

# The Grapeshot

Newsletter

February 2026



*The Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable*

*Welcomes*

**Curt Fields**

*as he presents*

***An Evening  
With  
General Grant***

Scottsdale Civic Center  
Library

Copper Auditorium

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

6:00 pm

Doors open at 5:00 pm  
for social hour, meet the speaker,  
book sale, and Civil War Video

Join the meeting on YouTube:

<https://youtube.com/live/blyUjnjbTaA?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*

### **Dr. Curt Fields**



The Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable is honored to host Dr. Curt Fields as General Ulysses S. Grant. General Grant will speak on the war and take questions from the audience. This is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States and U.S. Grant played a **leading role in preserving the Union, and was President in 1876 during the country's centennial celebrations.**

Dr. Curt Fields is widely recognized as the best living historian of General Grant. He is featured in the official movie shown at the Appomattox Court House National **Historical Park visitor center as well as at Grant's Tomb in New York City.** Dr. Fields speaks on General and President Grant throughout the country, and can be found at [www.generalgrantbyhimself.com](http://www.generalgrantbyhimself.com). Dr. Fields resides in Western Tennessee, teaches at the University of Memphis, and was formerly a police officer and a hostage negotiator.

**Dr. Fields will be speaking as 'President' Grant at the Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West** at 6 p.m. on Thursday night, February 19. The museum is located at 3830 N. Marshall Way in Old Town Scottsdale. Tickets for that event are available on **the museum's website:** [www.westernspirit.org](http://www.westernspirit.org).

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Join the meeting on YouTube:

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

# **Scottsdale Civil War Round Table Speakers & Programs September 2025 -May 2026**

**February 17** - Curt Fields, "An Evening with General Grant"

**March 17** - Roseann Bacha-Garza, "Civil War in the Rio Grande Valley"

**April 21** - Lynn Herman, "The New Mexico Campaign & Glorieta Pass"

**May 19** - Neil Chatelain, "Treasure & Empire in the Civil War"

## **GENTLE REMINDERS**

- Members, please remember to wear your name badges to our meetings. It helps us to remember you and for others to get to know you.
- New members, please stop by the welcome desk to pick up your name badges and welcome tote bags!

## Letter from our President

*Mark Stoler*



January was a busy month for the Roundtable. Along with Lucas Wilder's recounting of the struggle for East Tennessee, the Roundtable conducted its first tour, with a group of 50 visiting the Pioneers' Cemetery in Phoenix and the site of the Battle of Picacho Pass at Picacho Peak State Park. A grand time was had by all and you can find photos elsewhere in this edition of the Grapeshot. Our special thanks to Steve Smith of the Tucson Roundtable who ably guided us through the battle, Scottsdale Roundtable member Bob Cox who recounted the stories of some of those veterans buried at the cemetery, and to Jarrod Riddle of Spirit of Arizona Tours who arranged the tour and kept us entertained on the bus with tales from Arizona history. We'd also like to thank the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for its support as eight OLLI members joined the tour.

Roundtable member and reenactor John Fritz, along with reenactor Brian Buck, and with the assistance of Roundtable member Laurie Manifold, gave a well-received presentation on the New Mexico campaign at the Museum of the West on January 22 (photos elsewhere in the Grapeshot).

And February is also going to be quite busy. On February 11, we'll be at the Scottsdale Senior Expo meeting potential Roundtable members. The week after that is the big event. On February 17, Curt Fields will be at the Roundtable as General U.S. Grant at the end of the war, reflecting on the tumultuous and historic events of the prior four years. Two nights later, Curt will be at the Museum of the Western Spirit, speaking as President Grant on Indian policy. Roundtable members are invited to attend the Museum event for which the museum is waiving the usual \$10 fee for our members.

In addition, in February several Roundtable members will be serving as judges for the state competition on National History Day, an event organized by the Arizona Historical Society.

*For those of you attending events in the library auditorium,* please remember to turn off your phones and keep voices down when speaking. Thanks!

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We are always on the lookout for members who would like to work to support our organization. It takes a lot to keep it going. If you are interested in becoming more involved please contact me at [stolerscwr@gmail.com](mailto:stolerscwr@gmail.com) or speak with me or other Board members at one of our meetings.

