

GENERAL ORDERS



The Newsletter of the

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



October 8, 2026

Joshua Lindamood

April 6, 1865: The Black Thursday

"My God! Has the army dissolved?" Robert E. Lee

April 6, 1865—known as “Black Thursday”—was one of the most devastating days of the American Civil War. As Robert E. Lee’s Confederate army retreated, Grant’s Union forces struck along a stretched and vulnerable line, triggering the Battle of Sailor’s Creek. Fighting broke out at multiple locations, including near the Hillsman House and along Sailor’s Creek, where Confederate units were overwhelmed, cut off, and forced into intense close-quarters combat. The losses were staggering, with thousands killed, wounded, or captured. This program highlights the key decisions of the day and their significance, showing how the fighting at Sailor’s Creek led directly to Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House just three days later.

Joshua is a founding member and co-director of the Appomattox-Petersburg Preservation Society (A.P.P.S.), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the historic battlefields and landmarks of Southside Virginia while promoting public education about the region's vital role during the American Civil War. Through his work in public history, preservation, and education, Joshua is committed to ensuring that the stories of those who experienced the conflict continue to inform and inspire future generations.



Joshua Lindamood is a historian serving at both Sailor’s Creek Battlefield Historical State Park and Staunton River Battlefield State Park. Throughout his career, he has also held positions with the American Civil War Museum and Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, where he has helped interpret and preserve the history of the Civil War for visitors from around the world.



General Orders No. 10-26

October 2026

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October 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.

2026-2027 Speaker Schedule p. 7

milwaukeeecwrt.org

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.

Watch for New Faces

The Milwaukee Civil War Round Table has been working hard to spread the word about our organization. A key component of the plan centers on reaching out to prospective members through social media.

Grant Johnson developed an invitation that was delivered on Facebook. The Board of Directors gave approval for a special program in which first-time guests could experience a Round Table meeting at no cost to themselves.

Look for new faces at your table. Make them feel welcome, and tell them all about your passion for Civil War history and fellowship.

[illegible]**MCWRT Annual Fund**

The following members have made a generous commitment to the MCWRT by investing in that fund. This list reflects donations made July 1, 2026 through September 11, 2026.

Major Contributor (\$500 and above)

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

Patron (\$200 - \$499)

Michael Deeken, Gary & Judy Ertel, Gene & Jane Jamroz, Kathy McNally, Laura Rinaldi, Justin & Stacy Tolomeo, Dan Van Grunsven

Associate (\$100 - \$199)

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Contributor (up to \$99)

George Affeldt, Larry Desotell & Deborah Wied, Lori Duginski, John Durr, Julian Gonzalez, Jr., Brian Gunn, Leon & Margaret Harris, Don Hilbig, Christopher Johnson, Rich Kallan, Allan Kasprzak, Janet & Michael Key, Jay Lauck, Steve Loreck, Steve Magnusen, Rod Malinowski, Tom Mueller, Ann & Dave Steinhilb, Chuck Vogel

Speaker Enhancement Fund

George Affeldt, Don & Amy Bauer, Ellen & Jerry DeMers, Tom & Karen Doyle, Lori Duginski, John Durr, Gerald Frangesch, Julian Gonzalez, Jr., Brian Gunn, James Heinz, John Helmenstine, Tom Hesse, Jean & Peter Jacobsohn, Gene & Jane Jamrozy, Dan Jones, Rich Kallan, Bruce Klem, Jay Lauck, Rod Malinowski, John & Susan Petty, Laura Rinaldi, Diana Smurawa, Dan Tanty, Paul Zehren



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

- 2003 Jerry Russell: "Lee After Chancellorsville"
- 2006 Gordon Dammann: "A Museum, a Battlefield, and a Hero"
- 2008 Gloria Swift: "Ford's Theater Secrets Revealed"
- 2011 Vernon Burton: "Lincoln and the Constitution"
- 2012 Edward Bonekemper III: "Lincoln and Grant: The Westerners Who Won the War"
- 2014 Mark Bradley: "When East Meets West: Joe Hooker, O.O. Howard, and the Atlanta Campaign"
- 2016 Lance Herdegen: "The Baby Had Red Hair: The Music of the Iron Brigade"
- 2017 Dave Powell: "Who Won the Battle of Chickamauga?"
- 2018 Ted Karamanski: "The Civil War as an Indian War"
- 2019 Jim Lighthizer: "Historic Preservation and Place-Based Teaching"
- 2020 Robert Girardi: "Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier"
- 2021 David Dixon: "The American Civil War: A Radical, International Revolution"
- 2023 Carleton Young: "Voices from the Attic"
- 2024 Dr. Jen Murray: "The Victor at Gettysburg: General George Gordon Meade and the Civil War"
- 2025 Kim Harris: "Libbie Bacon Custer"



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.

