

# The Grapeshot

## Newsletter

September 2023

This month's presenter:

**Brian Jordan**



**The Scottsdale Civil War  
Roundtable welcomes**

**Brian Jordan**

**as he presents:**

***A Monopoly on Misfortune:  
The Odyssey of an  
Immigrant Regiment  
In the Civil War***

Scottsdale Civic  
Center

Library Auditorium

September 19, 2023

6:00 pm

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

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable, Inc.

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

*Also on YouTube*

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## About Our Speaker

### Brian Jordan

A graduate of Gettysburg College and Yale University, Dr. Jordan is department chair and associate professor of history at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.



An award-winning author, Dr. Jordan has published widely on the era of the Civil War. Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War, published by W.W. Norton in 2015, along with "Unholy Sabbath: The Battle of South Mountain", published by Savas Beatie in 2012, are two of his notable monographs.

His talk before the Scottsdale group will focus on his most recent book, A Thousand May Fall: Life, Death, and Survival in the Union Army, which profiles the service of the 107th Ohio Volunteers. Dr. Jordan's presentation, *A Monopoly on Misfortune: The Odyssey of an Immigrant Regiment in the Civil War*, will examine the negative reputation this group of German immigrants received after the bloody 1863 battles at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Serving in the 11th Corps, the 107th Ohio emerged as scapegoats for the failure of the Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville and their failure at Gettysburg on the opening day of the battle. These Ohioans fought for the abolition of slavery but also for reunification of North and South. As "War Democrats," these German immigrants believed too that nativism, and not unfree labor, was a bigger threat to American liberties.

Topic: Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable,  
September 19th, 2023 Time: 6:00 PM Arizona

Join the meeting on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g16CdyuRaPU>

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

**September 19   Brian Jordan   "A Monopoly on Misfortune: The Odyssey of an Immigrant Regiment in the Civil War"**

**October 17   Tim Smith   "The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid through Mississippi"**

**November 14   John Matteson   "The Concord Nurse and the Brooklyn Bard: Alcott and Whitman in Washington"**

**December 12   Cory Pfarr   "McLaws and Longstreet at Gettysburg"**

**January 16   A. Wilson Greene   "Leaders and Leadership at Petersburg" (2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebration of the Life of Ed Bearss)**

**February 20   Peter Carmichael   "The Fate of a Confederate Deserter After Gettysburg"**

**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.**

## Letter from our President

***Mark Stoler***



Welcome back everyone! We are all looking forward to our 2023-24 season, kicking off on September 19. Once again, a reminder that speakers will begin at 6PM, instead of 5PM.

We've also switched from Zoom to YouTube for those who can't attend a meeting in the auditorium. The change will provide enhanced security and convenience and will be easy to access.

Elsewhere in the Grapeshot you'll see that the Roundtable recently received two recognitions from the Civil War Roundtable Congress - for marketing and for completing the Congress' Sustainability Challenge.

Marketing and sustainability go together. As participants in the Roundtable, we feel a duty to pass on to future generations our interest in the Civil War and recognition of its significance in American history. Sustaining the Roundtable plays an important role in that process. We are one of the most successful Roundtables in the country but constant attention is needed to maintain and build upon that success.

We are constantly on the lookout for ways to attract new members, retain current ones, and improve our offerings and events. Please give us your suggestions and let us know if you are interested in serving on one of our committees, a list of which you'll find in the Grapeshot.



## Awards and Recognition

The Scottsdale Civil War Round Table was recognized at the Annual Civil War Congress meeting in Gettysburg on August 26, 2023, for its outstanding leadership.

It was awarded the inaugural Matthew Borowick Marketing Award. The Civil War Congress Marketing Award recognizes a Civil War Round Table for presenting itself to members, enthusiasts, community partners, potential supporters, and others by using a variety of methods and channels. It requires thought, planning, and logistical support.

The Scottsdale Civil War Round Table also received a Certificate for completing the Sustainability Challenge. Only two Round Tables have received this award. The submission of the Sustainability Challenge is a crucial step in the continued development and success of your Round Table.

Seen receiving the awards is President Emeritus Dr. John Bamberl.



