



# HARDTACK



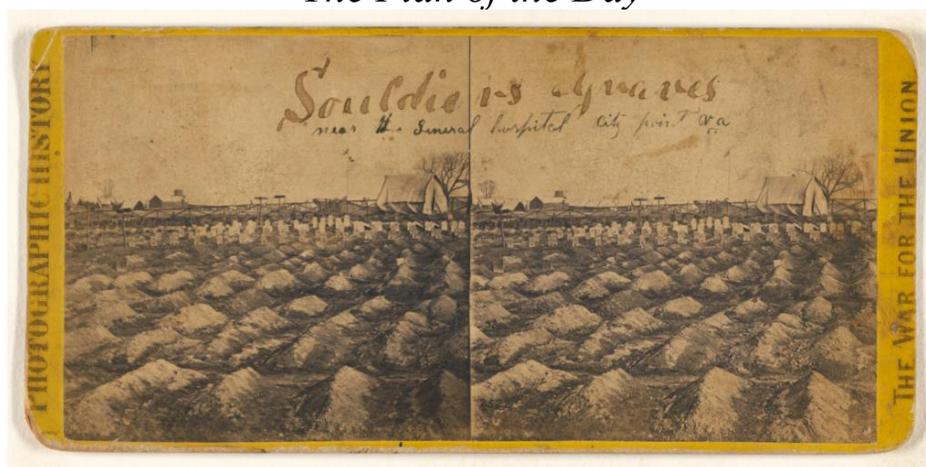
Indianapolis Civil War Round Table Newsletter  
<http://indianapoliswrt.org/>

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Monday, December 11, 2023 at 6:45 p.m.  
 Meeting at MCL Cafeteria Township Line  
 2370 W. 86th Street

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## *The Plan of the Day*



Getty

## **“Infectious Diseases of the Civil War”**

Most reports about the Civil War describe battles and battlefield conditions. The large number of deaths that occurred in Civil War armies from infectious diseases, most of which had no relationship to battlefield injuries, is often overlooked. The number of deaths hints at the degree to which the ability to fight was compromised because of infectious diseases. The causes of death and disease reflected health at the time when morbidity and mortality in the whole population was led by a wide margin by infectious diseases. Key parts of the story of Civil War medicine related to infectious diseases will be told. The toll of morbidity and mortality was especially high among the supposedly fit and healthy population of young farmers and/or their sons from rural agricultural regions who made up 80-85% of the U.S. population. How soldiers from the cities frequently fared better than the outwardly more robust and healthy rural recruits will be considered. Lacking a framework for understanding the nature of infectious diseases, substantial progress in controlling some of the diseases nevertheless occurred as the war went on. Most of the progress was attributable to civilian organizations which we may now see as predecessors to major public health efforts that continue today. The speaker believes that the best and most important uses of history are a basis for present interpretations and actions.

## *Our Guest Speaker*



**Steve Buxser**

Steve Buxser was born in Ohio where he remained through undergrad (Ohio State University, B.S. Microbiology) and has lived in Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Indiana. He has a master's degree (Bacteriology) from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a Ph.D. (Microbiology) from the University of Cincinnati Medical School.

Dr. Buxser's interest in the Civil War dates from the Civil War Centennial which stimulated a life-long interest in the war and a life-long habit of reading history on topics including military history, economics, and presidential biographies. After (mostly) retiring from his career in science, he pursued and received a master's degree in history from the History Department at the University of Indianapolis. The program emphasized American history with several courses on the Civil War and the antebellum and Reconstruction periods. As a part of the program, he encountered the Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion, a 6-volume 6000+ page compilation of records from regimental surgeons and larger medical organizations during the Civil War. The volumes were published by the United States Government Printing Office between 1870 and 1888 as a summary of medical events occurring during the Civil War. This inspired writing a thesis on infectious diseases during the Civil War, part of which is the topic for today's talk.

