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# General Orders

## *Altavilla's Brigade*

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### PRESIDENT'S POST

*By Keith Altavilla*

Greetings everyone. I hope you are looking forward to the upcoming campaign for the Houston Civil War Round Table, set for our first meeting on September 15 at Rudi Lechner's.

You may have noticed that I am not Eugene Boisaubin, who was elected president at the end of the last campaign. Gene has had to step down, and I and the rest of the Round Table membership thank him for his service. We hope to see him at upcoming meetings. Also, Walker Agnew has stepped up into the vice-presidential position.

For those of you who want dinner, I recommend arriving at Rudi's around 5:30 pm so you can enjoy your meal before heading to the meeting room. We hope to add a few more chairs, but seating is limited. Therefore, it is important that you guarantee your spot by letting Barry Brueggeman know beforehand. The details regarding this meeting will be provided in the September newsletter.

A new addition to this year's calendar, starting in October, will be a small silent auction at every meeting. For further details, please see Barry Brueggeman's article below. Also, we have another great speaker lineup for the coming year, a few returning favorites, some new faces, and two former Vandiver Award winners, all joining us to discuss various topics surrounding the Civil War.

It is vital that you get your dues submitted. You can mail your check to Barry now or give it in person in September. Your dues help keep this organization going, allowing us to bring in these great speakers and provide the opportunities for fellowship we all enjoy together. It's been a busy summer, it promises to be a busy year, and I look forward to seeing everyone on September 15!



### MONTHLY SILENT AUCTION BEGINS IN OCTOBER

*By Barry Brueggeman*

It has been several years since the HCWRT has held a silent auction. Since we have more limited space than we did at the HESS Club, we will begin to offer a few items at each meeting starting in October. Besides donated items, Donnie Stowe will offer some of his more valuable book sets as well.

If you have any items you would like to donate, bring them to me at the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting so that I can have them ready for display starting in October. The auctions will continue until we run out of items.

# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*By Michael Clennan*

I'm pleased to announce that our membership ranks are growing! Our new campaign consisting of nine meetings and lectures takes off in September. There is plenty of room for you and others in our fellowship.

As Membership Chair, I would welcome hearing from our members or potential members. I can be reached at (713) 864-1204 or via email at [mgclennan@gmail.com](mailto:mgclennan@gmail.com). I look forward to greeting you at the front door prior to our meetings!

Feel free to post my contact information on any bulletin board or information source. Also, please reach out to me regarding any suggestions you have regarding membership.

Please help us by stressing to potential members that the HCWRT's mission is to promote impartial inquiry, study, and education about the period of the American Civil War and its causes and aftermath. They should also be informed of our website, which is [houstonscivilwar.com](http://houstonscivilwar.com), as well as our Facebook page.

Finally, please be sure to remit your membership dues as soon as possible to Barry Brueggeman at the address on the last page of this newsletter, or submit these to him at our September meeting. There is a membership application form on page 5 which you may use.

## 2022-23 SPEAKERS SCHEDULE

*By Keith Altavilla, President*

As we finished a 2021-22 Campaign that saw us return to in-person meetings, the Programs Committee was pleased to announce the schedule for the upcoming 2022-23 campaign. This is a strong lineup, and one we are especially proud to note comes in large part from scholars and authors right here in Texas. These are prominent and accomplished speakers, many of whom are well known to us, with a few new faces as well.

Starting the year in September will be **Chris Mackowski**. The co-founder of the popular "Emerging Civil War" website and managing editor of the Emerging Civil War Series from

Savas Beatie, Professor Mackowski will be presenting *The Last Days of Stonewall Jackson*.

In October, **Catherine Clinton** returns to us from UT San Antonio to present *Mary Lincoln: A Life*, her engaging biography of the Union's First Lady.

Vandiver Award recipient **Edward Cotham** comes in November, this time to present his work *Sabine Pass: Thermopylae of the Confederacy*, about the Confederate stand on the Texas-Louisiana border.

December will see the return of **Brian Matthew Jordan**, professor from Sam Houston State. He will present to us *A Thousand May Fall: An Immigrant Regiment's Civil War*, tracking the experience of the 107th Ohio, a German regiment in the Eastern Theater. Jordan's book was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

We begin 2023 with another past Vandiver recipient, **Don Frazier** of Schreiner University. Dr. Frazier will look at *The Texas Hill Country in the Civil War*, examining the home front in Central Texas.

Texas A&M professor **Lorien Foote** joins us again in February. Her presentation, *The Yankee Plague*, looks at escaped Union prisoners in the Carolinas, and what their presence meant for the end of the Confederacy.

