



# THE drum roll

Volume 37      357th Regular Meeting  
Number 6      February 1, 2019

## *Turning point eroded monarchy and establishments*

Friday, February 1, 2019, 7:30 p.m.

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

### Schleswig-Holstein War of 1864



Harold Knudsen

Americans living today in a large union, affirmed by the result of the Civil War, tend to focus on 1861–1865 as the beginning of our modern nation, and even to some degree a contributor to the world we live in today, influenced greatly by America's role. However, a similar (but not very well known in America) struggle concerning secession of small states from a monarchy and the emergence of a large union was occurring in Europe during the American Civil War. It shaped modern Europe to a great degree and helped propel Germany into the modern nation it is now.

The Second Schleswig-Holstein War of 1864 between the German states and the Kingdom of Denmark was another important turning point that further eroded monarchy and the old establish-

ments. It started the process of German unification, which inexorably led to Germany's becoming a rival European power to England and France. In many ways it was the same type of catalyst for Germany toward creating a firm union as the Civil War was for America.

The Second Schleswig-Holstein War of 1864 was short and fought within the small area of southern Denmark. Like the war in Virginia, the contending German and Danish armies worked within a campaigning space roughly the distance between Richmond and Washington, DC.

This war had other similarities to the American Civil War, such as secession as its cause, modern trench and fortification warfare, an ultramodern iron-clad, and the overlap of old weapons and tactics vs. modern. Due to its suddenness and short length, it was fought almost entirely by soldiers and officers with no combat experience, just as the American Civil War was in its first year. It gave rise to Otto von Bismarck as a great statesman and helped solidify his place in history as the creator of the modern German union, as Lincoln is known for preserving the American union.

Harold Knudsen, who lived in Germany for a decade while serving in the U.S. Army, studied this war while living in Europe. He visited the Battle of Dybøll Mill, where the "question was settled," and other related sites. His presentation will cover some basic European history to set the stage, the key aspects of this war, and its meaning for Europe while our Civil War was still raging.

If you would like to join us for dinner with Harold Knudsen at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting on February 1 at Sam's of Arlington restaurant, 1863 West Central Road, Arlington Heights, please contact Wayne Rhine at waynerhine@gmail.com or (847) 363-0875 by Wednesday, January 30.

**The February meeting will be at the Arlington Heights History Museum**

# Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in the Civil War

By Pat McCormick

**O**n January 7, 2019, the round table heard from our resident railroading expert, Charlie Banks. In this case, however, his topic was not a railroad, but its freight-moving rival, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

The C&O Canal had its origins not long after the Revolution, when George Washington formed the Potomack Company (“Potomack” being a common spelling at the time) to maintain and improve the Potomac River waterway. The company struggled and by 1819 had just enough money for maintenance, none for improvements.

The following year, Potomack Company engineer Thomas Moore proposed the construction of a canal to Cumberland, Maryland, linking that region’s coal production to its customers to the east. Moore estimated the canal would cost about \$1.14 million. The planned course of the canal would run about 185 miles; in comparison, the famed Erie Canal (then under construction, having started in 1817) would cover 363 miles.

The Erie Canal took 8 years to complete. The Chesapeake and Ohio, on the other hand, would ultimately take 22 years to build, from 1828 to 1850, nearly three times as long as the Erie. The primary reason for the drastic contrast? topography. The route of the Erie Canal was through relatively level terrain; that of the C&O through a rocky, narrow river valley. Ultimately, the C&O would involve 74 locks, 11 aqueducts over major streams, 240 culverts over lesser watercourses, and the 3,118-foot-long Paw Paw Tunnel.

The C&O’s progress also was hampered by legal challenges. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, started on the same day as the C&O, needed to use the same narrow Potomac River Valley. The point of contention was an actual point, known as Point of Rocks, a particularly narrow section of the valley. Four years of litigation would see the C&O win the legal battle. However, to save money they eventually shared the right-of-way from Point of Rocks westward to Harper’s Ferry.

The combined challenges put the C&O Canal seriously behind schedule. The original charter

specified that it would be completed by 1840; by 1843 it had only reached Hancock, Maryland, well short of its goal. Slow progress limited paying traffic, exacerbating the fiscal troubles, and periodically the state of Maryland bailed it out.

Finally, in 1850 it was completed, albeit at a cost of \$11 to \$14 million rather than the \$1.14 million estimated. In fact, the B&O Railroad beat the C&O Canal to Cumberland by 8 years. Nonetheless, both routes saw plenty of use. Not until after the Civil War would locomotives be powerful enough to haul more than a moderate amount of freight, so the canal was vital for heavy loads.

Thus, when the Civil War broke out in 1861, both the B&O and the C&O would be targeted by Rebel forces. Initially, not much thought was given by the Union government to protecting these routes, primarily because Lincoln’s first Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, was more interested in protecting routes to the north in Pennsylvania (his home state, where his business interests just happened to coincide with the alternative routes).

But the importance of the Potomac Valley routes would soon be conclusively demonstrated by the Confederates. Initially, when General Stonewall Jackson seized Harper’s Ferry in 1861, neither railroad nor canal was disturbed; the Rebels hoped to woo Maryland into their fold with a “hands-off” policy. When Maryland remained in the Union, this attitude changed. Ordered to retreat from Harper’s Ferry, Jackson’s troops burned the B&O bridge and damaged the canal.

