KCWRT is a non-partisan, non-profit, educational forum for promotion of knowledge, commemoration, and preservation of our American Civil War heritage. Meetings are always open and visitors are always welcome.

The Scout's Report

Knoxville Civil War Roundtable
P. O. Box 52232
Knoxville, TN 37950-2232
Website: kcwrt.org

VOLUME XIV | SEPTEMBER 2026 | NO. 3

KCWRT MEETING

TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026
****Buffet at 6:30 PM****
****Speaker at 7:30 PM****
Dinner & Presentation
$22.00 Members
$25.00 Non-members
Presentation Only
$8.00 Members
$10.00 Non-members

DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE OR CANCELED BY 11 AM, FRIDAY, SEPT. 11TH
CALL (865) 671-9001 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE

MENU
Southern Roast Beef
Grilled Chicken
Glazed Carrots
Oven Roasted Potatoes
Garden Salad
Beverages
Assorted desserts

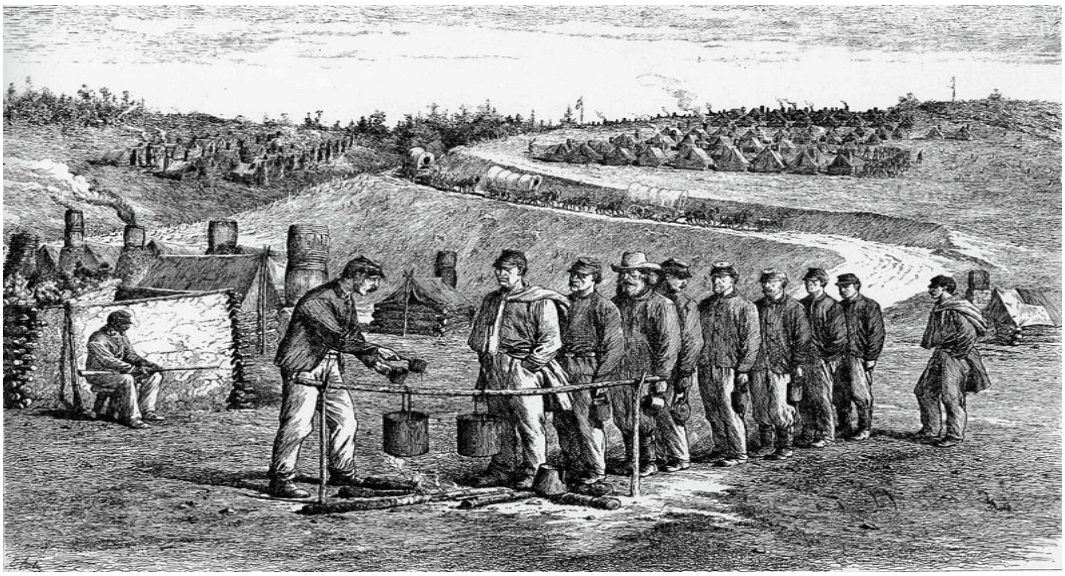
LOCATION
Bearden Banquet Hall
5806 Kingston Pike

THIS ISSUE

The Impact of Agriculture ...1
Matt McClanahan Bio 2
President's Message.....3
Announcements.....4 & 5
Travelogue #7.....6 & 7
Renew your Membership.....8
2026-2027 Speakers.....9
Membership Form.....10

The Impact of Agriculture on the American Civil War

"An army marches on its stomach."
"Amateurs talk strategy; professionals talk logistics."



These two quotes, often erroneously attributed to Napoleon, capture the importance of food to a campaigning army. Of course, Napoleon learned firsthand in his invasion of Russia in 1812 what happens when food runs short. It is estimated that he lost more than 500,000 men to starvation and disease in that bleak Russian winter.

The winter of 1863-64 was the coldest of the Civil War here in East Tennessee, and food was always at issue. Driven back into the defenses of Knoxville in mid-November, the Union army under Gen. Ambrose Burnside was reduced to quarter and then to half rations before the Confederate stranglehold on the town was broken. That winter, several engagements were fought to the north and east of Knoxville. The Union

aim was to drive Longstreet from upper East Tennessee, while the Confederates fought to stay put by maintaining control over the valuable farmland between the Holston and French Broad rivers. The withdrawal of Union forces following the Battle of Dandridge on January 17, 1864, decided the matter. Free to forage and feed themselves, the Confederates would remain a threat to Union activities in the area until the spring of '64.

