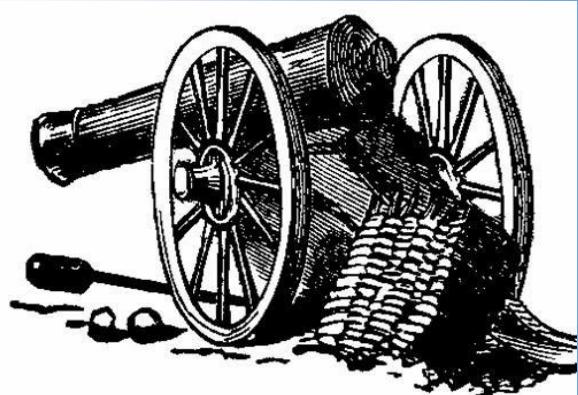


Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable, Inc. 501 (C) (3) non profit corporation

Founded 1978

The Grapeshot

February 2020



This month's guest speaker:

Don't miss our exciting presentation by David Stewart. The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson.

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Scottsdale Civic Library

Auditorium 6:00 p.m.

February 18 2020. Please
join us for social hour and
book sales at 4:30

About Our Speaker

The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson will be the subject of February's meeting of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. David Stewart is author of the highly praised *Impeached: The Trial of President Andrew Johnson and the Fight for Lincoln's Legacy*. Mr Stewart brings to the subject meticulous and groundbreaking research along with his experience as a lawyer in defending a federal judge at a Senate impeachment trial.

His talk traces the explosive trial of President Johnson to its roots in the social and political revolutions that rocked the South with the end of slavery and the Civil War, and reveals new information on the machinations surrounding his Senate trial.

Mr Stewart is the author of several other books, including *The Summer of 1787* on the Constitutional Convention, *American Emperor* on the trial of Aaron Burr ,as well as several novels of historical fiction. He graduated from Yale Law School, was a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell, and a partner in the law firm of Ropes & Gray.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library Auditorium on the third Tuesday of every month Sept. thru May. Each meeting includes these activities: 4:30 Social Hour and Book Sales, 5:00 Movie, 6:00 lecture



Feb 18 - David Stewart, “The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson”

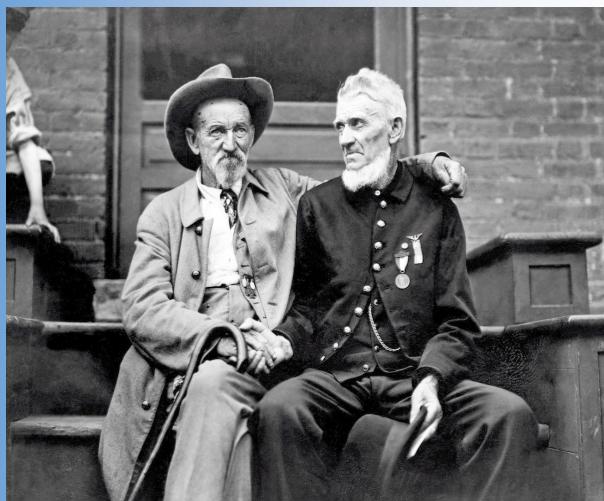
March 17 - Eric Wittenberg, “Holding The Line On the River of Death: Union Calvary at Chickamauga”

April 21 - Chris Mackowski, “The Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania”

May 19 - Lorien Foote, “Retaliation: Bushwackers, Guerrillas, & Prisoners”

History Discussion Groups

Didn't get enough Civil War at our speaker meetings? Here is the schedule for our History Discussion Group for this season. We encourage you to join us. Our meetings are casual and engaging with a lot of information. Not to mention it's a blast. The discussion group meets in the Gold Room at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library from 6 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.



