these lodges I can safely venture the assertion that the general sobriety and excellent discipline that have characterized Wisconsin troops thus far in the war, And one for them a high position in the eyes of military men, is more directly traceable to the influence of good Templarism among them than any other single cause. But to the quote I do not wish to close this letter without saying something of the condition of our lodge or rather of its members; for from the time we left Madison we have had no opportunity whatever to hold but of our members I am proud to speak for in whatever company they are found they are the trusted and reliable men, having it all Cases the fullest confidence even of those officers who do not practice the absences for which they respect in others. In my company there are about 60 good templars, most of them new members of the order. And out of this number two only have broken their pledge.

Quote: "The strength of the purpose evicted by are good Templars in thus remaining true to their principles can be better appreciated when the circumstances which have surrounded them are better known."

We crossed the Pontiac on the night of September the and remained without tents for more than two weeks, during which time it rained nearly every day; and my men went not on picket duty, were employed in chopping and digging in the trenches. When it did not rain Comm the weather was intensely hot during this time whiskey rations were issued to the men on fatigue duty, by order of the general commanding, and deemed necessary to protect the men against the effects of fatigue and exposure. In every case, the stimulus was rejected by the good templars of my company, and it took pains to ascertain the course pursued by the members of the order in other companies, and I found that they were all strong to resist the temptation.

At times the general health of our regiment has been very bad, owing to the exposure and overworked; but at all times it has been evident that the total absence men were less liable to disease or to be overcome with fatigue, and when taken sick were more easily cured.

We are very much in hopes that we will yet be quartered where we can start the lodge in working order, but we shall have some hard fighting to do first period Our regiment ranks high for efficiency, and may be considered equal if not superior to any in this division And, if we get an opportunity, we'll not discredit our state.

Very truly your friend.

Army correspondents

Wisconsin Daily State Journal
February 5 1862

The concert tonight by Mrs. Tappan assisted by her pupils transpires at the City Hall this evening. The program is a most entertaining one and after the concert we understand the affair is to be concluded with dancing. Tickets of admission 50 cents.

Feb 3 1862
A Libel on the Twelfth

The Quincy Illinois Herald, of the 14th, contained an article the Wisconsin 12th burned up an entire village, which stated that the regiment in question arriving at Douglas, a small Village opposite Hannibal on the Missouri, after a march of 22 miles upon a bitter winter day. Finding themselves without fuel or shelter, they burned the four or five buildings, including a warehouse, which constituted the village, in order to preserve themselves from freezing

A private letter from Colonel pronounces this statement a lie, prefixing the word with certain intensifying and Demetri adjectives which indicate that the gallant kernel does not enjoy such a sense slander upon his Wisconsin boys. He adds that the village of D contains just two dwelling houses and three or four storehouses. The dwellings as he learned afterwards in Missouri are occupied by slave-catchers, men who make a living by chasing fugitives, and returning them to their secessionist owners. Their warehouses belonged to its secessionist Steamboat Captain, who laid up his boat in the ice to prevent it used to convey the soldiers of the 12th across the river.

Colonel Bryant reports that not a building in the village was harmed in the least by our soldiers, that many of his men paid 50 cents for the privilege of sleeping on the bare floors of these rickety dwellings, and that six cords of wood which they did burn was paid for.

**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!

“Dirt Thrower” and Other Nom de Guerre

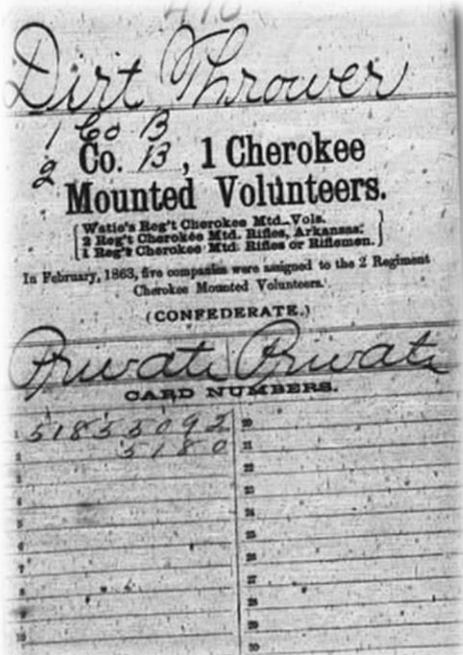
Dirt Thrower served in Company B of Stand Watie’s 1st Cherokee Mounted Volunteers. As one would suspect, he was a Native American. Of course, Dirt Thrower was not his original name. As often happened in Native American culture, a name could be changed to reflect an important event that occurred in an individual’s lifetime. Haven’t we all been fascinated by the possible origins of the names Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Red Cloud, Chief Joseph, and others?