In March, **Jeffrey Hunt**, director of the Texas Military Forces Museum, joins us again to look at *Rappahannock Station*, another battle between Meade and Lee in the Eastern Theater during the fall of 1863, following Gettysburg.

Our final scheduled speaker, for April, is author and educator **Jonathan M. Steplyk**, who will present on his work *Fighting Means Killing: Civil War Soldiers and the Nature of Combat*. Using battles like Franklin, he considers what it meant for soldiers, both Union and Confederate, to kill, and potentially be killed, by their countrymen.

The May meeting is being held open to honor our **2023 Vandiver Award** recipient.

Once again, I want to thank the full Programs Committee, which included **Gary Chandler**, Immediate Past President **Eugene Boisaubin**, Past President **Mike Harrington**, and **Jim Godlove** for their assistance in finding names and assembling the schedule. All did excellent work throughout the past campaign in

helping to coordinate the arrival of this previous year's slate, rendering invaluable assistance throughout the year. There is a lot to like in this next campaign, and we hope you will be able to join us at these meetings!

## **HTBAR SCHOLARLY SEMINAR**

This year's scholarly seminar, sponsored by the Hood's Texas Brigade Association, Re-Activated, will take place on Friday and Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 in Brenham. On Friday, a driving tour of historic Independence will take place starting at 12:30 pm. The \$40.00 fee includes docents at primary stops, packets, evening speaker, and a light supper.

Saturday's events will be from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm at the Barnhill Center located at 111 W. Main Street in Brenham. There will be outstanding speakers, a buffet lunch, vendors, and exhibitors. The fee for Saturday's event is \$85.00. Scheduled speakers include Wayne Motts, Richard McCaslin, Scott Bowden, and John C. Perry.

For additional information, contact John Stevens at (713) 885-5288 or via email at [htbar1967@hotmail.com](mailto:htbar1967@hotmail.com)

## **JEFFERSON SYMPOSIUM**

Here is your "last minute reminder" regarding the 11th Annual Civil War Symposium, which will be held on Saturday, August 6th, 2022 in Jefferson, Texas. The theme of this year's symposium is "Even More Trans-Mississippi Lore." The symposium, sponsored by the Jefferson Historical Society and Museum, will feature individuals who are noted authors, speakers, professors, and historians on various aspects of the Trans-Mississippi Civil War history, include Scott Dearman, Donald Frazier, John Goddard, and Bill J. Gurley.

Vendors and exhibitors will be present at the symposium, which will feature their traditional raffle of Civil War books plus a silent auction and a grand prize to be awarded.

Registration (which includes a catered lunch) is \$75.00 for adults and \$35.00 for students. On Friday evening, there will be a speakers' reception which will cost \$25.00 per person. The reception will provide an opportunity to meet and visit with the speakers and will include refreshments and musical entertainment.

For information on registration, contact the Museum at (903) 665-2775 or visit their website at [www.jeffersonmuseum.com](http://www.jeffersonmuseum.com). For information on Jefferson and local lodging, go to [VisitJeffersonTexas.com](http://VisitJeffersonTexas.com) or [Jefferson-texas.com](http://Jefferson-texas.com).

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## **A SOLDIER'S LETTER** *Contributed by John Stevens*

This letter has been transcribed from a copy of the original with the spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure exactly as written. The writer, Willis J. Watts, enlisted as a private at Palestine, Texas, April 5, 1862, age 23. He was wounded at Chickamauga (September 20, 1863); again at the Wilderness (May 6, 1864), and again at New Market Heights (September 30, 1864). Watts was paroled at Appomattox (April 12, 1865).

Army of Northern Va Camp 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Regt  
March 11<sup>th</sup> 1865  
Mr Philip Gathings<sup>1</sup>  
Dear Cousin



*John Stevens, Don Zuckero, and Roland Bienvenu with May speaker Mike Movius at the Monument Inn*

As I have an opportunity of sending you a few lines by hand, I cheerfully avail myself of the opportunity to do so. This leaves me in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits. Hope this will find you enjoying the same blessings and I have but little or no news of any importance or interesting character to commune to you. I have undergone a great many hardships and privations since I left Texas and expect will have to undergo many more before I get back, at least I fear so. I have fought on nearly every field of Virginia, Maryland, and Gettysburg, Pa. and over the mountains in Georgia and Tennessee.

