



ABOUT the ALCWRT

- *The Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table is the oldest Civil War Round Table in Michigan, founded in 1952. Our JUBILEE (65th) anniversary was September, 2017.*
- *Meetings are each 3rd 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*
- *Our web site is ALCWRT.org*
- *Like us on FACEBOOK...! "Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table"*

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The Reverend MICHAEL GILLETT

will be the featured speaker for the OCTOBER 18th meeting of the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table. His topic:

CIVIL WAR CHAPLAINS

The tools and manner of the chaplain has not changed much over the last 150 years. Today, we can easily find a small, rural church whose services would be virtually identical to a Civil War Era Sunday morning.

Both the Union and Confederate governments authorized chaplains early in the war. Almost 4,000 individuals (including at least one woman) served as chaplains during the war. Mike will speak to the many roles and types of chaplains, and the portrayal that he has chosen to do as a reenactor. Michael doesn't "portray" a chaplain, he is a chaplain .

Rev. Michael Gillett is a retired ordained minister and a life-long Civil War Nut. This is his fifteenth season as a Civil War Reenactor, portraying a Union Chaplain. And while it's a "portrayal", he has performed too-many-to-count actual "period" (and legal) weddings in the reenacting community, and often preaches at church services at reenactments. In addition to Civil War Reenacting, Gillett also reenacts the American Revolutionary War as a kilted chaplain for a Scottish Regiment.

A man of many hats, Gillett is a caricaturist and cartoonist, a Genealogy Nut, and an old Cemetery Nut as well. He finds that it all dovetails nicely with Reenacting, making names and dates and places more than boring, dry history, but living, breathing real people.

Dinner at Station 885 -

Michael Gillett will join Liz, Worley, Brian and the group for dinner at **Station 885** prior to the October 19th meeting. Please join us!

CAPTAIN CONGER'S SWORD

On a tour earlier this year with South Mountain Expeditions – Tours for History Buffs, the Burkharts visited St. Albans, VT. The St. Albans Museum docents, dressed in period costume, gave the group an excellent walking tour of the town, highlighting important landmarks that figured in the St. Albans Raid over 150 years ago.

"RAISE HELL IN THE NORTH"

October 19th marks the 154th anniversary of this northernmost action by the Confederacy against the Union. The Confederacy had maintained government operations in Canada from the early days of the U.S. Civil War as a point of communication with Great Britain. Canada was also a base of operation for Confederate spies and operatives, and a safe haven for Confederate prisoners who escaped from Union prison camps.

By some accounts, St. Albans Raid was but one of several Confederate operations planned for the northeast. In April 1864, President Jefferson Davis had dispatched Jacob Thompson (former Secretary of the Interior), ex-Alabama Senator Clement Clay, and veteran Confederate spy Captain Thomas Henry Hines to Toronto. Their mission? To "raise hell in the North".

One of the group's failed missions was a takeover of the state of Maine. In the summer of 1864, operatives posing as artists were dispatched to sketch Maine's coastline. Their plot was foiled by Union counterespionage efforts. The three Confederates nabbed led to the capture of several caches of Confederate weapons in the North, as well as operatives in Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio.

The attempted takeover of Maine was one of several missions that either fizzled or failed. But planning and execution of these various plots required cash, and St. Albans was a prosperous manufacturing town with four banks. Only 15 miles from the Canadian border, its location offered a quick escape to safety after a raid. And most importantly, there were no military units in the area.

The raid, planned for October 18th, was postponed a day to avoid the "butter day" (aka market day) crowds, and because some forty of the city fathers would be away on the 19th, either at a Supreme Court hearing in Burlington, or at the Legislature in Montpelier.

At 3:00pm on Wednesday October 19th, three of St. Albans four banks were robbed simultaneously by the Confederate raiders. While the banks were being robbed, other raiders herded citizens into the park under guard, to prevent them from alerting men in the factories nearby. Horses had been stolen and positioned for a quick getaway. The raiders escaped to Canada with \$208,000. Their plan was to burn the town as they fled by tossing incendiary devices of "Greek Fire" into buildings and bridges, but none of the devices ignited as planned.

PURSUIT and TRIALS

Two posses were hastily organized to pursue the fleeing raiders. Within 24 hours, fourteen of the raiders had been apprehended and \$87,000 recovered. (The Canadian government did not return these funds, however, until April, 1865).