1/30 What It's Like Consulting on a Civil War Movie. Facilitator: David Ward

2/27 Annual Trivia Contest

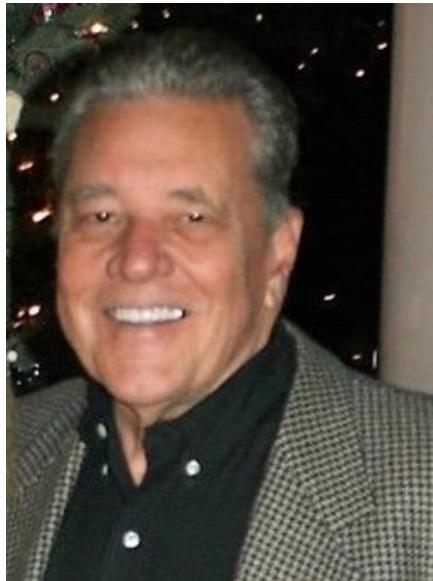
3/26 Open Discussion on the Battle of Chickamauga.

Facilitator: TBA

4/30 Open Discussion on the Battle of Spotsylvania. Facilitator: TBA

5/28 Confederate Partisan Rangers. Facilitator: Dick Cox

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



Your SCWRT board along with 3 other roundtables formed the Civil War Congress in 2016. The congress is dedicated to helping CWRT's become or stay sustainable. We found that 65 roundtables have closed in the last 5 years. There are multiple reasons but the main one is lack of depth at the board level.

We have recently added Chris Mackowski to our board and are talking to other prominent authors.

We have held 3 national workshops that focus on membership, governance, fundraising, marketing, etc.

I have given 3 talks and my first one was to present on a national level how our board has built our roundtable to over 400 members and has become one of the largest and most dynamic roundtable in the country.

Subsequent talks I have given include:

Marketing

Board structure

Advisory board

Bylaws

501 ©3's

Rack card

Battlefield preservation and

Web sites. Besides teaching other roundtables to be sustainable our board has learned:

The importance of Rack cards as a marketing tool.

The use of Polo shirts with our logo as a marketing tool.

Updating your Bylaws to meet your present goals and

The importance of an Advisory board as a backup and advisors to our present elected board.

Our present Advisory board has been very productive:

Josh Ackerman is a Junior at ASU and is very active in passing our rack cards out to college students.

George Bennett lives in Tucson but is quite active on the Speakers committee.

Alan Rockman assists in teaching the Civil War at Coccopah Middle School.

Jim Henderson has been quite helpful with the distribution of over 300 Rack cards.

Gary Dorris writes a very interesting Civil War blog site and furnishes articles for our Grapeshot.

Cheri Stegall teaches the Civil War at Coccapah Middle school and was elected “Civil War teacher of the year” and won a scholarship to the Civil War Trust meeting in Chattanooga.

David Ward is very active on our program committee.

Bill Thomas started a Civil War discussion group at his church

Thomas Merrill is reactivating our Student outreach .

Joanne Roberts is president of the Blue and Gray Educational Society and has expressed a desire to help with our Grapeshot.

Many of our Advisory members have gone on to serve on the SCWRT board.

We are actively seeking interested members who would be willing to help sustain our roundtable as the most progressive in the United States.

OFFICERS/BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Dr. John Bamberl 480-699-5844

VICE PRESIDENT: Mark Stoler

SECRETARY: Hal Bliss

TREASURER: Michael Harris

Parliamentarian. Hal Bliss

Board members thru 2020

Don Swanson

Dick Cox

Board Members thru 2021

Brad Cox

Cal Thompson

David Smith

Shelly Dudley

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Editorial: Chairman: Brad Cox. John Bamberl

Finance: Chairman: David Smith, Mike Harris, Dick Cox

History: Chairman: Dick Cox, Brad Cox Mark Fischer

By Laws: Dick Cox, Mark Stoler Hal Bliss

Genealogy: Chairman: Brad Cox, Cal Thompson, Jim Davis

Social Media: John Bamberl

Greeters: John Bamberl, Mary Anne Hammond,: Gary Shapiro, Bob Breen, Bill Thomas, George Bennett, Alan Stearns,

Web Master: Marc Echeveste, Brad Cox

Grapeshot: Brad Cox

Officers, Staff, and Meetings

Meetings @

Scottsdale Civic Center Library (Auditorium)