But before we get to Mr. Dirt Thrower, let’s take a brief look at other rather unusual names. The Cherokee Mounted Rifles had a 2nd Lieutenant known as Martin Buzzardfloppter. Many other individuals in the regiment had names common among English-speaking populations due to intermarriage and cultural blending. These names were often English translations of traditional Cherokee names or phonetic spellings of Cherokee words. Other examples of this were soldiers named Pheasant, Bugler, Dickey Driver, and James Keg.

Stand Watie, the second principal chief of the Cherokee nation, was named Tak-er-taw-ker at his birth. In his native tongue that translated to “Stands Firm.” This was a highly appropriate name for the last Confederate general to surrender in the Civil War. William Penn Adair was a colonel in the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. The town of Adair, Oklahoma was named for him, as was American humorist Will Rogers, who proudly proclaimed Native American blood!

If you have never heard of the Cherokee Mounted Rifles, a brief introduction to their association with the Confederate States of America is warranted.

The Cherokee Mounted Rifles initially fought for the Confederacy. The Confederacy sought alliances with Native American tribes to bolster their military forces, particularly in the western territories. The Cherokee Nation, led by figures like Stand Watie and John Ross, saw this alliance as an opportunity to protect their sovereignty and lands, which were threatened by Union expansion and policies. This strategic partnership was part of the broader Confederate efforts to gain support from Native American tribes. The treaty that led the Cherokee Nation to ally with the Confederacy was signed on October 7, 1861. Under pressure from internal fractures between Watie and Ross and from external threats from the United States, the Cherokee saw the alliance as a means to protect their lands and sovereignty. The treaty promised the Cherokee Nation support and recognition from the Confederacy, influencing their decision to form units like the Cherokee Mounted Rifles.



Let’s now return to Mr. Dirt Thrower. As a teenager working on his family’s farm during the early part of the war, three Kansas Redlegs rode up and debated how they were going to kill him. One of the guerillas picked up an axe from the woodpile, intending to kill the boy with it. At that moment, the teenager dove to the ground, grabbed a handful of dirt, and threw it into his opponent’s face. The man staggered, blinded by the dirt, and dropped his musket. Seizing the weapon, he shot one of the other thugs off of his horse. He then grabbed the fallen man’s revolver, killed the remaining mounted Redleg. Finally, he shot the one who had been blinded by the dirt. From that day forward, it is said he rarely used his long Cherokee name and instead went by the name “Dirt Thrower” in memory of his victory against the three Redlegs.

If you are interested in learning more about the Cherokee Mounted Rifles, feel free to investigate these titles. For a historical overview, read The Confederate Cherokees: John Drew’s Regiment of Mounted Rifles by W. Craig Gaines. A Union perspective is found in M. Jane Johannson’s Albert C. Ellithorpe: The Indian Home Guards and the Civil War on the Trans-Mississippi Frontier. If historical fiction is your forte, try Rifles for Watie by Harold Keith. It is a real favorite of junior high readers, and is reviewed in *Between the Covers*.

submitted by Dave Wege

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

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**
Overlooked and Underappreciated: Dan Butterfield
- October 9, 2025 **Kim Harris**
Libbie Bacon Custer
- November 13, 2025 **Chris Kolakowski**
*Civil War to World War:
Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. and Sr.*
- December 11, 2025 **Brian Jordan**
*(At the Bavarian Bierhaus)
Marching Home: Union Veterans - Their Unending Civil War*
- January 8, 2026 **Guy Fraker**
Lincoln the Lawyer
- February 12, 2026 **Keith Bohannon**
*General Joseph Wheeler and the Army of Tennessee's
Cavalry Corps in the Atlanta Campaign*
- March 12, 2026 **Cliff Roberts**
Castle Pinckney
- April 9, 2026 **Wayne Motts**
*Nevins-Freeman Award Winner
Topic to Be Determined*
- May 7, 2026 **Chris Mackowski**
*A Tempest of Iron and Lead:
The Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse*
- June 11, 2026 **Alex Rossino**
*Calamity at Frederick: A Fresh Look at the Creation and
Loss of Special Orders No. 191*