Those captured were held in Montreal. The Lincoln administration retained a prominent Irish-Canadian lawyer to seek extradition of the raiders. The court ultimately decided that these men were soldiers under military orders and, since Canada was officially neutral, the raiders would not be extradited to the U.S.

Five of the raiders did ultimately stand trial in Canada for violations of an 1842 treaty between Canada and the U.S. permitting extradition of criminals who had fled across the border. This case ended in March, 1865 when the court again determined that the defendants had acted as combatants of war, and thus it had no jurisdiction to try them.

A final charge against the leader of the raiders for violation of British neutrality laws was also dismissed in November, 1865. It was never known what happened to the rest of the funds taken in the robberies of the St. Albans banks.

CAPTAIN CONGER's SWORD

One of the posses pursuing the raiders on October 19th had been organized by Captain George Parker Conger. In 1861, Conger had formed Company B of the First Vermont Cavalry. He saw action at the Battle of Bull Run and Culpepper Court House. After his term of service was completed, he had retired to St. Albans. So he was there to be caught up in the events of October 19th, 1864.

As a bystander on the day of the raid, Captain Conger was briefly detained by the raiders but managed to escape. He rallied other residents of the town to form a posse, calling out "It's a raid. Bring your guns and fight!" Conger and his posse pursued the raiders across the Canadian border, and participated in the arrests of those Confederates who were eventually put on trial in Montreal.

HOMECOMING for CAPTAIN CONGER's SWORD

No, the sword in question was not used during St. Alban's Raid or in any other action. Captain Conger was presented a ceremonial sword by his men when he retired. The inscription reads:

Presented to Captain Geo. P. Conger
by the Officers and Privates of Co. B. First Vermont Cavalry
as a token of respect for him as an Officer and a Man,
Sept. 16, 1862.

The sword went missing sometime in the early 2000's, after being passed down by successive generations of the Conger family. An exhaustive search by the family recently located it in a private collection in Pennsylvania. Two of Captain Conger's descendants provided the funding for the Saint Albans Museum to purchase the sword for its collection. Along with the sword, the museum has also acquired Captain Conger's brass scabbard, leather waist belt, sash, his original copy of the 1861 Army Regulations, and several documents including his officer's commission, unit history, and discharge papers.

On October 19th this month, the day after the ALCWRT holds our monthly meeting, the St. Albans Museum will be hosting a **homecoming celebration and reception for the return of Captain Conger's ceremonial sword**. Living history!

MANY THANKS to Peter Gaudet

Many thanks to **Peter Gaudet** for his excellent and informative presentation at our September meeting: Gettysburg Photography: Then and Now.

UPCOMING EVENTS in 2019

Watch for announcements from ALCWRT.NEWS@gmail.com when dates & details are firmed up *

65th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Now set for the [fall of 2019](#), we'll celebrate the ALCWRT's 65th year (better late than never!) with a dinner-and-speaker event at the GAR Building in Detroit.

Our speaker will be [A. Wilson Greene](#), whose recently published book on the Petersburg campaign -- "[A Campaign of Giants](#)" -- got a very favorable review in the Wall Street Journal in August.

SPRING TRIP - 2019

Liz is now targeting [spring 2019](#) for the next round table trip. She's thinking Kentucky.

Are you interested? Let Liz or Worley know.

FUTURE SPEAKERS

Here's a look ahead at some of the upcoming programs that Brian Mayer has arranged for us:

NOV. 15:	Dr. David Stoddard:	"The Red River Campaign"
JAN. 17:	John Gibney	"The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down"
FEB. 21:	William Cottrell	"Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence"
MAR. 21:	Steven Ramold	"The Controversy Over the Sherman/Johnston Surrender"
APR. 18:	Dr. E. Lawrence Abel	"John Wilkes Booth and the Women Who Loved Him"
MAY 16:	Curt Fields	"General Ulysses S. Grant: The Man Behind the Uniform"

THIS and THAT ...

* VISITOR's WELCOME ...

~ The ALCWRT welcomes friends, relatives, acquaintances...

~ We're always looking for new members, and visitors are **always welcome..!**

* ANNUAL DUES –

~ Worley is always happy to collect your dues

~ \$20 for a single ~~ \$35 for a couple

~ Dues are payable by the calendar year (January through December)

* **WEBSITES for other nearby roundtables** are posted on ALCWRT.org.

* **STATION 885** – Yes, the group still meets for dinner prior to the monthly meetings... All are welcome!

* **REFRESHMENTS for FUTURE MEETINGS –**

~ Let Liz know if you're interested in bringing refreshments to a future meeting.