## **2023-24 Roundtable Officers, Board, & Committees**

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 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

## **“LINCOLN’S AVENGER”**

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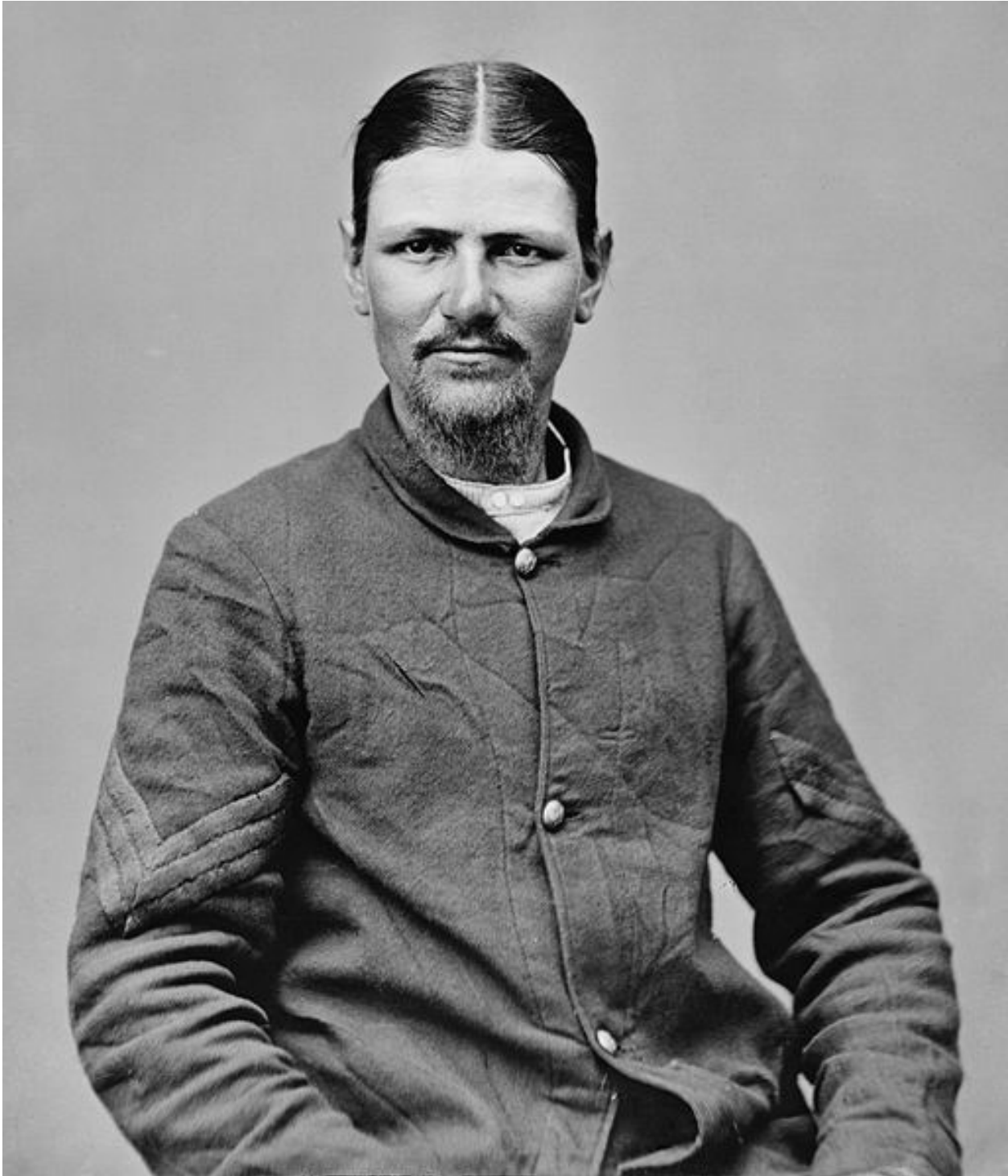
Due to his earlier fame, he was appointed assistant doorkeeper of the Kansas House of Representatives in January 1887. A month later, he became convinced officers of the House were out to get him. He brandished a revolver and began chasing the officers out of the building. He was arrested and a judge ordered him sent to the Topeka Asylum for the Insane. Sadly, this was only one of the many bizarre episodes in the life of Thomas H. “Boston” Corbett, the man who killed John Wilkes Booth and was known by many as “Lincoln’s Avenger.”