**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 Bepalec	Member	2026
Roman Blenski	Second Vice President Quartermaster	2028
Mike Deeken	Member	2028
Paul A. Eilbes	Treasurer	2028
Tom Hesse	Past President	2026
Grant Johnson	Membership/Webmaster Past President	2027
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.milwaukeecwrt.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 February 12, 2026

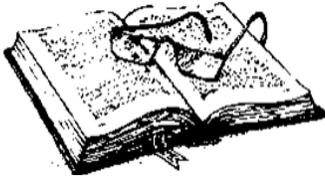
Mail your reservations by Friday, February 6 to:

Paul Eilbes
1809 Washington Avenue
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

Call or email reservations to:

(262) 376-0568
peilbes@gmail.com

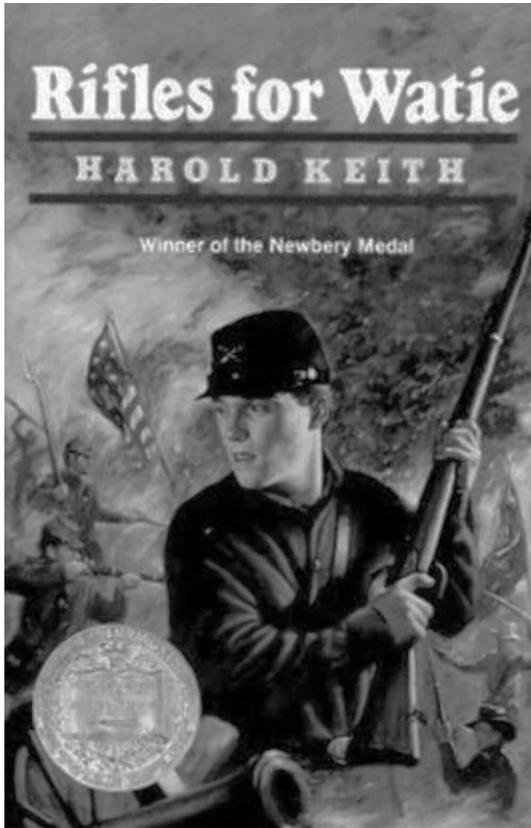
Enclosed is \$_____ (meal is \$35.00 per person) for _____ people for the
February 12, 2026 meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee.
(Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)



BETWEEN THE COVERS

Rifles for Watie

Harold Keith



Rifles for Watie is historical fiction. If this genre is not your thing, feel free to stop reading. However, many solid historians feel that historical fiction has a proper place in telling the story of history. Rifles has the added bonus of telling the story of a rather forgotten sector of the Civil War. The Trans-Mississippi Theater saw some exciting action during the course of the four-year conflict, along with some fascinating characters who were a part of that story.

The setting for this novel includes Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. The book opens with our protagonist, Jefferson Davis Bussey, contemplating signing the muster roll in service to the Union. His family farms just north of the Kansas-Missouri border, and has experienced depredations from Missouri Border Ruffians. At 16 years of age, Jeff is too young to enlist, but when his father is threatened with murder and his home is attacked, Jeff convinces his parents that he must join up to do his duty and protect them all. Imagine signing the Union roll with the name *Jefferson Davis* Bussey.

Harold Keith explores the widespread belief that the coming war was going to be nothing but glory, bugle calls, and waving flags. When Bussey goes off to war, he does so fearful that he will miss the single most important event to occur in his lifetime. On his way to enlist, he draws two friends into his circle of recruits. Big John Chadwick and David Gardner come to represent other attitudes that prevailed in pre-war thinking. Chadwick enlists to get off the farm and experience new adventures. Gardner simply wants to get away from home and all the responsibilities he has in helping his widowed mother and his siblings survive.

Needless to say, all three characters experience combat in all of its brutal reality. A first taste of battle at Wilson's Creek, MO shatters the illusion that war is glorious. The Battles of Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove follow, reinforcing the theme that war is horror. Then the story takes an interesting turn.

Bussey is employed as a scout for the Union army commanded by General James Blunt. While on a mission to gather information and collect prisoners, he is trapped behind enemy lines. Demonstrating some quick thinking, Jeff tells his captives that he has come south to enlist in the Confederate army. He soon finds himself as a member of the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. How this predicament is resolved is literally "the rest of the story." There is a love interest, an evil traitor who could conceivably cause defeat of all Union forces in the Trans-Mississippi, loyal canine companions, and some surprisingly excellent telling of Civil War history.

