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# General Orders

## *Altavilla's Brigade*

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Nov.  
2022



**NOVEMBER, 2022 MEETING**  
**Thursday, November 17, 2022**

**Rudi Lechner's Restaurant**  
**2503 South Gessner Road**  
**6:00 (or sooner) Dinner**  
**7:00 Program Begins**

**E-mail reservations are preferred. Please**  
**e-mail Barry Brueggeman at**  
**[bgbrueg@aol.com](mailto:bgbrueg@aol.com) or call 281 480-1130**  
**by 6 pm Monday, November 14, 2022**

**\*\*\* Reservations are Required \*\*\***

**There is no cost for dues-paid members.**  
**\$10.00 charge for visitors.**

**The HCWRT Presents**  
**Edward Cotham speaking**  
**on:**

**“Sabine Pass: Thermopylae of  
the Confederacy”**

*With Ed and Candy Cotham enjoying a well-earned vacation in Portugal, your Past President, Mike Harrington, is presenting this brief overview of Ed's upcoming address to our Round Table.*

We are singularly fortunate to have Ed speak to us about the Battle of Sabine Pass. Nobody knows more about this battle than Ed Cotham, the author of the definitive account of the fight

that Jefferson Davis once described as “more remarkable than the battle of Thermopylae.”

Ed will tell us the story of how on September 8, 1863, Confederate Lt. Richard W. “Dick” Dowling and his 40-odd men of the Jefferson Davis Guards, one of the batteries that made up Cook's 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Heavy Artillery Regiment, prevented a Union military force of more than 5,000 men, 22 transport vessels and four gunboats from occupying Sabine Pass, the starting place for a planned full-scale invasion that would have given the Union control of Texas. In a battle lasting less than an hour, Dowling and his sharp-shooting cannoneers employed a mere six smoothbore cannon in destroying two Federal gunboats, capturing 350 prisoners and driving the Union armada back to New Orleans. Thanks to their efforts, Houston was spared the fate of Atlanta.

Dowling and his men received the thanks of the Confederate congress for their heroics and the only medals for valor ever awarded by Richmond.



**Ed Cotham**

The key figure in this brief but consequential battle is, of course, Houston's own Dick Dowling. A native of County Galway, the youthful Dowling immigrated to New Orleans in 1846 to escape the Great Hunger that resulted from the Irish potato famine. Resettling in Houston in 1857, Dowling quickly established himself as a successful entrepreneur. By 1860, Dowling operated several Houston saloons, including the Bank of Bacchus, Houston's leading social gathering spot.

As part of the reaction to the killing of George Floyd, the mayor of Houston ordered the removal of Dowling's statue from public view. Dowling Street in downtown Houston was also renamed. Never mind the fact that neither Dowling nor any of his men, almost all of whom were poor Irish immigrants to Houston and Galveston, held slaves. A much more impressive monument to Dowling and the other defenders of Sabine Pass still stands at the Sabine Pass Battleground State Historic Site.

You will not want to miss this stirring presentation by the Houston Civil War Round Table's own Ed Cotham.

### About Ed Cotham

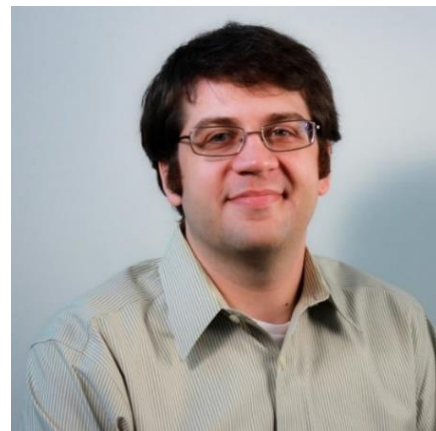
Edward Terrel Cotham, Jr. needs little introduction to members of the Houston Civil War Round Table. A long-term member of our organization, Ed has served as President of HCWRT and is currently an Advisory Director of our organization. In 2006, we proudly bestowed the Frank C. Vandiver Award of Merit on Ed.

