

Circular Memorandum #535

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Announcing Our 562nd Meeting

April 2022

**"Confederate Failures in the Vicksburg Campaign:
"Could Vicksburg Have Been Saved?"**

Will be Presented by Dr. Timothy B. Smith

DATE: Saturday, April 9

Location: Big Spring Country Club

COCKTAILS: 6:00 P.M.

DINNER (\$30.00): 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 is now working on a new biography of Albert Sidney Johnston in addition to more Vicksburg volumes. He lives with his wife Kelly and children Mary Kate and Leah Grace in Adamsville.



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*.

"Confederate Failures in the Vicksburg Campaign: Could Vicksburg Have Been Saved?"

Confederate defeat at Vicksburg loomed large in the eventual defeat of the Confederacy itself. While arguments rage over the importance of the Eastern versus Western theaters of the war, and the importance of Gettysburg versus Vicksburg in particular, this program will instead look at the reasons for Confederate defeat in the Vicksburg Campaign. Geography played a major role, as did commanders and their personalities. Union stubbornness also loomed large. But the biggest issue was Confederate command failure of John C. Pemberton. This program will delve into his failures to examine the many reasons why Vicksburg fell and will determine to the best of our ability whether the city could have ever been held.

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Books! Books! Books!

We will have two of Tim Smith's books for sale at the Meeting, *The Union Assaults at Vicksburg: Grant Attacks Pemberton May 17 - 22 1863*, and *The Siege of Vicksburg: Climax of the Campaign to Open the Mississippi River May 23 - July 4, 1863*. Both of these books are hardbacks, and you will receive a 40% discount off the retail price.

Please Note the Price of the Buffet is now \$30!

Due to a price increase at Big Spring, the Price of the buffet is now \$30. The Round Table is paying a \$2 subsidy for the 2021-2022 season.

Reservations

RESERVATIONS: Please Note!!! If you email Bryan Winslow and **do not** receive a confirmation, you need to call Doug Krawczyk (502-592-6864) and make your reservation. Not receiving a confirmation via email means you do not have a reservation, and this is a problem for Big Spring as they need an accurate count of our reservations so they can prepare enough fried chicken for us!

RESERVATIONS: Call Doug Krawczyk (502-592-6864) to place your reservations. If you are making reservations for more than just yourself, please give the names of the others. If you leave your reservation on his answering machine, please spell out your name so he can correctly identify you. You can also make your reservation by e-mail by sending it to bryanw@macconstruction.com. If you do not receive a confirmation from Bryan, please call Doug and make your reservation. Please call or email **no later than Wednesday, April 6**, by noon. If you wish to join us just for the program, please call and make a reservation so that we can provide you with a chair. If you are only coming for the program, you can call Doug anytime up to 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Reminder for Table Reservations: We can reserve tables for parties of six only, and we need you to provide us with the names of all the people in your party when you make the reservation. This will enable us to manage our meeting space in a more efficient manner. Thank you.

2021 - 2022 Schedule

Saturday April 9	Tim Smith	"Confederate Failures in the Vicksburg Campaign: Could Vicksburg Have Been Saved?"
Saturday May 14	Thomas Flagel	"Abraham Lincoln: Divorce Lawyer"
Saturday September 10	Gary Gallagher	"If the Enemy is There, We Must Attack Him: Robert E. Lee and the 2nd Day of Gettysburg"
Saturday October 8	Gordon Rhea	"TBA"
Saturday November 5	Eric Wittenberg	"TBA"

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Webmaster Wanted

The Round Table is in need of a Webmaster. This person is responsible for updating and maintaining our website. The main duties of the Webmaster are to upload the newsletter and put announcements of upcoming events on the website. This is not a time-consuming task but does require skills in handling website maintenance. If you are interested, please contact our President, Art Boerner, either at a meeting or by emailing him at abob1407@yahoo.com. Our current Webmaster, Ken Draut will provide instruction when he hands off the duties to the new person. We want to thank Ken for his service. His expertise was very helpful in setting up our zoom meetings during the worst days of the pandemic and we do appreciate his contribution as Webmaster.

