

Circular Memorandum #555

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April 2024

Announcing Our 581st Meeting

**"The Iron Dice of Battle: Albert Sidney Johnston
and the Civil War in the West"**

Will be Presented by Timothy Smith

DATE: Saturday, April 13

Location: Big Spring Country Club

COCKTAILS: 6:00 P.M.

DINNER (\$35.00): 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: 8:00 P.M.

Meet Our Speaker - Timothy B. Smith

We welcome back Timothy B. Smith this month. Tim has spoken to our Round Table on multiple occasions and was the tour guide on our 2012 field trip to Shiloh. Tim is a native of Mississippi and received his BA and Ma in History from Ole Miss and his Ph.D. from Mississippi State University, in 2001. He is a veteran of the National Park Service and currently teaches history at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In addition to numerous articles and essays, he is the author, editor, or co-editor of twenty books, including award winners *Champion Hill: Decisive Battle for Vicksburg* (2004), *Shiloh: Conquer or Perish* (2014), and *The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid Through Mississippi* (2018). He has recently published books on the May 19 and 22 Vicksburg assaults as well as the Vicksburg siege, and he just finished a new biography of Albert Sidney Johnston. He lives with his wife Kelly and children Mary Kate and Leah Grace in Adamsville, Tennessee.



His main area of interest and specialty, besides the Civil War, is in the history of Civil War battlefield preservation.

Tim has published a history of the first five military parks preserved during the 1890s entitled *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Establishment of America's First Five Civil War Military Parks*. This book came out with the University of Tennessee Press in 2008. Smith has also published an edited version, along with Dr. Gary D. Joiner of Louisiana State University-Shreveport, of a 1966 Ph.D. dissertation on the Battle of Shiloh: Shiloh and the Western Campaign of 1862.

"The Iron Dice of Battle: Albert Sidney Johnston and the Civil War in the West"

Killed in action at the bloody Battle of Shiloh, Confederate general Albert Sidney Johnston stands as the highest-ranking American military officer to die in combat. His unexpected demise had cascading negative consequences for the South's war effort, as his absence created a void in adequate leadership in the years that followed. In *The Iron Dice of Battle*, noted Civil War historian Timothy B. Smith reexamines Johnston's life and death, offering remarkable insights into this often-contradictory figure. As a commander, Johnston frequently faced larger and better-armed Union forces, dramatically shaping his battlefield decisions and convincing him that victory could only be attained by taking strategic risks while fighting. The final wager came while leading his army at Shiloh in April 1862. During a desperate gambit to turn the tide of battle, Johnston charged to the front of the Confederate line to direct his troops and fell mortally wounded after sustaining enemy fire. The first work to survey the general's career in detail in nearly sixty years, *The Iron Dice of Battle* builds on recent scholarship to provide a new and incisive assessment of Johnston's life, his Confederate command, and the effect his death had on the course of the Civil War in the West.

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Books, Books Books!

We will have Tim Smith's most recent book "The Iron Dice of Battle" for sale at the meeting with an amazing discount of **45%**!

Please Note the Price of the Buffet is now \$35!

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED!

If you do not make a reservation, you may not get fed!

The Round Table must give Big Spring an accurate count of reservations no later than the Wednesday before a Saturday Meeting, or the Thursday before a Sunday Meeting. Reservations can be made by **emailing Doug Krawczyk at rdklou1@gmail.com** or by calling Doug Krawczyk at 502-592-6864.

PLEASE NOTE: You will **not** be able to email Bryan Winslow as in the past. You must now email Doug Krawczyk or you can call Doug to make your reservation.

When making a reservation for more than yourself, please list the names of everyone for which you are making a reservation. If you are calling Doug, and get his voicemail, please spell your name so he can properly identify the reservation.

If you wish to join us for just the program, you must still make a reservation so we can assure you have space and a seat. If you are attending just the program, you can call Doug anytime up to 4:00PM the day of the Meeting.

Reminder for Table Reservations: Tables for parties of eight (8) can be reserved. When making a Table Reservation, please list the names of everyone in your party. That will ensure everyone in your party will be at the same table and enable us to manage our meeting space in a more efficient manner.

