



Circular Memorandum #502

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December 2018

Announcing Our 533rd Meeting

"The Trials and Tribulations of the Corpse of Abraham Lincoln"

Will be Presented by Clay Stucky

DATE: Saturday, December 8

Location: Big Spring Country Club

COCKTAILS: 6:00 P.M.

DINNER (\$28.00): 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: 8:00 P.M.

Meet Our Speaker - Clay Stuckey

We are please to have Round Table member Clay Stuckey present our program at the December meeting. Clay is a graduate of Indiana University where he did his undergraduate work in history. He graduated from Indiana University School of Dentistry in 1975. He is now retired and lives in Bedford, Indiana. Clay has a life-long avocation of reading and writing about history. His articles have appeared in the *Lincoln Herald*, the *Indiana Magazine of History*, *Indiana Folklore and Oral History*, and the *Hoosier Line* as well as other publications. The Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis has over fifteen of Clay's manuscripts he has written on regional history.

The Trials and Tribulations of the Corpse of Abraham Lincoln

The long and descriptive title of my talk is "The Trials and Tribulations of the Corpse of Abraham Lincoln: How Nefarious Tomb Robbers and Incompetent Tomb Builders did not Allow him to Rest in Peace." In the talk I describe the bizarre history of Lincoln's body and the attempt to kidnap it, the about fifteen times it has been moved since its burial in Springfield, and the five times the coffin has been opened since the open casket funeral at Springfield. I explain the complete dismantling and rebuilding of the tomb at Springfield that has occurred TWICE!

Reservations

RESERVATIONS: Please Note!!! If you email Bryan Winslow and **do not** receive a confirmation, you need to call Doug Krawczyk (502-425-0325) 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 (502-425-0325) 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, December 5**, 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 **eight** 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.

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Please Renew Your Membership

If you have not renewed your membership, please do so as soon as possible. If you decide to become a Patron member, any amount you give above the basic or family membership fee is tax-deductible since the Round Table has tax-exempt status as a 501 (c) (3) organization! **Note: Please send your renewal check made out to LCWRT directly to Louisville Civil War Round Table, 9462 Brownsboro Road - #142, Louisville, Ky., 40241.**

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Welcome New Members!

Please extend the hand of fellowship to the following new members who have joined the Round Table recently:

**Stephen Wayne Sebree, Larry Adams,
Kenn and Debbi Brann, Rylee Cobb,
Kevin Bratcher, Todd Geddes**

**And returning member:
Dr. Alan Akridge**

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2019 Spring Field Trip: Jackson's Valley Campaign of 1862

Next year's field trip will be to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia where we will study the famous 1862 Valley Campaign of Stonewall Jackson. The dates for the trip are April 24-28, 2019 and our guide will be Will Greene. Will is one of the best guides we have ever had, and we are looking forward to having him interpret Stonewall Jackson's epic valley campaign of 1862. We will be headquartered in Harrisonburg from which we will traverse up and down the Valley visiting all the major sites of the campaign. It has been 25 years since the Round Table took a field trip to study this important operation. There will be more information on the trip and readings in the coming issues of the Adjutant's Call. We expect this trip to sell out, so you will want to make your reservations early. We are now taking signups and collecting the **\$200 non-refundable deposits**. You can sign-up by emailing John Davis at johnd.davis@twc.com and mailing your \$200 non-refundable deposit check made out to LCWRT directly to Louisville Civil War Round Table, 9462 Brownsboro Road - #142, Louisville, Ky., 40241. You can also signup at the meetings.

The \$200 Non-refundable Deposit Explained

To guarantee your reservation for the April 2019 Field Trip, you will need to make a \$200 non-refundable deposit. We expect this trip to be a sellout. Please understand that once you make this payment it is **non-refundable** for any reason after the January 19th meeting. If you need to cancel after January 19, only the amount of the trip fee above \$200 will be refunded. This policy is necessary because we must make several payments in February and March for the bus, insurance, and other items in advance of the trip. We also need a guaranteed count on the number of people going so we can keep the price of the trip as low as possible.

Jackson's Valley Campaign of 1862 Suggested Reading

If you are planning on going on the Valley Campaign field trip, I strongly urge you to begin your reading now. There are several good books on the 1862 Valley Campaign. Here is a list of some of the best.

A good place to start is Robert Tanner's "**Stonewall in the Valley**" (**revised edition**) which is a detailed study of the entire campaign. As the title implies, it is written from the Southern army's point of view, but it is a very objective work. Thoroughly researched and well written, if you can read only one book on the Valley Campaign, you can't go wrong with this one.