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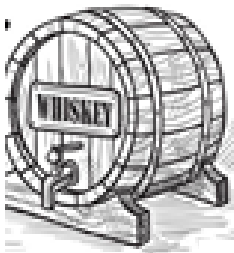
10th Annual Bourbon & BBQ June 26th!

We are happy to report that the 10th annual Bourbon & BBQ will be held on Sunday, June 26th! This year's event will be held at historic Farmington and will feature Dr. Curt Fields as General U.S. Grant and bourbon historian Mike Veach conducting our bourbon tasting. General Grant is going to set the record straight on his drinking habits giving us the real story about what went down during the Civil War. There will be BBQ and other delicious dishes, and we will have some great bourbons to sample. Reservations can be made by mailing your check to LCWRT, 9462 Brownsboro Rd. #142, Louisville, KY. 40241. The price for members is \$70.00 and for non-members is \$80.00. This includes a tour of Farmington, the bourbon tasting, and the BBQ and side dishes

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“Coffee,



Tea

or



Bourbon & BBQ”

**With
Gen. U.S. Grant**



Michael Veach

26th June 2022



Historic Farmington



LCWRT MEMBERS:

\$70.00*

NON-MEMBERS:

\$80.00*

**inclds. Historical & Tasting Presentations;
BBQ w. “fixins” + Farmington Home Tour*

LIMITED SEATING

*Reservations Required***

Phone: (502) 592-6864

Email: rdklou@gmail.com

***payment guarantees seating*

***non-refundable unless event is cancelled by LCWRT*



**3033 BARDSTOWN RD,
LOUISVILLE, KY 40205**

3:00 pm to 7:00 pm

MAIL CHECK TO:

LCWRT

9462 Brownsboro Rd.

#142

Louisville, KY. 40241

Credit cards NOT accepted

Rain, Flintlocks Doom Rebel Attack at Mill Springs

Posted on Feb. 17, 2022 by ECW Guest Post author Stuart W. Sanders; Future Speaker at Our Round Table

When the Battle of Mill Springs was fought near Somerset, Kentucky, on January 19, 1862, the Union troops routed the attacking Confederate army. Although the rebels outnumbered the federals, the southern assault was stifled by their use of flintlock muskets that failed to fire during a steady rain. In late 1861, the Confederates established a camp on the northern side of the Cumberland River at Beech Grove, Kentucky. Brigadier General George Crittenden arrived to take command and was astounded that the soldiers' backs had been placed against the river. Therefore, when Union troops led by Brigadier General George H. Thomas approached, Crittenden left his earthworks to strike Thomas's army.

After marching northward for ten miles, the rebels encountered pickets from the 1st Kentucky Union Cavalry. As musketry sputtered in the rain and fog, the cavalymen fell back to the 10th Indiana Infantry. The 19th Tennessee and 15th Mississippi infantry regiments struck the Hoosiers and Kentuckians near a fence line. After nearly an hour, the 4th Kentucky Union Infantry reinforced the federal left along the fence and fought the Mississippians and the 20th Tennessee. Later, more Confederate regiments entered the fight, but the federal line held firm.

While the Mississippians were armed with rifled muskets, most of the rebel regiments used outdated weaponry. One Union soldier said that the Confederates were equipped with "squirrel rifles, shot guns, smooth bore flint lock muskets, Mississippi rifles, and old flint lock horse pistols." These arms impeded the Confederate attack because many of the flintlocks failed to fire in the rain.

Crittenden recognized this deficiency. "A heavy rain occurred during the progress of the engagement," he wrote, "and in consequence a great many of the flint-lock muskets in the hands of my men became almost unserviceable." Despite the guns' ineffectiveness, the rebels' smoothbore muskets—which fired buck and ball rounds consisting of a round musket ball and several smaller pieces of buckshot—could be dangerous. One Union soldier remarked that "I do not see How any of us Escaped their Bullets For they Fell like Hail around us."