Minnesota's Own Civil War: The Dakota Conflict of 1862

Friday, October 9 | 12pm – 1pm

Presented by: Mr. Stephen Osman

The Dakota War of 1862 was the single most important event in Minnesota's 168-year history. In six tragic weeks, more were killed than all of Minnesota's Civil War combat deaths, and the western half of the state was largely depopulated. Civilian casualties, adjusted for population, were nearly seven times those of 9-11. Minnesota's Dakota people were evicted from the state, leaving scars that remain to this day. Learn about the causes, visit the battlefields, and consider the legacy of the Dakota War in a colorful PowerPoint presentation by Stephen Osman.

Stephen Osman is a graduate of St. Olaf College who retired as senior historian with the Minnesota Historical Society. He managed Historic Fort Snelling for over three decades, and actively researches, speaks, and writes about Minnesota's role in the Civil War and the Dakota War. Osman served with the US Army Reserve in Psychological Operations at Fort Snelling, is a board member of several historical organizations, and has developed Civil War exhibits for the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum.

Courage Defined

Friday, November 13 | 12pm – 1pm

Presented by: Beverly Vallancourt

This 45-minute presentation features selected clips from two Civil War video series that tell the remarkable stories of Wisconsin and Illinois men and women who left their homes and families to serve their country. Discover the story of Dr. Samuel H. Everett, the first Union surgeon killed in action, Martin J. Hawkins, a participant in the daring Great Locomotive Chase, and William Shipley, an immigrant and the first soldier from Quincy, Illinois, to die in the Civil War. Along the way, you'll gain a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices of Union nurses, such as Elizabeth Leebrick, who tirelessly cared for and gathered supplies for the wounded and for volunteer soldiers such as Dyer Walker Hitchcock and Philip Cheek, who struggled to understand the staggering human cost of the war but fought on with courage and fortitude. Through personal stories and historical insights, this presentation reveals the courage, resilience, and humanity that defined those shaped by America's greatest conflict.



Wisconsin Soil

From Hudson's Tannery to the Slope West of Groveton

The history before the Civil War was a major factor when you look at the story of Wisconsin in that conflict. The Fairchild family had been in business with John Brown and his father in the Hudson, Ohio, tannery trade. Jairus C. Fairchild—later Madison's first mayor, and father of the colonel who would take the 2nd Wisconsin after O'Connor fell—was Brown's partner there before the family moved west. That old tie still mattered when Wisconsin papers printed John Brown after Dred Scott and after Harpers Ferry.

After Dred Scott, a current ran straight through Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Sentinel—the paper Rufus King had built before he organized what became the Iron Brigade—printed Brown's words. They ended where Wisconsin had already planted its flag: any who reached Wisconsin soil was free. The Glover rescue and the Booth cases had said the same thing in court and in the street. The men who later walked up the long hill west of Groveton had been raised inside that sentence.

That late-afternoon stand on the Warrenton Turnpike still reads like the moment the Black Hats announced themselves. Jackson's opening guns, the 2nd Wisconsin sent up the slope after the battery, and then the sudden realization that the long gray lines ran both ways as far as the eye could see—that is the fight that turned a Western brigade into something the Army of Northern Virginia would remember. They treated the surprise as the chance they had been writing home about. They were hunting Stonewall as they wrote home.

The field itself is still that simple walk west of the 1861 ground. You come up the rise and the distance between the two lines is shockingly short. Darkness ended it, not either commander. The casualties were out of proportion to the numbers engaged; both the Stonewall Brigade and Gibbon's four regiments were badly cut up before the larger Second Manassas even properly began. From there it was three weeks of almost continuous fighting—Groveton, Second Bull Run, South Mountain (where the name "Iron Brigade" stuck), and Antietam the Cornfield. Gettysburg on July 1 was the last time the original organization could still be recognized as itself.