Come join us as attorney Matt McClanahan examines the impact farming had on the decision making of Civil War leaders. Specifically, he will explore the logistics of feeding an army, the decision to take on certain campaigns, and ultimately the defeat of the Confederacy. While much has been made of the North's industrial capabilities, the dominance of Northern agriculture in the end proved vital to Union victory.

WELCOME TO KNOXVILLE, MATT McCLANAHAN!



Matthew McClanahan serves as General Counsel for the Tennessee Department of Agriculture ("TDA"). Before joining TDA, McClanahan was a managing partner at his law firm in Crossville, focusing on government relations, civil litigation, agricultural and environmental matters, and business matters. He is currently the executive director of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts, where he works closely with conservation leaders and agricultural stakeholders across the state to conserve and enhance Tennessee's natural resources.

McClanahan earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Tennessee College of Law. He graduated magna cum laude from Tennessee Tech University with a bachelor's degree in agriculture with a minor in History.

McClanahan serves on the board of directors of TennGreen Land Conservancy and is active in his local community. A third-generation Tennessean, he was raised on his family's farm in Cumberland County, Tennessee He and his wife, Lauren, have a son, Adam Claude McClanahan.

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Dr. Lesley Gordon was originally scheduled to address the Roundtable in September but had to withdraw due to health issues. She will be rescheduled.

AUGUST PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

The August meeting had 75 attendees (65 dinners and 10 lectures only); $112 in book sales and $345 in memberships.

— Stan Sech, Treasurer
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Timothy D. Vane

A quick look at the calendar shows that summer will soon be turning to fall and with it the promise of cooling weather, the leaves turning color and… a series of events sponsored by the Knoxville Civil War Roundtable. For those of you who thought I was going to mention SEC football, I'm sorry to disappoint you. However, two great things can happen at the same time and why not football and great opportunities to appreciate and experience our Civil War heritage, right? Here's the lineup: in September, Tim Dake has arranged to have our quarterly cemetery workdays at Odd Fellows on the 19th and at Bethel on the 26th. On October 2-3, Paul Eastes will be leading a tour to both Mill Springs and Perryville battlefields in Kentucky and we'll wrap up the Fall festivities with our annual Living History Weekend on November 14-15th organized and led by Tom Wright. So, there's a lot for members to select from this autumn but make sure you leave enough time to watch a little football.

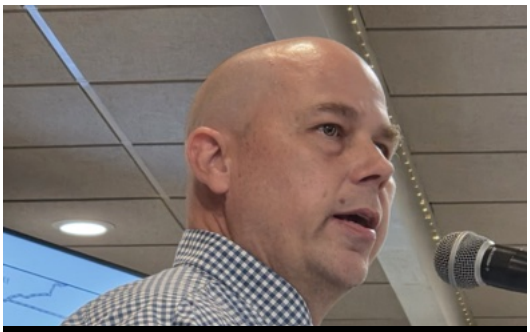


The KCWRT Booth at the ETHS History Fair

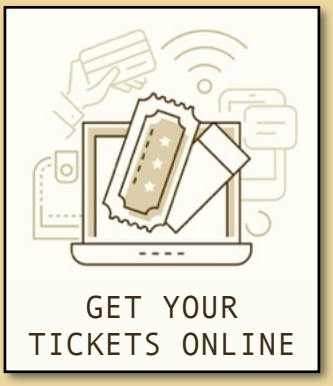
My thanks to Taylor Jones, Tom and Sue Wright, Jim Doncaster, Star Lakavage and any others I didn't see who manned our booth at the History Fair in downtown Knoxville on August 15th. In particular, I'd like to thank Tammie and Brian Burroughs for all the hard work they put into creating/bringing material for people to view as well as setting up the booth and talking to visitors. The event was sponsored by the East Tennessee Historical Society and was well attended. By the way, in case you're guessing, the child in the image is my grandson.

Speaking of contributions from our members, Jim Weeks has stepped up and volunteered to become our next director of programming. If you'll recall, I've reminded members several times that Jim Doncaster will be leaving his post at the end of this fiscal year and Jim came forward. He'll need time to understand the ropes and that training process is underway now. Technically, he must be voted in to the role by membership in the Spring, but I'm guessing that he'll pass muster.

Finally, August's speaker, Steven Nash, showcased a topic not usually covered in discussions of the Civil War. His very localized topic of Reconstruction in Western North Carolina and the realities, both economic and political, forced upon former slaves and residents in the area was illuminating. Wars very often let loose dynamic forces that are hard to resolve and that reality still resonates today.



