



HARDTACK



Indianapolis Civil War Round Table Newsletter
<http://indianapoliscwrt.org/>

Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6:45 p.m.
Meeting at MCL Cafeteria Township Line
2370 W. 86th Street

The Plan of the Day



HISTORY.com

“Benjamin Harrison”

Biographer Ray E. Boomhower examines the life and times of the twenty-third president of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, including his early life, political career, service in the Union Army during the Civil War, his rise to the White House, and his eventual return to Indianapolis. He will also talk about how and why Harrison did not receive the recognition he deserved following his one term as president.

Our Guest Speaker



Ray Boomhower

Ray E. Boomhower is senior editor at the Indiana Historical Society Press, where he also serves as editor of the popular history magazine *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*. He has written biographies of numerous notable Hoosiers, including Gus Grissom, Ernie Pyle, Lew Wallace, May Wright Sewall, and John Bartlow Martin. His newest book, release in November 2021, is **Richard Tregaskis: Reporting under Fire from Guadalcanal to Vietnam** (University of New Mexico Press).

Remainder of the 2022-2023 Campaign

March 13, 2023 – Dave Finney - “Custer Meets the Wolverines”

April 10, 2023 – Gerald Jones - “Grierson’s Raid”

May 8, 2023 – Jonathan Tracey – “The 27th Indiana”

June 12, 2023 – Steve Jackson - “50th Anniversary of the Blue & Gray at Gettysburg”

Roster of Officers and Committees for the 2022-2023 Campaign

Officers:

President: Steven Magnusen

Vice President: Pete Brenner

Secretary: Eric Dove

Treasurer: Pete Mohr

Immediate Past President: Bill Ghormley

Committees:

Preservation: Andy O’Donnell

Website: Ed Pope

Program Selection: Bob Gottschalk, Nikki Schofield, David Finney, & Tony Trimble

Publicity: Peg Bertelli & Chris Smith

Quiz Master:

Tony Trimble

HARDTACK Newsletter:

Editor: Bob Gottschalk

Other Camp Activities

Hamilton County Civil War Roundtable: Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday each month, September through May (excluding December) in Carmel City Hall. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and meetings start at 7:00 p.m.

Madison County Historical Society Civil War Roundtable: Meetings take place on the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Bowman Room at the Museum of Madison County History, 15 West 11th Street, Anderson, Indiana.

Official Records

January Attendance: 30+

Alan T. Nolan Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund: The Executive Board of the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table has established this fund to provide membership dues, annual tour expenses or other worthwhile purpose for any full-time student of any age. Please see Tony Roscetti to donate to this fund.

Facebook: The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table is on Facebook. We invite you to join our group. Feel free to post Civil War related messages on our site.

Charitable Sponsors: In an effort to upgrade our speakers and programs, the board of ICWRT is asking members and organizations with which they are involved (companies or charitable organizations) to consider sponsoring one or more speakers. This could be done as a gift now, or a person could opt to make a bequest in a will for that purpose. Because of our limited membership, we can't bring in as many national speakers as we would like to. If you are interested or want more info, call Chris Smith at 450-7430.

160th Anniversary Event Links

Helena, Arkansas (April 14 - 16, 2023)

<https://www.arkansasheritage.com/events/2023/04/14/default-calendar/battle-of-helena-160th-anniversary-reenactment>

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (June - July 2, 2023)

[160th Battle of Gettysburg Anniversary | Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association \(gbpa.org\)](https://www.gettysburgbattlefield.org/160th-battle-of-gettysburg-anniversary)

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This Month in Civil War Period History

by Nikki Stoddard Schofield

February 13, 1861 - The earliest military action to be awarded a Medal of Honor is performed by Colonel Bernard J.D. Irwin, an assistant army surgeon serving in the first major U.S.-Apache conflict. Near Apache Pass, in southeastern Arizona, Irwin, an Irish-born doctor, volunteered to go to the rescue of Second Lieutenant George N. Bascom, who was trapped with 60 men of the U.S. Seventh Infantry by the Chiricahua Apaches.

Irwin and 14 men, initially without horses, began the 100-mile trek to Bascom's forces riding on mules. After fighting and capturing Apaches along the way and recovering stolen horses and cattle, they reached Bascom's forces on February 14 and proved instrumental in breaking the siege.