Ewell's shattered left knee that evening is one of those wounds that historians keep circling. The amputation took him out for months. When he came back as Jackson's successor, Lee's "if practicable" order on Cemetery Hill sat in a different kind of mind. Whether the lost leg, the new command relationship, or simple prudence decided it, the high ground stayed in Union hands long enough for the rest of Meade's army to arrive. That is a fair thread to keep pulling.

A small point of lineage that sometimes gets compressed: Rufus King's grandfather was the Rufus King who signed the Constitution and spent the rest of his career trying to keep slavery from spreading into the Northwest. The Milwaukee editor who first assembled the Western brigade carried that inheritance, even if the later accusations after Second Bull Run clouded his reputation. Fairchild taking the 2nd Wisconsin after O'Connor fell, then losing the arm on Seminary Ridge and going on to three terms as governor, is the other Wisconsin through-line that makes the brigade feel like more than a military unit. They did not have to be taught honor. The ground still teaches it to anyone who walks the slope away from the traffic noise.

The raw percentages hide how completely the command structure was torn up in two hours.

Every regiment in Gibbon's line lost its colonel or equivalent. O'Connor of the 2nd Wisconsin was hit five times and died. Cutler of the 6th was shot through the thigh and carried off. Robinson and Hamilton of the 7th were both down; the regiment finished the night under a captain. Meredith of the 19th Indiana was crushed when his horse was killed under him; Major Isaac May was left mortally wounded on the field when the division pulled out at midnight and was never recovered. Eight of twelve field officers gone.

That is why the brigade that formed up at Manassas Junction on the morning of the 29th was already being led by lieutenant colonels and captains who had not expected to be in command twelve hours earlier.

The wounded who could walk or be loaded went with the column. The rest were left. Confederate details gathered both sides after the firing stopped; Confederate surgeons treated Federal wounded as well as their own. Burial parties put the dead of both armies in shallow graves on Brawner's rented ground. Some of those graves were never properly identified. O'Connor's father later sent a party from Wisconsin with a map of where men had fallen; they could not find the body. May's grave was never located. That is the part the official 79 "missing" does not show.

The 6th Wisconsin's lighter loss is the exception that proves the rule. Cutler put them in a dry wash on the right. Confederate fire that would have swept an open slope mostly went over their heads. Even so they still lost their colonel and more than seventy men. There was no truly safe piece of that field; there was only slightly less lethal ground.

What the survivors carried away was not just the count. Rufus Dawes later wrote that the best blood of Wisconsin and Indiana had been poured out "for not one night's experience," and that after Gainesville they would always be ready but never again anxious. That sentence is the casualty list in a different form. The brigade that left the pike at dusk on the 28th was still a drilled, untested Western outfit. The one that reached Manassas Junction at sunrise on the 29th already knew what standing in the open at seventy-five yards actually cost.

**Thank you, James Johnson, for again
providing these monthly pieces for
From the Field!**

The Driftless Area Civil War Club 2026-2027 Schedule of Meetings

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.

September 19	Laura Schiller -Illinois Cavalry	January 16	Mark Bishop – Old Abe, the War Eagle
October 17,	Leslie Goddard – Clara Barton	February 20	Show and Tell – Artifacts of the Civil War
November 21	John Beatty – Shiloh	March	To Be Determined
December 19	Andrea Nolan – Lincoln’s Counterfeiters	April	To Be Determined
		May	To Be Determined
		June	To Be Determined
		July	Robert Girardi – Andersonville and Illinois Prisons

**Kenosha Civil War Museum Bus Trip: Williamsburg and Yorktown Tour
October 18-21, 2026 (Please see the Museum website for more details.)**



In Memoriam - Col. Stephen Ryder "Steve" Leopold USA, Ret.

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Col. Stephen ("Steve") Ryder Leopold (USA, Ret.) on April 7, 2026. He will truly be missed by family, friends, and military buddies. Steve was born on June 19, 1944 in Jefferson City, Missouri to Charles Leopold and Pauline Leopold, the youngest of their three children. Steve relocated to Shorewood, Wisconsin with his family when he was entering his first year of high school. He attended Shorewood High School where he played numerous sports and lettered, was editor of the school newspaper, and received a National Merit Scholarship for his stellar academics.

