

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table

Vol. LX No. 8 April 2023



559th Regular Meeting

DATE: SATURDAY, April 15, 2023
PLACE: Glen Ellyn History Center (N.W. Corner of Main & Elm Streets)
800 N. Main Street, Glen Ellyn, IL
TIME: 11:00 am
PROGRAM: "Hero of the Red River, The Life and Times of Joseph Bailey"
SPEAKER: Michael Goc

In the spring of 1864, hoping to neutralize Confederate forces in Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas, a combined Union army and naval force ascended the Red River from its junction with the Mississippi. The army, under the command of Major General Nathaniel Banks, was defeated at the battle of Mansfield and retreated to the city of Alexandria downstream on the Red. Meanwhile, as river levels fell, the navy, under the command of Flag Captain David Dixon Porter, found itself trapped above the rapids blocking the Red, also at Alexandria. Porter's gunboats were the dreadnoughts of the Union's "brown water" navy and should they be abandoned on the Red, it would constitute the single largest loss of warships the American navy had yet known.

Detached from his post with the Fourth Wisconsin Cavalry, the self-taught Colonel Joseph Bailey was an "acting engineer" in Banks' force. Overcoming the scorn of regular army engineers Bailey persuaded the desperate Porter and Banks to give him command of over two thousand men who quickly felled trees, quarried stone, and moved earth to construct a dam and other diversions to raise the water above the rapids so the fleet could steam downstream. With newspaper correspondents and illustrators on hand to show and report his success, Bailey gained national renown as "the hero of the Red River." He joined the elite ranks of Generals Meade, Sherman, Sheridan and Grant to receive the official Thanks of Congress.

In his book, *Hero of the Red River, The Life and Times of Joseph Bailey*, Michael J. Goc tells the story of the man and his work at Wisconsin Dells on the Wisconsin River, where he built the dam that provided the template for the Red River. An award-winning journalist and author/editor of over ninety books on Wisconsin history, Goc used previously unknown personal and local historical sources to tell the story of this unsung hero of an often ignored Civil War campaign.

ALL FOR THE UNION

Volunteers are needed at the Salt Creek table at the Civil War Show on April 22nd. A signup sheet will be at the April meeting or contact Jan at jrbarns@sbcglobal.net.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

Check with the organization sponsoring the program for meeting status.

April 21, 2023

Lincoln/Davis CWRT will feature Charles Knight presenting "From Arlington to Appomattox".
Country House Restaurant, Alsip,
Lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com

April 27, 2023

South Suburban CWRT will feature Gordon Ramsey presenting "The Role of Music in the Civil War".
Trail's Edge Brewery, 20 Kansas Street, Frankfort.
South Suburban CWRT on Facebook

May 5, 2023

Northern Illinois CWRT will feature Wayne Rhine presenting "The Kersarge"
northernilcwrt.org

May 12, 2023

Chicago CWRT will feature Sean Michael Chick presenting "Grant's Left Hook: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign".
Holiday Inn Oakbrook, 17 W 350 22nd Street, Oakbrook Terrace
chicagocwrt.org

May 16, 2023

Lincoln/Davis CWRT will feature Frank Varney presenting "U.S. Grant on the Rewriting of History".
Country House Restaurant, Alsip,
Lincolndavisroundtable@yahoo.com

May 18, 2023

South Suburban CWRT will feature Brian Conroy presenting "Little Egypt's War: the 31st Illinois and the 15th Tennessee at Shiloh".
Trail's Edge Brewery, 20 Kansas Street, Frankfort.
South Suburban CWRT on Facebook

April 22, 2023

Civil War & Military Extravaganza
Dupage Co. Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL
www.ChicagoCivilWarShow.com

FUTURE SALT CREEK CWRT MEETINGS

Check us out on Facebook and at saltcreekcwr.org

Meetings are held at the Glen Ellyn History Center at 11am

May 20, 2023

Arthur Foley will present: "Patriot from Keokuk: Samuel Ryan Curtis".

June 16, 2023

Annual Banquet Lawrence Lee Hewitt will present: "The Birth of Combat Photography: McPherson & Oliver, 1863". **Banquet Registration flyer is included as an attachment.**

June 17, 2023

The Abraham Lincoln Association is holding a symposium at Cantigny Park, Wheaton, IL.
Information flyer is included as an attachment.