Corbett was born in London, England in 1832 and immigrated with his family to New York City in 1840. He was apprenticed to a milliner and practiced that trade off and on throughout his life. As a milliner he was constantly exposed to the fumes of mercury nitrate used in the treatment of fur to produce felt for hats. Excessive exposure to that chemical can lead to hallucinations, psychosis and damage to the central nervous system, a condition sometimes called “mad hatter’s disease.” Historians have speculated that the mental issues Corbett exhibited before and after the Civil War were caused by exposure to mercury.

Corbett married, but his wife and child died in childbirth. He moved to Boston and began drinking heavily over the loss of his wife and daughter. He was unable to hold a job and became homeless. After one night of heavy drinking, he encountered a street preacher who persuaded him to join the Methodist Church. After being baptized, he changed his name to Boston to honor the place of his conversion.

He continued to work as a milliner and became a street preacher and distributor of religious literature. He soon earned a reputation around Boston as an eccentric and religious fanatic. In 1858, Corbett was accosted by two prostitutes while walking home from a church meeting. He was traumatized by the experience. To avoid sexual temptation, he castrated himself with a pair of scissors. He then ate a meal and went to a prayer meeting before seeking medical treatment.





**THOMAS H. "BOSTON" CORBETT**

After moving back to New York, Corbett became an early volunteer for the Union cause. In April 1861, he enlisted in Company I of the 12<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia. His eccentric behavior soon got him into trouble. He held unauthorized prayer meetings and argued with his superior officers. On one occasion he verbally reprimanded Colonel Dan Butterfield for using profanity and was sent to the guardhouse. Eventually, his continual disruptive behavior and refusal to take orders led to a court martial and he was sentenced to be shot. His sentence was later reduced and he was discharged in August 1863.

Corbett re-enlisted later that month as a private in Company L, 16<sup>th</sup> New York Cavalry. In June 1864 he was captured by troops led by John S. Mosby and was held as a prisoner of war at Andersonville for five months. He was released in a prisoner exchange in November and admitted to a military hospital in Annapolis, Maryland where he was treated for scurvy, malnutrition and exposure. When he returned to his regiment he was promoted to sergeant. Corbett later testified for the prosecution at the trial of Captain Henry Wirtz, commandant of Andersonville.

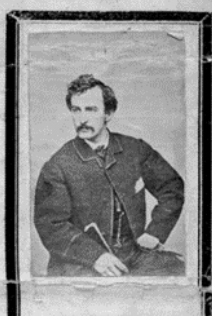
Corbett's regiment was detailed to join the manhunt for John Wilkes Booth, President Lincoln's assassin. Booth had managed to escape through Southern Maryland and had crossed the Potomac into Virginia. On April 24, 1865, Corbett's regiment closed in on Booth at the Garrett farm outside of Port Royal, Virginia. Booth and his accomplice David Harold were trapped in a tobacco barn. Soldiers from Corbett's regiment set the barn on fire to flush out the pair.

What happened next became the subject of no small controversy. The War Department had issued strict orders to take Booth alive if possible. The government was eager to put Booth on trial for his deed.

In a later interview Corbett, who could see Booth through an open slat in the barn's siding, claimed he saw him aiming his rifle to shoot at someone. Corbett shot Booth with his Colt revolver, paralyzing him. He died two hours after Corbett shot him. When an officer asked which soldier had shot Booth, Corbett stepped forward and admitted he was the shooter. When asked why he had violated orders, Corbett replied, "Providence directed me."



SURRAT.



BOOTH.



HAROLD.

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,



**\$100,000 REWARD!**

# THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,  
**IS STILL AT LARGE.**

**\$50,000 REWARD**

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

**\$25,000 REWARD**

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURRATT, one of Booth's Accomplices.

**\$25,000 REWARD**

Will be paid for the apprehension of David C. Harold, another of Booth's accomplices.