Steven Nash



Now you can also preorder your dinner or lecture-only tickets… and avoid having to call-in your reservation

NEW OPTION THIS YEAR, by accessing our website at Knoxville Civil War Roundtable – Remembering the Civil War in East Tennessee (aka https://www.kcwrt.org) you may reserve your dinner online. This is sooo easy!

You may have noticed there are two buttons on the home page… the **JOIN/ RENEW KCWRT HERE** and **RESERVE TICKETS HERE.** The "Reserve Tickets Here" may be used to buy your dinner tickets or the lecture-only ticket. That way, there is no need to pay at the door – and more importantly, **there is no need to call-in your reservation**. Just follow the prompts when you click on the link to buy your tickets… Please note that you need to buy your tickets (or call in your reservation) **by 11am on the Friday before the Tuesday meeting,** so that we can order the right amount of food for everyone. We certainly do not want to run out!

As always, feel free to contact me or Craig Brown with your questions.

Thanks, Bill Nicolai, Membership Director









MAINTENANCE DAY

Odd Fellows
September 19
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Bethel Cemetery
September 26
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Chris Magra, the director of the Center for the Study of Tennesseans and War at the University of Tennessee, is still looking for members to come in to either tell the story of their military service to the country or that of their ancestors. He wants to hear their stories and record it for study by historians. Every story matters so please contact him at cmagra@utk.edu.

CIVIL WAR FIELD TRIP

MILL SPRINGS NATIONAL MONUMENT & PERRYVILLE BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

MILL SPRINGS NATIONAL MONUMENT



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026

PERRYVILLE BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE



TWO HISTORIC BATTLEGROUNDS. ONE UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE.

Walk the ground. Understand the history. Honor their legacy.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

- **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026**
  Mill Springs National Monument
- **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026**
  Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

HOME 2 SUITES BY HILTON

Home 2 Suites by Hilton
Danville, Kentucky
(859) 209-2243
Rate: $144/night plus tax
Check-in Friday, October 2, 2026



KNOXVILLE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

SPONSORED BY
KNOXVILLE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
AND
CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

TRAVELOGUE #7

Potter's Raid in South Carolina in 1865 and the Battle of Dingle's Mill

By Tim Dake



Dingle's Mill Battle Map

Three miles south of Sumter, SC on US 521 is the site of the interesting yet inconsequential Battle of Dingle's Mill. It was the second action during BG Edward E. Potter's Raid through coastal SC in search of railroad equipment which MG William T. Sherman had sent him to destroy. With two brigades comprised of 2,700 men, Potter moved north from Georgetown toward Sumter along the highway through a swamp. On 9 April Potter's force moved on a causeway lined with trees encountering burning bridges until reaching Turkey Creek which had been flooded by a dam. A mix of local Confederate forces under Col. George W. Lee, including the 20th SC Militia, 44th Clarendon Militia, and 65 convalescing hospital patients, totaling 158 men, had set up three cannons across the road.

After two Federal assaults were repulsed by the cannons, Potter sent his First Brigade of infantry, with the 157th NY, and the 56th NY to his left (west) and found a way across Turkey Creek and through the swamp to flank the Confederates, while the 25th OH mounted a bayonet charge across the remnants of a burning bridge, and the 107th OH continued suppressive fire across the creek toward the cannons. The Second Brigade of infantry, with the 54th MA (of the movie Glory fame), 32nd US Colored Infantry, and the 102nd USCI were sent to the right (east) to find another way around the swamp.

One of the Confederate cannons would not fire, and the ammunition did not fit the other two cannons, so rocks and broken metal pieces had to be used. The First Brigade came out of the Confederate right and promptly mounted a bayonet charge which forced the Confederates to abandon their artillery and flee into Sumter. The action started at 2pm and continued until 6pm.



Dingle's Mill Cannons



The Battlefield at Dingle's Mill

Estimates of losses varied on both sides. The accepted numbers are six Confederate dead, and eight wounded; three Federal dead, and 23 wounded.

After securing the field, Union troops moved into Sumter and began destroying railroad equipment and public buildings. Potter's Raid continued until 21 April when word finally reached the troops that General Robert E. Lee and General Joseph E. Johnston had both surrendered and that President Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated. Ironically, the Battle of Dingle's Mill took place at the same time as General Robert E. Lee was surrendering in Virginia.

