



THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

# THE drum roll

410th Regular Meeting Volume 42 Number 2 October 4, 2024



## PLEASE NOTE!!!!

The October meeting will be in person at the Arlington Hts. Library, Oct. 4, 2024, and on ZOOM, at 7:00 P.M. The Library is located at the corner of W. Euclid Ave. and Dunton St. in Arlington Hts.

Our own Charlie Banks is our speaker on the topic of the Railroads at the time of the Civil War.

The American railroads were a disaster throughout the first year of the civil war. They were run by the individual railroads under the premise Secretary of War. Also, the Generals in the field were exerting their power to control the railroads in their sector. A big shakeup occurred at the beginning of 1862 with Edwin Stanton as new Secretary of War and the creation of a railroad construction corps under Herman Haupt. Come and hear about this extraordinary man who had a piece in saving the union.

Charlie Banks has a great interest in the railroads of our country. One of his favorites is the Baltimore Ohio Railroad from his childhood of hearing the stories from his mother, who was born and raised there. He follows the Baltimore Orioles and Chicago Blackhawks. He plans at least one trip a year to a Civil War battlefield to expand his horizons. In his spare time, he likes to read books on history and work on his model railroad. He is a past president of Lake County, Northern Illinois and McHenry County CWRT. He is currently Vice-President of McHenry County CWRT.

## CLARA PAYS A VISIT

Unquestionably, Clara Barton was one of the most famous women of the Civil War era. On September 6, Ms. Barton herself paid the Round Table a visit – as presented by Leslie Goddard.

Barton's wartime talk started by thanking those present for their donations, primarily fruits and vegetables (including raw onions, which she noted that the soldiers ate like apples, craving the acid). She then demonstrated how to roll bandages: Using long strips of almost any fabric, 2" or 1" wide, roll them as tightly and evenly as possible in order to stack as many as possible in a given space.

Barton then launched into her backstory. She was born in Massachusetts on Christmas Day 1821, her four siblings (two male, two female) being ten or more years older. Naturally, they teased her as a child,

but also taught her; she referred to having six parents instead of two. One sister taught her to read, while a brother taught her to ride a horse – bareback. Another brother indirectly “instructed” her in the skill for which she would eventually become famous; an accident left him bed-bound for approximately two years, during which time Barton developed her skills as a nurse (changing bandages, issuing medicine, even leech application – which she then demonstrated.)

Her unusual upbringing led Barton to want to be useful – to make a difference, rather than simply marry and become a housewife. As she became a young adult, nursing was in the future, since hospitals were few and female nurses unheard of. Instead, Barton took up teaching. Starting in the proverbial one room schoolhouse, she would teach in the first free private school in New Jersey -without pay, receiving only room and board. Barton stated that she started with six students and had six hundred by the end of the first year (this was probably an exaggeration, as Goddard later pointed out when she segued from presenter to historian; Barton was prone, at times, to overclaiming.) She built a new school, but when it was complete, a man was hired over her as principal, prompting her to resign.

What next? Barton secured a job in the U.S. Patent Office, the only woman in a department full of men. She did receive equal pay, stating firmly that she “will never do a man’s job for less pay.” But her co-workers resented her presence, referring to her as “a pest in petticoats” and occasionally even spitting at her. Barton put up with it.

In Washington at the start of the Civil War, Barton discovered that when the 6th Massachusetts arrived after having been attacked by citizens in Baltimore, their luggage had also been stolen in the process, and they were in need of virtually everything. Besides gathering supplies locally, Barton wrote to a newspaper back in Massachusetts asking for donations, and the response was “overwhelming,”

In July, the battle of Bull Run led to a terrible situation regarding care of the wounded. Barton obtained permission from Quartermaster Colonel David Rucker to bring supplies to the needy troops. At Cedar Mountain in 1862, Barton answered another “appalling” situation. Shocked

by the post-battle suffering, she worked four days and three nights assisting the medical staff, with barely any sleep. One surgeon stated that “she supplied us with everything.”

Soon thereafter, Barton showed up at the site of a major battle – as the combat was taking place. Seeing the Union right fall back through a cornfield, in mid-morning she brought supplies over to the scene. Soldiers were being tended to in a barn, some of their wounds being wrapped with corn leaves as an expedient. Barton described the head surgeon as “shocked” at the arrival of both her and her supplies; she was soon working hard alongside the medical personnel, even as the fighting continued. As she was giving a soldier water, a minie ball passed through her sleeve and killed the man she was tending. She never mended the hole (and showed the damage to the audience.) Short of food on site, Barton discovered that corn meal had been used in packing some of the items she had brought, alleviating the shortage; as darkness approached and the surgeon lamented a lack of candles, she produced plenty from among her supplies. Barton worked well into the night.

At the end of this account, after expressing her admiration for the manner in which these fearfully wounded soldiers held up under their strife, Barton revealed that this long day was of course the battle of Antietam, and mentioned her appreciation for the impact the victory had on the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.

An encounter with paroled Union prisoners led her in a new direction: learning the fate of missing soldiers. Barton used her political contacts to get word to Abraham Lincoln that she would like to assist with that problem. This led to her setting up the Office of Missing Soldiers, occupying three rooms in a boarding house and employing ten clerks to assist her. With nursing and medical supplies now being handled by larger organizations, this office became Barton’s focus for the remainder of the war. She closed her core presentation by declaring: “I am a U.S. soldier; the Army of the Potomac is my army.” (The talk being staged during wartime, her postwar career was not part of it; when she reverted to historian Goddard, her role in founding the American Red Cross was touched upon.)

On behalf of the Round Table, I would like to thank Clara Barton/Leslie Goddard.

Pat McCormick.

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SATURDAY/TUESDAY Discussion

We're looking to increase the attendance for the Saturday discussion. The more people we have, the more of a discussion it will be.

Our October discussion will be on Tuesday evening, October 15, from 7:00 PM till about 8:30 PM. The topic, continuing our theme of discussing the various General Officers, will be William S. Rosecrans. Come listen in and share what you know or ask about something you'd like to know about Rosecrans.

The link for the reg meeting works for this.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqViJ1WmZsTTd1VlJNRCtLcjJLdz09>

Speakers

Sept. 6, 2024, Leslie Goddard: Clara Barton, Civil War Nurse

Oct. 4, 2024, Charlie Banks: General Herman Haupt

Nov. 1, 2024, Doug Stiles: Lincoln's Watch

Dec. 6, 2024, Dave Oberg: The First Illinois Light Artillery

Jan. 3, 2025, Gordon Ramsey: Music of the Civil War

Feb. 7, 2025, Father Bob Miller: Civilian Life in Vicksburg

Mar. 7, 2025, Jan Rasmussen: The Dakota War

Apr. 4, 2025, Brian Conroy: TBA

May 2, 2025, Dave Powell: TBA

June 7, 2025, Bob Presman: Could the South Have Won the Civil War?



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Newsletter Editor	Jerry Rodosky
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Upcoming Events

Join Zoom Meeting on Friday, Oct. 4, 2024, at 7 PM.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqViJ1WmZsTTd1VlJNRCtLcjJLdz09>

This link works for the discussion group also.

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Questions? Comments? Email me or call.

Jerry Rodosky

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I will forward your questions or comments to the appropriate person.

Remember: The Board has decided not to charge dues for the upcoming 2024-2025 year. Let's use this to invite new members. What a way to try us out!