



THE drum roll

406th Regular Meeting Volume 41 Number 8 April 5, 2024



PLEASE NOTE!!!!

The March meeting will be in person at the Arlington Hts. Library on Friday, April 5, 2024, and on ZOOM, at 7:00 P.M. The library is at the corner of W. Euclid Ave. and N. Dunton Ave. in Arlington Hts. Underground parking is available, and you can take the elevator to the second floor and be right at the meeting site.

“The Birth of Combat Photography”

Larry Hewitt will present the who, what, where, when, why, and how the firm of McPherson & Oliver made photographic history. Between June 14 and July 9, 1863, the final 25 days of the 48-day siege of Port Hudson, McPherson & Oliver moved about the battlefield memorializing soldiers in action--and in combat! In the process of making this visual record of opposing armies actively engaged, an image of Union soldiers' sharpshooting opposite the Priest Cap was not

these two artists only claim to photographic fame. Other images include one taken at midnight (the first ever taken in the dark), one converted into a composite print (created by combining portions of two negatives), the Confederate army at the surrender ceremony, and examples of time-lapse photography.

McPherson & Oliver also produced the most widely circulated cartes-de-visite of the Civil War, three different views of “Whipped Peter.” But the duo seldom receives credit for these images of an abused slave. Other studios, including Matthew Brady's, published them as their own work. As with the battlefield they immortalized, McPherson and Oliver deserve better.



Lawrence Lee Hewitt, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, received his B.A. (1974) from the University of Kentucky and his M.A. (1977) and Ph.D. (1984) from Louisiana State University. He was the manager of the Port Hudson (1978-1982) and Camp Moore (1982-1986) Historic Sites in Louisiana and taught at Southeastern Louisiana University (1985-1996). He was a tenured full professor when he resigned to marry a native of Chicago, where he currently resides. The 1991 recipient of SLU's President's Award for Excellence in Research, the 1991 Charles L. Dufour Award, the 2011 Dr. Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr. Award, and the 2013 Nevins-Freeman Award, he is a past president of the Baton Rouge Civil War Round Table.

Hewitt's publications include *Port Hudson, Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi* (1987), *The Confederate High Command...* (1990), *Leadership During the Civil War...* (1992), *Louisianians in the Civil War* (2002), *Kentuckians in Gray* (2008), four volumes of *Confederate Generals in the Western Theater* (2010-2017), *Lee and His Generals: Essays in Honor of T. Harry Williams* (2012), three volumes of *Confederate Generals in the Trans-Mississippi* (2013-2019), and, *To Succeed or Perish: The Diaries of Sergeant Edmund Trent Eggleston, 1st Mississippi Light Artillery Regiment, CSA* (2015), which won the 2016 General Basil W. Duke Literary Award. Andrew J. Wagenhoffer's blog Civil War Books and Authors named Hewitt's *Port Hudson: The Most Significant Battlefield Photographs of the Civil War* 2021 Book of the Year.

Larry is currently writing biographies of David Glasgow Farragut and Richard Heron Anderson

and researching a history of the 14th Louisiana Infantry.

THE ELECTION OF 1860

The 1860 Presidential election both placed Abraham Lincoln in the White House and precipitated secession declarations in Southern states. But its roots go back to the 1824 contest, and perhaps further than that. On March 1, Steve Alban laid out the extended story.

Alban set the 1824 election – the first time the contest featured four primary contenders – as the base for 1860, but then moved the starting needle to the War of 1812. It was an odd war, one in which the British goals are still obscured, and which settled practically nothing except for firmly setting the Canadian border. It also set in motion a number of trends in the United States: Tariffs, a National Road, coastal fortifications, and an increasing number of British goods and British immigrants (many of them “undesirables” in Alban's term.)

When the decidedly anti-British Andrew Jackson entered the race for 1824, the British determined to work behind the scenes to influence the result, especially since one of the other contenders was John Quincy Adams – himself a former minister to Britain, and held in esteem by the English. When the electoral votes were tallied, all four candidates – Jackson, Adams, Henry Clay, and William Crawford – received votes, but none had enough to win. This threw the election into the House of Representatives, where what some termed the “Corrupt Bargain” – by which Clay (also with strong ties to England) threw his support to Adams, and was subsequently named Secretary of State – put Adams in the White House.

Henry Clay then provides a link to Abraham Lincoln. As a young lawyer and politician, Lincoln admired Clay perhaps more than any other. (And Mary Todd's family plantation was right next to Clay's in Kentucky!) When Lincoln was elected to Congress, he became acquainted with Clay (as well as Adams). Another highly important contact was Thurlow Weed of New York, an influential Whig (Lincoln's affiliation at that time) politician and newspaper publisher. Weed would be a mover and shaker behind the election of Zachary Taylor in 1848, and later in Republican operations

after the Whigs folded. Alban pointed out that Clay and Weed were Abraham Lincoln's biggest political influences. Both were anti-slavery, as was Lincoln – and both were pro-British (which Lincoln was not).

As the slavery question reached crisis level in the 1850's, Lincoln became an increasingly important voice, eventually leading to the famous series of debates with Stephen A. Douglas, which brought Lincoln to national prominence. But how did a contest for an Illinois senate seat become widely followed across the country? Thurlow Weed. He covered the debates extensively in his (now Republican) newspapers; Democratic papers were thus forced to provide coverage at a similar ramped-up level. Lincoln lost the race, but saw his fame greatly augmented.