Shortly after his 22nd birthday, Steve entered Infantry Officer Candidate School in 1966, where almost a year later he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry in the United States Army. After his commission, Steve completed basic airborne training and Special Forces Officer training. In 1968, Steve was sent to fight in the war in Vietnam. On May 9, 1968 he was captured as a Prisoner of War by the North Vietnamese Army near the Central Highlands of what was South Vietnam.

Steve was held as a POW by the NVA from 1968 until he was released on March 5, 1973. Despite repeated interrogations, Steve never gave up any state secrets or turned against his country. He remained steadfast and busied his mind imagining all of the places he would travel when he was freed. Steve also had an eidetic memory at the time and made mental lists of all the POWs that passed through the camps or did not make it home. He was integral in providing names and lists of soldiers who were listed as Missing in Action who passed through these camps. Steve retired from active duty and went into reserve status in the late 1990s.

Steve will be deeply missed by his children Christopher and Cassandra and his grandchildren Noah, Analeigh, and Maxine. He will also be missed by his great-grandchildren, his niece, and too many friends to count.

The following article about the **Horicon Guards** is the work of Carl G. Reinemann. His incredible story of one town's response to the war and the sacrifice it paid may be found in its entirety online on a podcast called One Shot at History. Reinemann is a public historian and writer who seeks to tell the stories of regular people who lived briefly in newspaper columns, courthouse records, and community memory, and then quietly faded away over time.

Carl graciously gave his permission for use of his work in the General Orders. Look for a second installment next month.



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!

Horicon, Wisconsin in the Civil War

A Town Answers the Call

When President Abraham Lincoln issued his first call for 75,000 volunteers in April 1861, the citizens of Horicon, Wisconsin responded with remarkable speed and conviction. Within days, local men were signing their names to enlistment papers, stepping forward to defend the Union in what many believed would be a short conflict. It would last four years and touch nearly every household in town.

Horicon, situated on the Rock River in Dodge County, was a community of several hundred residents in the 1860s — a working town of mills, craftsmen, and farmers. Yet from this modest population came nearly 90 documented soldiers, serving in infantry, artillery, and specialized units across both the Eastern and Western Theaters of the war.

The Horicon Guards — First to Go

Among the earliest from Horicon to answer the call was a company of men who would serve in the 1st Wisconsin Infantry Regiment. Company C of the 1st Wisconsin — known informally as the "Horicon Guards" — was organized in April 1861 under the command of Captain Orestes B. Twogood, a Horicon resident. The company mustered into federal service on April 27, 1861 at Camp Scott in Milwaukee, and was quickly moved east to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The Horicon Guards' place in the very first Wisconsin regiment was confirmed in the Horicon Gazette of April 24, 1861, which published the list of companies selected to compose the regiment: Governor's Guard of Madison, Madison Guard, Park City Greys of Kenosha, Horicon Guard of Horicon, Light Guard of Milwaukee, Montgomery Guard of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Rifles, Black Yager Rifles, Union Rifles, and Beloit City Guard. Seeing the name "Horicon Guard, Horicon" on that list — alongside companies from the state's largest cities — was a point of no small pride for the town.

The regiment's initial three-month service had it guarding crossings of the upper Potomac River under General Patterson's Army. The Horicon men participated in the advance on Martinsburg and the Battle of Falling Waters. The regiment — and the Horicon men in Company C — were mustered out on August 21–22, 1861, their three-month obligation fulfilled. Among those from Horicon in Company C were James C. Adams (First Lieutenant), Salmon E. Taylor (Ensign), and a dozen enlisted men including Thomas G. Boss, Edwin Austin, and George Chandler.

But the war was far from over. Just a week after the three-month muster out, orders came to reorganize the regiment for three-year service. Under Colonel John C. Starkweather, the 1st Wisconsin was reconstituted at Camp Scott and mustered back in on October 19, 1861. Most of the Horicon men, however, had already begun re-enlisting in other Wisconsin units.

The original roster of the Horicon Guards was published in the Beaver Dam Argus of May 3, 1861, and gives us the most complete picture of the company as it first formed. The officers were: Captain O.B. Twogood; First Lieutenant J.C. Adams; Second Lieutenant Charles H. Larrabee. The sergeants were S.W. Verbeck, J.W. Clark, H.W. Phelps, and H.A. Winter — the last being Hugh Abernathy Winter, brother of both Dr. Peter Winter and Captain Michael Winter of the steamboat M. Winter. The corporals were S.E. Tyler, George Clauson, W.W. Gilbert, and Thomas McNeil. Standard bearer was Guy S. Cobb; secretary, J.O. Pierce.