A native Texan, Ed grew up principally in Houston. He holds an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Houston and an M.A. in Economics from the University of Chicago. In 1979, Ed received a law degree from the University of Texas and returned home to practice law. Currently, Ed serves as the Chief Investment Officer of the Terry Foundation in Houston. The Terry Foundation is the largest private source of scholarships at Texas universities.

A Life Member of the Civil War Preservation Trust, Ed is also a member of the Company of Military Historians, the Society of Civil War Historians, the Southern Historical Association,

and the Author's Guild. Ed and his wife Candy maintain homes in both Houston and Galveston. Ed's ties to the Texas Gulf Coast run deep. He has guided historical tours on Galveston Island, at Sabine Pass and elsewhere on the Texas coast for many years now. Ed's published works focus on Civil War battles and other events in Texas. They include the following widely acclaimed books: *Battle on the Bay: The Civil War Struggle for Galveston*, published in 1998; *Sabine Pass: The Confederacy's Thermopylae*, published in August 2004 and the subject of Ed's upcoming talk to us; *Juneteenth: The Story Behind the Celebration*, published just last year; and Ed's most recent book, *A Busy Week in Texas: Ulysses S. Grant's 1880 Visit to the Lone Star State*.

Ed will have copies of several of his books available for purchase at our meeting.



### PRESIDENT'S POST

*By Keith Altavilla*

The year seems to go so quickly, doesn't it? All of a sudden, Thanksgiving is next week and the holidays are just around the corner. Of course I'm sure many of you know the connection between the upcoming holiday and the Civil War: Abraham Lincoln's 1863 proclamation for "a day of Thanksgiving" on the last Thursday of November. Coming "in the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity," Lincoln's message reminds me of the long shadow cast by the war on American life, one more reason why groups like ours are so fascinated by it.

Speaking of fascinating, Catherine Clinton gave an excellent talk, providing many interesting things to think about regarding the president's family. Ed Cotham, one of our previous Vandiver Award winners, comes this month. He always has great stories to tell from the Texas Gulf Coast, and his talk on Sabine Pass should be another worthy program before the holiday break.

I hope everyone enjoyed the silent auction in October. If you didn't get anything, remember we will be doing this monthly, so there will be plenty of great opportunities to come. If you have something that you think would make a good item for auction, contact Donnie Stowe or Barry Brueggeman.

Once again, I am looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting.

## **NOVEMBER SILENT AUCTION**

*By Donnie Stowe*

The following book sets will be included in our silent auction this month:

1. **BATTLES and LEADERS OF THE CIVIL WAR** (4 volume set)
2. **STONEWALL JACKSON and the AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** (2 volume boxed set) – by Lt. Col. G. F. R. Henderson; published by the Blue and Grey Press
3. **THE CIVIL WAR – A NARRATIVE** (3 hardcover volumes) by Shelby Foote

We're also auctioning a small diorama with two confederate soldiers loading their weapons (see photo below).



## **BOOK RAFFLE**

*By Donnie Stowe*

Glad to read that we had so many members attending the first meeting in September; I regret not being able to make it myself.

But this is November and we have another raffle I think you should enjoy. We begin with ***I RODE WITH JEB STUART*** by H. B. McClellan, and is a book donated by a past president of the HCWRT, Nate Jennings.

Next we have ***BLOODY ROADS SOUTH*** by Noah Andre Trudeau. This book details the campaign from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor - May-June, 1864. Our third selection this month is ***THE CONFEDERACY'S GREATEST CAVALRYMAN – Nathan Bedford Forrest*** by Brian Steel Wills and is a gift from Roland Bienvenu. Another offering this month is ***THE CIVIL WAR DAY BY DAY – ALMANAC 1861-1865*** by E.B. Long and is also a gift from Nate Jennings.