Although Irwin's bravery in this conflict was the earliest Medal of Honor action, the award itself was not created until 1862, and it was not until January 21, 1894, that Irwin received the nation's highest military honor. (*History.com*)

February 13, 1862 - The West Virginia Constitutional Convention voted that "no slave or free person of color" can enter the state to become a permanent resident.

February 3, 1865 - In a personal meeting with Confederate representatives, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln offered liberal pardons in exchange for the South's quitting the Civil War, with reunion as a precondition of peace—an offer that was rejected. (*Britannica*)

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Test Your Civil War Knowledge (with Trimble's Trivia)

by Tony Trimble

1. On June 11, 1863, Peace Democrats in Ohio announced their candidate for governor of Ohio. Who was he?
2. What was "fresh meat"?
3. On June 7, 1861, Lincoln saw no visitors and the White House was draped in black. Why?
4. What nickname was given to the 40th New York Regiment?
5. More than 2 weeks after Lee's surrender, a disaster struck Union troops returning home from the war? What was it?

Answers to the January Quiz:

1. Florida and Louisiana
2. A notorious red-haired New Orleans prostitute
3. Fredericksburg and Pea Ridge
4. Penetrate Lee's line along Mine Run
5. Uvalde County, Texas. The fight was against a band of Indians

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Catherine Welch is attempting to clean out and downsize, and has approximately 2 dozen books pertaining to the war, mostly from a Confederate perspective, and would be most happy to donate to our members. She can drop them off at our next meeting!

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Abraham Lincoln, Master Inventor: The True Story of the Only President to Ever Patent an Invention

Matthew Rozsa (Salon, 8/27/2022)

When you think of Abraham Lincoln, your mind probably conjures up an image of a tall, lanky man with a chinstrap beard and a stovepipe hat. Perhaps you also think of the 16th president's most famous accomplishments — winning the Civil War and freeing the slaves — or of his early life, much of which was spent reading and writing even when his family wanted him engaged in physical labor. Like many daydreaming youths throughout history, Lincoln yearned to do great things with his mind, even though his peers insisted that he pursue work through his hands.

On May 22, 1849, only three months after the native Kentuckian celebrated his 40th birthday, the United States Patent Office issued Patent No. 6,469 for a device "buoying vessels over shoals." The impetus for this invention was Lincoln's own hard experience; as a ferryman navigating boats along the Sangamon and Mississippi Rivers, he had repeatedly been frustrated when his flatboat would get stranded and take on water. On one occasion, while he and several other men were trying to get to New Orleans, their flatboat became stranded on a milldam (a dam built on a stream to raise the water level for a water mill) near the small pioneer settlement of New Salem.

Having your flatboat regularly get stuck would be the equivalent today of facing massive traffic jams, or having your car constantly stall out.

As the boat took on water, Lincoln rose to the challenge. To right the boat, he dropped part of their cargo, then purchased an auger so he could drill a hole in the vessel's bow and let out the water. Once that had been accomplished, Lincoln plugged the hole and then worked with the rest of the crew to move the boat over the dam. They succeeded, and soon he was back on his way to New Orleans.

Although Lincoln rarely shared this anecdote with people he met later in his life, it obviously stuck with him at the time it happened. In the mid-19th century Mississippi River Valley, rivers were the equivalent of roads and highways today; people needed them to easily transport themselves. Having your flatboat regularly get stuck would be the equivalent today of facing massive traffic jams or having your car constantly stall out. In other words, it was a big problem — and Lincoln clearly thought he could solve it.

Hence his invention. Lincoln's idea was to place "adjustable buoyant air chambers" on the sides of any boat that would be traversing a river. Obviously inspired by the financial loss he had suffered by dumping part of his cargo on the last occasion when he had been stranded, Lincoln's patent specifically mentioned that it would enable vessels to reduce their water intake and pass over bars or shallow water "without discharging their cargoes." That is because the invention, once lowered into the water, could in theory be inflated to simply lift a boat over the various obstructions.