Frustration about the weapons' ineffectiveness was evident. A member of the 19th Tennessee "saw two or three of the boys break their guns over the fence, after several attempts to fire them." In the 20th Tennessee, some of the troops smashed their worthless muskets on trees. Instead of giving in to frustration, some soldiers employed aggressive tactics. Bailie Peyton, a young officer in the 20th Tennessee, reputedly told his colonel that "we can not use our flint-locks but can use our bayonets—if you order a charge." The colonel ordered the attack, which killed several members of the regiment, including Bailie Peyton.

The federal troops, who were mostly armed with Enfield rifles, mounted a stubborn defense. When Thomas arrived on the field with reinforcements, the Union commander ordered multiple regiments to charge the Confederate line. The rebels broke and retreated to their camp, scattering discarded weapons along the route. One correspondent wrote that the Confederates "strewed the ground" with equipment, which included "mostly flint-locks."

A southern surgeon admitted that the Rebels had been whipped. "He ascribes the defeat to the badness of their arms compared with ours," a Unionist correspondent wrote. "They had mostly flint-lock muskets that would not go off half the time, the day being rainy." Although many of the weapons did not fire, the Confederates had made a dogged attack. A federal soldier wrote that the "trees were flecked with bullets, underbrush cut away as with a scythe. Dead and wounded lay along the fence, on the one side the Blue on the other the Gray; enemy dead were everywhere scattered across the open field."

The discrepancy in casualties illustrates the differences in weaponry and the advantages of the federals' defensive position. At Mill Springs, nearly 5,500 Confederates attacked 4,000 Union soldiers. It was reported that the Union army lost 39 killed and 207 wounded. The southerners suffered 125 killed, 308 wounded, and 95 missing.

When Crittenden's army reached their camp, the Confederate commander ordered his men to escape across the Cumberland River. Most of the Rebel troops rode across on the steamboat *Noble Ellis*, which towed two smaller barges.

Although the Federals' Enfield rifles outmatched the Confederate weaponry at Mill Springs, it was the rain that ultimately doomed the rebel attack. Had the weather been clear, the Union army would have sustained greater casualties. According to the regimental historian of the 20th Tennessee, if the weather had "been fair, or had we been armed with percussion [cap] guns, the result of that battle would have been far different. It rained nearly all the time and our 'Flint Locks' would not fire. Our men lost much time in drawing loads from their guns, the powder having gotten wet in the rain. Many of them never fired a dozen shots."

Thanks to the Rebels' antiquated arms, the federal victory at Mill Springs was, according to one Union soldier, "the first blow which breaks the back of this rebellion."

Stuart W. Sanders is the author of four books, including "The Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky."

MARCH 2022 QUIZ:

1. What was the original name of the Army of Northern Virginia?
It was originally the Confederate Army of the Potomac and renamed on March 14, 1862.
2. What was the name of the bag Civil War soldiers used to carry their personal items and food in?
It was a haversack.
3. Who was the famous authoress who called Robert E. Lee a "weak man"?
In a book published in 1937, Gertrude Stein said that she felt and was certain that Lee knew that the South could not win the war. She called him a "weak man" because she said he did not have the courage to say it and instead acted like a man leading a country in defeat. She also called the Civil War one of the world's "interesting" wars.
4. Who was supposed to have said about President Lincoln, "Now he belongs to the ages"?
That has been attributed to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton.
5. Which members of the U.S. Congress' Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War had previous military experience or military education?
It is believed that none of them had military experience nor education.

APRIL 2022 QUIZ:

1. What date did Richmond, Virginia fall to the Union Army?
2. When Generals R. E. Lee and U. S. Grant met for the second time on April 10, 1865, where did they meet?
3. Where is the largest Civil War cemetery?
4. When General Lee departed the McLean House after the surrender meeting, a Pennsylvania regimental band waiting outside struck up a tune. What song did they play?
5. Which Union general was NOT present at the surrender meeting on April 9, 1865?

The Quiz is prepared by Harriette Weatherbee

Attest:

**John Davis
Adjutant**

By Order of:

**Art Boerner
President**