While the battle did nothing to change the course of the war or even to lessen the impact of Potter's Raid, it is extraordinary that 158 men held up 2,700 men for four hours with two working cannon firing scrap metal and rocks. More astonishing is that the Federal troops were highly experienced while the Confederates were local militia and wounded soldiers, who comprised more than 40% of the Confederates and had not worked together previously. The use of the terrain, and the exceptional marksmanship of both the Confederate artillery and musketry made possible the delay of four hours. For more information, see Tom Elmore's Potter's Raid Through South Carolina, The Final Days of the Confederacy

TO ALL MEMBERS

As you'll see on the next page, our director of membership, Bill Nicolai, talks about our status in getting members to pay their dues for this current fiscal year. First, my thanks to those of you who have paid on time. Now conventional wisdom says that leaders should tread lightly and not alienate those who are behind in payment. Except we've been reminding members since May about this and about 90 members still haven't paid so calling people's attention to it is justified. Frankly, it's just unfair to the organization and to those who have met their obligation. There are three easy ways to pay – at the door at a monthly membership meeting, through the mail or online. Please don't wait any longer. Thanks.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Hello fellow Members of the Roundtable:

You are receiving this message because you have been a Member of the Knoxville Civil War Roundtable during the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 fiscal years (which runs from July 1 through June 30) but according to my records, approximately 90 former members have not renewed for the current campaign.

I hope you have enjoyed the programs in the past. We added nearly 30 new Members in the last campaign. Also, we have added six new Members already this year! We encourage you to renew your Membership.

You may renew by mailing a check to the PO Box (refer to the application at the end of this newsletter), paying me at the meeting, or...**THE NEW OPTION THIS YEAR**, by accessing our website at Knoxville Civil War Roundtable – Remembering the Civil War in East Tennessee (aka https://www.kcwrt.org) and renewing online. This is sooo easy! Click on the "**JOIN/RENEW KCWRT HERE**" button. Please renew so that you do lose access to the newsletter.

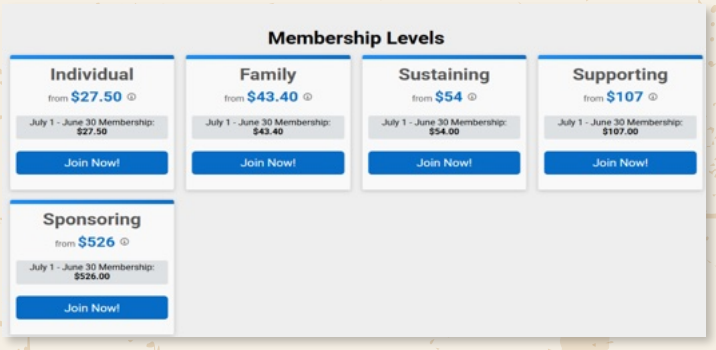
When you reach the KCWRT home page, you will see the following:



Scroll down the page:



If you click on **JOIN/RENEW KCWRT HERE**, you will see the following membership levels:



Click on your selection and follow the prompts. **Click on the "I'm new here" to complete the application.** Note that there is a service fee we have to cover when paying by credit card. We make no money on the purchase – your Membership goes toward paying for speaker travel expenses, meeting the mission and preservation efforts of the Roundtable (the two scholarships we offer, supporting the November Fort Dickerson weekend, etc.) and covering the few operating expenses we do have (website management, the newsletter, etc.).

The Board is in discussion that if you don't renew by November 1st, we may stop emailing the monthly newsletter to you. The newsletter will not be posted on the website based on this same decision. **But note that you will always have access to the website to renew anytime in the future.**

Thank you, Bill Nicolai, Membership Director

THE KNOXVILLE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE 2026-2027 SPEAKERS SERIES



October 2026 Speaker:
Gene Salecker

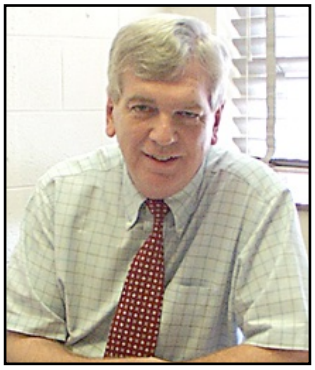
October 13, 2026 — Gene Salecker, Historian & Author, *"Destruction of the Steamship Sultana."*

November 10, 2026 — Brian Wills, Historian & Author, *"George Thomas: The Rock of Chickamauga"*

December 8, 2026 — Jim Ogden, Chief Historian, Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP, *"'Fighting Joe' Hooker and the Battle Above the Clouds"*



December 2026 Speaker:
Jim Ogden



January 2027 Speaker:
Jim Stovall

January 12, 2027 — Michael Van Ness, M.D., Historian & Author, *"Imprisoned at Camp Douglas: The Diary and Art of Knoxville Confederate Samuel Bell Palmer"*