Gary Ecelbarger has written two books on the 1862 Shenandoah campaign. The first "**We Are in For It!: The First Battle of Kernstown**" is a thorough analysis and study of Stonewall Jackson's first independent battle and his only defeat. Exhaustively researched and accompanied by great maps this is the definitive study of this battle and we will visit it on our trip.

Ecelbarger's second book on the Valley campaign is "**Three Days in the Shenandoah: Stonewall Jackson at Front Royal and Winchester**". This study is an attempt to revise the traditional interpretations of this phase of the campaign. He offers a new view regarding Lincoln's military meddling as commander in chief and gives Jeff Davis more credit than previous writers. This is a very engaging and thought-provoking book.

Peter Cozzens's "**Shenandoah 1862**" presents the campaign from both the Northern and Southern point of view and is also a comprehensive study of the entire valley campaign. Cozzens offers new interpretations of the campaign and the reasons for Stonewall Jackson's success.

2018 - 2019 Schedule

Saturday December 8	Clay Stuckey	"The Trials and Tribulations of the Corpse of Abraham Lincoln"
Saturday January 19	Brian Steele Wills	"Inglorious Passages"
Saturday February 9	Michael Murphy	"The Kimberlins Go to War"
Saturday March 9	Stephen Davis	"Earning His Spurs: General John B. Hood in 1864"
Saturday April 13	Chris Mackowski	"The Mine Run Campaign"
Saturday May 11	TBA	"TBA"

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A Conversation with Brian Steel Wills about *Inglorious Passages* (part one)

The following interview of Brian Steel Wills by Chris Mackowski is used with their permission.

Brian Steel Wills will be speaking on *Inglorious Passages* at the January meeting.

Posted on November 15, 2018 by Chris Mackowski on the Emerging Civil War Blog: emergingcivilwar.com

When I first read Brian Steel Wills' book *Inglorious Passages: Noncombat Deaths in the American Civil War*, I had to let it sit with me for a bit. By that, I mean that I'd had such a powerful reading experience that I needed time to process it, to let it sink in. [Reviewing it for LSU's Civil War Book Review](#), I called the effect "staggering." "He catalogues such a multitude of deaths, in so many ways, that one cannot help but feel their collective weight," I wrote.

Inglorious Passages received the Harwell Award at the Atlanta Civil War Roundtable for the best book of 2017, and it was a finalist for the 2017 Emerging Civil War Book Award.

I had the opportunity not too long ago to talk with Wills about his book. He is the director of the [Center for the Study of the Civil War Era](#) at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. Our conversation has been lightly edited for clarity.

Brian Steel Wills: I was mostly trying to shine a light on these stories of individuals that went to war and didn't come home and try to understand the full element of what those stories involved.

I guess I think back on a Georgia recruit who spelling was challenged, but he would talk about the "vakants" in the ranks, and he said that those folks would not be able to rejoin the circle of friends—and he couldn't spell "circle" either—or be around the fireside. Those places would never be filled. That made me think that those individuals don't need to be forgotten.

Chris Mackowski: The book contains so many stories. It was just incredible how many accounts you had in there. How did you pull together that much information?

BSW: One of the things you do through the years—and age is probably the biggest part of it because I've been around for a long time—is you accumulate letters and diaries and stories. I've written a number of books that have stories that I could connect this volume to. The closest and easiest one was the second book I wrote, called *The War Hits Home*, and several stories were found in it that talked about some of the incidents where things happened, like friendly fire or unfriendly fire, or just accidents like a tree falling on one of the men. I thought how much this sort of thing seems to have occurred, and I had it in my brain the notion that I could find every one that existed.

Of course, once you get more and more into it, and see just how pervasive the incidents were, whether they were disease—which I think we all understood that—but just the number of accidents and any number of things that occurred. I just wanted something to bring some kind of notice or attention to the people that went off to serve their country in the armed forces and didn't come home, but they didn't come home for reasons they certainly couldn't have anticipated—not because they were killed in combat or in a charge. Yet the chair is just as empty; the table will no longer be filled. I felt like those individuals deserved to have their stories told as much as possible.

CM: People understood when they enlisted that there was a risk that they might get shot in battle, but nobody expects to not come home because they had some accident befall them.

BSW: I think again, we all know that anything can happen when you travel, especially back then. If you think about it, the numbers of people moving from point to point were massive. Train travel was dangerous. Any kind of movement across water might result in accident; it certainly wasn't unheard of to have boiler explosions and ship wrecks.

