MCHENRY COUNTY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
NOW CELEBRATING EIGHTEEN YEARS
SERVING THE COMMUNITY AND MCHENRY COUNTY SINCE IT’S FOUNDING
AT UNION, McHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS IN SEPTEMBER OF 1998

DISCUSSION GROUP
AT THE PANERA BREAD COMPANY
6000 NORTHWEST HIGHWAY
CRYSTAL LAKE, ILLINOIS
BAD GENERALS FROM EITHER SIDE
SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 27, 2016
10:00 A.M. TO NOON

According to Georgia’s Blue & Gray Trail, the below listed were (in their opinion) the worst generals of the Civil War:

- Gidion Pillow (CSA)
- Benjamin Butler (USA)
- John A. McCleland (USA)
- George McClellan (USA)
- Braxton Bragg (CSA)
- Ambrose Burnside (USA)
- John Bell Hood (CSA)
- Don Carlos Buell (USA)
- William Rosecrans (USA)

Once you get past William Rosecrans, the number of candidates for worst Civil War general increase dramatically.

John C. Fremont and Nathanael Banks are to be considered to be very solid Union contenders. While John Pemberton stands out quite strongly among the Confederate poor performers.

YOUR OPINION IS ALWAYS WELCOME! COME JOIN IN ON OUR DISCUSSION AND BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS!

MESSAGE STATEMENT

MCHENRY COUNTY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE has been established to promote and foster education, discussion, and analysis of The American Civil War. We hope through learning about the past, we will be able to more completely understand the present and have a positive, beneficial effect on our local community including but not limited to our members.

PLEASE NOTE:
MCCWRT WILL NOT HAVE PRESENTATION MEETINGS DURING JANUARY OR FEBRUARY

DISCUSSION GROUP WILL MEET!
VISIT OUR WEB SITE ON THE INTERNET
www.mchenrycivillwar.com
MR. DON PURN WEBMASTER

MCCWRT WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY WISHES OF A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL AND AN INVITATION TO JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR 18TH YEAR SERVING THE COMMUNITY AND MCHENRY COUNTY

