

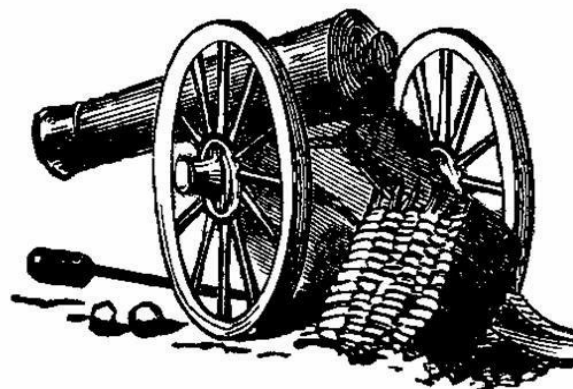
Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable, Inc. 501 (C) (3) non profit corporation
Founded 1978

The Grapeshot

Newsletter

November

2020



This month's guest presenter:

Dr. Donald S. Frazier

Please help us welcome Dr. Frazier, the Director of the Texas Center at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. He will be speaking on Blood and Treasure: The Civil War in the Southwest.

Presented through Zoom

November 17, 2020

6 pm

About Our Speaker

On November 17 at 6pm, Dr. Donald S. Frazier will be speaking on *Blood & Treasure: The Civil War in the Southwest*. Dr. Frazier is Director of The Texas Center at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. Frazier is also the award-winning author of five books on the Civil War including *Blood and Treasure*, *Cottonclads*, *Fire in the Cane Field*, *Thunder Across the Swamp*, and *Blood on the Bayou*. His latest work, *Tempest Over Texas*, was released in 2020.

In addition to his teaching duties, Frazier has been very involved in work on Civil War and frontier heritage trails in Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana, and work on historical projects in Europe and Mexico. He helped design *Frontier Texas!*, a museum-attraction in Abilene, Texas. He is the writer and director for the video *Our Home, Our Rights: Texas and Texans in the Civil War*, a winner of the Mitchell Wilder Award for Excellence in Publications and Media Design from the Texas Association of Museums and a Director-Scholar on the board of the Texas Historical Foundation.

SCOTTSDALE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE SPEAKERS 2020-21

All meetings at 6PM on dates below and via Zoom until further notice.

November 17 - Donald Frazier, “Blood & Treasure: The Civil War in the Southwest”

December 8 - Curt Fields as “US Grant”

Jan 19 - Steven Ramold, “Obstinate Heroism: Confederate Surrenders After Appomattox”

Feb 16 - A Wilson Greene, “Crossing the James and the Attack on Petersburg”

March 16 - Chris DeRose, “The Presidents’ War”

April 20 - Frank O’Reilly, “Malvern Hill”

May 11 - Brian Wills, “Inglorious Passages: Noncombat Deaths In The Civil War”

***From Around the Campfire...A Message from Our
President John Bamberl***



Leaving behind an insurmountable legend in the history and preservation community, Ed Bearss passed away on September 15, 2020 surrounded by family , at the age of 97. Although a prolific author, Bearss was particularly dedicated to the importance in preserving battlefields so our children and grandchildren could walk the hallowed grounds and feel empathy with the men and women who fought and died there.

Ed was a recipient of numerous awards in the field of history and preservation: the T. Harry Williams Award; the Bruce Catton Award; the Alvin Calman Award; the Bell I. Wiley Award and others. He was chosen man of the Year at Vicksburg in 1963. He received the Harry S. Truman Award for Meritorious Service in the field of Civil War History. In 1983, he won the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award, the highest award given by the department.

Ed Bearss is a truly American Icon who will be deeply missed. He was a member of our Round Table for 15 years.

Officers, Staff, and Meetings

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MEETINGS

Zoom Meetings scheduled the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6 PM by email invitation

September thru May

\$35 Annual Dues (individual)

\$45 Annual Dues (family)

EVERYONE WELCOME

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Trivia Questions

1. What country was a “secret” ally of the Union during the Civil War?
2. What was the nickname given to the water route opened to deliver badly needed rations to Grant’s troops holed up in Chattanooga in 1863?

Scottsdale Civil War Round Table

Membership

Please Join Us!

Your membership enables SCWRT to help with battlefield preservation and attract the best Civil War experts from around the country as keynote speakers at our meetings, September thru May! Please fill out this form and return it with your check payable to Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. Mail to this address:

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*Our monthly newsletter "The Grapeshot" will be emailed to you.

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Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

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ALTERNATE HISTORY AND THE CIVIL WAR

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In 1949 or 1951 (accounts vary), a young Cuban law student traveled to New York to try out as a pitcher with the Giants. He didn't have the "right stuff" and was rejected. He went back to Cuba and his resentment against professional baseball and the United States festered and grew.

That young pitching prospect was Fidel Castro. People have speculated ever since what might have happened if Castro had become a professional baseball player: No Cuban Revolution? No Bay of Pigs? Perhaps JFK wouldn't have been assassinated?

