

The Grapeshot

Newsletter

December 2023

This month's presenter:

Cory Pfarr



**The Scottsdale Civil War
Roundtable welcomes**

Cory Pfarr

as he presents:

***McLaws and
Longstreet
At Gettysburg***



Scottsdale Civic Center
Library Copper
Auditorium

December 12, 2023

6:00 pm

Doors open at 5:15 pm for
social hour, meet the
speaker, book sale, and
Civil War Video

Join the meeting on YouTube

<https://youtube.com/live/aej2jY1HBDA?feature=share>

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. Inc.

501 (c) (3) non profit Corporation , Founded 1978

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About Our Speaker

Cory Pfarr



The Scottsdale Civil War Round Table is proud to host noted historian Cory Pfarr. He is the author of the award winning “Longstreet at Gettysburg: A Critical Reassessment” and “Righting the Longstreet Record: Six Matters of Controversy and Confusion.” He has also written articles for many of the popular Civil War periodicals as well as appearing on C-SPAN American History TV.

Pfarr’s lecture, “My Own Movement and On My Own Responsibility: The Saga of Lafayette McLaws’ Commentary on Longstreet at Gettysburg,” will examine the role of General James Longstreet and his generalship at Gettysburg. After the war, McLaws evaluated Longstreet’s performance at Gettysburg and, despite his contentious relationship with him, put forward an unbiased, objective appraisal of Longstreet’s role in the battle of Gettysburg.

Topic: Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable,
December 12, 2023 Time: 6:00 PM Arizona

Join the meeting on YouTube

<https://youtube.com/live/aej2jY1HBDA?feature=share>

Scottsdale Civil War Round Table Speakers & Programs September 2023-May 2024

December 12 Cory M. Pfarr **“McLaws and Longstreet at Gettysburg”**

January 16 A. Wilson Greene **“Leaders and Leadership at Petersburg”
(2nd Annual Celebration of the Life of Ed Bearss)**

February 20 Peter Carmichael had to cancel his appearance. We will announce the new February speaker as soon as they are confirmed.

March 19 Steven Cowie **“When Hell Came to Sharpsburg: The Battle of Antietam and Its Impact on the Civilians”**

April 16 Eric Buckland **“Mosby’s Rangers”**

May 21 Mark Bielski **“A Mortal Blow to the Confederacy: The Fall of New Orleans, 1862”**

Beginning September 2023, meeting times will change to 6:00 pm.

Doors open at 5:15 pm for social hour, meet the speaker,

book sale, and Civil War Video

Letter from our President

Mark Stoler



The Roundtable Board has set a membership goal and timetable. Over the next four seasons, ending in 2026-27, Our goal is to reach 400 members. We are calling it “**400 in 4**”. It’s important to reach this goal in order to maintain our organizational vitality,

have the funds needed to bring our speakers to Scottsdale, and to continue to support battle-field preservation and Civil War memory.

To do this we are expanding our outreach efforts across our target area which, along with Scottsdale, includes Phoenix, Paradise Valley, Cave Creek, and the cities of the East Valley. On February 21 we will be participating for the first time in the Scottsdale Senior Expo, held at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, and we will be looking for other events at which the Roundtable can have a presence and connect with potential members.

If you identify any opportunities within our target area please let us know, or if you are attending an event where there is an opportunity to let people know about the Roundtable we can provide you with rack cards with our schedule.

We are also seeking to expand the media outlets for our press releases. If you have an ideas or media connections please let us know.

For those of you who missed our September and November speakers, you can now watch their presentations on our YouTube Channel which you can find here <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfxW2cvzCbGoKebHKPZsq5A>

In last month’s Grapeshot we asked for member recommendations about tour guides, accommodations, or other advice about visiting specific battlefields which we can share in the Grapeshot. This issue contains our first member submission. These don’t have to be articles, a couple of sentences would do, and if you have photos you’d like to share we can include those. The same goes for book recommendations - let us know if you’ve read something recently that you’d like to recommend to members and we’ll include that in the Grapeshot.