## 2025-2026 Roundtable Officers, Board & Committees Officers

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

(All Officers serve until 6/1/2027)

### Board Members

Tom Merrill, John Taylor, Pat Toftoy (until 6/1/26)

Elise Moore, Jim Payne, Cheri Stegall (until 6/1/27)

### Committees

Program:	John Taylor, Cheri Stegall
Grapeshot:	Richard Cox
Greeters:	Jim Payne
History:	Richard Cox
News Media:	Jim Payne
Event Support & YouTube:	Tom Merrill
Book Sale:	Pat Toftoy
Membership:	Mark Stoler, Cheri Stegall
Travel & Tours:	Elise Moore
Grapeshot Editor:	Barbara Ray
Database Management:	John Machir

## Photos from January meeting



**Left, below left and right:**  
Pre-meeting, catching up  
with friends and checking  
out the books



**Below left and right:** January speaker Lucas Wilder regaling members  
about Chattanooga and the East Tennessee Campaigns



# PIONEER & MILITARY MEMORIAL PARK CEMETERY AND BATTLE OF PICACHO PASS



**Above L & R:** Bob Cox recounts the stories of Civil War veterans buried in Pioneers & Military Memorial Park Cemetery



**Left and below left:** Steve Smith, Tucson CWRT, guides us through the battle

**Right:** Stone monument built in 1928, moved to current location in 1968

**Below right:** SCWRT group photo at Picacho Peak State Park, Jan. 20, 2026



## THE LAST CONFEDERATE TOWN TO SURRENDER WAS – IN NEW YORK?

2026 Richard P. Cox. All rights reserved.

You might think the last town to hold out for the Confederacy would be in Tennessee or Georgia or some dusty forgotten town in Texas, but in New York? Town Line, a little hamlet outside of Buffalo in Erie County, has the unique distinction of having seceded from the United States and did not rejoin the Union until 1946.

Sometime near the end of 1861, the residents of Town Line (so named because the hamlet straddles the boundary between the Towns of Lancaster and Alden) by a 85-40 majority voted to secede from the Union. But as a hamlet, Town Line was an “unincorporated community” under New York law and so the vote carried no weight. Neither the Union nor the Confederacy formally recognized Town Line’s vote. Nor did the citizens ever petition to become part of the Confederacy.

So why did the hamlet vote to secede? The record isn’t clear. Many of the residents were recent German immigrants and perhaps had not yet developed a sense of loyalty to the Union. They were poor farmers who maybe wanted to be left alone. Or perhaps they were afraid their sons would be drafted into the type of European-style conflicts from which they had fled and in which they had no stake.

Whatever their reasons and despite their resolve to secede, residents ended up being split over the war. Legend has it that several members of the German American community fled to Canada. Five residents crossed the Mason-Dixon line and joined Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia. But twenty signed up to fight with the Union Army. In 1864, a Buffalo newspaper reported that the county’s quota for the Federal army had fallen short. To show its loyalty, Town Line sent seven men of the expected thirteen.

The entire episode seems to have been forgotten until a Buffalo newspaper reporter resurrected the story in 1945. Surprisingly, Town Line’s rebellious streak stubbornly persisted. When a preliminary vote was taken to rejoin the Union, twenty-nine of the thirty voters opposed reunion.

Town Line now had its own civil war, but residents agreed to consult a higher power – President Harry Truman. “Town Line still is outside the Union and is in turmoil over fractional differences,” a group of citizens wrote to the president. “Both sides have agreed to abide by your decision.”

Truman’s humorous response seemed to imply that a blood sacrifice was needed in expiation. “I suggest that possibilities of roast veal as a vehicle of peace,” the president wrote. “Why don’t you run down the fattest calf in Erie County, barbecue it and serve it with fixin’s in the old blacksmith shop where the ruckus started?”

Heeding the president’s advice, the community slaughtered a 190-pound fatted calf and declared January 24, 1946, a public holiday and for a vote on whether to return to the United States. As a frosty wind lashed a Confederate battle flag waving overhead, Town Liners gathered inside a sagging, wooden blacksmith shop decorated in red, white, and blue bunting to lunch on barbeque veal sandwiches and coffee.

Then, following the dedication of the hamlet’s principal intersection as Truman Square, the crowd paraded to the volunteer fire house as the Lancaster High School band played "Swanee River" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." There they watched the world premier of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox film "Colonel Effingham’s Raid" about a retired Army officer who fights to save his Southern town’s Confederate monument. The movie studio had dispatched stars Cesar Romeo and Martha Stewart to Town Line for the festivities even though they hadn’t appeared in the movie.