The privates numbered more than sixty men: W.F. Disher, G.C. Williams, Theodore West, T. Delaney, George Graves, John R. Deacon, Lewis Frederick, James Dilley, W.F. Glover, S. Purdy, L. Kennedy, A.W. Cole, N.E. Hoyt, M.S. Rice, C.M. Hyde, J.S. Walker, T.G. Goss, William Ward, C.F. Bower, J.H. Quick, Franklin Perry, John Garvin, Karl Knibel, James Stevens, Henry Welsh, Charles Munn, Henry Ihde, John Mendel, Thomas Sherron, Charles Wilson, Henry Dowd, Charles Burgess, John Gillespie, Andrew Nightingale, Peter Ingleheart, Reuel Dye, Robert Rennie, G.W.W. Tanner, John Powers, Nathan Frost, Wilhelm Zeiman, August Kruger, Allen Young, Charles Gorman, D.W. Cole, Ernest Seifert, Frederick Rex, Frederick Mark, C.J. Robinson, Julius Reichenstein, John Brogess, G.L. Haight, August Henze, Peter Van Slyck, William Lammond, John Ihde, Charles N. Allen, George Chandler, Louis Franke, W.W. Cannell, L.W. Graves, E.J. Babcock, Albert Horny, Ferdinand Roll, E.H. Benson, J.W. Frownfelter, and Nathan Wilcox. This roster of nearly ninety names represents Horicon's first and fullest answer to the call.

Moving Forward at Gainesville and Antietam

The project to build monuments to the Wisconsin troops who fought at Gainesville (August 28, 1862) and Antietam (September 17, 1862) has taken a few steps forward. As you may recall, Federal legislation (such as H.R. 7495, introduced in early 2026 by Congressman Scott Fitzgerald) has been proposed to authorize privately funded memorials recognizing the service and sacrifice of Wisconsin infantry regiments at Antietam and Manassas. To date, no such monuments exist.

The next step in the process is this. H.R. 7495 was scheduled to be considered at the September 16th Natural Resources Committee Meeting. A report on what occurred there will be published when we know more. Beverly Vaillancourt has been invited to talk for a couple minutes; she is going at her own expense. US Senator Ron Johnson said he will support a companion bill if H.R. 7495 gets through the subcommittee. US Representative Chairman Tom Tiffany is the Chairman.

The argument for the monuments being proposed is simple. More than a century ago, the Wisconsin Legislature recognized the importance of commemorating the service of the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiments by creating a commission to establish memorials at these battlefields. Although authorized in 1913, those memorials were never completed. We might finally be arriving at an opportunity to fulfill that long-overdue commitment and ensure that future generations recognize the courage and sacrifice of these Wisconsin soldiers.



The soldiers of these regiments endured extraordinary hardship during the campaigns of 1862, fighting at Gainesville, South Mountain, and Antietam in rapid succession. Their actions contributed directly to some of the Civil War's most consequential events, including the Union victory at Antietam that enabled President Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Yet today, Wisconsin's important contribution remains underrepresented at these historic battlefields.

Update: As of September 17, 2026 major movement has occurred in a positive direction. That cryptic statement will be explained in the October General Orders.

Artist Edwin Forbes made this sketch of the battle at Brawner's Farm from high ground, now called Battery Heights, near the Warrenton Turnpike. A Union battery is firing over the heads of Gibbon's brigade. The Confederate Stonewall Brigade is arrayed along the tree line (number 3 on the sketch). Morgan Collection of Civil War Drawings, Library of Congress

More from the Kenosha Civil War Museum

Soldier's Eye View of the Battle of the Mule Shoe - Spotsylvania

Friday, December 11 | 12pm – 1pm

Presented by: Mr. Steve Acker

Veterans of the Seven Days, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and more said this about the fight at Spotsylvania Court House: "All the men say that this has been the hardest fight since the war." "There is not a man in this brigade who will ever forget it (Spotsylvania)." This program will discuss the events leading up to May 12, 1864, fight then offer a soldier's-eye view of the twenty-two hours of intense fighting where some soldiers fired over two hundred rounds, and an oak tree was cut in half by musket fire. Maps, images, and first-person accounts from Union and Confederate soldiers will help us gain a deeper understanding of the Battle of the Mule Shoe.

MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE 2026-2027 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

September 10, 2026	James Marten
<i>The 6th Wisconsin and the Long Civil War</i>	
October 8, 2026	Joshua Lindamood
<i>April 6, 1865: Black Thursday</i>	
November 12, 2026	Robert Miller
<i>Angels of the Battlefield: Catholic Nuns in the Civil War</i>	
December 10, 2026	Stuart Dempsey
<i>(At the Bavarian Bierhaus)</i>	
TBA	
January 7, 2027	Dan Masters
<i>Badgers to the Front: Wisconsin at Stones River</i>	
February 11, 2027	Rob Girardi
<i>Gouverneur K. Warren in the Gettysburg Campaign</i>	
March 11, 2027	Doug Dammann
<i>Tarheel and the Yankee: Civil War Veterans Who Played in the First Intercollegiate Football Game</i>	
April 8, 2027	Dave Powell
<i>Who Won the Battle of Chickamunga Creek?</i>	
May 13, 2027	Dr. Lucas Wilder
TBA	
June 10, 2027	Kevin Donovan
<i>The Court Martial of Fitz John Porter: Fair or Fixed?</i>	

Speakers/topics remain subject to change.



Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. 2026 – 2027 Board of Directors

Name	Office/Position	Term Expires
Terry Arliskas	Program Chair	2028
Thomas Arliskas	Past President/Secretary	2028
Michael K. Benton	President	2029
Dale Bspalec	Second Vice President	2029
Roman Blenski	Quartermaster	2028
Mike Deeken	Member	2028
Paul A. Eilbes	Treasurer	2028
Tom Hesse	Past President	2029
Grant Johnson	Membership/Webmaster	2027
	Past President	
Bruce Klem	Past President	2027
Frank Risler	Member	2027
Justin Tolomeo	First Vice President	2029
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 October 8, 2026

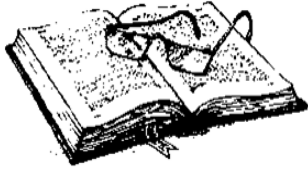
Mail your reservations by Thursday, October 1 to:

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
October 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

Lincoln's Pathfinder: John C. Fremont and the Violent Election of 1856

The Pathfinder and the President: John C. Fremont, Abraham Lincoln, and the Battle for Emancipation

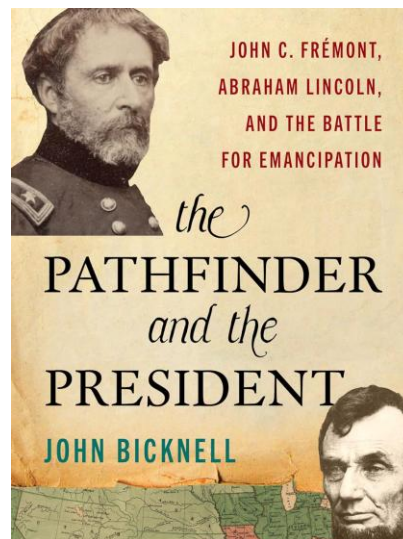
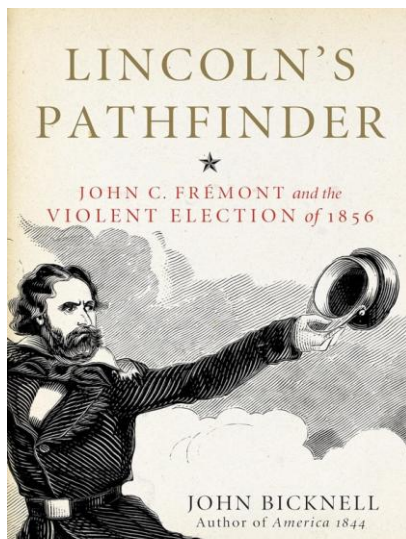
John Bicknell

"Lincoln's Pathfinder: John C. Fremont and the Violent Election of 1856" and "The Pathfinder and the President: John C. Fremont, Abraham Lincoln and the Battle for Emancipation" both by John Bicknell. I discovered Lincoln's Pathfinder in a bookstore in Springfield, Illinois. As an enthusiast of Fremont's early career, in his five exploratory surveys of the West, I was immediately drawn to the subject, as well as the cover. John Bicknell, author of "America: 1844, (another great book), is an excellent writer who can take a contentious and complicated subject such as the election of 1856 and not only make it interesting but compelling. The election of 1856 was the most violent peacetime election in American history. Amid all the violence, the campaign of the new Republican Party, headed by famed explorer John C. Frémont, offered a ray of hope that had never before been seen in the politics of the nation—a major party dedicated to limiting the spread of slavery. There was little doubt that the tempers in the country were coming to a head and that slavery was the driving force of what was to come.