2024 Schedule

Saturday April 13	Tim Smith	"The Iron Dice of Battle: Albert Sidney Johnston and the War in the West"
Saturday May 11	Scott Hartwig	"Antietam: The Soldiers' Experience"
Friday September 13	Chris Mackowski	"TBA"
Friday October 11	William C. Davis	"TBA"
Saturday November 9	Brian Wills	"TBA"
Saturday December 7	Thomas Mackey	"Opposing Lincoln: Clement L. Vallandigham"

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Online Options Are Here!

Reservations, Payments, and Membership Renewals

Members of the Round Table now have new options for making dinner reservations, Bourbon & BBQ reservations, field trip reservations, and membership renewals. To use these new options, first go to our website, <https://louisvillecwrt.yolasite.com> by clicking on this link or by googling "Louisville Civil War Round Table" which will bring up a link to our website.

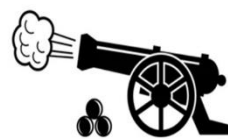
1. To make dinner reservations and pay for your meal, on the home page of the website, click on "**Meetings**" on the left-hand side of the page and then scroll down to the current meeting. Click on "**Dinner and Program Reservations**" and enter the required fields to make your reservation and pay with a credit card. You will receive a confirmation email. You can still make your reservations by calling Doug Krawczyk or emailing Doug.
2. To make membership renewals. On the home page under "**Membership**", then click on the appropriate level of membership and follow the instructions. Again, you can still pay your membership renewals by mail or by paying at the meetings.
3. You can now make reservations for the Spring field trip to the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, and you can pay the non-refundable \$200 deposit and the \$275 final payment using the website. Click on the "**Field Trip**" option and follow the instructions. You can also sign up for the field trip at the meetings.
4. You will now have the capability to pay for your meals at the meetings with a **credit card**. Of course, you will still be able to pay with a check or cash at the meetings as before.

Please note that **you can still make reservations and payments as you have always done** by using emails, phone calls, checks and cash. We are implementing these new options to give you another way and hopefully an easier way to do these things.

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THE 12th ANNUAL LOUISVILLE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
BOURBON & BBQ
FUNDRAISER



Sunday
Oct. 6th
2024!!...
Yuz' Guys!!!



Mark Your
Calendar...
U'AWL!!!

AN AFTERNOON of "EDUCATION", "FOOD", "CONVIVIALITY" and "LIBATION TASTING"
AT FARMINGTON HISTORIC PLANTATION
.....Details to Follow

The Emerging Civil War

Chris Mackowski, is the managing editor of the Emerging Civil War Series which serves as a public history-oriented platform for sharing original scholarship related to the American Civil War.

The primary audience is the general public, so scholarship is defined broadly: historical research, memory studies, travelogues, personal narratives, essays, book reviews, and photography. Journalistic-style coverage of current Civil War-related events and the Civil War in pop culture are also included. Furthermore, ECW encourages respectful discussion about that material. ECW does not publish fiction or poetry.

Our Mission

ECW seeks to encourage a diversity of perspectives in the scholarship it presents. We do that, in part, by identifying and spotlighting the next generation of Civil War historians and the fresh ideas they bring to the historical conversation.

As a collective, the individuals who comprise ECW are encouraged to share their own unique interests and approaches. The combined collection of material—and the respectful discussions that surround it—forward ECW's overall effort to promote a general awareness of the Civil War as America's defining event. This is a link to their website emergingcivilwar.com.. You can subscribe and receive daily emails that will contain a variety of articles by historians that will be of interest to you.