3839 N Drinkwater Blvd

Scottsdale AZ

3rd Tuesday of the month

September thru May (except Nov. Dec. for holidays)

5:40 PM - 7:30 PM \$35 Annual Dues (individual)

\$45 Annual Dues (family)

EVERYONE WELCOME

www.scottsdalecwrt.org

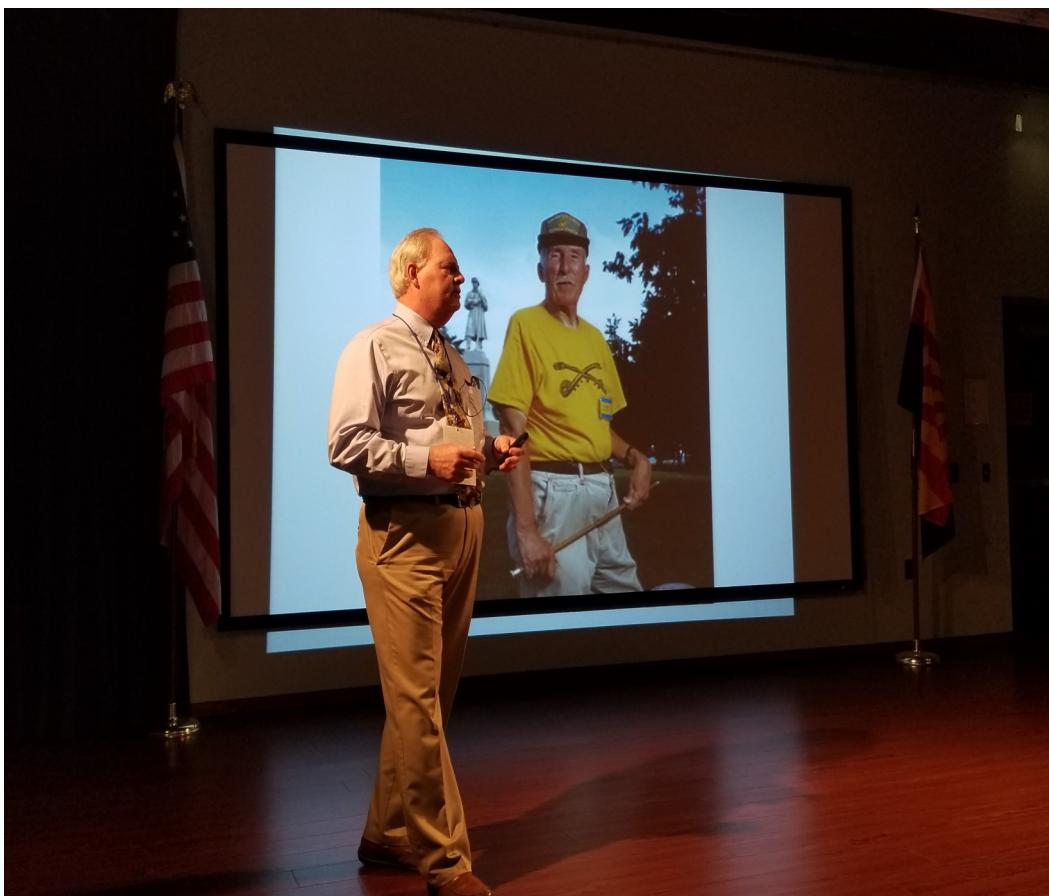
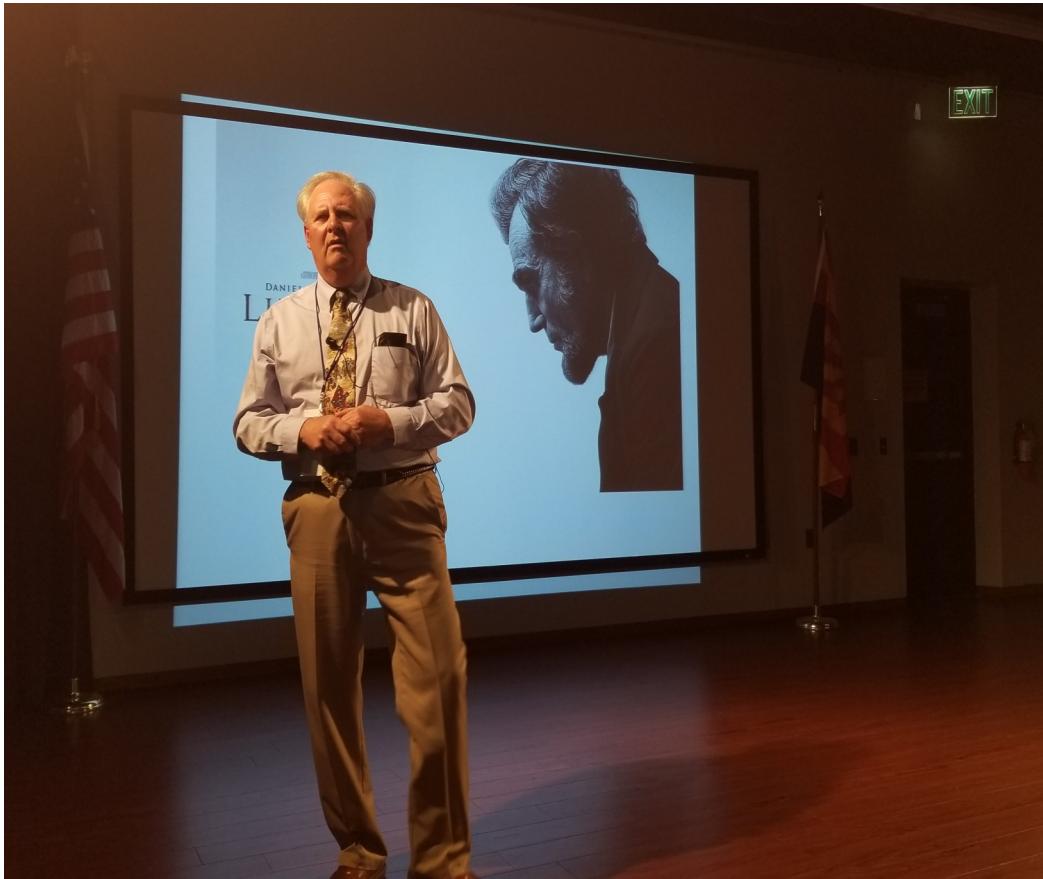
SCWRT #274