Please drop a note to me at stolerscwrt@gmail.com on any of the topics mentioned here or if you have any suggestions or comments about the Roundtable. Look forward to hearing from you.

Civil War Site Visit Reports

Many Roundtable members visit Civil War sites and we welcome reports including photos and recommendations on guides, restaurants, lodging, and any other aspects of your tours.

*Roundtable member **Derrick Fiedler** kindly shared some beautiful photos and memories of his recent trip to the Washington, D.C. area.*

I was able to spend a morning at Antietam Battlefield. It was a beautiful autumn morning. I highly recommend watching the brief documentary and attending the ranger talk. I also recommend the guidebook by Jay Luvaas, "Guide to the Battle of Antietam", which uses abundant quotes from primary sources (dispatches, orders, telegrams, etc.). I took the Cornfield Trail around the north end to the West Woods Trail, then down to the Sunken Road. I then drove down to the Burnside Bridge. One of my favorite battlefield visits so far.



Maryland Monument at Antietam National Battlefield



Right: Dunker Church at Antietam National Battlefield



Left: Burnside Bridge at Antietam National Battlefield

2023-24 Roundtable Officers, Board, & Committees

President: Mark Stoler (203)645-1387; stolerscwrt@gmail.com)
Vice President: Richard Cox
Treasurer: Bruce Washburn
Secretary: Hal Bliss

(All Officers serve until 5/31/2025)

Board Members

Until 5/31/2024

Tom Merrill, Pat Toftoy, David Ward

Until 5/31/2025

John Bamberl (President Emeritus), Jim Payne, Jo Roberts, Cheri Stegall

Committees

Program:	David Ward, Cheri Stegall
Grapeshot:	Richard Cox
Greeters:	John Bamberl, Jim Payne
History:	Richard Cox
News Media:	Jo Roberts
Social Media:	John Bamberl
Event Support & YouTube:	Tom Merrill
Book Sale:	Pat Toftoy
Membership:	Mark Stoler, Cheri Stegall

IMPORTANT CHARITABLE GIVING REMINDER FOR TAXPAYERS

The following is intended to provide general information only and does not constitute tax or legal advice. Please consult with a tax preparer, licensed financial advisor, CPA or tax lawyer to get advice on any specific actions you are considering.

The Internal Revenue Service is reminding taxpayers that you may be able to deduct donations to tax-exempt organizations on your tax returns. This also applies to those individuals who must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from a traditional IRA. Because of recent changes in federal law, the age at which you must start taking RMDs can vary from 70 1/2 to 73. Different rules apply to the state income tax treatment of such donations.

If you would like to make a donation to the Roundtable (a 501(c)(3) charitable organization) through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), please consult the IRS publication, “Reminder to IRA owners age 70 1/2 or over: Qualified charitable distributions are great options for making tax-free gifts to charity” <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/reminder-to-ira-owners-age-70-and-a-half-or-over-qualified-charitable-distributions-are-great-options-for-making-tax-free-gifts-to-charity>

Under IRS regs, a QCD is not included in your adjusted gross income for federal tax purposes, even if you are taking a standard deduction.

If you would like to make a QCD donation to the Roundtable, you will need the following information:

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable Tax ID No.: 77-0639661

Mailing Address:

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable
7349 N. Via Paseo Del Sur, Ste. 515-274
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

The Roundtable will provide the required IRS acknowledgement/receipt to any donor utilizing the QCD.

RICHARD SEARS MCCULLOCH: A CIVIL WAR “CHEMICAL TERRORIST”?

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We tend to think of terrorism as a modern phenomenon, but in fact its origins, theory, and practice are centuries old. Scholars inform us that the very word “terrorism” stems from the French Revolution. Since 9/11, increased attention has been paid to the history of terrorism. Surprisingly, the Civil War provides some startling examples. There is evidence that weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), notably biological and chemical agents, were not only proposed during the war, but may have actually been tried.