### **Remainder of the 2023-2024 Campaign**

January 8, 2024 – YOU – “Civil War Show and Tell”

February 12, 2024 – Dr. Brian Direk – “Lincoln's Views on Death”

March 11, 2024 – Chris Burns - “The Life & Legacy of Ulyesses Grant and the Women Who Molded the Man”

April 8, 2024 – Kent Brown - “General George G. Meade”

May 13, 2024 – Scott Britton – “But Not for My Children”

June 10, 2024 – Phil Spaugy - “19th Indiana & the Iron Brigade”

### **Roster of Officers and Committees for the 2023-2024 Campaign**

#### *Officers:*

President: Pete Benner

Vice President: Chris Smith

Secretary: Eric Dove

Treasurer: Pete Mohr

Immediate Past President: Steven Magnusen

#### *Committees:*

Preservation: Andy O'Donnell

Website: Ed Pope

Program Selection: Chairman Steve Magnusen; Members: Bob Gottschalk, David Finney, & Tony Trimble

Publicity: Peg Bertelli

#### *Quiz Master:*

Tony Trimble

#### *Book Raffle Master*

Tony Roscetti

#### *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*

### **November Attendance:**

**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.

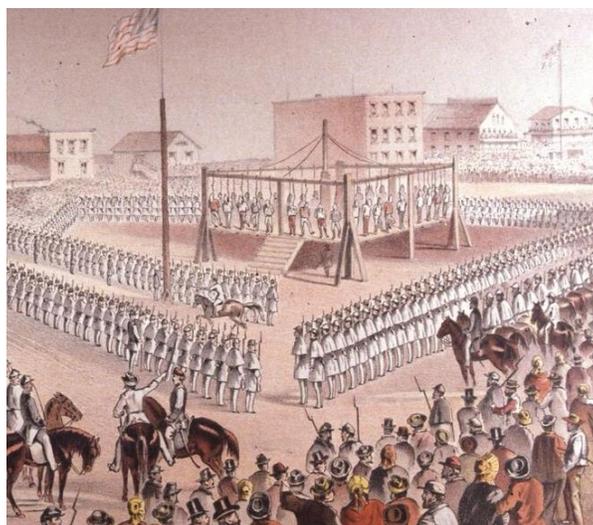
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## *This Month In Civil War Period History*

December 29, 1860 – The H.M.S. Warrior, Great Britain's first ocean-going ironclad warship was launched at Blackwall, London. It is on display at Portsmouth, England today.

December 9, 1861 – The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War was established by the U.S. Congress.

December 26, 1862 – In the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War. 38 members of the Dakota tribe were hanged in Minnesota. It was the largest mass execution in United States history.



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

*by Tony Trimble*

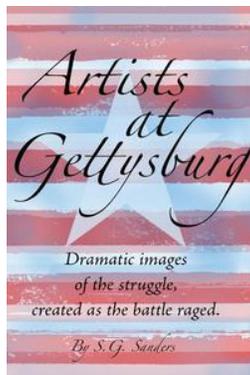
Please provide the name of the Civil War person or object that had each of the nicknames below.

1. "The Bull of the Woods"
2. "Old Cerro Gordo"
3. "Old Guts"
4. "Old Sacramento"
5. "Wristbreaker"

Answers to the November Quiz:

- |                 |                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mount Vernon | 4. Fort Skedaddle            |
| 2. Olustee      | 5. The Lost Tribes of Israel |
| 3. Mississippi  |                              |

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As the three-day Battle of Gettysburg raged, two artists and a Union soldier produced a pictorial depiction of the action that has languished in obscurity since shortly after it was produced. Historians have scrutinized and carefully dissected nearly every aspect of this pivotal engagement, but the “on scene” drawings these three eyewitnesses created have been almost entirely overlooked. While a handful of these images have been regularly employed as illustrations in histories of the battle, the merits of this incomparable body of work have been almost entirely forgotten or simply ignored. These several dozen drawings comprise the only contemporaneous visual record of the engagement!

Artists at Gettysburg was created to give this invaluable archive the recognition it deserves. The collection contains the work of Alfred Waud, Edwin Forbes, and Charles Reed. Waud and Forbes worked as “special artists” for competing weekly newspapers, and Reed was a bugler in a Union artillery battery who was awarded The Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism on the second day of fighting.