Thus, when it came time for the Republicans to choose a candidate for 1860, Lincoln was in the mix. He was not the frontrunner; William H. Seward (a New Yorker, and a protégé of Weed's; despite his role in covering the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Weed was more pro-Seward) and Salmon P. Chase were the favorites. The Republican convention was held in Chicago, in a temporary structure known as the Wigwam, which held some 10,000 people. Lincoln supporters flooded the Wigwam and thus were able to keep out Seward supporters; combined with backroom dealings, the dark horse Lincoln won a nomination he was not expected to win. The canny Lincoln was always a step or two ahead of the party diehards.

As in 1824, the election of 1860 featured four primary candidates: Lincoln, Douglas, John Breckinridge, and John Bell. Lincoln wasn't supposed to win this one, either. Unlike 1824, this one did not go into the House; Lincoln garnered enough electoral votes to win outright. The key swing state was Pennsylvania, with its 27 electoral votes. Had they gone to someone else, the 1860 election would have wound up being decided in the House. Alban suggested scenarios in which Breckinridge, or even Bell, might have been chosen instead. Post-election, the Radical Republican hardliners did what they could to move the nation towards war, and tried to control Lincoln's cabinet choices. (As usual, Lincoln was several steps ahead of them). The Radicals also took an antagonistic stance towards the British.

Ah, the British. What did they have to do with all this? Alban posited the question of who had the most to gain by a divided United States, and suggested that the British had influence with some politicians in the run-up to war. Certainly, they had a history, at least since 1824, of meddling in U.S. internal affairs. And once war commenced, the English government took a decided pro-Southern stance. Alban suggested that the Trent affair may have held a specific warning to Britain (as well as France). He also detailed the many ways Britain aided the Confederacy: Operating spies from Montreal, financial loans and credits, maintaining political connections, sending material through the blockade, and building raiding vessels. England also served as a haven for former Rebels after the war ended. Yet they never formally recognized the Confederacy; perhaps, Alban suggested, they preferred to leave the door open to regain those former colonies for the empire, rather than seeing the South become its own nation.

The 1860 election was the culmination of a number of longer-term processes, and may have even been influenced by a foreign power. On behalf of the Round Table I would like to thank Steve Alban for laying out the path.

Pat McCormick

Speaker List

Sept. 1, 2023: Jerry Allen: Old Abe the War Eagle
Oct. 6, 2023: Bruce Allardice: "Loose Lips"--
Military Secrecy During the Civil War
Nov. 3, 2023: Dave Powell Grant at Chattanooga
Dec.1, 2023 Rob Girardi Stonewall Jackson
Jan.5, 2024: Larry Hewitt Combat Photography
Feb. 2, 2024: Dennis Doyle Illinois Units at
Gettysburg
Mar. 1, 2024: Steve Alban: The Election of 1860
Apr. 5, 2024: Lawrence Hewitt Photographs of
Port Hudson
May 3, 2024: Jon Sebastian When Draftees Did
Their Duty: Four Months in the 51st Illinois Infantry
June 7, 2024: Diana Dretske: The Bonds of War:
The 96th Illinois
Sept. 6, 2024: Leslie Goddard TBA
Oct. 4, 2024: TBA
Nov. 1, 2024: Doug Stiles: Lincoln's Watch
Dec. 6, 2024: Gordon Ramsey: Music of the Civil
War

MANHUNT

This Apple+TV series is being streamed on TV weekly. It is not free. You need to subscribe to Apple+TV. It is based on the Non-Fiction book by James L. Swanson "The 12 Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer" published in 2006. Most critics and historians have spoken favorably about it. I have watched the first three productions and have enjoyed them.

JR

Upcoming Events

At this time, we are not charging dues for the 2023-2024 year.

Join Zoom Meeting on Friday, April 5, 2024, at 7 PM.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqVjJ1WmZsTTd1VIJNRCtLcjJLdz09>



2023-24 Officers and Trustees

President	Bruce Allardice
1 st Vice President	Jerry Allen
2 nd Vice President	Wayne Rhine
Secretary	
Treasurer	Pat McCormick
Assistant Treasurer	
Membership	
Historian	Pat McCormick
Trustee	Tom Gavigan (2024)
Trustee (2024)	Fred Reczkowitz
Trustee	Danielle Kafka (2026)
Trustee	Susan Hirsch
Trustee	Alisa Corsi (2028)
Trustee	Laurie Schiller

Appointed Positions

Newsletter Editor Jerry Rodosky

gjrodosky@gmail.com

847-420-1639

Important Announcements!!!!!!

Our Saturday discussion will be on the third Saturday of April, the 20th! The topic will be: George Thomas, The Rock of Chickamauga. We will continue the discussion and this month we will be discussing the Atlanta and Nashville campaigns.

We have shortened our Saturday discussion in order to attract more participants. It will go from 10 AM to around 11:30 AM. Please try to get in on this. Pat does a great job, and everyone can jump in on the discussion. Our participation has increased. Let's continue the trend.

The link works for this meeting, also. Don't miss it.