**LIBERAL REWARDS** will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above-named criminals, or their accomplices.

All persons harboring or secreting the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murder of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a Military Commission and the punishment of DEATH.

Let the stain of innocent blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers.

All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience charged with this solemn duty, and rest neither night nor day until it be accomplished.

## EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

**DESCRIPTIONS.**—BOOTH is Five Feet 7 or 8 inches high, slender build, high forehead, black hair, black eyes, and wears a heavy black moustache.

JOHN H. SURRAT is about 5 feet, 9 inches. Hair rather thin and dark; eyes rather light; no beard. Would weigh 145 or 150 pounds. Complexion rather pale and clear, with color in his cheeks. Wore light clothes of fine quality. Shoulders square; cheek bones rather prominent; chin narrow; ears projecting at the top; forehead rather low and square, but broad. Parts his hair on the right side; neck rather long. His lips are firmly set. A slim man.

DAVID C. HAROLD is five feet six inches high, hair dark, eyes dark, eyebrows rather heavy, full face, nose short, hand short and fleshy, feet small, instep high, round bodied, naturally quick and active, slightly closes his eyes when looking at a person.

**NOTICE.**—In addition to the above, State and other authorities have offered rewards amounting to almost one hundred thousand dollars, making an aggregate of about **TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.**

WANTED POSTER FOR BOOTH, HAROLD AND DAVID SURRAT

He was arrested and sent to Washington to face a court martial for disobeying orders. Secretary of War Stanton personally questioned him. Corbett admitted he shot Booth but maintained he did not intend to kill him but merely wanted to inflict a disabling wound. He stated either his aim slipped or Booth moved at the moment Corbett pulled the trigger. Stanton paused, then stated, "The rebel is dead. The patriot lives; he has spared the country expense, continued excitement and trouble. Discharge the patriot." On leaving the War Department he was met with a cheering crowd.

Corbett was discharged from the army in August 1865 and went back to work as a milliner in various cities. But he was fired from each job for his sermonizing and fanatical behavior. To earn money, he capitalized on his role as "Lincoln's Avenger" by giving lectures about shooting Booth at Sunday schools, women's groups and tent meetings. After each appearance he was never asked back due to his increasingly erratic behavior and incoherent speeches.

His sense of paranoia became extreme. A man who had befriended him recalled that Corbett believed men in high office in Washington at the time of the assassination were hounding him. They were angry that he had deprived them of prosecuting and executing Booth and were responsible for having him fired from his jobs.

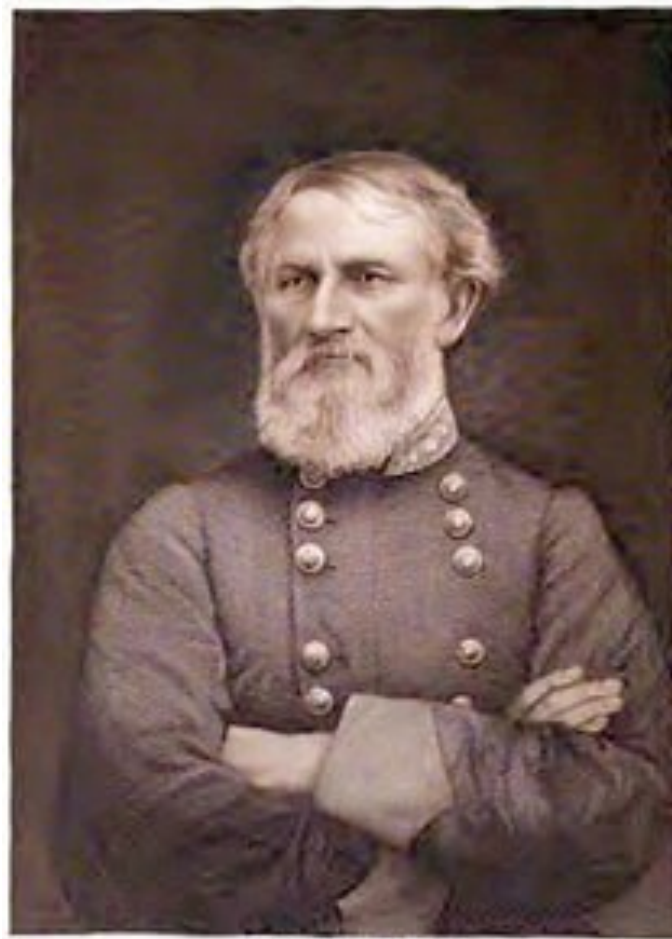
His sense of insecurity was heightened by hate mail he received for killing Booth. He thought a group of "Booth's Avengers" was planning to seek revenge on him. He began carrying a pistol and brandished it at friends and strangers he thought were suspicious.

