



THE drum roll

Volume 33 319th Regular Meeting
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Rosecrans struggled to tell his side of the story

Friday, April 3, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Arlington Heights Historical Museum
110 West Fremont Street, Arlington Heights, Illinois

Grant vs. Rosecrans The War After the War



Dr. Frank Varney

By 1865 Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip H. Sheridan emerged as the triumvirate of Union generals who finally put down the Southern Rebellion and won the American Civil War. Grant defeated Lee, Sherman captured Atlanta and made Georgia “howl,” and Sheridan finally subdued the Shenandoah Valley and then helped head off the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox.

Of course many other Union generals played a role in that victory, but Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan were the “big three.” Grant ascended to the White House in 1868, where he lasted out two terms — though admittedly his tenure in that highest office was marred by repeated scandal. Sherman and Sheridan would dominate the United States army for a full generation. Sherman served

as general-in-chief of the army until 1884, and Sheridan succeeded him in that position until Sheridan himself died in 1888. Grant, of course, died in July 1885, nine years after he left office. Grant's final legacy to the nation would be his *Memoirs*, completed just weeks before his passing, which became a literary sensation.

Our greatest conflict was not just destructive to life and property, however. The careers of a great many soldiers, north and south, did not survive the rigor and uncertainties of combat. Before finding Grant, the Lincoln administration discarded a great many initially promising commanders, many of whom were sent home to sit out the remainder of the war awaiting orders that never came or were sidelined in remote, less important duty stations.

One of those was William Starke Rosecrans. Once a rising military star whose name emerged as a possible presidential contender in the crucial 1864 elections, Rosecrans was replaced by Grant and relegated to Missouri after his unfortunate defeat at the Battle of Chickamauga. There Rosecrans finished out the war, only to resign in 1867. He recognized that the post-war army had little room for him and others who were perceived to be on the “outs” with Grant or Sherman.

Grant's memoirs have been lauded as a triumph of lucidity and honesty in military writing. They are certainly well worth reading by every student of the Civil War. Grant's writing became an influential — even indispensable — source for countless historians ever since they first saw the light of day. It is unlikely that there is a major historian of the period writing today who has not cited one edition of Grant's *Memoirs* or another.

However, plenty of the people mentioned in those memoirs found reason to object to the way

Save June 5 for the annual banquet

Grant treated them. Rosecrans was one. Along with partisans of Union General George Thomas (who died in 1870 and so never saw Grant's work) Rosecrans struggled to put forth his side of the story, often with little success.

Dr. Frank Varney, professor of history at Dickinson State University in North Dakota, joins us on April 3 to speak about his book, *General Grant and the Rewriting of History: How the Destruction of General William S. Rosecrans Influenced*

Our Understanding of the Civil War (Savas-Beatie 2013.) I welcome Dr. Varney in his first appearance before the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table and look forward to his presentation.

If you would like to join us for dinner with Frank Varney at Sam's of Arlington, 1863 West Central Road, Arlington Heights, at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting on April 3, please contact me at DPowell334@aol.com or (847) 343-2032 by Wednesday, April 1. — *Dave Powell*

The History and Historiography of Gouverneur K. Warren

By Tom DeFranco

On Friday, March 6, 2015, our fellow member, historian, prolific author, and my neighbor, Rob Girardi, addressed the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table about the case of General Gouverneur K. Warren.

After summarizing the early life of General Warren, Girardi stated that the first thing people know about General Warren is that he was instrumental in saving the day at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863, by placing Strong Vincent's brigade atop Little Round Top. Indeed Warren has what is probably the most recognizable statue on the battlefield.

The second thing people know is that Warren was unjustly relieved of command by General Sheridan after leading a successful charge at Five Forks a week before the war's end.

The third thing people know is that it took Warren the rest of his life to find justice in this case, and that he died before the public knew the truth.

Girardi mentioned that the research of Frank Varney (our next speaker) reveals that U. S. Grant rewrote history to favor himself and his friends.

Officers who he thought crossed him received poor treatment in his writings. Warren was one of these officers. It would be bad enough if it were only Grant's writings that influenced historians

for a century and a half to come, but Adam Badeau (a staff officer for Grant), James H. Wilson (a staff officer for Grant early in the war and later a cavalry commander), and Charles Dana (assistant secretary of state) added insult to injury in Warren's historiography. Their narratives about Warren tell the same story — General Warren will attack only if forced to by the enemy.

There are two books about Warren in print. The older one was written by Emerson Taylor and was commissioned by the general's daughter, so that book

is overly favorable to Warren. The more recent book, written by David Jordan, leans toward negativity. Girardi stated that instead of gathering evidence and allowing it to lead to a conclusion, David Jordan forces his conclusion and cherry picks his facts to justify his preconceived conclusion.



General Gouverneur K. Warren

Unfortunately, historians have allowed Grant and Jordan to form their opinions of Warren and his actions. These include well-regarded author/historians Bruce Catton, Gordon Rhea, Richard Sommers, Glenn LaFantasie, and Noah Andre Trudeau.