Although the railroad bridge was not repaired for the better part of a year, the canal was quickly put back into action. Raids by Jackson and Turner Ashby (as well as occasional quirks of Mother Nature) resulted in sporadic canal shutdowns, but it was usually back in order quickly, the exception being a closure of several months following a January 1862 ice storm and other complications.

The C&O was targeted again during General Robert E. Lee’s fall 1862 Maryland invasion. The Monocacy Aqueduct, longest on the canal at 500 feet, and having seven arches, was targeted twice,

but the “admirably . . . constructed” structure proved resistant to all Confederate attempts at destruction. The canal also was damaged in other places during the campaign, primarily in places where Lee crossed the Potomac.

The following summer Lee moved north again, this time to Pennsylvania. Again the C&O was in Rebel crosshairs. Partisan John S. Mosby was the first to strike, on June 10, followed by John Imboden on June 17. Lee’s main body crossed the Potomac at Williamsport, damaging the canal both by disruption and by creating crossings for his wagons and artillery. And as he moved to rejoin Lee in Pennsylvania, General J.E.B. Stuart hit the canal on June 27.

1864 saw more Confederate attention to the C&O. In February, General Thomas Rosser’s cavalry did some damage, but that summer, during General Jubal Early’s incursion, the canal would see its heaviest damage of the war. Both Mosby and Imboden were at it again. Meanwhile, as Early’s main force crossed at Shepherdstown, they did extensive damage to the Antietam Aqueduct.

After Early withdrew from the outskirts of Washington, DC, Southern cavalryman John McCausland burned Chambersburg, PA. While being chased by Northern horsemen, McCausland’s troopers burned a number of canal boats at Hancock before being defeated at the battle of Folck’s Mill and sent packing. (Overall, Jubal Early’s 1864 raid resulted in the destruction of some 80 canal boats, fully one third of the normal pre-war operating total on the C&O.)

Clearly, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was a highly important route during the Civil War, as evidenced by the numerous Confederate forays against it. On behalf of the round table I would like to thank Charlie Banks for shedding light on this vital waterway.

### **New Member**

The Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table was entertained by 11-year-old Ezra Maras of Algonquin at the January 2019 meeting. Ezra played several rousing Civil War–Era songs on his violin. Afterward, vice-president Wayne Rhine asked members present to make Ezra an honorary member, which they did. Please welcome Ezra.

*drum roll*, February 2019

### **February Saturday Discussion**

All members and guests are invited to participate in the session to be held at the Barrington Area Library, 505 North Northwest Highway, Barrington, on Saturday, February 16, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Pat McCormick will lead the discussion on the Tullahoma Campaign (postponed from February because of inclement weather).

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 Civil War events.

### **Eisenhower Library Discussion**

The Civil War discussion group at the Eisenhower Library, 4613 North Oketo Avenue, Harwood Heights, meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. On February 2, 2019, the group will watch the 2011 movie *Lincoln*. The time is extended to 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Women’s Civil War Book Club**

The Civil War book club for women will meet at the home of Connie Rawa, at The Grand at Twin Lakes Senior Living, 920 East Northwest Highway, Palatine, at 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 16. They will discuss William Tecumseh Sherman; attendees can read any book on him. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Denise Limburg at [dlimburg@prodigy.net](mailto:dlimburg@prodigy.net) or (847) 212-5313 or Mary Banks at (847) 497-3149 or [zeller1@comcast.net](mailto:zeller1@comcast.net).

### **Get Involved**

All members are encouraged to participate in all activities of the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table. There are a number of ways for members to serve the organization, for example, as an officer, committee member, or speaker. Anyone who would like to get more involved in these activities can contact President Harold Knudsen or any other officer or past president.





### 2017–18 Officers and Trustees

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#### Appointed Positions

Book Raffle	Charles Banks
Newsletter Editor	Sally Smith

## Banquet Raffle



Jerry and Ellen Allen donated a framed print of Old Abe, the War Eagle, to be raffled off at the June banquet.

Charlie Banks will start selling tickets for this raffle in February. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5. All proceeds go to the Sites Fund.

### February Events

**February 2, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI.** Steve Acker will speak on African American Civilians and the Gettysburg Campaign, 1 p.m. Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at [www.thecivilwarmuseum.org](http://www.thecivilwarmuseum.org) or (262) 653-4140.

**February 8, Second Friday Lecture Series, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI.** Tom Campbell will speak on Fighting Slavery in Chicago, noon. Program is sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Roundtable and the Iron Brigade Association.

**February 8, Chicago Civil War Round Table.** Rob Girardi will speak on Gouverneur K. Warren's Last Battle.

**February 15, Salt Creek Civil War Round Table.** David Keller will speak on Five Factors Impacting Confederate and Union Prison Camps During the Civil War.

**February 16–17, Civil War Medical Weekend, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI.** Weekend commemorates the roles of physicians, nurses, and caregivers during the Civil War. Trevor Steinbach will speak on Dr. Sarah Ann Chadwick, the first female surgeon and assistant surgeon of the Civil War, 1 p.m., Saturday. Lance Herdegen will discuss the Forgotten Role of Native Americans in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan Regiments, 1 p.m., Sunday.

### 2018–2019 Speakers

March 1	Rob Girardi	To be determined
April 5	Dan Patterson	The Origin of the Longstreet Controversy
May 3	Bruce Allardice	'Damn the Torpedoes': Hi-Tech Rebs and Their Infernal Machines
June 7	Matthew Switlick	Loomis Battery

To learn more about the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table  
visit our website at [www.northernilcwrt.org](http://www.northernilcwrt.org)