And I tried to not only focus on the soldiers, but on the civilians as well. When you start putting individuals in facilities, whether it be factories or so-called "laboratories," there are going to be casualties there, as well.

Even the precision of calling them "casualties" is problematic. Some of these people aren't going to die and some are just maimed, but so many of them do die. So many people think of casualties and death as synonymous, but there is "killed," "wounded," "missing," and all kinds of things that are casualties. When you think about the people who died, those deaths came from so many different sources, and so many of them were not anticipated, and the dangers weren't appreciated.

CM: As I read the book and got through more of these accounts, there was a gravity to the text. I think you did a great job at not sentimentalizing or romanticizing or anything like that—you just let the incidents speak for themselves.

BSW: Well, I tried to do that because so many of these people have such a depth of anguish from the loss of people that they had served with or had gone to war with. And of course we know that so many of these units come from communities where they knew each other, sometimes quite closely before the war took place. I don't know how many times I read the phrase, "He was my best friend," or, "He was the best soldier of the unit," or whatever. And to be struck down with an illness or have some untoward fatal accident occur—the poignancy of these things spoke for itself. I didn't have to do too much to embellish that because it speaks for itself.

So many things were tragic, and yet some of the things were also foolish. They're human, so these incidents don't cover just one aspect of the human condition; they cover almost every aspect of the human condition.

CM: I guess there were a couple of incidents that seemed like the Civil War version of *Jackass*, where it was no wonder something happened to them.

BSW: I always think of the notion of "thinning the herd," or "news of the weird," where we hear that something occurred with somebody's gun through their own miscalculations or mistakes. We like to think of people in history as separate from all of that, but they were people, and they made foolish decisions and sometimes didn't think things through all the way.

I guess the one that was sort of morbidly funny was this diary that had a very short notice about a person on the Mississippi River that was on a mortar boat and was carrying an open keg of powder on his shoulder, but also happened to be smoking a cigar at the same time. How it didn't dawn on him that that might not be a good choice to make, I don't know. The journal's author said that the mortar men were always so careless. Of course, you never know what the actual circumstances were, whether he had a stray spark or a mischievous friend that thought, "Well I'll see what happens and call him," and when he turned, the cigar came into contact with the powder. You never know some of those things in detail, but your imagination can take you where you want to go. But the mere fact that it did happen was certainly in the diary of this individual and recorded as such.

I guess one of the more interesting comments was from a general talking about soldiers who ended up getting killed or had comrades killed when they were pouring powder into shells. He said he "never knew of the original idiot who was actually doing it." There were, of course, as you read in the book, many "original idiots" who got

killed, too, but his point was that so often people do absurd things, and they aren't necessarily the ones who pay the price, like bayonet practice that goes a little too far, a boxing match that goes awry, a person killed in a house of ill repute, any number of things. If you go down the list from murder to mayhem to accidents, it goes down the gambit. So many of these people were unfortunate, unlucky, or foolish. At least I tried to get in that book.

I didn't try and go back and deal with every person's service record or determine whether it actually occurred, but I did want to have these letters and diaries and newspaper accounts speak for themselves. In some cases, I had multiple sources that could say whether the details were more or less accurate as to what seems to have happened. But someone else can explore some of the individual accounts to see if it offers an accurate depiction.

NOVEMBER 2018 QUIZ:

1. How long did the siege of Petersburg, Virginia last?
It lasted almost 10 months from June 9, 1864 -- April 2, 1865.
2. At what battle did Union General U. S. Grant break Confederate General R. E. Lee's line to capture Petersburg?
That would be the April 1, 1865 Battle of Five Forks, Virginia.
3. What general was known as Beast?
That was Union General Benjamin Butler.
4. What was General Grant's first major battle against General Lee?
It was the Battle of the Wilderness fought on May 5-7, 1864.
5. What Confederate general's name was supposedly on the lips of both Generals Lee and Jackson as they lay dying?
Supposedly both generals, on their deathbeds, called out to Confederate General Ambrose Powell (A.P.) Hill.

DECEMBER 2018 QUIZ:

1. Why, in 1864, was President Lincoln insisting that as many soldiers as possible be given leave to return home?
2. How old was President Lincoln's assassin at the time of the assassination?
3. Who was the Confederate commander at the December 15-16, 1864, Battle of Nashville?
4. What was the name of Jefferson Davis' Mississippi plantation?
5. What Kentucky politician had one son a Confederate general and one son a Union general?

(The Quiz is prepared by Harriette Weatherbee)

Attest:

**John Davis
Adjutant**

By Order of:

**Bryan Winslow
President**