Fremont said all the right things, and with his nationwide following as "The Pathfinder of the West," he was an attractive candidate, even though he was untested in politics. If anyone wonders how James Buchanan became president, this book shows how the nation stumbled into war with him as president. Bicknell does an excellent job providing context in areas that were very contentious in the campaigning for the 1856 election. This really is pre-Lincoln material, but the country's struggle over slavery is on almost every page. The author writes in an easy-to-understand style that gives readers a very clear picture of the tumultuous politics of our country.

John Bicknell followed this book up with his "The Pathfinder and the President," published last year. It is five years later. As we know, Fremont was not president but is now a general under Lincoln. Both are anti-slavery, but Fremont is more so and declares emancipation in Missouri. John Bicknell masterfully chronicles the volatile relationship between these two leaders as they grappled with slavery, military strategy, and the future of the nation. Readers learn how Fremont's unexpected declaration may have influenced Lincoln's own thoughts on emancipation and its timetable. He also examines the complex political and military dimensions of Civil War leadership, as well as the crucial part that the border states played in the war. He also gives readers fresh insights into the dynamics that affected wartime decision-making.

John Bicknell is an award-winning historian hailed by scholars as "powerful" engaging," and "distinctive." His latest book is perfect for anyone interested in Civil War history and politics, as well as allowing readers to better understand how the clash between Lincoln and Frémont helped determine the course of emancipation and the outcome of the war itself. Clearly, Fremont would not have been a very good president, nor was he an outstanding general, yet his role in this country as it struggled toward emancipation is undeniable.



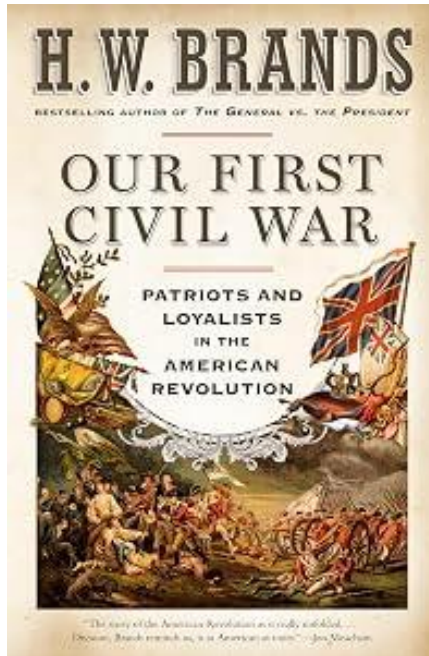
submitted by Robert Johnson



BETWEEN THE COVERS

Our First Civil War

H.W. Brands



This review is on a book that I read just recently for a book club meeting at the Civil War Museum in Kenosha. It's from our library, so not one I added to my collection. The book is by H. W. Brands who holds the Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History at the University of Texas at Austin. Its title is Our First Civil War, Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution. I found this to be an in-depth dive on the actions that led up to the American Revolution and a closer look at some of the main players in this event in our history.

As I read the book, I could see the perspective Mr. Brand was pointing to was that the "Revolution" seemed to have all the attributes of our Civil War, more so than just the fight of Americans fighting the British. I think each war was based more or less on one concept. The Revolution based on self-government and the Civil War over the concept of slavery.

It seemed to me that examples provided in this book provide the reader with a look that during the American Revolution this was as much a civil war as the Civil War of 1861-1865. The population was divided between Patriots and Loyalists much like Northerners vs Southerners in the later war. A difference did exist in the 1861 war in that there were neutrals that for the most part didn't exist in the so called "first civil war" Once the later war exposed more people in the north to what slavery really looked like the term neutral became less prominent and other than the folks in Dixie

became in favor of banning slavery. The Civil War became much more a war of brother against brother. This is very much the case of the Revolution... The Revolution pitted Patriots against Loyalists as well as the British.