7349 N Via Paseo Del Sur Ste 515

Scottsdale AZ 85258-3749

e-mail: scottsdalecwrt@gmail.com

Photos from our January meeting





The Great Escape – From Libby

“...a place so narrow, dark and damp, and more like a grave than any place short of a man’s last home.” – A former Union prisoner at Libby describing the tunnel he helped dig

“There was never a single day that I did not consider my escape.” - Union Col. Thomas Rose

The three-story building, with a large cellar, was a former food warehouse in Richmond, Virginia, adjacent to the James river. Luther Libby had leased the building for several years, where he operated a wholesale grocery business, including a ship's chandlery which packaged provisions for long voyages. By early 1862, the Confederate Army took control of the building and converted it into a prison to house the many Union officers captured in the early stages of the Civil War.



Conditions at the Libby prison quickly became terrible. One early Confederate Commander was Lt. David H. Todd, half-brother to Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of President Abraham Lincoln. Lt. Todd did not want the

assignment and protested to his superiors that he should be in battle areas. One reason for his objection, to what otherwise might have seemed a safe and comfortable position, was that some Southerners questioned his true loyalty because of his sister's position. Perhaps as a result, to prove his disdain for Yankees, Lt. Todd became more and more harsh in the treatment of the prisoners under his control. He confiscated packages of aid sent by relatives of the prisoners, and even interrupted needed medical care, before he finally got his wish and was transferred. Although subsequent commanders were not as deliberately punitive as Lt. Todd, the conditions within the prison remained unhealthy with no heat, limited food, minimal medical care and severe overcrowding. The Confederates did not decide to intentionally cause these deprivations; the simple fact was that the Confederate government did not have adequate resources to care for the thousands of prisoners under their control in facilities in Virginia, Georgia, and other southern states.