An obscure Maryland academic proposed some of the most potentially devastating WMDs during the Civil War. Richard Sears McCulloch (sometimes spelled McCulloh) is one of the war’s more elusive figures, but recent research has shed light on his wartime activities and what might have been his deadly contribution to the Confederacy in its waning months.

McCulloch was born in Baltimore in 1818 and raised on the family farm, “Oldfields,” near Glencoe in Baltimore County. His father, James William McCulloch, occupies his own small place in history as the chief teller of the Baltimore branch of the Second Bank of the United States. When the Maryland General Assembly imposed a tax on banks not chartered by the state (an obvious attempt to cripple the unpopular federally chartered institution), McCulloch sued the state on the Bank’s behalf. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States and resulted in one of Chief Justice John Marshall’s most famous decisions, *McCulloch v. Maryland*.

Richard attended a private school in Philadelphia and graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1836 at the age of eighteen. His mentor at Princeton was the chemist Joseph Henry, who is credited with inventing a forerunner of the electric motor and was the first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

After graduation, McCulloch taught Natural Philosophy (the physical sciences of physics and chemistry) at colleges in Pennsylvania. In 1846, he married Mary Stewart Vowell of Alexandria, Virginia, a cousin of Robert E. Lee. McCulloch then accepted a position with the United States Mint in Philadelphia, where in 1849 he invented an inexpensive method of refining the gold ore pouring into the East from California. He was dismissed from the Mint, possibly for attempting to patent his gold refining discovery, and became a Professor of Natural Philosophy at Princeton.

In 1854, McCulloch was appointed Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy and Chemistry at Columbia College in New York. In September 1863, two months after Gettysburg and the New York City draft riot, he abruptly resigned from the Columbia faculty, writing the college president from Richmond that “it should encite [sic] no surprize [sic] that one, born and reared a southerner, prefers to cast his lot with that of the South.”

McCulloch’s resignation was widely publicized in the North and did little to enhance Columbia’s reputation. The New York Copperheads (peace Democrats), including apparently some influential members of the Columbia community, may have played a role in the July draft riot. Whether McCulloch was in league with the local Copperheads or had a hand in the draft riot isn’t known, but McCulloch had refused to sign an unofficial loyalty oath the college circulated after the riot.

The trustees were furious with McCulloch and refused to accept his resignation. Instead, they expunged his name from the faculty records, an action reminiscent of the treatment resigning U.S. naval officers received before going south. George Templeton Strong, the noted Civil War diarist, was a Columbia alumnus and a college trustee. He wrote that McCulloch “has ‘gone over to the dragons’ and we are well rid of him. He has probably been offered a high price to come south and take charge of some military laboratory.”

Strong wasn’t too far off the mark. Armed with a fistful of recommendations from academics loyal to the South, McCulloch was recommended for a post at the Confederacy’s Nitre and Mining Bureau as a consulting chemist. The Bureau’s principal task was to oversee the mining of compounds for explosives and to ensure a steady supply of nitre (saltpeter), an essential component of the black gunpowder used in muskets, handguns, cannon charges and “torpedoes” (naval mines).

McCulloch had an important reason for trying to protect himself under the cover of a military commission. What records do survive indicate that McCulloch became a member of the Confederate clandestine services, one of several agents reporting directly to Jefferson Davis and Judah Benjamin, then Confederate Secretary of State. Benjamin's operatives included the Montreal group that planned the raid on St. Albans, Vermont, attempted to set fire to hotels in New York City, and one of whose number met with John Wilkes Booth on at least one occasion.

It appears from the evidence that McCulloch perfected two chemical weapons. The first was an improved form of "Greek fire," a petroleum-based compound that would self-ignite. Confederate agents had used an earlier version in the attempt to set fire to New York hotels but had failed, because placing the material in small hotel rooms with the windows shut rapidly consumed all the available oxygen and the fires quickly went out.

In February 1865, McCulloch developed a form of lethal gas that could be used as an anti-personnel weapon. McCulloch's formula and laboratory notes have been lost, but it's speculated he had developed a form of the oxygen-consuming gas halon, or possibly a form of chlorine or cyanide gas.

McCulloch demonstrated the new weapons to a small delegation of Confederate legislators. He shut up a number of cats in a room in his Richmond laboratory and poured a vial of a colorless liquid on the floor. Within a few minutes all the cats were dead. McCulloch said that if the liquid "were thrown from the gallery of the House of Representatives in Washington, it would kill every member of the House in five minutes." He then demonstrated his improved "Greek fire" by dipping a handkerchief in his formula and placing it on a mantelpiece. After a few seconds it burst into flame.

It is unknown whether the Confederacy ever seriously considered using McCulloch's gas as an anti-personnel weapon. However, one of the Confederate legislators who had witnessed the demonstration, W.S. Oldham, enthusiastically recommended use of the improved "Greek fire" to Jefferson Davis. He wrote Davis that "[t]here is no necessity of sending persons in the military service into the enemy's country . . . the work might be done by agents, and in most cases by persons ignorant of the facts, and therefore innocent agents We can 1. Burn every vessel that leaves a foreign port for the United States ; 2. Burn every transport that leaves the harbor of New York or other Northern port with supplies for the armies of the enemy in the South; 3. Burn every transport and gun boat on the Mississippi River, as well as devastate the country of the enemy, and fill his people with terror and consternation."

The war ended before the Confederacy could put McCulloch's weapons into practice against northern military or civilian targets. After Richmond fell, McCulloch fled with several other members of Davis's administration.

He was captured in Florida before he could make his way to Cuba. McCulloch initially appeared to be of little importance, but one of the witnesses at the trial of the Lincoln conspirators reported finding records in the Confederate archives alluding to McCulloch's chemical weapons. He was placed in solitary confinement in Libby Prison in Richmond while Federal authorities looked for evidence that his weapons had been used. It's been mentioned that one of the reasons for searching for actual uses of McCulloch's WMDs was to provide evidence sufficient to justify hanging Jefferson Davis. Curiously, one of McCulloch's prison diversions was sketching cats, his former "laboratory subjects."

In March 1866 McCulloch was released and paroled to New York. He soon received an offer to teach, which he accepted. His cousin-in-law, Robert E. Lee, had in the meantime become president of Washington College (later Washington & Lee University) in Lexington, Virginia. Lee got the college trustees to offer McCulloch a professorship of Natural Philosophy, and he stayed on the faculty until 1877. In 1876, a collection of his lecture notes was published in book form, *The Mechanical Theory of Heat and the Steam Engine*, which became a pioneering work in the field of thermodynamics. McCulloch later held a professorship at the Louisiana State University but left in 1884. He died in 1894 at his family's home in Baltimore County.



***McCullough's grave in Sparks, Maryland.
No known photos of him exist.***

Desperate situations sometimes lead to desperate measures. It's fortunate the war ended before the Confederacy was faced with the decision whether or not to initiate "state-sponsored terrorism" on a massive scale.

Dick Cox is Vice President of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable and chair of its History Committee. This article is excerpted from his book *Civil War Maryland: Stories from the Old Line State* (History Press 2008).

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

December 13, 1861. After the Union charges at Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg, an officer inspecting the troops of the 88th New York (part of the Irish Brigade) tells a soldier standing alone to rejoin his company.

The soldier replies, "Sir, I am my company."



Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg

December 2023 Trivia Questions

1. What Confederate surrender took place at Liverpool, England, seven months after Appomattox?
2. Soldiers of what Union regiment discovered a copy of Lee's "lost orders" near Frederick, Maryland, on September 12, 1862?
3. What general was the Episcopal bishop of Louisiana when he accepted his commission in the Confederate Army?
4. What was Admiral David Farragut's flagship during the battle of Mobile Bay?

Answers on final page

SWCRT History Discussion Group

Moves To New Location

Big changes are coming for the Roundtable's History Discussion Group. After years of meeting in the Civic Center Library, we have decided to go offsite to gain more flexibility with our starting time. The goal is to make it easier for members and guests to attend. Starting in September, we will meet at the Panera Bread at 7145 E. Indian School Road, near the corner of Scottsdale Road and Indian School. There is a large room at the back of the restaurant that is suitable for our needs. It would be good if attendees could buy a beverage or light meal while attending to help thank Panera for hosting us but is not required. We will start discussions at 6:30 p.m. and end at 8:00. In addition, we will be moving from Tuesday nights back to Thursday, which was our usual day before COVID. Our discussions are relaxed and lots of fun.

Everyone is welcome. Come and join us at our new location!

2023-24 SCWRT HISTORY DISCUSSION GROUP SCHEDULE

December 2023, No Meeting

January 25, 2024, The Siege of Petersburg from the Northern and Southern Perspectives

February 29, 2024, Military Discipline During the War

March 28, 2024, Prelude to Antietam: The Battles for the South Mountain Passes

April 25, 2024, Annual Trivia Contest

May 2024, No Meeting

Scottsdale Civil War Round Table Membership Form

Please Join Us!

Your membership enables the SCWRT to donate towards civil war preservation projects and attract the best Civil War experts from around the country to speak at our meetings, from September to May! Please fill out this form and return it with your check payable to Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. Mailing address:

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

7349 N. Via Paseo Del Sur, Ste 515-274

Scottsdale, AZ 85258

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Student Membership (no charge)

Active Duty Military (no charge)

Lifetime (\$500) \$ _____

Individual Annual (\$35) \$ _____

Family Annual (\$45) \$ _____

Additional donation \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

The Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable is an Arizona non-profit corporation and a U.S. 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Website: www.scottsdalecwrt.org

All members receive our monthly publication, The Grapeshot, from Sept-May

Follow us on Facebook at Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

160 years ago
1864
 to War's End

CENTRAL COAST CONFERENCE

March 1-3, 2024

Monterey History & Art at Stanton Center
 5 Custom House Plaza, Monterey, CA 93955

Friday night Art Gallery reception and panel;
 Saturday and Sunday presentations & book signings

Five preeminent historians reflect
on the people, events and significance of the last year of the

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Gary
 Gallagher



Harold
 Holzer



Joan
 Waugh



Craig
 Symonds



Gordon
 Rhea



A prolific author, and Professor in the History of the American Civil War, Emeritus Director, John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at the University of Virginia. [Biography](#)

Writer, lecturer, and winner of the 2015 Glider-Lehman Lincoln Prize, he is one of the country's leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln and the political culture of the Civil War era. [Biography](#)

Professor Emeritus at UCLA she researches and writes about nineteenth-century America, specializing in the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Gilded Age eras. [Biography](#)

Professor Emeritus of History at the United States Naval Academy, where he taught for over 30 years. He received Pritzker Military Museum & Library's 2023 Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement. [Biography](#)

A former Assistant U.S. Attorney in Washington D.C. and the Virgin Islands, he has written a magisterial five-volume campaign study of the 1864 Overland Campaign. [Biography](#)

For more information, visit:

<https://whtours.org/1864-the-tide-turns.html>

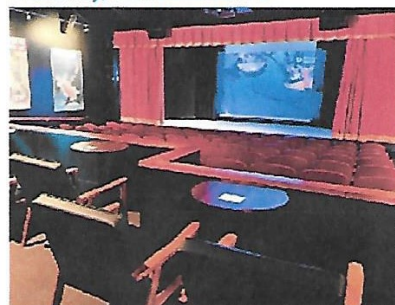
or email: CivilWarForum@mac.com



Stanton Center, left, and Custom House on Monterey's historic plaza



Monterey History & Art at Stanton Center
5 Custom House Plaza
Monterey, California 93940



All presentations will be held in the comfortable 100-seat theater at the Stanton Center

Parking is available at the Waterfront Parking Lot at the intersection of Del Monte Avenue and Washington Street. Additional parking is available at the East and West Parking Garages located at Del Monte Avenue and Tyler St.