It's an intriguing story, but it's totally false. It's merely another urban legend dreamed up and perpetuated by anonymous purveyors of retro "fake news."

But the story does contain one germ of truth: Whatever name you give it – alternate history, conditional history, contingent history or counterfactual history – people love speculating about the "what ifs" from the past. And writing it is a literary genre that started as early as Roman times.

Not surprisingly, the American Civil War has been a popular subject for alternate history speculations. Written in 1900, *Hallie Marshall: A True Daughter of the South* by Frank Williams, is the earliest known Civil War alternate history. *If the South Had Been Allowed to Go* by Ernest Crosby followed in 1903.

Fast forward to 1931, when Scribner's Magazine published a series of three articles under the heading "If It Had Happened Otherwise." Two of the three dealt with the Civil War: "If Lee had NOT Won the Battle of Gettysburg" by Winston Churchill (yes, that Winston Churchill) and "If Booth had Missed Lincoln" by Milton Waldman. Inspired by these articles, James Thurber added a humorous take on alternate history with "If Grant Had Been Drinking at Appomattox," in which a hung-over and very confused U.S. Grant surrenders to R.E Lee!

The Civil War centennial in the 1960s gave a new impetus to alternate history fiction. One of the most successful contributions was MacKinlay Cantor's 1960 article for Look Magazine entitled "If the South Had Won the Civil War." The article was such a success that Cantor published it as a book in 1961.

Starting in the 50s, alternate history began to change with the literary tastes of the times. Alternate historical themes came to be influenced by fantasy, science fiction, time-travel and other counterfactual literary devices. Civil War alternate history can now be found in many genres, including film, television, comics and even video games.

As one might expect, the quality of some of the Civil War alternate history fiction varies, relying to a large degree on the reader's willingness to buy into the authors' sometimes bizarre premises. Some examples are merely exploitive and embarrassing, such as Seth Graham-Smith's book and film *Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter*, which recasts the conflict as a war on vampires who feed on slaves. Harry Turtledove, an otherwise seriously inventive writer of fantasy historical fiction, went completely off the rails with *The Guns of the South*, in which a South African white supremacist group from 2014 travels back in time and supplies the Confederate armies with AK-47s.

Probably the most ambitious counterfactual history project is Turtledove's 11-volume "Southern Victory Series," aka *Timeline-191* (after R.E. Lee's notorious Special Orders No. 191). Turtledove's volumes follow a triumphant and independent South up to the close of World War II in 1945.

Another noteworthy contribution is Newt Gingrich, William R. Forstchen and Albert S. Hanser's trilogy *Gettysburg*, *Grant Comes East* and *Never Call Retreat*. Forstchen is an academic military historian, Hanser is the author and co-author of several historical novels and Gingrich, in addition to his political credentials, holds a Ph.D. in history. The novels lay out a compelling scenario of what might have happened post-Gettysburg and contain a wealth of genuine historical details about how the armies marched and fought.

Even professional historians, the very folks we count on to tell us "what really happened" instead of what "might have happened," occasionally loosen up and play the speculation game. For the 10th anniversary edition of *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, the editors asked several prominent historians this question: What do you consider the most important might-have-beens in military history? The only limitation the editors placed on the answers is that they be "plausible" – no stealth bombers for Napoleon or AK-47s for R.E. Lee. The historians contributed essays on critical events ranging from biblical times to the Second World War. The essays were published as a book in 2006 under the title *The Collected What If: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*.

Some noted Civil War historians and novelists contributed essays to the collection. Pulitzer Prize winning historian James M. McPherson wrote "If the Lost Order Hadn't Been Lost: Robert E. Lee Humbles the Union, 1862." Stephen W. Sears lays out five alternate scenarios in his essay, ranging from how the North could have won the First Battle of Bull Run to how George McClellan could have ended the war with a Union victory after his election as the 17th president. Tom Wicker, The New York Times columnist and author of several historical novels, recounts how R.E. Lee prevented an "American Vietnam" in 1865 by refusing the suggestion offered by some of his officers that the Confederate armies head for the hills and wage guerilla warfare, a theme expanded upon by Jay Winik in his 2001 book *April 1865: The Month That Saved America*.

The eminent British historian E.H. Carr once wrote that looking at history's "what ifs" has a genuine value that goes beyond the "idle parlor game." They can be a tool to enhance our understanding of history, to make it come alive. They can reveal, sometimes in startling detail, the essential stakes of a confrontation, as well as its potentially abiding consequences.

If you're interested in exploring some of the alternate history that's been written about the war and its times, a good place to start is the Wikipedia entry, "American Civil War Alternate Histories." Most of the major works in all genres are listed there.

Dick Cox is a SCWRT board member and chair of the Roundtable's History Committee.

Trivia Answers

1. Russia. Tsar Nicholas II, who had emancipated the serfs in 1861, was very friendly to the Lincoln Administration. He dispatched two naval squadrons, one to New York and the other to San Francisco, to aid the Union if Britain or France intervened on the side of the Confederacy.
2. The Cracker Line.