Been wounded six times four times by pieces of shell the other two times by Minnie Balls. The four by Shell was slight, the others were very painful, but not serious. I have almost recovered from them, my arm is a little weak, but I am at my post of duty and always do it. Brother Sandy has been retired and gone to Texas, he was wounded through the knee, which disabled him for life.<sup>2</sup>

Our company is very small out of 150 Men, 22 remains. We have about one hundred men in our Regiment, about four hundred in the Brigade. There are four Regiments in the Brigade. I know we will average too Scars to the Man. Although we have suffered so much and so heavily, we are all in high Spirits and more determined on gaining our Independence than when we first entered the army. I hear of no despondency in the army, because they are all determined on our independence. I hear of some little despondency among the people at N.C., S.C., Georgia, and Alabama but that all amounts to nothing when the Soldiers are alright. I hope the people of Texas are standing square toed to our country's cause. I have not heard how they stand on the subject of reconstruction, but I hope such a thing has never entered the minds of our gallant people of Texas.

I heard through Col. White<sup>3</sup> that you was in the Army, I was truly surprised to hear that a man of your age was in the army. I knew that your patriotism would lead you a great ways, but you are entirely unfit for a soldier on account of your age & health & you could do a great deal more at home than you could in the Army. I hope you are at home when this reaches you, enjoying the

comforts and pleasures of home. We have pretty good huts to live in and are always very lively & merry. When the weather permits we often play Town Ball, Cat Bull Pin, or something of that sort. When the weather is bad, we sit in our huts and work at something. I have just finished hooking me a pair of gloves. I have learned to hook very fast, can finish a pair of gloves in a day. We get a plenty of good rations and clothing and heavy picket duty to do, but we bear it all very cheerfully, knowing that if we hold out faithful a little longer, we will gain our independence.

Well I will close by asking you to pick me out a nice pretty and smart girl for a wife when I get back. Don't let the old widowers take all of the girls before I get back. Give my love to all the family and Friends. Write soon and give me all the news afloat.

I ever remain your devoted friend.

W. J. Watts  
Co "G" 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Regt  
Richmond Va

1. Philip Gathings was an early pioneer in the Northern part of Hill County, Texas in 1853. Philip's wife Elizabeth and Willis were second cousins.

2. Willis, his brother Sandy, and two first cousins enlisted at Palestine, Texas in the spring of 1862. Sandy was wounded at Antietam, Chickamauga, and the Wilderness. He was furloughed to Texas in January 1865.

3. Colonel Joseph White was Philip's father-in-law. He lived in Anson County, North Carolina, but at age 67 did not participate as a soldier in the Civil War.

DO NOT REUSE WITHOUT PERMISSION  
For questions or comments, contact John Stevens



**Marsha Franty and Gary Chandler  
with the late Ed Bearss**



## HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Houston Civil War Round Table is dedicated to the study of the civilian, military, and cultural aspects of United States history during the period of 1861 – 1865 and to the preservation of historical sites and artifacts. For additional copies of this form please go to [www.HoustonCivilWar.com](http://www.HoustonCivilWar.com)

### Membership Type

(CHECK ONE BOX ONLY.)

- \$50 – Individual
- \$60 – Family
- \$25 – Student/Faculty or Out-of-Town
- Existing Member - Address / Information Update Only

### JOINING BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND MAY 31

**NON-RENEWING** members joining in the months of January through May will automatically be enrolled as members for the current and following year's speaker series ("campaign").

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Cell  Home  Work

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

In which format would you like to receive your newsletter?

- Email (PDF)  U.S. Postal Service (Printed)

How did you learn about us? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### FOR FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ONLY

Family Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

Relationship to Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Cell  Home  Work

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** For memberships or subscriptions outside the U.S., extra cost of postage to mail the newsletter may be added. Cost will vary; please write or email to inquire.

Mail your completed application and dues to: Houston Civil War Round Table  
C/O Barry G. Brueggeman  
3706 Lonnie Wood Drive  
Houston, TX 77059

## 2022 – 2023 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Sept. 15, 2022	Chris Mackowski: <i>"The Last Days of Stonewall Jackson"</i>
Oct. 20, 2022	Catherine Clinton: <i>"Mary Lincoln: A Life"</i>
Nov. 17, 2022	Edward Cotham: <i>"Sabine Pass: Thermopylae of the Confederacy"</i>
Dec. 15, 2022	Brian Matthew Jordan: <i>"A Thousand May Fall: An Immigrant Regiment's Civil War"</i>
Jan. 19, 2023	Donald S. Frazier: <i>"The Texas Hill Country during the Civil War"</i>
Feb. 16, 2023	Lorien Foote: <i>"The Yankee Plague"</i>
Mar. 17, 2023	Jeffrey Hunt: <i>"Rappahannock Station"</i>
April 21, 2023	Jonathan M. Steplyk: <i>"Fighting Means Killing: Civil War Soldiers and the Nature of Combat"</i>
May 19, 2023	Reserved for the 2023 Vandiver Award Recipient

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