



### **ABOUT the ALCWRT**

- *The Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table is the oldest Civil War Round Table in Michigan, founded in 1952. Our JUBILEE (65<sup>th</sup>) anniversary was 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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**Dr. CURT FIELDS** will be the featured speaker for the **MAY 16th** meeting of the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table.

### **ULYSSES S. GRANT: THE MAN BEHIND THE UNIFORM**

When someone mentions U.S. Grant, you may first think of his military achievements in the Civil War. Or maybe you think of his years as the 18th President of the United States. But when you attend the ALCWRT's May meeting and meet Living Historian Dr. Curt Fields, you'll learn more about Grant's childhood, his years at the US Military Academy, his courtship and marriage to Julia, his service in the Mexican War, his resignation from the army in the 1850's, and his struggles in his civilian endeavors. Dr. Fields will present all this and more in his first person portrayal as Grant at our May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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**Dr. CURT FIELDS** is an avid and lifelong student of the American Civil War, through which he developed his deep respect and admiration for General Grant. Fields is also the same height and body type as Grant, which makes his portrayals quite convincing and true-to-life.

Just a few of Fields' credentials as Grant: \* the official Gen. Grant for Sesquicentennial celebrations at Ft. Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Appomattox, and for the opening and dedication of the Grant Presidential Library at Miss. State Univ. \* at USMA request, portrayed Grant at West Point in Jan 2019, to kick off their "semester of Grant" celebration, with statue to be erected on the plain April 25; \* TV appearances on the Discovery Channel (Mike Rowe's "How Booze Built America") and NGS; \* featured on four national magazine covers; \* the official Grant for the U.S. Grant Boyhood Home Assn. in Georgetown, OH; \* featured in Visitors Center films at Appomattox and Ft. Donelson.

Dr. Fields holds Bachelor, Master's and Ph.D. degrees in the field of education from the University of Memphis and Michigan State. His career includes secondary school teaching and administration; leadership development consulting; police officer and hostage negotiating in Memphis; and is currently an adjunct sociology professor at the University of Memphis and Belhaven University.

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**THANKS to E. LAWRENCE ABEL** for his entertaining presentation in April: **"John Wilkes Booth and the Women Who Loved Him."**

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**SEPTEMBER SPEAKER: Dave Jordan** on **"Gen. Trimble at Gettysburg"**.

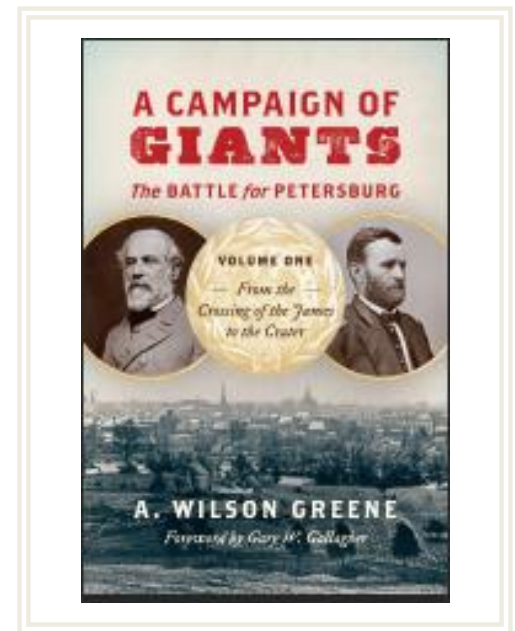
## BOOKS ! BOOKS ! BOOKS !

*If ever there was a group of people interested in books about the Civil War, it's this crowd. As we get ready for our summer break, here are some recommendations to fill the gap between now and when we get back together in September.*

### **A CAMPAIGN OF GIANTS: THE BATTLE FOR PETERSBURG** by A. Wilson Greene

(The University of North Carolina Press, 2018)

John Reeves, author of The Lost Indictment of Robert E. Lee: The Forgotten Case Against an American Icon (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), said this about A. Wilson Greene's first volume on the battle of Petersburg: "The story of Grant's crossing of the James River and his initial attempts to seize Petersburg is brilliantly told in A. Wilson Greene's A Campaign of Giants: The Battle for Petersburg. This book should be required reading for all students of the Civil War. I hope that it finds a more general audience as well. Greene shows us that the struggle to save the Union and abolish slavery was bloody and often quite precarious. In 1864, a member of the Sanitary Commission perfectly captured the significance of the Petersburg Campaign when he wrote, "If future generations do not appreciate the amount which is now expended for the preservation of the Union they will deserve the contempt of the race." "



Students of the Civil War are familiar with the devastating losses of the Overland Campaign of 1864, when the Army of the Potomac suffered roughly 55,000 casualties between crossing the Rapidan on May 4 until the closing days at Cold Harbor in June. Hindsight showed that Grant's actions had actually changed the dynamic in the east and had inflicted significant harm on Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. The price, though, had been extraordinarily high.