At least, that was Lincoln's invention intention. To the best of our knowledge, his device was never sold or used by anyone, with Lincoln's former law partner and biographer William Herndon dismissing it as "a perfect failure." Yet in a 2018 article for the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, industrial designer Ian De Silva conducted a number of experiments to see if Lincoln's invention could have worked. It didn't — but not because the future president got the science wrong.

"On the contrary, it was a prescient concept and one that was scientifically tenable," de Silva wrote. "Where Lincoln erred was in the execution, specifically his complicated system of poles and ropes that made it an invidious contraption. Had he devised a simpler and less intrusive means of inflating his bellows, the Great Emancipator might have also been remembered for an emancipation of a different sort — freeing boats captured by river sand."

"...it was a prescient concept and one that was scientifically tenable," de Silva wrote. "Where Lincoln erred was in the execution..."

David J. Kent, President, president of Lincoln Group of DC and author of the new book "The Fire of Genius: How Abraham Lincoln's Commitment to Science and Technology Helped Modernize America," told Salon by email that he too believed that Lincoln's invention likely would have worked in practice if not for the cumbersome "system of

ropes and poles and pulleys." He also pointed out that Lincoln's inability to make money off of the invention had less to do with his engineering aptitude than with more mundane realities.

"It is common for patents to meet the standards for being accepted but not ever be commercialized," Kent pointed out. "Lincoln made no attempt to commercialize his design. He was too busy running a law firm and dealing with big picture political issues."

At the same time, the invention is more notable for what it tells future historians about Lincoln's character — and here, we must return to the young boy who found farm life to be dull and yearned to indulge his natural intellectual interests.

"For Lincoln, this was about observing a technical problem and his natural curiosity about how to resolve it," Kent explained. "He never planned to try to make money off of it; solving the problem was his goal. He hated the subsistence farm life he was born into and was intellectually curious. He always sought to 'better his condition.' He did so through self-study, augmenting his meager formal schooling (less than a year total) with many hours of reading, writing, and turning over problems in his head until he felt he fully understood them."

One can also glean something about Lincoln's political philosophy through his invention. In his mind, scientific innovation and infrastructure improvement were moral imperatives as well as subjects of personal interest.

"Lincoln was a big believer in what we call infrastructure as the key to economic development and general prosperity," Columbia University historian Eric Foner, author of "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War," told Salon by email. "His invention was connected with his support for making the Sangamon River more navigable, to spur the development of New Haven." Although the development of American railroads changed transportation in America, Lincoln "gave a speech quite a few times in the 1850s on the history of inventions." He strongly believed in the value of knowledge, and how it could be used for the betterment of mankind.

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Harold Holzer, also a renowned scholar on Lincoln's life and times, told Salon last year that Lincoln's former political affiliation as a member of the Whig Party further explains his passion for infrastructure. Lincoln had "always passionately believed in infrastructure, including government investment in railroads, canals, and roads," just like Whig Party leader Henry Clay, and as president this led him to push for major projects like the building of a transcontinental railroad.

Tellingly, Lincoln's support for investments in science and technology put him on the wrong side of the racists of his time.

"In general, the slaveholding states rejected science and technology," Kent wrote to Salon. "They, as many do today, said this was because they thought it would give too much power to the federal government. In reality, it was because they feared that it would loosen their power over both enslaved African Americans and poor white farmers in the South."

By contrast, "Lincoln saw science and technology (and education) as a way to improve democracy by ensuring all of its citizens could 'better their condition.' This conflict between those who see America as a broad democracy where all of us have an equal chance and those who see America best served by a class of powerful leaders overseeing the masses has defined our history and continues to this day."

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UNION MEN WANTED!



The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3), charitable, fraternal, patriotic, and educational organization similar to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), which was the largest Union Civil War veterans' organization. The SUVCW is officially recognized as the GAR's legal successor, receiving its Congressional Charter in 1954 (Public Law 605).

The SUVCW cooperates in doing honor to all who have patriotically served our country in any war. The Order participates with other organizations in the proper observance of Memorial Day (May 30th), which was established by the GAR in 1868, seeks out and marks the graves of Civil War veterans; observes the care and upkeep of Civil War Memorials and brings any failure to do so to the attention of the proper authorities.

