

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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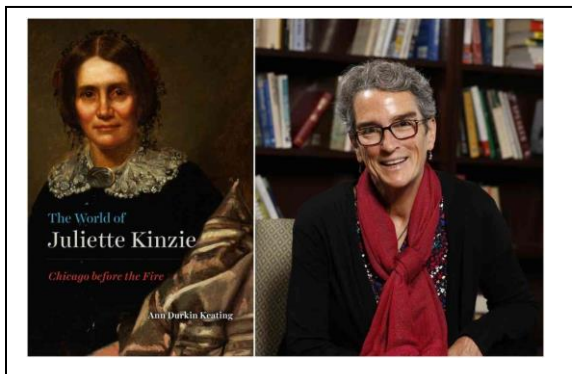
808th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, February 11th, 2022

Ann Durkin Keating on

"Juliette Kinzie, the Civil War, and the Making of Chicago"

Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Feb. 11, 2022, 07:30 PM CST

Zoom Option ID 898 4099 2845; No Passcode needed



After spending the 1832 Black Hawk War at Portage, Wisconsin, Juliette settled with her husband, John H. Kinzie at Chicago, where they were central figures in the city's early political, social and religious life. The family witnessed the arrival of the first railroad and the opening of the canal. John was an enthusiastic Whig and then an early supporter of the Republican Party alongside Abraham Lincoln. But the Kinzie family was

split by the Civil War. Juliette's husband and three sons served in the Union Army, while her son-in-law was an officer in the Confederacy. Juliette kept in contact with her daughter who lived in Savannah Georgia through letters. This presentation will explore her experiences with a war that fundamentally split her family.

Ann Durkin Keating is Toenniges Professor of History at North Central College in Naperville where she has taught for more than 30 years. She is the co-editor of the Encyclopedia of Chicago (2004) and is the author of several books on Chicago history, including most recently The World of Juliette Kinzie: Chicago Before the Fire (2019).

Battlefield Preservation

Today, you and I have a special opportunity to save three tracts of land—141 acres of irreplaceable battlefield land that was once the site of both an American Revolutionary War standoff and a Civil War engagement near the historic Todd’s Tavern, plus 98 acres of land where Union forces attempted to damage the pertinent Confederate supply lines of the Weldon Railroad with battles fought in proximity to the Globe Tavern.

The importance of saving and preserving sacred land where men fought and died in two separate wars that determined our sovereignty and defined our nation cannot be understated. These 141 acres that included the land where Todd’s Tavern stood are threatened by the shadow of development. As a history lover, I’m sure you understand the importance of this land and the necessity of its preservation.

An additional 98 acres of hallowed ground, on two tracts, near a second tavern — the Globe Tavern south of Petersburg, Virginia — played very important roles in two battles for the strategically vital Weldon Railroad, the first in June 1864 and the other in August of that same year. The Weldon connected Richmond and the rail hub of Petersburg to the South’s last Atlantic port, Wilmington, North Carolina, and Grant desperately wanted to wrest control of the railroad from the Confederates.

Thanks to grants from the federal government and the Commonwealth of Virginia, funding from partner organizations Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, and the Petersburg Battlefields Foundation, and a large contribution from a generous donor and members like you, we can save all this land and put these 239 priceless acres into the “saved forever” column for just \$137,500.

Today, we have the opportunity to do just that — and, frankly, we may be just in the nick of time because the threats to the land around Todd’s Tavern and Globe Tavern appear to be growing almost daily.

David N. Duncan, American Battlefield Trust President

January Meeting

By Mark Matranga

Rob Girardi addressed The Civil War Round Table at its 807th Regular Meeting on January 14, 2022, on John Eugene Smith, “Galena’s Forgotten General.” Partially due to there being multiple generals Smith in the Union army, and nine generals -some quite

famous - hailing from Galena, Illinois, Smith has been overlooked. But Girardi argues that Smith's career and influence on his former neighbors' success deserve a fresh look.

Born in Switzerland in 1816, his father a Waterloo veteran, Smith attended school in Philadelphia after his family emigrated. He moved to St. Louis and in 1836 to Galena where he established a jewelry shop. Shortly thereafter, he formed a lifelong association with Elihu Washburne who served in Congress from 1852-69. Prominent in local affairs, he was elected County Treasurer in 1860. Attorney John Rawlins and he were friends; he made connections with future generals John Corson Smith and Ely Parker through the Masonic Lodge. Smith also befriended Ulysses Grant who came to Galena in 1860 and worked in his brother's tannery. He claimed, "No one knew Grant better than I did," and noted that his friend seemed rather uninterested in business: "He was a very poor businessman," who preferred talking about his prior war experiences than waiting on customers.

As the secession crisis mounted in February 1861, Smith, an ardent Lincoln supporter, used his influence to obtain a commission from Governor Yates: Colonel with responsibility for organizing Illinois militia. He and Rawlins organized rallies to raise troops in Galena; impressed with Grant's military experience, they asked him to speak, whereupon the men requested that he train and lead them. Grant, who was seeking a regular army commission, declined. Later, charged with training regiments in Springfield, Smith solicited Grant who accepted and ultimately became Colonel of the 21st Illinois Volunteer Regiment.