The Libby prison was just one of several buildings in that warehouse district and there was no high fence or wall surrounding the area. Over time, prisoners attempted to escape by leaving the converted warehouse at night and scurrying from one building to the next until they could blend into the city of Richmond. Almost all were caught and returned, and, while some may have been killed, a few did make it to Union lines. To most of the prisoners at Libby, however, the chances of a successful escape were small and the risk was too great. One early prisoner at Libby was Captain Andrew Hamilton, who began to plan an escape using a tunnel, but, at first, he had no support from other prisoners; so, his plan was never fully developed.

Unknown to him at the time, Hamilton had been promoted to Major, so in some accounts, his rank has been confused. Then in September 1863, Colonel Thomas E. Rose was captured and sent to Libby prison. Soon he learned of Major Hamilton's preliminary plan and the two worked together; however, Colonel Rose was the more committed of the two to try to escape, and was such a strong leader that he quickly enlisted about twenty-five men to participate. The plan was to dig a tunnel far enough from the Libby building and the guards who were stationed around it, to emerge and just walk out of the area.

Conceiving the idea was the easy part. Any tunnel would need to be at least sixty feet long, dug through compacted soil, and large enough to accommodate a man moving in and out with bagged debris. The challenges they faced included the lack of any proper tools, nor a way to shore up the tunnel, and they needed a place to hide the removed dirt. Also, this would not be a quick dig and Colonel Rose originally estimated at least thirty days of daily effort.

But they did have one advantage. The building had a cellar with an abandoned kitchen in one part; however, it was infested with rats, often flooded by the nearby James River, and filled with fouled, noxious air. Because of these conditions, Confederate guards rarely entered and must have assumed no prisoner would either. The cellar was referred to as "Rat Hell" by prisoners and guards alike; but the determined Colonel Rose saw it as an opportunity and took it.

Most prisoners were held on the second and third floors and the first floor was used primarily for temporary holding and processing of new inmates. It also had several divided areas for guards to gather and for storage. Rose noted that a chimney ran through the three floors and out the roof and surmised that it must originate in the cellar. Since no fires were allowed in the prison, even for warmth in the winter, the chimney was, in essence, a passageway. By removing a few bricks, he was able to slide down the inside of the chimney and emerge into the cellar. Photographs of the building show a few small windows at cellar level, so there was some light, but not much. The old kitchen floor was covered in straw, lots of straw, which would come in handy for the tunnelers to hide the removed dirt.

About January 20, 1864, Col. Rose determined it was time to start. Over the first several days, Rose and a few men would enter the cellar after morning roll call, remove enough bricks and stones from the foundation wall, and begin to dig the tunnel entrance. The tunnel would be about six feet below the surface and about three feet wide and high. Their target was an abandoned tobacco shed which, if they tunneled up through the floor into the shed, would hide their emergence from guards. When other prisoners learned that the escape plan was actually being implemented, Colonel Rose had no problem recruiting more men to help dig the tunnel. Rose would have two men slide down the chimney into the cellar where one man would crawl to the farthest point in the tunnel, and the other would remain at the entrance. Their only tools were iron rods they found in the cellar, some large clam shells, and spittoons to collect the dirt. They tied a spittoon in the middle of a long rope with one end at the face of the tunnel where the lead digger would fill

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The return to the second or third floor required a bit of acrobatics and contortions. To inch his way back up, the man would put his back to one wall of the chimney reach out with hands and feet to the opposite wall, and with small upward thrusts he would slowly rise in the chimney. It must have been exhausting.

About the "Rat Hell" cellar, one former prisoner wrote, "*It was dark and you could barely see your own hand, the air was bad, and the rats would crawl over us, squealing. Some men could not stay at the task. I did because I wanted out.*"

Another wrote, "*It was impossible to breathe the air of the tunnel for many minutes; the miner, however, would dig as long as his strength would allow, or until his candle was extinguished by the foul air; he would then make his way out, and another would take his place – a place so narrow, dark and damp, and more like a grave than any place short of a man's last home.*"

Many men "*could not stay at the task*" at all, and the few who had the fortitude to work in those conditions could not do it for long. As a result, Colonel Rose rotated the men at least every hour. After about fifteen days, one of the lead diggers, a young Lieutenant, decided they must be under the shed and reported to Col.