Greene has been an avid student of the campaign for Petersburg since 1973 when he was a young seasonal park ranger there. His meticulous research is evident. In this first volume (two more are planned), Greene poses some fascinating questions: Why did the Union Army fail to take Petersburg on June 15-16 when he had clearly taken Lee by surprise? How to explain Grant's disengagement from military operations throughout much of June and July in 1864? Who is to blame for the disgraceful lack of leadership at the Battle of the Crater?

**Greene will be the guest speaker at our 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary banquet October 14th at the GAR Building in Detroit. This is a timely addition to our summer reading lists.**

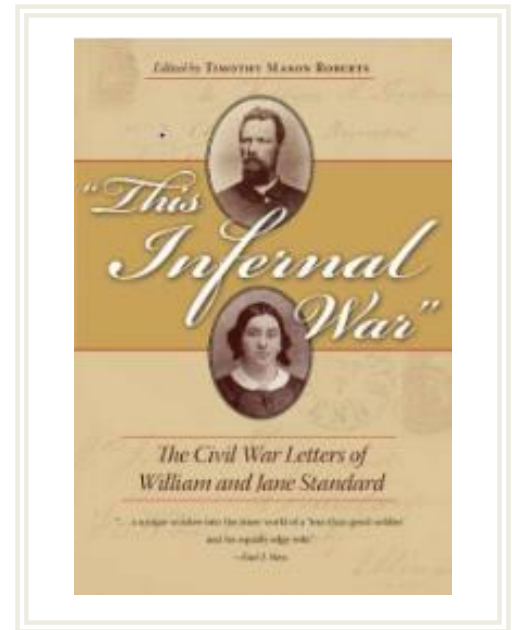
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**THIS INFERNAL WAR: THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS of WILLIAM and JANE STANDARD,**  
**edited by Timothy Mason Roberts**

(Kent State University Press, 2018)

William Standard of Lewiston in Fulton County, Illinois enlisted in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment in October, 1862. He fought at Vicksburg, at Missionary Ridge, at Atlanta, was part of Sherman's March to the Sea, and marched in the Grand Review of the Armies at war's end in Washington, D.C. *[where Sherman refused to shake hands with Stanton, we learned from Steven Ramold at our March meeting].*

Yet the Standards of Illinois were antiwar Copperheads. Their letters show their opposition to the draft and their denunciation of emancipation. We read that Jane regularly encouraged William to either desert, or be captured and paroled, and of the difficulties in small communities when most of the men are away at war. We read that William's fear of dishonor kept him from deserting, but not from taking delight in stealing and foraging.

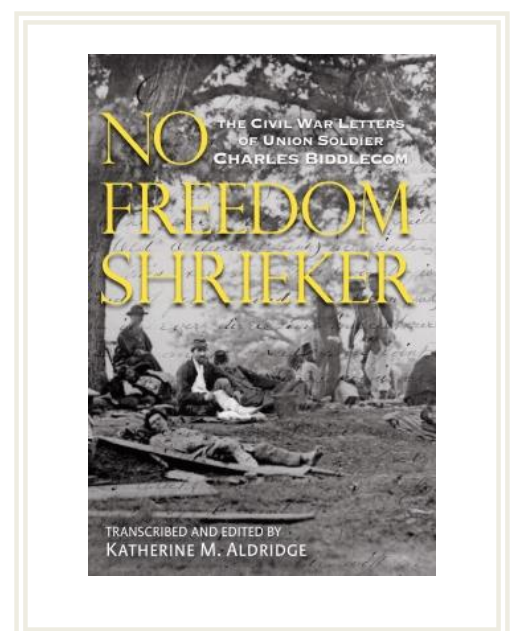


Scholars argue that most Union soldiers left their families and went to war to save the Union or to wipe out slavery. Per the editor Timothy Roberts, these letters from the Standards of Illinois reflect the sentiments of a class of Union soldiers strongly opposed to the ideals of the Lincoln administration. As any student of history knows, the human response to war is not simple.

**NO FREEDOM SHRIEKER: THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS of UNION SOLDIER CHARLES BIDDLECOM,**  
**edited by Katherine M. Aldridge**

(Paramount Market Publishing, 2011)

As soon as New Yorker Charles Biddlecom joined the Army of the Potomac, he wanted to escape. Drafted in 1863, he shared none of the idealism of volunteers in 1861. His letters complain about politicians, generals, army life. In one letter to his wife he writes "If not for you and my children I would blow out my brains." He nearly deserted in the spring of 1864, but remained for the brutal Overland Campaign. As the war progressed, his letters become more introspective and candid, and reflect a transformation of character.



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## WOMEN's WAR

by **Stephanie McCurry**

(Belknap/Harvard, 2019)

The award-winning author of Confederate Reckoning uses a trio of dramatic stories to show another side of this bloody American conflict often described as a war of brother against brother.

McCurry tells the story of **Clara Judd, a Confederate spy** whose imprisonment for treason sparked a heated debate about the principles of civilian immunity and how that controversy led to changes in the laws of war.

Another group of women confounded Union officers and upended policies around emancipation, which were specific to formerly enslaved men. Thousands of former slaves had flocked to Union army camps, where initially the Union defined male slaves as seized property, not as individuals. Emancipation policies allowed those formerly enslaved men to gain freedom as military laborers and later as soldiers. But what of the formerly enslaved women? The author describes how 19<sup>th</sup> century views of “the proper place of women in society” led the Union to classify fugitive black women as “**soldiers' wives**”, which offered some protection but placed new obstacles on the path to freedom.

The third story tells of the struggles and fundamental transformation of families like that of former Confederate **Gertrude Thomas** during the war, emancipation and economic devastation. From Gertude's diaries, we read of the disintegration of the household during the war as slaves escape, and of her learning to bake and perform other household duties for the first time. Her support for education for freed blacks and for women's suffrage as Reconstruction winds down reflects how fundamental the changes of Reconstruction would prove to be.

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**SOAK UP SOME MORE KNOWLEDGE** Here are a couple other ways to soak up some Civil War knowledge:

### **Hillsdale Seminar on the Civil War: June 2 - 8**

Go to this link for details on an upcoming multi-day seminar at Hillsdale on the American Civil War:

<https://lp.hillsdale.edu/lis/civil-war/>

### **12th Annual Great Lakes Civil War Forum.**

What: The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Lakes Civil War Forum. This year's theme: The Battle of Gettysburg. Four speakers and a catered lunch for your \$60 registration fee. Registration is now open.

Where: At the Civil War Museum of Kenosha, WI.

When: Saturday 09/14 from 8:30am to 3:30pm.

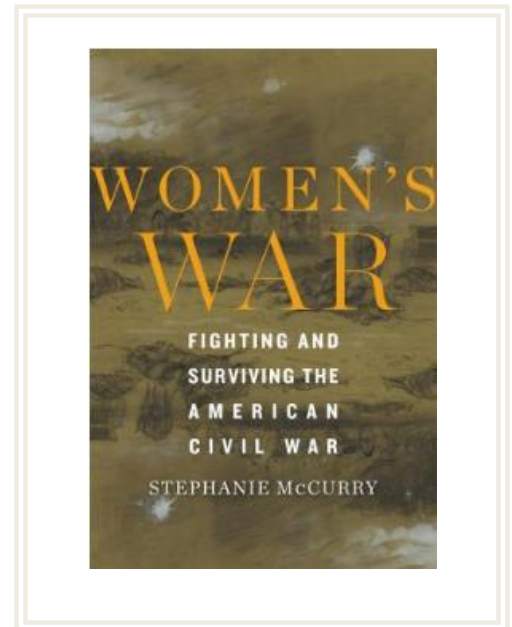
More info: 262-653-4140 –or- <https://84428.blackbaudhosting.com/84428/Great-Lakes-Civil-War-Forum>

### **American Civil War Museum in Richmond re-opens in new location**

If you're traveling to Virginia, stop by the American Civil War Museum in its new location in Richmond.

Ribbon cutting was Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at the new location in a re-purposed Confederate uniform and armaments factory.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS in 2019

### 65<sup>th</sup> 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 book on the Petersburg campaign - "*A Campaign of Giants*" - was published in 2018.

### ~~SPRING~~ **FALL** TRIP - 2019

Liz told the group at the April meeting that she's working diligently to put together a trip to Kentucky, but it won't be in June as she had hoped. Target timing is now sometime in the fall, 2019.

## THIS and THAT ...

### \* ANNUAL DUES –

Worley's always happy to collect dues: ~ \$20/single ~ \$30/couple ~ Payable by calendar year

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

### \* STELLA in Plymouth –

Yes, the group meets for dinner at 5:30pm prior to the monthly meetings... All are welcome!