To purchase Steven G. Sanders' Ebook, use this link: [books2read.com/u/bxNvdD](https://books2read.com/u/bxNvdD)

## *Gettysburg's Railroad Cut - Then and Now*

The December issue of Gettysburg Magazine will print an article drafted by Steve Magnusen concerning the post-Civil War correspondence and friendship between 6th Wisconsin commander Lt. Col. Rufus Dawes and 2nd Mississippi color bearer William Murphy. The article explains the deadly clash at Gettysburg's famous Railroad Cut. Murphy and his flag were captured there, but the story continues. Steve was able to locate Murphy's descendants in Arkansas and connect two great-great-granddaughters by phone – Murphy's Linda Howell (Little Rock) and Dawes' Barb Moberg (Marietta, Ohio). The friendship developed by two former enemies became rekindled between the two granddaughters over 130 years later. Linda Howell describes the reconnection:

"It's amazing that Steven has brought both families together through his work writing the Rufus Dawes story. I'm sure Dawes and Grandpa Murphy are delighted since they became friends after the War and we are still talking about them. I do public speeches about Grandpa's story and how he and Dawes became friends and the crowds are truly impressed about their story. My speech focuses on my Grandpa Murphy and his journey to find out what happened to his flag and his attempt to get it back from the Government."

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## *ICWRT 70th Anniversary*

The Indianapolis Civil War Roundtable will celebrate 70 years of continual existence in 2025. A memorable event is being planned fitting to the occasion. We have a volunteer committee comprised of Roy Agnew, Peg Bertelli, David Finney, Bill Ghormley, and Steve Magnusen. If you have any questions or ideas, please feel free to contact a committee member. The committee will be meeting again soon.

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***Thanks to Nikki Schofield, Linda Smith and Andy O'Donnell***, our Round Table again has a tree in the Indiana Historical Society's Festival of Trees at the Indiana History Center. The Festival of Trees is going on now through January 6th and is a festive holiday event for the entire family.



To provide publicity for our Round Table, they have placed brochures next to the tree that include our schedule of speakers. Check with Nikki, Linda or Andy if you have questions. There is a charge for admission.

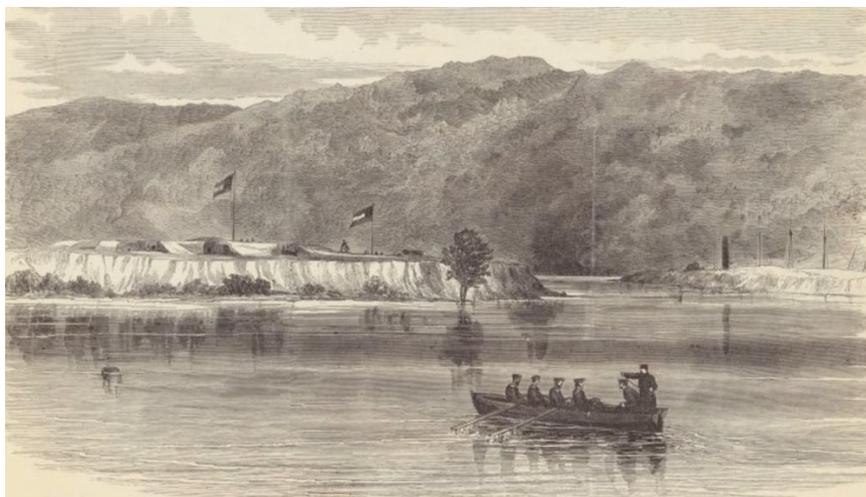
## *Confederate Blockade of Washington, D.C.*

Waite Rawls, July 24, 2023

[blueandgrayeducation.org](http://blueandgrayeducation.org)

The most important, yet under told, story of the early period of the Civil War did not happen in the Deep South, or in the Western Theater, or the Atlantic, but very close to Washington, D.C. From October 1861 until March 1862, the Confederates effectively blockaded the U. S. capital city with artillery batteries that closed off the Potomac to Union ship traffic into or out of Washington, while allowing supplies to cross the Potomac to Virginia from Confederate-sympathizing Charles County in Maryland.

