



THE drum roll

409th Regular Meeting Volume 42 Number 1 Sept. 6, 2024



PLEASE NOTE!!!!

The September meeting will be in person at the Arlington Hts. Library, Sept. 6, 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.

Please check the announcements on Page 4.

Our speaker for the September meeting is Leslie Goddard.

Clara Barton, Civil War Nurse

Long before she founded the American Red Cross, Clara Barton earned fame as the first woman to serve as a nurse on the front lines of a battlefield. This historical portrayal brings to life the story of Barton's work during the American Civil War. What led her to decide to put her efforts into wartime provisioning? And what was it like for her working at battlefield hospitals? Her stories –

funny, poignant and sometimes heartbreaking – reveal the medical conditions Civil War soldiers endured and the courage required for a woman to defy conventions during a national crisis.

Leslie Goddard, Ph.D., is an award-winning historian who has been portraying great women in history for more than twenty years. She holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. from Northwestern University as well as a master's degree and an undergraduate degree in theater. A former museum director, she currently works full-time as an actress, public speaker and author. Her portrayals have been seen by audiences in more than thirty-five states, including scores of universities, museums, libraries, civic organizations and Chautauqua festivals.

Come hear Leslie Goddard speak on Sept.6, 2024.

THE BONDS OF WAR

Sometimes a simple photograph can lead down a rabbit hole to a compelling story. On June 7, Diana Dretske presented just such a portrait.

In 1962, a photograph of five soldiers belonging to the 96th Illinois Volunteers was donated to a Lake County museum, now the Dunn Museum. Initially only one subject was identified; eventually the other names came to light. The five: James Murrie, William Lewin, Loughlin Madden, Edward Murray, and John Taylor – immigrants all, from England, Scotland and Ireland.

The 96th Illinois Volunteers were formed in response to the August, 1862, call for 600,000 volunteers. The regiment mustered in from September 5 to October 8, 1862, at Camp Fuller in Rockford. It consisted of four companies from Lake County and six from Jo Daviess County; the commander was Colonel Thomas Champion (of Daviess), the Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Clark (from Lake). 71% of the recruits were American-born, 29% immigrants. Their civilian livelihoods were typical of most volunteers, with an additional, uncommon vocation also well-represented, among the Jo Daviess contingent: lead mining.

The five-man photo was taken about October 1, during the mustering period. All had enlisted in Company C. The oldest of them was Edward Murray, a farmer in Russell, Illinois; he served as a role model for his younger British Isles compatriots. Their motivation was simple and direct: by fighting to uphold U.S. ideals, they would become more “American.”

Fighting, however, proved elusive for an extended period. For much of the next year, as part of the Reserve Corps, Army of the Cumberland, the 96th Illinois served in rear areas. Drill, guard duty, construction and other support services were their lot in life. But in September, 1863, all that changed. Their first (and most important, as categorized by Dretske) combat would be at a key moment in a key battle: Chickamauga.

After two days of contact, on September 20, 1863 the Confederate Army of Tennessee punched a hole in the Army of the Cumberland’s defenses, driving about half of the Union force off the field. Under the redoubtable George Thomas, the balance of the army held on grimly as the fighting spread west along the Horseshoe Ridge complex. At a key moment, Reserve Corps

troops – including the 96th Illinois –arrived to reinforce Thomas. (Dretske noted that, at first, Thomas was unsure whether it was friendly or enemy soldiers in the approaching dust cloud, causing some anxious moments.) They arrived in the nick of time, reaching the crest of the ridge just ahead of the advancing Rebels.

The 96th Illinois had been in service for just under a year, and was consequently well-drilled over that time period, but had never seen real combat. The regiment took 419 men into their first fight. As the newly-arrived brigades drove the enemy in retreat, Colonel Champion ordered the green 96th in pursuit along a spur of the ridge. When they ran smack dab into Southern artillery at close range, they held briefly then broke back in confusion. They would re-form and continue the fight – and in fact a couple of companies would eventually move out beyond the left of the main line, becoming the furthest flank units on the ridge. But, as Dretske noted, their retreat after the initial surge, and the seeming disappearance of part of the regiment, led to some undeserved post-battle criticism. In fact, they turned in a solid performance. And they fought hard, as their 225 casualties would attest.

Those casualties included Lieutenant Colonel Clarke, mortally wounded, as well as some of the British Isles comrades. Edward Murray, by now a sergeant, took a bullet in the spine while in the act of reloading his musket during the initial surge forward, temporarily paralyzing him. His friend Lewin tried to carry him back but had to leave Murray behind when the regiment fell back. Murray was captured by the Rebels, spending ten days on the field. Although medics determined he was “too critical for care,” a local woman gave him chicken broth daily, and he recovered enough to be taken into captivity. (Murray recorded that his benefactor inquired, “Why are you all down here?”) He would be paroled in late October. Surviving the war, Murray died in Waukegan in 1909, the bullet still lodged in his spine likely contributing to his demise.

John Taylor was also wounded in the 96th’s initial charge. He was evacuated to Nashville, his arm amputated, and he died six weeks later. William Lewin was grazed by a bullet, but was otherwise okay. He soldiered on until being captured at Resaca, Georgia in May 1864, during the Atlanta campaign. Loughlin Madden was luckier, making it through Chickamauga unscathed. However, while on picket duty at Chattanooga, Madden was captured. In 1864, he and Lewin would meet up at the notorious Andersonville

prison camp, where Madden would die of scurvy. The fifth comrade, James Murrie, missed Chickamauga due to illness. (Thus, of the four friends present on Horseshoe Ridge, three were hit at Chickamauga, though one was just grazed.)

Unlike Madden, Lewin survived Andersonville, and the war; he struggled with his disability for the remainder of his life, but nonetheless wrote a memoir. Murrie soldiered on with the regiment, mustering out in 1865 along with 165 others. Regardless of whether they lived a year or many decades from the group portrait, the greatest pride these immigrants had was to be considered Americans – a direct result of their service.

On behalf of the Round Table, I would like to thank Diana Dretske for a compelling look at five from the 96th.

Pat McCormick.

We're looking to increase the attendance for the Saturday discussion. The more people we have, the more of a discussion it will be. Considering the possibility that the time itself may not work for some, we're checking to see if another day/time might work better.

Possibilities are: A different Saturday from 10:00 to 11:30 (Third Saturday conflicts with the regular meeting of at least one other local Round Table.

A weeknight: Possibly Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in mid-month, 7:00 to 8:30.

Anyone who currently attends, or currently does not but would like to, please chime in. We want to serve the highest number of interested members possible.

Thanks!

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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Appointed Positions

Newsletter Editor Jerry Rodosky

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Upcoming Events

Join Zoom Meeting on Friday, Sept. 6, 2024, at 7 PM.

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

Our Saturday discussion group is Scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024. The topic will be John Bell Hood. Watch for changes in time and date as they may come up for this discussion group

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!