On behalf of the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table, I wish to thank historian, fellow member, and neighbor Rob Girardi for presenting us with a new way to look at General Warren. I also wish him well with his (and Paula Walker's) soon-to-be-released book about the general.

April Events

April 9, Lake County Civil War Round Table. Jerry Kowalski will portray Union General George Thomas.



April 10, Chicago Civil War Round Table. Michael Burlingame will speak on the Assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

April 10, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Robert Girardi and Paula Walker will speak on Major General Gouverneur K. Warren, one of the finest corps commanders in the Union Army, noon. Program sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and the Iron Brigade Association. Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at (262) 653-4140 or www.thecivilwarmuseum.org.

April 11, Great Lakes Home Front Seminar, Exploring the Civilian Experience during the Civil War Era, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Speakers include Patricia Lynch on Ruffled Eagle Feathers: Old Abe and the "War" Between the Milwaukee and Chicago Homefronts; Dr. Michelle Kuhl on Rooting for Confederate Victory and Defeat: Southern Women, Black and White; Dr. Michael McBride on Saving Private Borghardt: Are You Comfortable with the Remains of a Civil War Veteran Used as a Scientific Project?; and Dr. Brett Barker on the Fire in the Rear: Midwestern Copperheads and a Society at War; 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., \$60 (\$50 Friends of the Museum), includes lunch.

April 14, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. A first person presentation of President Lincoln by George Buss, 7 p.m., \$5 suggested donation.

April 14, McHenry County Civil War Round Table. Ron Halverson will speak on the Man Who Knew Lincoln.

April 14, Armchair Generals Civil War Round Table. Charlie Banks will speak on the Lincoln Funeral Train at Gail Borden Library, 270 North Grove Avenue, Elgin, 11:45 a.m.



April 15, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Rich Schimenti will give an eyewitness account of the assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, DC. The account details Lincoln's last hours on earth, the efforts made to save his life, and his legacy to the nation, noon.

April 17, Salt Creek Civil War Round Table. Doug Dammann will speak on Elmer Ellsworth and the United States Zouave Cadets.

April 17 – May 24, The Bloodhound Law, City Lit Theater, 1020 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, Chicago. World premiere play by Kristine Thatcher, directed by Terry McCabe, tells of both black and white Illinoisans whose lives were changed by the Fugitive Slave Law. Tickets are on sale at www.citylit.org or (773) 293-3682.

April 18, Battlefield Balladeers will perform songs of the Civil War at the Chicagoland National Civil War Extravaganza, DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2025 West Manchester Road, Wheaton, 11 a.m.

April 18, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Joe Walker will speak on Harvest of Death: The Battle of Jenkins' Ferry, Arkansas, 1 p.m.

April 23, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Folk-singer and historian Judy Cook will present songs, images, and readings that give a unique peek inside life during the Civil War; 6:30 p.m., \$5 suggested donation.





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Book Raffle	Charles Banks
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April Saturday Discussion

All members and guests are invited to participate in the session to be held at the Hoffman Estates Community Bank, 1375 Palatine Road, Hoffman Estates, on Saturday, April 18, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Attendees are asked to park in the adjacent lot rather than in spaces provided for bank customers. The discussion will start with Fort Fisher and then join Sherman in South Carolina for the march north.

These discussions are generally held on the third Saturday of the month from September through June. They are held to generate and foster a free exchange of ideas on events that transpired during the Civil War.

2014–2015 Speakers

May 1, Eric Wittenberg will speak on John Buford at Gettysburg.

June 5, Chris Kolakowski will speak on the Naval War in 1864.

March Raffle

The March raffle winners were Kirby Smith, who won *Lee* by Douglas Southall Freeman, edited by Richard Harwell; Corey Lange, who won *Shiloh: In Hell Before Night* by James Lee McDonough; Charlie Banks, who won *An Irishman in Dixie: Thomas Conolly's Diary of the Fall of the Confederacy* by Thomas Conolly, edited by Nelson Lankford; Mary Abroe, who won *The American Civil War* by Brian Holden Reid; Danielle Kafka, who won *Richmond Redeemed* by Richard J. Sommers; and Kurt Carlson, who won *Rescue by Rail: Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863* by Roger Pickenpaugh.

Congratulations to the winners and sincere thanks to the donors. To donate Civil War-related books or items, please contact Charlie Banks.

Roster Change

New recruit

Ms. Lynda Caselton
929 West Happfield Drive
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004-7143
(847) 749-2220
e-mail lynda.caselton@att.net

Book Discussion Group

The Civil War book discussion group led by Tom DeFranco at the Eisenhower Library, 4613 North Oketo Avenue, Harwood Heights, meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 until 11:30 a.m. On April 4, 2015, they will continue the discussion of *Bentonville* by Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr.



**To learn more about this Round Table call Jerry Allen at (847) 516-6429
or visit our website at www.northernilcwrt.org**