That history is accurate due to the simple formula Harold Keith followed as he researched this novel. The author interviewed survivors among the Cherokee Rifles and Union participants of the period. This lends an authenticity to the tale, which makes Rifles for Watie good history told in an exciting way. The book is appropriate for ages twelve and up. For those looking for a "hook" to capture the interest of young readers, this book may be it. It covers the brutality of war, discusses divided loyalties, and, finally, is a coming-of-age story that reveals the humanity of both sides of the conflict.

Not convinced? Rifles for Watie was the winner of the 1958 Newbery Medal and the 1964 Lewis Carroll Shelf Award. And, to share some scintillating details, one of Stand Watie's wives is related to a Milwaukee Civil War Round Table member. This book comes with the highest recommendations for both its entertainment value and its dive into neglected Civil War history.

(not) submitted by Dirt Thrower

Winter Daydreams are for Planning Battlefield Visits!



Where will you be visiting this year? Are you getting ready to check off any bucket list destinations? The Carter House grounds in Franklin, TN have seen some major changes recently. A new visitor center will open in the spring. A modern building, long considered an eyesore, was recently demolished, opening up a better view of the battlefield. The Cross Keys battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley has also seen some upgrades. Land purchases and new signage on walking trails have been added. Perhaps the following information will help you in your trip planning. Remember, if you visit Civil War sites, don't forget to write-up your adventures for our Wanderings feature!

Franklin, Tennessee

Fifteen years after the dream began Battle of Franklin Trust CEO Eric Jacobson and Director of Historic Sites Joanna Stephens took a walk through of the new visitor center being constructed at Carter House. The new Herbert Harper Center is slated to open in May 2026!

In March of this year, the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Battle of Franklin Trust broke ground on the new Herbert Harper Visitor Center at [Carter House State Historic Site](#) in Franklin. Named for the late former executive director of the Tennessee Historical Commission, the new visitor center will replace the current building, which dates back to the early 1980s, with a state-of-the-art visitor facility designed to naturally blend with the existing historical structures on the battlefield, complete with immersive exhibitions, flexible galleries and modern amenities.

The Carter House remains Tennessee's most-visited state historic site, welcoming more than 100,000 tourists each year. Once threatened to be demolished for the site of a new gas station, the Tennessee Historical Commission purchased the property in 1951. Funding for the \$6.5 million project was made possible by Gov. Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly, and an additional \$2 million in funding comes from the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Cross Keys, Virginia

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation has preserved the historic 98-acre Webb Farm on the Cross Keys Battlefield. This significant achievement underscores the Battlefields Foundation's commitment to preserving the Shenandoah Valley's rich Civil War history and their continued effort to conserve open space in Rockingham County and throughout the Valley.

The Webb Farm, owned in 1862 by Dr. J. B. Webb, is a crucial part of the Cross Keys Battlefield. This battle played a pivotal role at the end of "Stonewall" Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign. The preservation of this land ensures that future generations can continue to learn and draw meaning from this historic landscape. The farm witnessed intense fighting throughout the day with Jackson's Confederates taking up positions along Mill Creek Ridge and engaging in fierce skirmishes with Fremont's Federal army.

Many Civil War folks don't take the time to stop at Cross Keys (or its sister battlefield at Port Republic). The action there on June 8 and 9, 1862 was an amazing conclusion to Jackson's Valley Campaign. One thing I find particularly fascinating is following in the footsteps of a regiment. In this case, the 15th Alabama opened the fighting on June 8. This is the same regiment that assaulted Joshua Chamberlain's position on Little Round Top in July of 1863 and then was sent west to reinforce Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee a few months later. The 15th was the regiment that held (and lost) the key to opening the Cracker Line at Brown's Ferry.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the landowners, Fred and Jane Cline, who agreed to donate an easement on the property, the Battlefields Foundation, and its members were able to secure this preservation victory. The Cline's wanted to protect their property because they "have been concerned with the incredible amount of development in the Shenandoah Valley" and wanted to prevent "the loss of another working farm." With the support of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the area around the Webb Farm and other properties at the Cross Keys and Port Republic battlefields will be opened to the public with new walking trails and interpretive signs as part of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Tourism Infrastructure Plan. As part of this partnership, wayfinding signage was recently installed from Interstate 81 and Route 33 to the battlefields to promote the sites and guide visitors.