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT ONE OR MORE OF OUR EVENTS DURING OUR PRESENTATION SEASON

AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

APRIL 12 – 13, 1861
FORT SUMTER IS FIRED UPON BY CONFEDERATE FORCES IN CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR WAS BEGUN.
### FEBRUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KANKAKEE VALLEY CWRT</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 3, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LETTERS TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN FROM THE POPULACE</td>
<td>By Art Schumacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHICAGO CWRT</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 12, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE CAUSE OF ALL NATIONS</td>
<td>By Don Doyle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SALT CREEK CWRT</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 19, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOURNING CUSTOMS DURING THE CIVIL WAR</td>
<td>By Jill Silbert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINCOLN/DAVIS CWRT</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 16, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GONE WITH THE WIND AND THE MEMORY OF THE CIVIL WAR</td>
<td>By Leslie Goddard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 25, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE 29TH USCT</td>
<td>By Jeff Kannel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### KENOSHA CIVIL WAR MUSEUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECOND FRIDAY LUNCHBOX LECTURE SERIES</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 12, 2016</th>
<th>NOON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONFEDERATE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATHER JAMES SHERAN OF THE 14TH LOUISIANA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVIL WAR MEDICAL WEEKEND</th>
<th>SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2016 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.</th>
<th>SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2016 NOON TO 4:00 P.M.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WOUNDED IN THE CORNFIELD SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2016 1:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Presented by Dr. Gordon Dammann.</td>
<td>What happened to a Wisconsin soldier from the famed Iron Brigade after he was wounded at the Battle of Antietam? Follow the journey of these men and the care they received according to the Letterman Plan instituted by the Union Army.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BAD GENERALS OF THE CIVIL WAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gideon Pillow (CSA)</th>
<th>Gideon Pillow's friendship with James Polk won him a generalship in the United States Army under Winfield Scott during the Mexican War. He almost lost the battle of Cerro Gordo singlehandedly, so Scott assigned Joseph Hooker to be his chief-of-staff to help him.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Fort Donelson he led an attack that breached Union lines, then failed to consolidate his gains.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather than surrender, Pillow fled. In 1864 he returned to active duty during the Atlanta Campaign, losing, most notably, the battle of Lafayette Court House, where he outnumbered his opponent 4-to-1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benjamin Butler (USA)</th>
<th>Powerful politician who became a Union General after successfully relieving Washington D.C. following the bombardment of Fort Sumter. Butler was ordered to assume command of the “Department of the West”, Union gains around New Orleans. His dictator-style military government of New Orleans showed no respect for non-combatants. Relieved of duty by President Lincoln, he was eventually given command of the Army of the James. Landing his 40,000 men at Bermuda Hundred and City Point, Butler was turned back by P.G.T. Beauregard and an army never exceeding 13,000 men (a good deal of whom were irregulars). In January 1865, Lincoln finally removed him from command.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Fort Donelson he led an attack that breached Union lines, then failed to consolidate his gains.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather than surrender, Pillow fled. In 1864 he returned to active duty during the Atlanta Campaign, losing, most notably, the battle of Lafayette Court House, where he outnumbered his opponent 4-to-1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John A. McClernand (USA)</th>
<th>Although a lifelong Democrat, this (friend) of Abraham Lincoln rushed to Fort Donelson and attacked without orders. He failed to anchor his line, allowing Gideon Pillow to nearly break out of the besieged fort. At Shiloh, he supported Sherman and Prentiss with an early attack, then pulled back to Grant’s last line.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Fort Donelson he led an attack that breached Union lines, then failed to consolidate his gains.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather than surrender, Pillow fled. In 1864 he returned to active duty during the Atlanta Campaign, losing, most notably, the battle of Lafayette Court House, where he outnumbered his opponent 4-to-1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>George McClellan (USA)</th>
<th>McClellan repeatedly froze during close tactical command. At Rich Mountain, he refused to support William Rosecrans, who ran into Rebels near the top of the mountain. At Ball’s Bluff, he did not support the advance of Edward Baker. McClellan claimed that he could not start the Peninsula Campaign until Grant and Buell had taken Kentucky. By the time he got started, Grant and Buell were just north of the Mississippi-Tennessee border. At Yorktown, a force of 13,000 Rebels held off 60,000 to 80,000 Federal Troops for a month. Within sight of Richmond, he retreated his superior force.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Fort Donelson he led an attack that breached Union lines, then failed to consolidate his gains.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rather than surrender, Pillow fled. In 1864 he returned to active duty during the Atlanta Campaign, losing, most notably, the battle of Lafayette Court House, where he outnumbered his opponent 4-to-1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
George McClellan’s success at South Mountain and Antietam were tempered by his refusal to pursue the Army of Northern Virginia.

**Braxton Bragg** (CSA)

Bragg’s problems are legendary. He showed little ability to communicate with his generals and refused to give them even a modest decision-making ability, and made weak strategic and poor tactical decisions.

His march to Kentucky, touted by some as a strategic masterpiece, was little more than an attempt to protect Kirby Smith’s flank from Don Carlos Buell.

He simply assumed that William S. Rosecrans would not attack once his forces were routed at Stone’s River.

It took him two days to find out that the enemy was advancing on his position at Tullahoma, then chose to obey a six-month old order directing him to retreat to Chattanooga.

Once there, a brigade of men fooled him into retreating from that city.

After Chickamauga, he refused to destroy the Army of the Cumberland in spite of the advice of Nathan Bedford Forrest and James Longstreet.

On Missionary Ridge, Tennessee, he had misplaced his line, then blamed his men for the loss.

**Ambrose Burnside** (USA)

He pointedly lost nearly 1,000 men at Antietam.

**Abraham Lincoln** asked him twice to take command of the Army of the Potomac and Burnside refused.

In all fairness, Burnside knew he would not be a good overall commander.

The third time Lincoln ordered him to take command.