These day by day readings should give one a big picture overview and help tie in key Civil War events. I'm also raffling ***TO SEE MY COUNTRY FREE "Magnolia Guards"*** edited & annotated by Clifton C. Valentine, and comes to us from the library of C. R. Featherston. This book has underlining and some highlighting, but it is well done and is from the pocket diaries of Ezekiel Armstrong, Ezekiel P. Miller, and Joseph A. Miller, Co. K, 17<sup>th</sup> Reg. Mississippi Infantry. Another outstanding book is ***AUTUMN OF GLORY*** by Thomas Lawrence Connelly, donated by James Godlove. It is a chronicle of the Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865.

Other books in this month's raffle are ***HIGH TIDE AT GETTYSBURG, THE BLOODIEST DAY*** from Time-Life's Civil War Collection, ***THE CIVIL WAR DICTIONARY, VOICES OF THE CIVIL WAR – ATLANTA, GENERAL JO SHELBY'S MARCH, and BATTLE HISTORY of the CIVIL WAR.***

And once again, any new members will get books as well, so please bring a new member to the meeting.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*By Michael Clennan*

Our membership campaign for 2022-2023 is ahead of last year! Last month's turnout for dinner, fellowship, and the excellent Mary Todd Lincoln lecture was outstanding! And we still had three empty seats for new members!

So please bring a friend to the November meeting! **Also, please be sure to RSVP with Barry no later than 6 pm on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>!** If you are coming for the first time and have any questions, call or text me at (713) 864-1204 or you may reach me via email at [mgclennan@gmail.com](mailto:mgclennan@gmail.com). Our membership office is open 24/7. Please join us!



*HCWRT President Keith Altavilla and  
October speaker Catherine Clinton*

## RED RIVER CAMPAIGN FIELD TRIP

The Civil War Round Table of Chicago is sponsoring a tour, scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, entitled "The Red River Campaign in Louisiana." The tour will be limited to one bus with a 50-passenger capacity. The "headquarters hotel" will be the Wyndham Garden located in Alexandria, Louisiana.

The tour's guide will be retired Brig. General Parker Hills. Dr. Garry Joiner, chair of the Department of History at LSU Shreveport, will be speaking during the tour. Tour stops will include Mansfield and the Battle of Irish Bend site, among many other locations.

Cost of the tour is \$998.00 per person, double occupancy, or \$1,250.00 per person, single occupancy. Cost includes four nights at the hotel, all meals, all motor coach services, tour guides, admission fees, evening programs, and a comprehensive Tour Kit.

To register or to obtain additional information, contact Tour Registrar Rae Radovich at (708) 218-1861 or via email at [rae@anusource.com](mailto:rae@anusource.com). You can also visit their Round Table's website, [chicagocwrt.org](http://chicagocwrt.org). On the home page, click on "Annual Battlefield Tour."

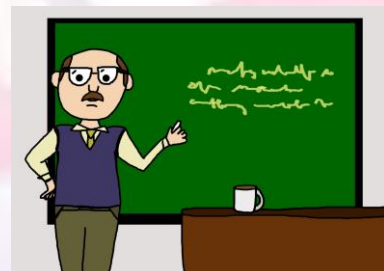
## NOVEMBER QUIZ

*By Jim Godlove*

Q: The Union commander of the Sabine Pass Expedition had graduated first in his 1843 class at West Point (Ulysses Grant was 21<sup>st</sup> in the same class). At the Battle of Fredericksburg, he was in command of the Left Grand Division of the Army of the Potomac. Ambrose Burnside largely blamed him for the defeat.

Both he and Burnside were relieved in January 1863. After a period of inactivity, he was sent to Louisiana to command the XIX Corps.

**Who was this Pennsylvanian?**





## 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

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. 16, 2023	Jeffrey Hunt: <i>"Rappahannock Station"</i>
Apr. 20, 2023	Jonathan M. Steplyk: <i>"Fighting Means Killing: Civil War Soldiers and the Nature of Combat"</i>
May 18, 2023	Reserved for the 2023 Vandiver Award Recipient

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