REGISTRATION \$285 per person

What's included: Friday night (March 1) Art Gallery admission, wine & cheese reception in the gallery, and author panel in the theater. Full schedule of ten presentations in the theater, five on Saturday (March 2), and five on Sunday (March 3). **What's not included:** meals, or hotel accommodations. Visit "Places to Stay in Monterey County": <https://www.seemonterey.com/hotels/>

Mail check or money order to:
Woodbury Historical Tours
PO Box 60085, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Confirmation will be sent to you via email (if given above), or mailed. Pick up your nametag with your registration packet at the Stanton Center on March 1, 2024

(Secure online registrations will be available on our website beginning October 1, 2023, at whitours.org)

WHAT'S GOING ON AT NEIGHBORING ROUNDTABLES?

TUCSON CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

January 5, 2024 – “Could the South Have Won the War?” Robert Presman

February 2, 2024 – “General Montgomery Meigs—Engineer, Quartermaster, Architect” Bob Consigli

March 1, 2024 – “General James Longstreet—A Magnet for Controversy” Dan Paterson (Zoom)

April 5, 2024 – “The North Carolina Campaign — 1884” Don Waugaman

May 3, 2024 – “Civil War Music” Steve Smith

The Roundtable conducts lunch meetings at 11:30am at the Hungry Fox Restaurant in Tucson.

For more information contact Elise Moore at elisemoore7@gmail.com

Sun Cities and Surprise Civil War Round Table

Program Year 2023—2024

October through May on the first Tuesday each month

1:30 pm Social, 2:00 pm Program

Covenant Presbyterian Church

13601 W Aleppo Dr

Sun City West, AZ 85375

December 5, 2023	George Shoop: Battle of Champion Hill (Grant v Pemberton)
January 2, 2024	Hal Barber: Siege at Tubac—Apache Battle
February 6, 2024	John Cox: More Civil War Letters
March 5, 2024	James Bish: Slavery and American Colonies
April 2, 2024	Jim Terasinski: Blazing the Railroad Trails
May 7, 2024	Steve Alexander: The Laws of War and Civil War Tactics— The USA Today Verses 1861—1865

Other Online Opportunities

A series of free lectures on **Wednesdays hosted by the Civil War Round Table Congress** (CWRTC). Check out their website for topics and to register.

<https://www.cwrtcongress.org/speaker.html>

CWRT Congress Fridays With U.S. Grant for a special series with Dr. Curt Fields.

To register (free)

<https://www.cwrtcongress.org/grant.html>

YouTube Channel for CWRT Congress includes 40+ recorded past talks:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=cwrt+congress

From Chambersburg Civil War Seminars and Tours

Zoom presentations 15th and 30th of every month. Nationally known speakers.

\$5 per registration

For schedule and registration

<https://www.civilwarseminars.org/lectures>

And See Your Round Table Online

Follow the Scottsdale Civil War Round Table on Facebook

Watch past speakers on our YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfxW2cvzCbGoKebHKPZsq5A>

Visit our website <https://www.scottsdalecwrt.org/>

December 2023 Trivia Answers

1. The Confederate cruiser *Shenandoah*, which had sailed around the world raiding Union commercial ships, surrendered to British authorities on November 6, 1865.
2. The 27th Indiana
3. Leonidas Polk
4. The U.S.S. Hartford