



THE drum roll

420th Regular Meeting Volume 43 Number 2 October 3, 2025



PLEASE NOTE!!!!!! PLEASE NOTE!!!!!!!!!!

The October meeting will be in person at the Arlington Hts. Historical Museum on Friday, October 3, 2025, and on ZOOM, at 7:00 P.M. The museum is one block West of the Arlington Hts. Library. in Arlington Hts. Outdoor public parking is available just across the street from the museum.

Our speaker for October is our own Jerry Allen. His topic is General James Blair Steedman.

And Then He Was a Lion

Major General James Blair Steedman (pronounced Stead-men), being a former newspaper man was always concerned that reporters would spell his name wrong. At the Battle of Chickamauga, Steedman was a division commander in the Reserve Corps which came to the timely aid of the Army of the Cumberland on

the last day of the battle. During a crucial moment, his horse was shot from under him. He immediately, got up on a borrowed horse to resume his desperate work. His aide, who was sure his boss was going to get himself killed, asked if he had any last words, Steedman replied, Yes. See that these damn newspaper reporters spell my name right.

Historian William Shanks, in his "Personal Recollections of Distinguished Generals" had this to say about Steedman, "Steedman dares to assume responsibilities which are at times appalling and does so with so much cool impudence as silences you in astonishment, and such sublime nerve and boldness as hushes you in admiration. He defies argument by the preposterousness of his plans, and silences opposition by the daring with which he executes them. He hesitates at nothing. The magnitude of an undertaking has a charm for him, and he accomplishes great things in the most unexpected of ways."

Jerry Allen Brief Biography

Jerry Allen is a retired pension actuary currently living in Cary, IL. He has been a life-long amateur historian with main interest in the American Civil War. Jerry is a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago and the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table. He is a member of seven Civil War Round Tables. For over 25 years he has been making presentations to history groups along with living history performances.

Our guest speaker at the September meeting was Charles (Chuck) Rebesco. He spoke to us about Ward's Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg.

John Henry Hobart Ward was promoted to command a brigade after the Battle of Chantilly in September of 1862. In late June, 1863, Ward was leading his Brigade up to Gettysburg in torrential rain and nearly impassable roads. They reached Gettysburg shortly after dark on the night of July 1, 1863. The Brigade was very low on food but had plenty of ammunition. Later, this would come in very hand when the Confederate Army was low on ammo and Ward had plenty. Because of the heavy rain the Union Army was late to form for fighting on July 2.

Ward was wet but held the line as the left flank while the Union troops arrived. He performed quite admirably in spite of the Union Army drawing men from Ward's Brigade to supplement their own shortages. Ward's holding the line gave the Union Army precious time to gather forces and continue the fight.

Up until 1864, Ward had an excellent reputation. There were several incidents after Gettysburg where it was thought that Ward had been drinking and was unfit for duty. He was never court martialled and retired honorably from the Army.

Ward's problems kept him from looking as good as many other officers. History has not been kind to John Ward, but when the chips were down, he delivered. He also supported Gen. Meade when he did not pursue Lee after Gettysburg. He maintained that the Army was physically and mentally exhausted after days of marching and then intensive fighting and were becoming less effective in their pursuit of Lee.

There were several attempts to bring charges against Ward for his actions after Gettysburg, but none went

forward. Ward worked in the New York court system until his death in 1903.

On behalf of the NICWRT, a big Thank You to Dr. Chuck Rebesco for his time and talent sharing.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqVjJ1WmZsTTd1VlJNRClLcjJLdz09>

[This link works for the regular meeting and discussions.](#)

Speakers

Sept. 5, 2025, Dr. Chuck Rebesco, War's Brigade at Gettysburg

Oct. 3, 2024, Jerry Allen: General James Blair Steedman

Nov. 7, 2025,

Dec. 5, 2025,

Jan. 2, 2026,

Feb. 6, 2026,

Mar. 6, 2026,

Apr. 3, 2026,

May 1, 2026,

June 5, 2026,



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

My Upcoming Presentations - Charlie Banks

- December 12, 2025, Kenosha Civil War Museum
12 noon to 1:00 pm Civil War Railroads
- January 17, 2026, Mineral Point CWRT Civil War Railroads
- February 10, 2026, Armchair Generals 11:45 am to 1:00 pm Civil War Thru Postal Covers
- March 10, 2026, McHenry County CWRT 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm Battle of South Mountain;
- April 25, 2026, Salt Creek CWRT 11:00 am to 12:30 pm General Nathaniel P. Banks

Charlie always gives an interesting presentation, and, boy, does he know railroads!

Upcoming Events

Join Zoom Meeting on Friday, October 3, 2025, at 7 PM.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqVjJ1WmZsTTd1VlJNRCtLcjJLdz09>

This link works for the discussion group also. Our next discussion will be on Wed. Oct. 15, 2025, at 7 PM. If there is a conflict with a Cubs playoff game, this date will change. Stay tuned. We will be discussing the role of West Point in the Civil War.