On May 26, 1888, Corbett escaped from the Topeka Asylum for the Insane. He briefly stayed with an acquaintance he had met as a POW and said he intended to go to Mexico. His ultimate fate is unknown. It's possible he lived alone in a pine forest near Hinckley in Pine County, Minnesota. He is believed to have died in the Great Hinckley Fire on September 1, 1894. Although there is no concrete proof, the name "Thomas Corbett" appears on the list of the dead and missing from the fire.

*Dick Cox is SCWRT vice president and chair of the History Committee.*

## THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

September 3, 1861. The State of Kentucky has thus far remained “neutral” in the dispute between the North and the South. On this date, believing Union forces intend to occupy key strategic positions in the state, Confederate General Leonidas Polk sends his men in in a preemptive move. This action irritates Kentucky so much that, while the state continues to maintain a neutral stance, the majority of its men will end up fighting for the Union.



*Confederate General Leonidas Polk*



## September 2023 Trivia Questions

1. Military parole was the discharging of prisoners upon their oath (i.e. word of honor or “parole”) not to take up arms against their captors until they were officially exchanged. What made officers’ parole oaths different from those of regular soldiers?
2. What was the monthly pay at the beginning of the war for a private and a brigadier general?
3. Did Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation free all of the slaves?
4. Conditions in Confederate POW camps at Andersonville and Libby Prison in Richmond were notorious, but the conditions in Union POW camps were little better yet have received not as much attention. What were the major Pow camps in the North?

*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**

**September 28, 2023,** The Role of Immigrants and Foreign-Born Americans in the Civil War

**October 26, 2023,** The Role of Cavalry in the War: Which Side Used It More Effectively

**November 30, 2023,** The U.S. Sanitary Commission

**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](http://www.scottsdalecwrt.org)

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

Follow us on Facebook at Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

# WHAT'S GOING ON AT NEIGHBORING ROUNDTABLES?

## TUCSON CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

**October 6, 2023**—TCWRT Round Table, Book Reviews, Discussion Topic: “If I could meet and visit with one individual from the Battle of Gettysburg, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.”

**November 3, 2023**—“The ABCs of the Civil War—A Personal View,” Gene Bryan

**December 1, 2023**—Annual Meeting. “The Reconstruction(s)” Paul Waugaman

**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](mailto:elisemoore7@gmail.com)

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## SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

On **Nov 3-5, 2023** the San Joaquin Roundtable is holding the 2023 West Coast Civil War Roundtable Conference in Fresno, California.

<http://www.sjvcwrt2.com/events.html>

Presentations will be on the Vicksburg Campaign; speakers include Curt Fields, Jim Stanberry, and Parker Hills.

For conference program and registration contact Michael Spencer (559)304-8170.

## 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](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/>



## September 2023 Trivia Answers

1. The addition of the sentence: "We pledge our words of honor as officers and gentlemen."
2. Union private: \$13. Union brigadier general: \$315; Confederate private: \$11. Confederate brigadier general: \$301.
3. No. It declared free only those slaves in states or portions of states still in rebellion against the United States. For example, slaves in the non-seceding border states of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri were not freed.
4. Point Lookout, Maryland; Elmira, New York; Fort Delaware near Wilmington; Camp Chase near Columbus, Ohio; Johnson's Island in Lake Erie near Sandusky, Ohio; Camp Morton, at Indianapolis; Camp Douglas near Chicago; Rock Island in the Mississippi River in Illinois; Fort Warren, Boston Harbor; and Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor.