

The group PRE-MEETING SUPPER
at **STATION 885** in PLYMOUTH
is now at **5:30 pm**...
The earlier start time is so folks can
get to the meeting on time 😊



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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STEVEN RAMOLD

will be the featured speaker for the **MARCH 21st** meeting of the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table. His topic:

The **CONTROVERSY** over the **SHERMAN / JOHNSTON SURRENDER**

The discussion between Generals William Sherman and Joseph Johnston that ended the Civil War in North Carolina should have been celebrated. Instead, Sherman's efforts created a firestorm of controversy in Washington, DC. Reeling from the recent assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, government officials saw Sherman's generous terms to Johnston as tantamount to treason. This presentation will discuss why Sherman offered such generous terms, why the administration of President Andrew Johnston rejected them, and how the incident damaged William Sherman's reputation.

Steven J. Ramold, Ph.D is a native Nebraskan, and received his professional preparation from institutions in that state. He received his Bachelor of Science from Wayne State College, his Master's from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has previously worked as an archivist at the Nebraska State Historical Society, and has taught at the University of Nebraska, Doane College, Virginia State University, and, since 2005, at Eastern Michigan University, where he is currently Professor of American History. Professor Ramold is the author of three books: *Slaves, Sailors, Citizens: African Americans in the Union Navy*; *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army*; and, *Across the Divide: Union Soldiers View the Northern Home Front*. In 2014, Dr. Ramold was the recipient of the Ronald W. Collins Teaching Award, the highest award granted by Eastern Michigan to its faculty, and in 2015 was named Eastern Michigan University's Professor of the Year. Prof. Ramold and his wife, Paula, reside in Ypsilanti.

Thanks to William Cottrell for his engaging presentation to us in February: "[Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence](#)".

THE IRISH ARE COMING, THE IRISH ARE COMING..!

As you tuck into your corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day this year, raise a glass of Guinness to the audacity of the Fenian Brotherhood and their raids into Canada in the years after the U.S. Civil War.

WHO WERE THE FENIANS?

The Fenian Brotherhood was an Irish republican organization that formed in the Americas in 1858, dedicated to the goal of making Ireland a republic independent from Britain.

("Irish republicanism" refers to the ideology based on the belief that all of Ireland should be an independent republic and not subject to British rule).

The Fenian movement dates back to the 1790's in the British Isles, when an Irish rebellion failed to gain independence for Ireland from the crown. The British Parliament subsequently passed the Act of Union in 1801, which promised emancipation for Catholics. But this promise of emancipation, to allow Catholics to participate in civic life without renouncing their faith or joining the Anglican church, was not kept. A bitter struggle for civil liberties for Catholics ensued, and finally ended in 1829 when the British government reluctantly granted equal civil rights for Catholics.

Irish leaders continued to push for repeal of the Act of Union, however, to gain Ireland its independence. Agitation had turned to armed rebellion by some in the 1840's. Two of those were John O'Mahony, a Gaelic scholar, and Michael Doheny, an Irish writer. Both fled prosecution for their participation in the acts of rebellion and ended up in the United States. It was these two gentlemen who formed the Fenian Brotherhood here in the U.S. in 1858.

THE FIGHTING 69th

Both O'Mahony and Doheny fought for the Union in the Civil War in the 69th Regiment of the New York State Militia, which recruited primarily from the ranks of the Fenian Brotherhood. (A large proportion of Meagher's Irish Brigade, the Corcoran Legion, and other Irish regiments were Fenians as well).

GROWTH OF THE FENIAN MOVEMENT

Between 1860 and 1867, an estimated \$500,000 poured into the Fenian Brotherhood, primarily from the sale of Irish bonds to be redeemed six months after Ireland gained its independence. In 1863 the Fenian Brotherhood adopted a constitution and rules for general government, and met in convention in Chicago where elections were held. Councils of those elected were held the following years in Philadelphia and Missouri. Co-founder O'Mahony was elected the first president. Membership grew rapidly.

O'Mahony, a colonel in the 69th, resigned his commission soon after the war ended to focus on his responsibilities as leader of the rapidly growing Fenian Brotherhood. Around this time, a second faction was emerging in the Fenian Brotherhood. It was led by William R. Roberts, and it was Roberts who was the primary instigator pushing for more aggressive actions. Roberts' "secretary of war" was former Union general Thomas William Sweeny, another Irish immigrant.

The more aggressive actions Roberts envisioned were a series of raids on British targets in Canada. The goal was to bring pressure on the British to withdraw from Ireland by "ransoming" captured British forts, custom houses, and the transportation network in Canada in return for Irish freedom.

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THE FENIAN RAIDS

Between 1866 and 1871, the Fenian Brotherhood made a series of raids on British targets in Canada. To prepare for these raids, a large quantity of weapons was purchased and other preparations were made using proceeds from the sale of the Irish bonds. The preparations were made openly. Initially the US government took no major steps to prevent this activity, perhaps because Britain had failed to support the Union during the Civil War.

The Fenians had gained some intelligence, prior to the raids, that they would get support from like-minded Irish Catholics in Canada. But it turned out that Irish Canadian sentiment was split, with some seeing these invasions as a threat to the then emerging sovereignty of Canada.

The first invasion campaign - In April 1866, a band of 700+ Fenians moved into Maine with the objective of seizing Campobello, but they were quickly repulsed by British warships from Halifax and Nova Scotia. At the same time, another band of 800+ Fenians crossed the Niagara River from Buffalo and briefly captured Fort Erie, defeating a Canadian force at Ridgeway. But this invasion was broken up by US authorities who had interrupted Fenian supply lines and arrested reinforcements attempting to cross into Canada. Other Fenian attempts to invade occurred over the next week in the St. Lawrence Valley, but efforts were stymied because the US Army had confiscated many of their weapons. (Some weapons were returned to the raiders by sympathetic officers).

To clear the Fenians out of the St. Lawrence and Buffalo areas, the US government bought rail tickets for the raiders if they promised to return home and not invade any more. Many of the weapons were also returned to the participants, if they would claim they would not use them again in any further raids.

The second invasion campaign - But there were further raids. Another convention in 1867 was held in Philadelphia. Attending were 400 accredited delegates and 6,000 Fenian soldiers, armed and in uniform, parading the streets. It was here that the second invasion was planned.

It was reported that 15,000 stands of arms and three million rounds of ammunition were distributed to Fenian soldiers stationed between Ogdensburg, NY and St. Albans, VT in preparation for the April 1870 invasion. The Fenians crossed into Canada near Franklin, VT but were dispersed by a single volley from Canadian volunteers. The Fenian Brotherhood president at this time was John O'Neill who was arrested by the U.S. authorities on the order of President Grant.

One final try – John O'Neill resigned from the Fenians but still made one more unsanctioned attempt to invade Canada in support of the goal of ransoming it for Ireland's freedom. He joined his remaining supporters with exiled members of another rebellion in Manitoba, and captured a Hudson's Bay Company trading post. But with permission of Canadian officials, U.S. soldiers crossed the border and arrested the Fenians without resistance.

Aftermath

In 1867, the Fenian Brotherhood sent soldiers to Ireland to participate in the Fenian Rising, another doomed rebellion that was poorly organized and had minimal public support. Most of the Irish-American officers who landed at Cork were imprisoned.

In Canada, the Fenian threat (real or perceived) prompted renewed calls for Canadian confederation. A confederation had been in the works for some years, but the 1867 Fenian invasion accelerated support.

By this time there were dueling factions in the Fenian Brotherhood back in the U.S., so the groups in Ireland chose to support neither of them, and instead promoted a new organization in America, Clan na Gael. The Fenian Brotherhood continued to exist until they voted to disband the Brotherhood in 1880.

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But there was still Fenian activity into the 1880s, with some organizing activity in Washington and Oregon. While no raids materialized, the Canadians took no chances. When the Canadian Pacific Railway's main line was inaugurated in 1885 near Vancouver, three British warships were posted in the harbor near the railhead and the first train carried large numbers of troops.

FINIAN FLAGS

There were three types of flags typically seen in use by the Fenian Brotherhood in the US:

- * **The Golden Harp**, a clear connection to the flag of Ireland
- * **Stars and Bars**, reminiscent of the US flag, with 32 stars for the counties of Ireland
- * **The Sunburst**, symbolizing the dawning of a new day



CONNECTING the DOTS...

Those of you watching the PBS series **Victoria** may have noticed these "connecting dots" to our U.S. Civil War history.

Bertie, the Prince of Wales

The eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert is still a child in the current season of the show. But recall from the ALCWRT newsletter of February, 2018, that he was the first representative of another government to make an official visit to **Mt. Vernon in October, 1860**.

John Henry Temple, Lord Palmerston

In the latest episode of the show, Lord Palmerston is not yet Prime Minister but hints that he expects to be in the future. From the ALCWRT newsletter last month, we know that he will be PM during the U.S. Civil War. Recall that he was a Confederate sympathizer primarily because of his lifelong hostility to the U.S. and because he believed that Britain would benefit from trade with an independent Confederacy. And then there was the Trent Affair, and the CSS *Alabama* ...

UPCOMING EVENTS in 2019

65th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: OCTOBER 14, 2019

The celebration of the ALCWRT's 65th year will be held Monday, October 14, 2019, with a dinner-and-speaker event at the beautifully renovated and restored **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, 2018.

SPRING TRIP – 2019:

Liz announced at the February meeting that she's targeting **JUNE 2019 for a group trip to Kentucky**. Stay tuned for exact dates and details.

CWRT CONGRESS – Sept. 20-22 in St. Louis

The following announcement was shared from our friends in the Ann Arbor Round Table:

The 2019 Civil War Round Table Congress will be held at the Missouri Civil War Museum September 20-22 in the newly remodeled 1918 Exchange Building. The host round table will be the CWRT of St. Louis.

For details and further information, please go to www.cwrtcongress.org.

THIS and THAT ...

*** ANNUAL DUES –**

~ Worley is always happy to collect your dues: ~ **\$20** for a single ~ **\$30** for a couple ~ Payable by calendar year

*** 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!

NEW DINNER TIME: 5:30 pm – so everyone can get to the meeting on time