Rose that he was ready to break through. Col. Rose checked the tunnel length and disagreed, believing they were at least ten feet short. The Lieutenant went back into the tunnel and, disregarding Col. Rose's orders, dug upward and broke through the surface. We can only imagine his surprise, and horror, as he heard sentry footsteps and voices very near the hole. He quickly plugged the small hole and had to report his mistake to Col. Rose. The disappointment among the group must have been palpable and the fear was real. The men knew that if one of the sentries were to step on the weakened surface, his foot would break through and the tunnel would be discovered. But Col. Rose's leadership was on full display as he rallied the men and encouraged them to keep working.

But why did the Confederate guards not notice that men, who were in the cellar and tunnel, were missing from their assigned places on the second and third floors? The oversights occurred because, by early 1864, there were over one thousand prisoners in Libby and roll call was disorganized. On most mornings and evenings, the guards would have all prisoners stand in designated groups and have a senior Union officer call out the name of each prisoner. It was relatively easy for another man to respond "present" when one of the digger's name was called. In at least one instance, however, Confederate guards conducted the roll call and discovered a man was missing; but they erroneously concluded he had escaped. In fact, he was a digger at the time, so Colonel Rose decided that the man must remain in the cellar until the tunnel was finished. As it turned out, that prisoner was left in the foul air for three more days.

In February 9, 1864, the lead digger, in this case Col. Rose himself, broke through into the shed. That evening 109 men, including Colonel Rose and Major Hamilton, crawled through the tunnel and scattered throughout Richmond. They knew that Union troops were within a few days walking distance, but they needed to avoid the many Confederate patrols which surrounded the city. A few decided to swim across the James river, which was adjacent to the prison, but the water was swift and very cold and two of the escapees drowned. Forty-eight were recaptured over the next few days and returned to Libby; however, fifty-nine others reached Union lines. Among those who were successful in locating Union positions was Major Hamilton, who had initially developed the escape plan.

Unfortunately, Colonel Rose, who had led the effort, was re-captured before he could cross into Union territory. He had made his way through Richmond and was nearing a place where he expected to encounter Union picket lines when he spotted several soldiers in blue uniforms. He thought he had been rescued; however, when he identified himself, instead of receiving the expected protection, the soldiers pointed their rifles at him. As it turned out, in a case of very bad luck by Colonel Rose, the soldiers were actually Confederates who had donned the uniforms to penetrate the Union picket lines to gather information. They then returned Col. Rose to Libby.

Confederate prison officials conducted an inquiry into the prison break and quickly realized the serious lack of oversight by the guards. Two guards even testified that they saw several men walking from the old tobacco shed into Richmond, but assumed they were off-duty Confederate soldiers sneaking away from their camp for a night on the town. Also, in the scramble to find someone accountable, the Confederate commander charged Robert Ford, a Black teamster who delivered supplies to the prison, as an accomplice in the escape. He was beaten and imprisoned at Libby; however, a few months later, in another lapse by guards, he managed to just walk away. In subsequent interviews, Colonel Rose stated that Mr. Ford was innocent of the charge and had given no assistance to the prisoners.

It became clear to the investigators that the re-captured Colonel Rose had been the leader of the escape. To limit any further mischief by the Colonel, they kept him isolated from other prisoners until he was included in a prisoner exchange in April 1864. He promptly returned to a Union Brigade, was given a brevet (temporary) promotion to Brigadier General, and again led men into battle. In June, 1864, Rose was seriously wounded in Georgia as Union forces closed in on Atlanta. He recovered from his injuries and continued his career in the U.S. Army until his retirement in 1894.

Thomas Ellwood Rose, the architect of the Civil War's Great Escape, died in 1907, and was given a hero's burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Contact the author at gadorris2@gmail.com and find other articles under "blogs" at the website



Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable 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!

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