



### **ABOUT the ALCWRT**

- *The Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table is the oldest Civil War Round Table in Michigan, founded 1952. This year is our JUBILEE ...! Our 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary is September, 2017.*
- *Meetings are each 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, September through May (except December), 7:30 pm, at the Charter Township of Plymouth City Offices, 9955 N. Haggerty, in the Chamber Council Room.*
- *For more information, contact ALCWRT President Liz Stringer at [stringerL@aol.com](mailto:stringerL@aol.com)*
- *Our web site is [ALCWRT.org](http://ALCWRT.org)*
- *Like us on FACEBOOK...! "Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table"*

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**TOM NANZIG** will be our featured speaker for the January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table.

As of press time, his presentation topic was not available to share with you, but if past history is any guide, we can expect a very interesting and informative evening..!

**ABOUT OUR SPEAKER** -- Tom is well-known to our club, and to other students of American history and the Civil War, as an author and engaging speaker. Tom was the co-founder of the Ann Arbor Civil War Round Table.

### **LOOKING FOR SOMETHING to DO on a SNOWY COLD DAY in MICHIGAN? Two suggestions...**

The theme of this month's newsletter is suggestions for keeping ourselves distracted from this winter's unseasonably cold winter! The internet to the rescue!

First suggestion:

#### **READ the ORIGINAL MAGAZINE ARTICLES:**

Did you know that the *Atlantic* magazine has archived issues, back to the late 1850's, available on-line at no charge? (*Harper's Weekly* also has back issues on-line if you're willing to subscribe and pay).

For example, the July-1862 issue of the *Atlantic* contains these items:

- ... "Chiefly about War Matters", by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- ... "The Poet to his Readers", by Oliver Wendell Holmes
- ... "Lyrics of the Street (Part II)", by Julia Ward Howe

Here's the link to the *Atlantic* archives:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/backissues/>

Second suggestion:

*Read on for info about Winslow Homer and his Civil War paintings, including one in the DIA's collection.*

## WINSLOW HOMER'S PAINTINGS of the AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

While Matthew Brady was photographing scenes of the American Civil War, others were sketching and illustrating and painting the same subjects. One of these was **Winslow Homer**, who would go on to become one of America's foremost 19<sup>th</sup> century painters.

Winslow Homer was born in 1836 in Boston, and exhibited at an early age the artistic talent that he had inherited from his mother, his first art teacher. By 1857, at age 21, he had finished a two-year apprenticeship with a lithographer and become a freelance illustrator, contributing to the renowned Harper's Weekly. When the Civil War started, Harper's sent him to the front lines to sketch battle scenes and camp life. One of his initial sets of sketches in 1861 was of McClellan's camp, commanders and army on the Potomac.

Homer produced several paintings of life during and after the Civil War, from 1862 through 1876.

He exhibited some of these at the National Academy of Design in New York from 1863 through 1866, and his painting *Prisoners from the Front* was exhibited in Paris in 1867.

The **Detroit Institute of Arts** owns one of Homer's Civil War era paintings. Homer made two trips to the front at Petersburg, and from his sketches there he subsequently produced the painting

***Defiance: Inviting a Shot before Petersburg, 1864***. The painting shows a young soldier taunting the enemy, his fellow soldiers in the shadow of the trench behind him, and a barren landscape that's been denuded of trees as a result of the war:



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If you're looking for something to do on a snowy or cold day this winter, make a trip to the DIA to see Winslow Homer's *Defiance*. Or spend an afternoon on the internet checking out Winslow Homer's other Civil War era paintings. Here's a partial list:

1862: Sharpshooter on Picket Duty

1863: Home Sweet Home

1864: The Brierwood Pipe

1866: Prisoners from the Front

1876: A Visit from the Old Mistress

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### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

**THANKS to Bill Christen** for his November presentation on the work he and his wife are doing to transcribe and catalog Civil War-era letters from the Curtis family of Connecticut.

Instead of a quiz this month, here are a few key points from Bill's presentation:

\* Despite being 150+ years old, the letters were in good shape when they were pulled from the barrel in which they had been stored all those years.

\* One of the Curtis brothers served as Provost Marshall in New Orleans for a time during the Civil War.

As part of their research, the Christens are trying to find out where in New Orleans he was living at that time, and whether that home is still standing today.

\* One brother had a Michigan connection: Elliott Curtis was in Detroit in 1855, as part of a trip around the Midwest selling sewing machines.

\* Besides information about the war, the letters shed light on daily domestic life in the US at that time.

For example, the letters tell us that the Curtis family took in two sets of neighbor kids when the mothers passed away, and describe the arrangements with the fathers for paying room and board for their children.

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### THIS and THAT --

\* **REFRESHMENTS for FUTURE MEETINGS** -- Let Liz know if you're interested in bringing refreshments to a future meeting.

\* **ANNUAL DUES** -- Worley is always happy to collect your dues.