I think that no better example was made than the split between Benjamin Franklin and his only son William, his steadfast companion through his many years in London as agent for the Province of Pennsylvania to the British government. Great insights are provided in this book into the personalities we are familiar with as icons on currency rather than human. The book gives a comprehensive context to events of an implausible revolt against the most powerful Empire in history to that time. It's a consequential Revolution whose outcome has reverberated through the centuries like no other. If you were a Loyalist you could suffer severely if captured by a Patriot or vice versa. The author provides numerous examples throughout the book as to how each side could be punished by the other. The end in this war resulted in many Loyalists having to leave America due to their support for the British King.

Like the Civil War of 1861 the Revolution grew into a full out war by small steps, many of which were taxes and laws imposed from afar by one ruler who denied self-governing. The war of 1861 also grew by small steps as in that case over the expansion of slavery into new areas and laws implemented to support slavery. This is from the perspective that the Revolution was more a Civil War than just a war between Americans and the British. Throughout the book Brands gives a very good overview of the Revolution, its major battles and major players in it. The author also includes stories of how some families were torn apart because of their loyalties to one side or the other. The main example that is focused on is the Benjamin Franklin and his son.

I liked this book because the author spent a lot of time with putting more information on the key players in this story, like Washington, Franklin, some of the British players, certain Loyalists, which I hadn't read about before. This was very interesting read and gave me a real insight into why these people did what they did and how they reacted to situations.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in history. Although it isn't strictly a Civil War book, I thought it helps to show how the Civil War developed from a string of incidents just like the American Revolution.

submitted by Bruce Klem



A Visit to the Milwaukee Soldiers Home



On a beautiful and sunny afternoon this past August, a group of CWRT members were treated to a personal tour of the Old Soldiers Home on the campus of Zablocki VA Medical Center. Our tour guides, Laura Rinaldi and Terry Arliskas, led the group past the buildings that make up the Soldiers Home while informing us about the history and architecture of this lesser-known Civil War site.



In early 1865 the women of the West Side Soldiers' Aid Society, with the support of Governor James T. Lewis and the Wisconsin Legislature, received a charter, initial appropriation, and permission to begin fundraising for a more suitable home for the disabled and destitute soldiers arriving in Milwaukee. With great success the women were able to purchase land and hire an architect. They decided to divert their assets to the Federal government to help establish the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Milwaukee. The Home became the Northwestern Branch of the three original sites in the United States. The Milwaukee campus was the first to be built expressly for the purpose of aiding soldiers. In the 1930s the home was placed under the newly established Veterans Administration, which in 1989 became the Department of Veterans Affairs. The campus was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.

As we viewed the buildings and learned about their development and function over the years, stories from "Out at the Soldiers' Home" by Elizabeth Corbett were shared. These first-hand accounts of the characters who lived here and the daily experiences, made the old buildings come alive.

During our tour of Old Main, we experienced a bit of excitement when the elevator stopped working. We were able to exit the car but had to walk down four flights of stairs. It was inspiring to see that Old Main has been restored and renovated to accommodate apartments for veterans in need. Now, nearly 160 years later, the Old Soldiers Home is still serving the veterans who have served our country. The tour was not only historically informative, but provided insight into the world of veterans after they left the battlefield. There are many lessons that we can still learn from studying the lives of these men and women.

The work is not done. Restoration of the Ward Theater and the Chapel continues. I'll end with words from Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address "Let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

submitted by Dale Bspalec

From Laura Rinaldi:

I have worked with the historic side of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (present day Milwaukee VA Medical Center) and Wood National Cemetery for many years.

We currently host a program in the afternoon of Memorial Day to present stories of individual military personnel from all military eras who are interred at Wood National Cemetery.

We can't tell those stories if we don't know what they are. We need your help:

- 1) Submit the story of a relative or friend who is buried at Wood National Cemetery. Submission should include the first and last name and any other identifying information to ensure the story is matched to the correct person. If the story pertains to a recent interment, please seek permission from the family prior to story submission.
- 2) If you are personally connected to or are interested in a particular military branch or specific unit, research a name to determine whether or not that person is interred at Wood National Cemetery. If confirmed, research the story and submit for consideration.

Questions may be directed to:

Laura Rinaldi laurasshf@gmail.com or 414-460-6554



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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.