Returning to the blacksmith shop, which had once been the schoolhouse in which their forebears severed ties with the Union, Town Line residents cast their votes on whether to reverse the 1861 decision. After 113 residents deposited their secret ballots into a wooden box on top of the same desk on which the articles of secession reportedly were signed, the ballot box was handed to Romero. The actor best known for playing the Joker on the 1960s TV show "Batman," counted the ballots and announced the results. The last rebel community had voted ninety to twenty-three to rejoin the United States.

The Union was whole at last.



**Dick Cox is SCWRT Vice President and Chair of the History Committee.**



**Above left & right, below right:** SCWRT member John Fritz in Union uniform and Brian Buck in Confederate uniform give a presentation on the New Mexico Campaign at Scottsdale's Museum of the West

**Below left:** SCWRT member Laurie Manifold with her southwest Civil War display



## THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

February 4, 1861. While the secession convention is meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, another group meets in Washington. This is the Peace Conference or Convention with more than 130 delegates who hope to forge a compromise and “adjust the present unhappy controversies.” The conference does offer a proposed constitutional amendment, but it pleases neither pro-slavery nor anti-slavery factions.

## February 2026 Trivia Questions

1. What was the last state to join the Confederacy?
2. What was a “columbiad”?
3. What confederate commander was known as “The Gray Ghost?”
4. What U.S. government agency was created in 1865 to deal with rampant counterfeiting of U.S. currency?

*Answers on final page*



Members of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable gather monthly to share stories, hear from leading historians, and support the preservation of Civil War history.

## Scottsdale Civil War group explores history beyond the battles

By Michael P. Murphy

There is a reason why there continues to be so much interest in the Civil War 160 years after General Lee's surrender in Appomattox. There are endless stories connected to the catastrophic events... stories that are about more than generals, battles, and bloodshed.

Sharing these stories is the mission of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable, one of hundreds across the country. They meet on the third Tuesday of each month from September to May in the lower level of the Scottsdale Library. It is a welcoming gathering where members share a common fellowship in history.

Nationwide roundtables began during the centennial in the 1960s, when history buffs found each other, formed groups, began inviting speakers, and grew as an organization. The Scottsdale group has been in its current form for the past 30 years.

"We have leading historians come and speak to us," President Mark Stoler said. "We also have a lot of activities, but the monthly meetings are our core. Through membership

dues and donations, we contribute every year to Civil War preservation."

Over the past decade, the group has donated more than \$50,000 to battlefield preservation. Because those opportunities offer matching funds with multipliers, donors have contributed \$2.5 million in land parcels for battlefields and other Civil War sites.

The popularity of these groups extends surprisingly far beyond the U.S. Online presentations enabled the roundtable to attract members from the East Coast, Brazil, and Venezuela. Current sessions are broadcast live and archived for future viewing online.

Arizona itself has a place in Civil War history. The Battle of Picacho Peak in 1862 was a small but significant skirmish



Historian Curt Fields will be presenting on February 17.

that reshaped the boundaries of our state and New Mexico. Visitors to the Pioneer Cemetery in Phoenix will see segregated burial sites for Union and Confederate veterans.

"The legacy still impacts us today," Stoler said. "There are so many different characters involved, and that means you can tell great stories. If you like stories, great characters, and great events, you can't go wrong with the Civil War."

Sessions begin at 5 p.m. with a casual social hour in the lower lobby and a display of donated books to take home. Presenters who are authors usually have books and will hold signings before the event. At 6, the program moves to the auditorium.

On February 17, the Scottsdale roundtable will host historian Curt Fields, appearing as Ulysses S. Grant in character and uniform. Grant was president during our country's 1876 centennial. Having Fields on hand to reflect on the end of the Civil War is fitting for this year's 250th celebration.

[scottsdalecwr.org](http://scottsdalecwr.org)

The Col. Sherod Hunter Camp #1525, Sons of Confederate Veterans, cordially invites you to attend the **Iron Cross Dedication Ceremony** in memory of **Private Perry E. Wilson (1828–1899)**.