The Confederates had earlier thought to build their batteries at Mathias Point, just upriver from the current US 301 bridge; but they abandoned that effort because it was too far away from supporting infantry forces. Instead, they worked frantically, and in secrecy, during the August-September 1861, period to build a series of batteries between Occoquan and Quantico Creeks, with the biggest batteries at Evansport and Shipping Point, near current day Quantico, and Cockpit Point, just to the north of Quantico Creek. The batteries were supported on shore by two Confederate units stationed in Dumfries, each of which would become famous later in the war, the Texas Brigade and Wade Hampton's Legion.



North battery of the Confederates at Shipping Point, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, looking up the river.  
New York Public Library Digital Collections

Ready for action and opening fire in mid-October, these Confederate batteries forced the Union Navy to redirect all ship traffic out of the Potomac and to use Baltimore instead of Washington, much to the embarrassment of Lincoln, his Navy, and his Army. By that time, never-ready-for-action George McClellan refused to send Union land troops down the southern side of the river from Alexandria to dislodge the Confederates. Instead, he dispatched a division to the Maryland side opposite the Confederates, where they could do no harm nor any good. The Union soldiers noticed there were few men around in the Maryland homes and assumed that the women were widows, only to discover later that the ladies had husbands who were very much alive and had gone South to fight with the Confederacy.

It was curious. The North had blockaded the Southern ports with its fleet of ships, and the South had used its artillery to blockade Washington, where supplies withered and prices soared, as the overwhelmed Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was its only supply link with the rest of the world. This condition lasted throughout December, January, and February as northern impatience with McClellan's intransigence built.

The breakthrough finally came on March 9, 1862, but not from any Northern action. In February, Jefferson Davis gave Confederate general Joseph Johnston the permission to pull back from Centreville, Dumfries, and the Potomac River. Wasting no time, Johnston burned his supplies, exploded extra ammunition, and moved farther south in the direction of Fredericksburg, giving up the blockade.

**Sign up for more free Blue and Gray Education Society dispatches or at our website:**  
<https://blueandgrayeducation.org/>

## *Help Preserve 32 Acres at Chickasaw Bayou and Champion Hill*

### **The Opportunity**

The Vicksburg Campaign is often called one of the turning points, if not the turning point, of the Civil War. Now, this is our once-in-a-generation opportunity to buy, and protect forever, almost 32 acres of the remaining pieces of the Vicksburg Campaign.

The total value for all parcels is more than \$2.1 million.

We've applied for federal and state grants — some have already been awarded, and some are still pending — that could help get us over the finish line. If we are able to secure these grants, the Trust would still need to come up with an additional \$327,825 to close the deal.

That means that every dollar you give today will be matched \$6.50-to-\$1 to save 12 parcels that add up to nearly 32 acres of prime, unprotected battlefield land at Chickasaw Bayou and Champion Hill.

### **The Land History**

Chickasaw Bayou, Miss.

The fall of Vicksburg wasn't accomplished in a single battle. It took a bloody campaign. And one could say, it began at the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, where General William T. Sherman attempted to defeat Confederate forces led by Generals John C. Pemberton and Stephen D. Lee.

Despite the importance of their mission, neither artillery bombardment nor infantry attack could dislodge the Confederate forces from their defenses. Union soldiers suffered a staggering 1,776 casualties compared to 207 on the Confederate side.

Sherman then attempted to lead a Union advance against the Confederates at nearby Drumgould's Bluff on December 31, 1862, but heavy fog interfered with his plans, and he called off the attack.

At Chickasaw Bayou, we have the chance to save 11 acres divided into eight parcels with eight different owners. Getting all the sellers on the same page and getting all to agree to sell would seem nearly impossible. But somehow, we have done it, and we cannot lose this opportunity!

Every owner is now at the table and ready to sell. We just need to raise the last \$327,825 to seal the deal here, and at Champion Hill.

### **Champion Hill, Miss.**

Historians far and wide acknowledge Champion Hill as the most decisive battle of the most crucial campaign in the most important theater of the Civil War.

The bloodshed began when two Federal divisions, part of Grant's Army of the Tennessee, advanced toward the Hill. With a mighty cheer, the men in Union blue slammed into the Confederates along the ridge and drove them back, fighting their way toward the Crossroads.