Albert Sidney Johnston's Wounding and Death - the Myth

The site of the wounding and death of Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston has been controversial since the time of the battle. According to our speaker, Tim Smith, the famous Johnston death tree is the source of one of the most enduring myths of Shiloh. According to tradition, the tree marks the spot where Johnston died after being wounded near the Peach Orchard. Senator Isham Harris had found Johnston slumping in his saddle near the Peach Orchard on the afternoon of April 6, 1862 and had attended to the wounded Johnston. He returned to the battlefield in 1896 and after examining the field, he pointed out the area near the now-famous tree where he had found the wounded general. The Park Commission placed a wooden board marker on the tree and the legend was born. After that the tree became the place connected to Johnston's death. The original wooden board marker had been placed in a ravine 50 yards south of the tree and said that Johnston had died there. The actual tree died in the 1960's and the rotting tree stump stood there until 2001 when park officials removed it. I can remember seeing the stump on my visits to Shiloh and I always thought it was the spot where Johnston was wounded.



Historian Wiley Sword led a one-man campaign to relocate the place Johnston was wounded insisting it was farther north, but his campaign was not accurate. The place he argued for would have been behind Union lines and we know that Johnston was wounded and died within Confederate battle lines. Isham Harris had accurately pointed out the place in the ravine where Johnston died on his 1896 visit. In all probability the tree under which Johnston was sitting is the tree that we see in the photograph. After much examination, Harris spoke of finding Johnston near the tree and later he spoke of "the large lone oak tree under which the General sat". Still, this is not the tree under which Johnston was wounded or died. He was wounded around 1:30 leading a charge of Bowen's brigade near the Peach Orchard. He was helped from his horse and had been shot in the back of his leg and the bullet had severed an artery. Unfortunately for Johnston no one who attended him had a tourniquet nor knew how to apply one to stop the bleeding and Johnston slowly bled to death near the famous tree and it is there that Harris found him. There is much speculation that it was actually a Confederate minie ball that wounded Johnston as his wound was in the back of his leg. Johnston's personal physician had been sent to attend wounded soldiers and was nowhere near where he could have aided the wounded general.

So as Tim Smith points out, the famous tree actually had little to do with either Johnston's wounding or death. The general was wounded elsewhere and died near another tree that Harris described as a "leaning tree in the ravine". If any tree should be commemorated, it is this tree but unfortunately it has been lost to posterity probably because it did not receive any of the famous wooden boards the park commission placed at key points on the battlefield.

The article above is based on Tim Smith's book "The Untold Story of Shiloh" pages 34-36. We are fortunate to have Tim come and speak to us again and we are looking forward to Tim being our guide when we go to Shiloh next April 2025.

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Wanted: Books for the Door Prize Drawing

If you have Civil War books you would like to donate for our door prize drawings, please bring them to one of our meetings and give them to Lowell Griffin.

Mike Movius Donates Books to the Round Table

Mike Movius, President of the Civil War Roundtable Congress, graciously donated 14 books from his library to the Louisville Civil War Round Table.

We will be using them for our respective dinner meeting door prize drawings.

Thanks again to Mike Movius and the Civil War Round Table Congress.

MARCH 2024 QUIZ:

1. Who was the senior Confederate general at the beginning of the Civil War?
That was General Samuel Cooper.
2. Through how many states did President Lincoln's funeral train travel before reaching its destination?
It traveled 1,654 miles through seven states.
3. During the Civil War how many times did Harpers Ferry change hands?
It changed hands 14 times until Union troops permanently gained control on July 8, 1864.
4. What were the main anesthetics used by doctors during the Civil War?
They were chloroform, ether, and whiskey.
5. Who made the official announcement to a joint session of Congress that Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin had been elected president and vice-president of the United States?
On February 13, 1861, Vice-President John C. Breckinridge made the official announcement. Breckinridge later became a Confederate general.

APRIL 2024 QUIZ:

1. Which of General Robert E. Lee's sons was captured at the Battle of Sailor's Creek on April 6, 1865?
2. According to the Terms of Surrender for the Army of Northern Virginia, General Ulysses S. Grant allowed Confederate officers to keep what?
3. The commander of the Union 5th Corps was one of the six "Surrender Commissioners" at Appomattox. Who was he?
4. Which state is believed to have sent more men to the Civil War than any other state?
5. What was the Bohemian Brigade?

(The Quiz is prepared by Harriette Weatherbee)

Attest:

John Davis
Adjutant

By Order of:

Julie Bartlett
President