Following First Manassas, Smith was commissioned Colonel, 45th Illinois Regiment (The Washburne Lead Mine Regiment), which mustered in at Camp Douglas on December 26, 1861. Sent initially to Cairo, the regiment fought at Fort Donelson in W.H.L. Wallace's Brigade/McClermand's Division. Smith described the February 15, 1862, fighting as "continuous though irregular skirmishing;" through it all "my only solicitude was for the men," he wrote. This trait showed at Shiloh on April 6 when, his camp overrun and men demoralized, he calmly cleaned and filled his pipe and began to smoke. This inspired the men: a shout went out along the line and the regiment rallied. Despite taking substantial casualties, the 45th was the last unit to fall back. Smith criticized his commanders after Shiloh. Replying to Washburne's inquiry, he blamed the division commanders - "we were surprised," he wrote.

Promoted to brigadier general, Smith commanded a brigade during the Vicksburg campaign, assumed division command during the siege and led the 45th into Vicksburg through the surrender. At Chattanooga, Sherman fed his brigades piecemeal into battle at Tunnel Hill where, Girardi commented, they were "chewed up." After the fall of Atlanta, he coordinated defenses at Allatoona Pass and subsequently led his division

throughout the March to the Sea and the campaign in the Carolinas. When fire destroyed Columbia, Smith noted that his men did not fight the fire with “the same zeal with which they fought the rebels.” Girardi noted that Smith was typical of commanders who “shut their eyes” to their troops’ activities once they crossed into South Carolina.

Following Confederate surrender, Smith was appointed Military Commander of West Tennessee (May '65 - February '66). Promoted to Major General, USA, for war service, he continued in the Regular Army and fought in the West; retired in 1881 as Colonel, 14th U.S. Infantry, he died in 1897 and was buried in Galena. Reporting to the President from Vicksburg, Charles Dana found in Smith “A firmness of character, a steadiness of hand, and a freedom from...jealousy which had a positive effect;” his “conscientious devotion not only to doing but also learning his duties...renders him a better and better general every day.” To Chief Red Cloud, Smith was simply, heroically “the only white man I could trust.”

Girardi presented a man very much of his time who made much of it. Successful in business and military affairs, Smith was considered for Secretary of War in the Grant administration. Almost all the Galena men who rose to prominence (Parker, Colson Smith, Rawlins, all became generals) were indebted to John Eugene Smith, especially Grant who he may have rescued from obscurity. Girardi makes a convincing case that Smith is the “most important Civil War general you never heard of.”



BULLETIN BOARD

The **Kenosha Civil War Museum** is putting on the following in-person programs:

The Fatal Rush: The 29th USCT at The Crater, Petersburg

Friday, February 11 | Noon | Presenter: Dr. Laurie Schiller

A Proud Competitor But a Humble Sportsman: The Athleticism of Abraham Lincoln

Saturday, February 12 | 1 pm | Presenter: Dr. Jason Silverman

For more on programs at the museum, visit
<https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/events/>

The **Congress of Civil War Round Tables** is sponsoring a series of virtual Civil War Lectures by some of the nation's leading historians. Visit <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html> to view the complete schedule and register

On Feb. 14th, starting at 3:30 CST, the **Abraham Lincoln Bookshop's** "House Divided" series will feature an interview with author John Avlon, who will discuss his latest book, *Lincoln and the Fight for Peace*. Visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/> for more.

On Feb. 9 **John Horn** is speaking on "The Battles for the Weldon Railroad, August 1864" at the Sarasota (FL) CWRT.

Official Records for Sale

Wayne Giza writes: I realize that physical copies of the Official Records and Naval Records may not be as sought after as they once were. I am 70 years old and have complete sets of both that it would be nice to see someone else enjoy. If anyone might be interested price is negotiable. I live in Rolling Meadows near the no longer there Motorola complex. Contact: wgiza@lehmaninc.com.

The CWRT's Winter Executive Committee meeting has been postponed to March 5.

Rob Girardi will be speaking for the Schaumburg Library on Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. on "Shadow Over Chicago" (zoom).

More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Due to government-ordered shutdowns, CWRT events are being cancelled or going online on an ad hoc basis. Contact the sponsoring organization for up-to-date details.

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

Feb. 4th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Doug Dammann on "A Civil War Museum in Kenosha"

Feb. 7th, Rock Valley (Rockford) CWRT: David Dixon on "Radical Warrior: August Willich's Journey from German Revolutionary to Union General"

Feb. 10th, Milwaukee CWRT: Steve Acker on "The 26th Wisconsin Infantry"

Feb. 12th, Two Old Goats in Cedar Lake: Dennis Doyle on "Irish Brigade at Gettysburg"

Feb. 15th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: David Dixon on "The Civil War as a Radical International Revolution"

Feb. 19th, Salt Creek CWRT: Jon Sebastian on "Turning the Table: The Gettysburg Campaign"

Feb. 24th, South Suburban CWRT: Jen Murray on "General Meade"

Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

March 11th: Mark Laubacher on *The USS Red Rover: Hospital of Firsts*

Apr. 8th: Jeffrey Hunt on *Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station and Mine Run*

May 13th: Dr. Thomas Carson on *Lincoln as Moral Exemplar*

June 10th: Lauren Szady on *TBD*

Zoom notice: For the remainder of the 2021-22 year, a recurring zoom meeting has been set up. The Zoom option for viewing the presentation will use the same ID each time, and no passcode will be required.