February 9, 2027 — Jim Stovall, Historian & Author, *"The Dissenting South"*

March 9, 2027 — David Powell, Historian & Author, *"Storming Kennesaw"*

April 13, 2027 — Brian Kowell, Historian, *"The Magnificent Seven: Pook's Turtles in the Civil War"*



June 2027 Speaker:
Gil Hahn

May 11, 2027 — Robert Girardi, Historian & Author, *Gouverneur K. Warren vs. Phil Sheridan: Five Forks and a Knife in the Back'*

June 15, 2027 — Gil Hahn, Historian & Author, *"Campaigns for the Confederate Coast"*

July 13, 2027 — TBA

August 10, 2027 — Kevin Donovan, Historian, *"The Court Martial of Fitz John Porter: Fair or Fixed?"*

September 14, 2027 —Juanita Leisch Jensen, Historian, *"The War Through Women's Eyes"*

October 12, 2027— Ed Gantt, Historian, TBA

November 9 — Frank O'Reilly, Historian & Author, *"Retreat from Victory: The Battle of Malvern Hill and the End of the Seven Days"*

Director of Membership
Knoxville Civil War Roundtable
P.O. Box 52232
Knoxville, TN 37950-2232

(Mail Application to the above address or turn in at Monthly Meeting – 2nd Tuesday each month at Bearden Banquet Hall, 5806 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN; 6:30 pm Buffet, 7:15 Business Meeting, 7:30 pm Speaker)
(Knoxville Civil War Roundtable Website: https://kcwrtorg.wordpress.com/)
Facebook page is: https://www.facebook.com/Knoxville-Civil-War-Roundtable-117118935033706/
Membership year is by fiscal year (1 July – 30 June)

Membership Application

Name _____ Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail addresses you want monthly Scout's Report and other KCWRT information sent to:
_____

Name you want to be called on nametag (i.e., first name, middle name, or nickname) _____

Type Membership: Individual ($25) ☐; Family ($40) ☐ (List additional family members at bottom)
Sustaining ($50) ☐; Supporting ($100) ☐; Sponsoring ($500) ☐;
Any additional donation is welcome and will help with KCWR Programs: $_____

Occupation _____ Employer _____
Year Joined _____ Where did you first hear of KCWRT? _____

Do you have ancestors who served in the Civil War? (Yes, No, Unknown) _____

Major Civil War interests (to be used in the Roster to network with members with similar interests. Indicate specifically, if possible, a particular battle, person, unit or other interest).
_____
_____
_____

Hobbies/Clubs other than the Civil War: _____
_____

Field Trips: I am ____, am not _____ interested in field trips. If you are, for how many days?
1 day _____, 2 days ____, 4 to 7 days _____. Suggestions for field trip sites: _____

Area(s) of expertise I would be willing to share with KCWRT _____
_____
Volunteers always needed! I would be willing to volunteer in the following areas:
_____
Suggestions or comments to improve the KCWRT _____
_____
Additional Information for Family Membership. List the following below (use back if necessary):
Names, additional mailing addresses, additional email addresses, and names for nametag.

The Scout's Report of the Knoxville Civil War Roundtable

KCWRT is a non-partisan, non-profit, educational forum for promotion of knowledge, commemoration, and preservation of our American Civil War heritage. Meetings are always open and visitors are always welcome.

President
Tim Vane
tdvane@comcast.net

Past President
Tammie Burroughs
tmcburroughs@gmail.com

Vice President
Tom Wright
thomaswright8@comcast.net

Secretary
Chris Manning
cjmanning13@gmail.com

Treasurer
Stan Sech
zachsam@yahoo.com

Director of Preservation
Brian Burroughs
bburroughs@charter.net

Director of Community Activities
Tim Dake
tjdake@comcast.net

Directors of Membership
Jerry Patterson, Emeritus

William Nicolai
nicolai.william@gmail.com

Director of Promotions
Taylor Jones
ptaylormjones@gmail.com

Director of Programming
Jim Doncaster
jdoncaster1@msn.com

Director of Technology
Craig T. Brown
c37801@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor
Marietta Fargueson
mfargueson@icloud.com

Directors at Large
Tom Morgan
tomamorgan45@gmail.com

Chad Gardner
cbigb1000@gmail.com

The Knoxville Civil War Roundtable welcomes any person who has an interest in the American Civil War.
New Members are always welcome.
For more information, call 865-671-9001, visit our website at kcwrt.org, or email us: kcwrt1865@gmail.com

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