The result was the massive Union loss at Fredericksburg.

Although uninspiring, Burnside held Knoxville when attacked by James Longstreet.

He returned east to participate in the Overland Campaign and the Siege of Petersburg.

Although he commanded the incredible Union travesty at the Crater, he was not solely responsible for the massive loss of life.

His name gave rise to the term “sideburns.”

---

**EVERY ASPECT OF THE CIVIL WAR PRODUCED ITS OWN CROP OF CURIOSITIES**

**TITLE PAGE FROM THE BOOK CIVIL WAR CURIOSITIES STRANGE STORIES, ODITIES, EVENTS, AND COINCIDENTS BY WEBB GARRISON**

It is estimated that 623,000 soldiers died during the Civil War. Fighting took place on each of the war’s approximately 1,396 days from 1861 to 1865; as tabulated by Fredrick H. Dyer, 10,455 military “events” took place during the war.

Members of the U.S. Congress and the C.S. Congress gave frequent speeches, offered much advice, and pulled strings to get political and military favors.

Editors of newspapers—from the New York Tribune to the Charleston Mercury—published thousands of editorials, and their correspondents filed reports by the tens of thousands. Men ranging from cabinet members to buck privates in the rear ranks, wrote letters and penned diaries. Artists and photographers competed with one another to be the first to depict important events and the men who participated in them.

During four years of frenetic activity, enough firsthand material was written and published to fill several large rooms. All major battles and many minor military events have been described in one or a score of books, and each commander who played a significant role—and many soldiers who did not—recorded their activities in detail.

Instead of offering another look at the most significant military and political events, Civil War Curiosities focuses on relatively unknown and obscure aspects of the war. Some of the subjects treated are brand new. For instance, major multi-volume works seldom include an index entry dealing with “hostages.” Subjects such as “atrocities” and “appraisals by contemporaries,” to say nothing of “Lincoln’s appearance,” are not found in standard Civil War encyclopedias and dictionaries. Even seasoned readers are likely to discover much that is new and fresh here.

My criteria for determining what to include focused on three main points: interest, novelty and brevity.

Much of the information here is brief enough to be read aloud to a friend or family member.

Inclusion of a comprehensive index allows the book to double as a special kind of reference work.

I hope that as you read through Civil War Curiosities, your imagination will be challenged on every page.

Certainly, the war was filled with unusual events, and I have sought to record some of the most interesting ones for your reading enjoyment.

Webb Garrison

---

MCCWRT OFFICERS AND STAFF

PRESIDENT: ROBERT FRENZ
VICE PRESIDENT: CHARLIE BANKS
TREASURER: DONALD PURN
SECRETARY: GLORIA MACK
MEMBERSHIP: SANDY KUPSTIS

MCCWRT DIRECTORS

JIM KEEFE
JIM STANNIS

MCCWRT WEB SITE
www.mchenrycivilwar.com

WEB MASTER: DONALD PURN

MCCWRT NEWS LETTER
THE CIVIL WAR REPORTER

EDITOR KEITH M. FISHER

In 1861, Wilmer McLean, distressed that a cannon ball had crashed through his home during the battle of Bull Run, moved to a farm where “the sound of battle would never again reach him and his family.”

Almost four years later, McLean’s Appomattox Court House home was used for Lee’s surrender to Grant.

There was no damage from cannon balls, but souvenir-hunting Union officers left McLean’s parlor bare of furniture.

After the Confederacy was defeated, Jefferson Davis was stripped of his U.S. citizenship.

He died a man without a country.

His citizenship was restored by Congress during the administration of Georgian Jimmy Carter.

Jefferson Davis, prominent among Democrats expected to have a chance at the nomination for the presidency of the United States in 1860, had some staunch admirers in the North. One of them was Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts, destined soon to receive from Lincoln the first commission as a major general of volunteer troops entering Federal service. Senator Davis, who placed a high value on support of Butler was not disappointed in him. During fifty-seven ballots, the man from Massachusetts voted in favor of pitting Davis against any presidential candidate the Republicans might choose.