Confederate General John C. Pemberton ordered his finest combat division into action to check the Federal advance and secure the Crossroads. The Rebel Yell echoed above the din as battle-hardened Missourians and Arkansans launched a vicious counterattack, rolling across the vital Crossroads and re-taking the crest of Champion Hill. In seven or eight hours of some of the hardest fighting of the entire War, described as "wild confusion and panic," the Union army suffered nearly 2,500 casualties while the Confederates lost almost 4,300 men, resulting in the Southerners' retreat.

The twin Union victories at Champion Hill and nearby Big Black River Bridge the next day forced the Confederates into a doomed position inside the fortifications of Vicksburg.

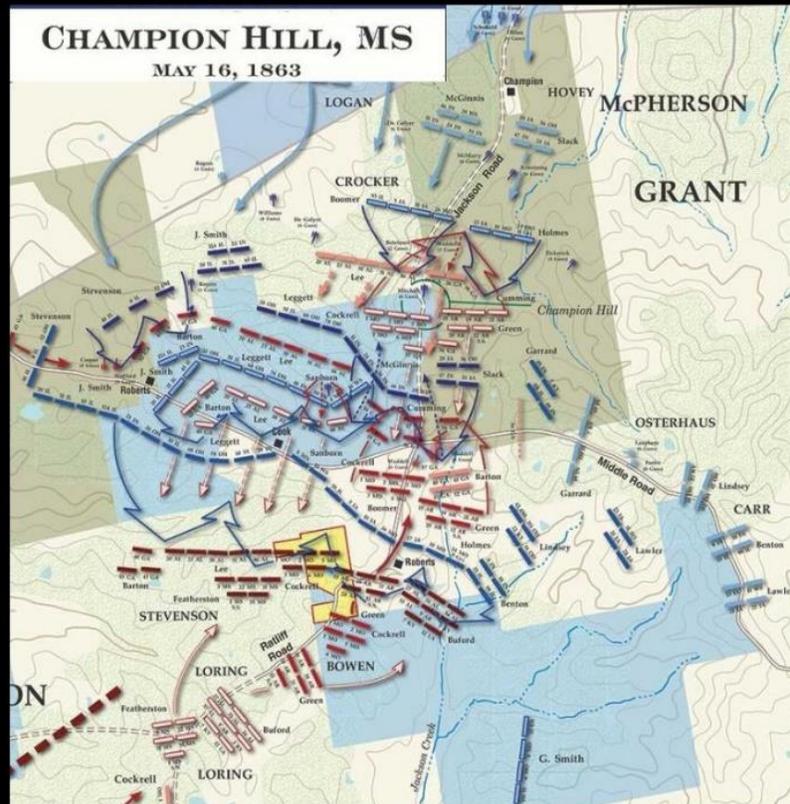
While the Civil War raged on, the fall of Vicksburg was a turning point from which the Confederacy never fully recovered.

In 2007, the Trust purchased an easement directly from the Champion family — the reason it's called Champion Hill. And then as you'll no doubt remember, in 2021, the Champion family gave us the extraordinary opportunity to purchase the 144 acres of land outright, as well as an additional 354 acres of family-owned land nearby.

As we honor the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Champion Hill, we have the opportunity to put some of these pieces back together and save 20 acres at this significant battlefield park.

These tracts are contiguous, making it a remarkable opportunity to preserve this historic land. More importantly, each of them is a critical “missing piece” adding to the 1,223 acres that you have already helped to save at Champion Hill.

Your generous gift today will be matched \$6.50-to-\$1, multiplying your battlefield-saving impact!



**DONATE NOW!**

American Battlefield Trust  
1156 15th St NW Ste 900,  
Washington, DC 20005

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**ICWRT authors Jenny Thompson (The Story of the Bloody Eighth), Steve Magnusen (To My Best Girl: Courage, Honor, and Love in the Civil War: The Inspiring Life Stories of Rufus Dawes and Mary Gates), Michael Eisenhut (Brothers of War. The Iron Brigade at Gettysburg), and Nikki Schofield (Spotsylvania County, A Civil War Romance) have their books available for purchase online.**

**Remember, books make great Christmas gifts!**