Milwaukee Civil War Round Table Educational Membership

It will come as no surprise that we have a very generous group of members, deeply interested in the Round Table's focus on education and preservation. Through that generosity, the Round Table has several Education memberships available.

Do you know of someone interested in Civil War history that attends or teaches an educational institution? Let's get them connected to the Round Table via an Education membership! It is the perfect opportunity to get students and teachers involved in the organization, and help fuel that interest in learning about the Civil War!

Please contact me if you would like to learn more about this opportunity, or if you would like to join those who have donated the memberships which make this possible.

Paul Eilbes
Treasurer

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.

How Many Different Ways Can One Experience Gettysburg?

I've been to Gettysburg close to forty times in my life. It's always been a place that has "called to me" ever since my first visit back in 1976. I've spent countless hours walking the fields but my advancing age plus a bum knee led me two years ago to consider yet another way to view the place I love. At the invitation of fellow Roundtable member Seth Maxfield, I attended the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College. It was a memorable 5-day event filled with wonderful and noteworthy speakers plus extensive battlefield tours.

Last summer I returned and took along fellow Roundtable member George Affeldt. We were again joined by now Major Seth Maxfield who continues in his role as an instructor at the United States Military Academy at West Point. There were two exceptional panel discussions; one on the role of Robert E. Lee in history and memory and the other on how we understand civil war history in today's public domain. Another very interesting presentation was from the National Park Service as they shared stories and artifacts uncovered during the recent work done on Little Round Top. Gary Gallagher was another big-name presenter.

This year's Institute will be June 12-17 and another impressive lineup of speakers is already in place including Jeff Shaara, Jennifer Murray, Keith Bohannon, Kevin Pawlak, Jim Hessler, and Dennis Frye. I'm planning to go again and would love the company of another Round Table member or two! Give me a call (414-698-2387) or send an e-mail (aoren@att.net) if you're interested in learning more. You can also check out the Civil War Institute website at [2026 Civil War Institute Summer Conference - Gettysburg College](#).

submitted by Andy Oren



This month's Member Spotlight is on John Rodahl. John was very fortunate to have Mrs. Gardner for 4th grade in 1961 during the Civil War Centennial. Her required "reading list" included "The How and Why Wonder Book of the Civil War"- "Abraham Lincoln (Classics Comics)" "Facts About the Civil War (The Civil War Centennial Commission), and "The Civil War Handbook" by William Price. His Christmas present that year was "The American Picture History of the Civil War" which was worn out pretty quickly!

All of this reading was followed up with battle after battle on the basement floor with blue and gray "soldiers." John's uncle who bought the "Picture History" also bought Carl Sandburg's 1940 "War years" which was close to the only book John read while in college that was not required!!!

The early 1990's saw an exponential interest in the Civil War. The Ken Burn's documentary not only became extremely popular and was found to be shown in American history classes all around the country. The movies "Glory" and "Gettysburg" became highly watched and tourists made their way to Civil War battle sites. Around this time a teaching colleague mentioned that his father was a member of a group of people who had a high interest in the Civil War. Guest lecturers were the highlight of the night at the Wisconsin Club during the Civil War Round Table meetings. Books of the speakers were for sale that were being signed. Over the next few months historians such as Lance Herdegen and David J. Eicher sat at a dining table with us. In 2006 the Guest Speaker was James McPherson, arguably the most prominent American historian of our time. It was like we were spending time with "rock stars."

Also, John loved the story of William Upton - a man who was born in 1918- and whose father had met President Lincoln and fought in the Civil War! John's students did not believe that to be true!

Thanks go to Carolyn Ivanoff (a speaker from two years ago) who was a guide at a Civil War Time Travelers Tour. Carolyn was able to pinpoint where a relative had been shot in the Brickyard on the First Day at Gettysburg, but lived to serve for the rest of the war. Further investigations have revealed another relative fighting in another important battle - The Breakthrough at Petersburg.

John is married to Sue, a Time Traveler also. He is a retired History teacher after almost forty years from the Milwaukee Public Schools. John took a lot of notes from the Round Table lectures and purchased "many a book" for use in his Advanced Placement classes. He also attended many teacher seminars around the country including one in Richmond Virginia with a fellow teacher named Dave Wege. It's amazing who you can run into!!

When not reading treasured books, you can see John walking the sidewalks of his community.

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.

Abraham Lincoln (Feb 12, 1865): Reflecting on the war's purpose, he noted, "We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing".



Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.



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
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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

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(414) 327-2847 dbcpmilw@gmail.com

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