On **August 20, 2025**, the **Iron Cross of Honor** was formally approved for placement on the grave of Private Wilson by **President General Julie Hardaway** of the **United Daughters of the Confederacy**—the highest officer of the organization and originator of the Iron Cross, which has long been mistakenly referred to by the Sons of Confederate Veterans as the “Southern Cross of Honor.”

This historic dedication will be held on:

- **Saturday, February 28, 2026**
- **12:00 Noon**
- **Pioneer Cemetery, 1317 W Jefferson St, Phoenix, Arizona**

The ceremony will be attended by the **lineal descendants of Private Perry E. Wilson**, honoring his service and memory.

We welcome all compatriots, friends, and members of the community to join us in this solemn act of remembrance.

Sincerely,

Avery Frantz, Arizona Division Historian, Sons of Confederate Veterans



## **HISTORY DISCUSSION GROUP TOPICS SET FOR 2025-26**

### **LOCATION AND MEETING TIMES**

SCWRT's History Discussion Group is an informal monthly get-together for Civil War buffs in the greater Phoenix area to discuss topics in Civil War history.

We meet at the Wildflower Bread Co. in the Seville Shopping Center, at the northeast corner of Indian Bend and Scottsdale Roads. The McCormick Stillman Room, which is a partitioned meeting room at the back of the restaurant, has been reserved for us.

Our meetings start at 6:00 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. There is ample parking in the shopping center parking lot. In exchange for the Wildflower's hospitality, we encourage but don't require attendees to buy some food and beverages from the restaurant before our meetings.

Everyone – members, non-members, family, friends, and visitors – are welcome. We're casual and have lots of fun talking about history! Come and check us out!

The following is our schedule and list of topics for the coming season:

### **NO MEETING IN DECEMBER**

- 2/26/26 The generalship of Robert E. Lee
- 3/26/26 In what ways did the war permanently change the U.S.?
- 4/30/26 Films about the Civil War: Which are the best?

### **NO MEETING IN MAY**

## What's Going On at Neighboring Roundtables?

### TUCSON 2025/2026

- Feb 6** Floyd Gray Ft Huachuca
- March 6** Amanda Dahl, Director of Sanguinetti Museum in Yuma "John W Jones: The Unsung Civil War Hero and Spy"
- April 3** Bob Consigli "Capt. Frances Lowell"
- May 1** Dr. Christopher Oakley Prof at NC "Placing the Platform: Using 3D Technology to Pinpoint Lincoln at Gettysburg" (Zoom)

### SUN CITY WEST AND SURPRISE 2025-26

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
<b>2/03/26</b>	Statesmen of the Lost Cause	Thomas Gergen
<b>3/03/26</b>	U.S. Army Camel Corps	Bill Andrews
<b>4/07/26</b>	Quantrill's Raiders	Brian Callahan
<b>5/05/26</b>	Gen. Ambrose Burnside	Dan Lookabill

# 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.scottsdalecwr.org](http://www.scottsdalecwr.org)

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

Follow us on Facebook at Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

## 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.

[2025 Lectures | CWRT Congress](#)

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

To register (free)

[www.cwrtcongress.org](http://www.cwrtcongress.org) › [videos](#) › [grant.html](#)

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

[CWRT Congress - YouTube](#)

**From Chambersburg Civil War Seminars and Tours**

Zoom presentations 15th and 30th of every month.

For schedule and registration [www.civilwarseminars.org/lectures](http://www.civilwarseminars.org/lectures)

**See Your Round Table Online**

Watch past speakers on our YouTube Channel

[Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable - YouTube](#)

**Visit our website:** [Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable - SCWRT Home](#)

**Follow us on Facebook:** [Facebook](#)

**Gary Gallagher** presents a series of 48 lectures entitled “The American Civil War.” Available on Audible as part of [The Great Courses](#).

**Chris Mackowski** hosts [The Emerging Civil War Podcast](#). New episodes on Tuesdays.

Find articles by **Gary Dorris** on his blog at [alincolnbygadorris.com](http://alincolnbygadorris.com).

## February 2026 Trivia Answers

1. Tennessee, which formally seceded on June 8, 1861
2. A large caliber smooth bore cannon the Union used for sieges and coastal defense
3. John Singleton Mosby
4. The U.S. Secret Service. Its mission to protect the president and other government officials wasn't added until after the assassination of President McKinley.