The SUVCW assists in the preservation and making available for research, the documents and records pertaining to the Grand Army of the Republic and its members. The Order ensures that the condition of signage along U.S. Route 6, the GAR highway, is properly maintained. The SUVCW supplies scholarships, funding to the annual Lincoln Memorial and Tomb Ceremonies, and to the Gettysburg Remembrance Day Ceremony, which includes the country's largest Civil War parade held on the third Saturday in November. Grants for Civil War Memorial preservation are also provided. Meetings and Encampments (conventions) are still conducted according to the tradition and rituals of the GAR. The SUVCW's patriotic education includes teaching patriotism and the duties of citizenship, the true history of our country, and the love and respect for our Flag. Each year, the Order conducts presentations to schools and communities.

The SUVCW encourages the proper teaching of American history in our schools. It keeps the public informed of activities and measures that violate or may weaken the spirit and purposes of our country's Constitution and institutions. It promotes and broadly sustains the American principles of representative government, of equal rights and impartial justice for all.

For more information, please visit our National Organization's Website SUVCW.org.

Thank you,

Bruce R. Kolb, PDC
Commander
Ben Harrison Camp #356
Department of Indiana
SUVCW

President's Message, February 2023 Hardtack

Name Badges: As of this writing, Bardach Awards has the latest name list and badge design and will be sending a proof for review. Hopefully this will all come together so that badges will be available at our February 13 meeting. These will make it easier for all of us to put a name to the face. Thanks so much to all who have already contributed to offset the \$11 cost. Much appreciated! Pete Benner and David Finney will be taking name badge contributions and/or dues at the February meeting in the absence of treasurer Peter Mohr.

Program Committee: There is no question that interesting programs have, are, and always will be the key to maintaining interest in attending our CWRT meetings. That is why we keep the “business” part of the meeting to a minimum, allowing our speakers time to present their areas of expertise and respond to questions.

Nikki Scholfield has led the Speakers Committee for quite some time, deserving the lion's share of credit for our continual slate of terrific speakers. She has been ably assisted by David Finney and Bob Gottschalk, both possessing extensive historical knowledge. Nikki is passing the baton to David Finney for the 2023-24 Campaign, and David is already developing a terrific schedule, many speakers with national acclaim. Next month we will be meeting to refine the list. If you have input or suggestions, please feel free to contact David (ddfj60@gmail.com), Bob (flyingcircus2011@hotmail.com), or Steve Magnusen (magnusens@sbcglobal.net).

Welcome Members, Visitors and First Timers:

We exist to enhance historical knowledge and awareness. To sustain that we need to be a welcoming organization. Please invite and make a point to meet-and-greet guests and “first-timers”. Our name badges will certainly help, but there are a few improvements we can make.

Beginning in February we will have a printed sign-in sheet and volunteer members who will greet everyone near the door of our MCL meeting room. Members will just need to initial-in under the column for that meeting. Guests and visitors will have a place to jot down their name and email address. As new members join we will add their names to the next month's sheet. It is a simple thing aimed at being more pro-active and welcoming.

A friend of mine, Janet Whaley, President of the Pasadena, California CWRT, recently spoke to this idea: “Now that we've returned to in-person meetings, we've had very good luck at having two designated Board members serve as the official “greeters” for the Pasadena CWRT. They greet all attendees at the door and make sure they are on our mailing list to receive future meeting notifications.”

The CWRT Congress and August Conference

This organization headed by Mike Movius and Carol VanOrnum exists to help sustain CWRT's across the world. The “Sustainability Challenge” developed by Mike and the CWRT Congress Board of Directors provides a terrific road map. The CWRT Congress is planning a training conference for August 25 – 27 in GETTYSBURG! The theme is Membership Expansion and Retention. Partnerships have been developed with the Seminary Ridge Museum & Education Center, Adams County Historical Society, the Gettysburg Foundation, and the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College. See www.cwrtcongress.org.

Carol VanOrnum produces a monthly newsletter titled “The Light Post”. I encourage you to read it online and peruse the Congress website. Here is the link to the February issue.

<https://www.cwrtcongress.org/light-post.php>

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Indianapolis Civil War Round Table
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