CIVIL WAR TOUR

The Civil War Round Table of Chicago's Annual Battlefield Tour will feature
The Red River Campaign. The tour is May 3-7, 2023.

For information and itinerary: Email us at CWRT2023Tour@ChicagoCWRT.org.
The tour is limited to one bus with capacity for 50 attendees.

BACK IN HISTORY

50 Years Ago: Don Sender presented Mathew Brady Slides.

25 Years Ago: Donna Daniels presented "Women in Black: Mourning Customs in Civil War" America".

10 Years Ago: Don Sender presented: "The Lincoln Assassination".

THE SALT CREEK CWRT

President: Cindy Heckler

Vice-President: Rick Zarr

Secretary-Treasurer: Jan Rasmussen

Board Members: Sharon Maher, Nancy Fritz, Rob Girardi

Historian: Cindy Intravartolo

Newsletter Staff: Brian Conroy & Jan Rasmussen

Facebook and Website Editor: Brian Conroy

April 2023 Preservation Report

By Brian Conroy

The American Battlefield Trust has had a new campaign 'spring' up that covers five battlefields across four states, in which from 1862 to 1865, some of the fiercest fighting of the Civil War happened. And while this group of properties span multiple years and states, they all played a crucial role in the story of the Civil War. This campaign consists of an \$18-to-\$1 match to raise \$140,732 towards a staggering \$2.5 million transaction value towards preserving these hallowed acres, which we will cover individually over the coming months and focus on the importance of that battle.

On the battlefield of Shiloh, the ABT is attempting to secure a strategic, two-acre tract of land near the heart of the fiercest fighting, which marked the greatest carnage and human toll of battle on the continent up to that date. Leading up to the battle, Gen. Albert S. Johnston set his Army of the Mississippi in motion towards Pittsburgh Landing against General Grant, who was ordered not to engage until reinforced by Gen. D.C. Buell. But Beauregard's men swept through the Union camp on the morning of April 6th, forcing attacks and counter attacks around Shiloh Church throughout the day that forced Union lines to be pushed back towards Pittsburgh Landing. Federal musketry and artillery tore through Confederate forces at the "Hornet's Nest," as Union lines fought to defend Pittsburgh Landing. Gen. Johnston was killed in the fighting that day after a bullet tore through his leg, with blood loss pooling in his boot, and leaving Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard in charge of Confederate forces. That evening, after Buell's forces arrived, Sherman encountered Grant in the driving rain and remarked, aware he was caught unprepared during the morning attack, "Well, Grant, we've had the devil's own day, haven't we?" Grant drew from his cigar and proclaimed, "Yes. Lick em tomorrow, though."

At 6:00 am on April 7th, Buell's army, combined with the rest of the Union forces, attacked the Confederate forces. Beauregard immediately ordered a counterattack, which was initially successful, but soon encountered stiffened federal resistance, and after falling back and regrouping, they then tried a second counterattack that brought both armies to a stalemate. Grant was provided with naval artillery support by the timber clads *USS Tyler* and *USS Lexington*, which forced Beauregard to realize he was outnumbered and, with large casualties, retreated towards Corinth. Grant then sent Sherman and Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood toward the Confederate position, where they encountered Rebel cavalry at Fallen Timbers under Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest. He became isolated and surrounded by Union troops, who shot him at point blank range before he could escape, not only requiring intensive surgery to remove the bullet, but also allowing his troops to escape, ending the campaign.

The more than 23,000 casualties from the battle were more than the Revolution, War of 1812, and Mexican War combined. The Confederate defeat ended hopes of blocking the Union advance into Mississippi, while Johnston's loss was a damaging blow to Confederate morale. President Jefferson Davis wrote about the loss of A.S. Johnston, "When Sidney Johnston fell, it was the turning point of our fate; for we had no other hand to take up his work in the West." Unfortunately for the south, Davis never found another successful commander in the region through 1862 and 1863 like Johnston, while Grant's victory added to his growing reputation as a successful field commander. President Lincoln praised him for not giving up after being nearly destroyed: "I can't spare this man, he fights," Lincoln said after the battle. With Corinth in Union control by the end of May, Grant could now turn his attention to gaining control of the Mississippi River.