

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

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662nd Meeting

November 2023

Michael McKinley

Michael McKinley is a journalist, author, screenwriter, and filmmaker. He was educated at the University of British Columbia, and at Oxford University.

Michael has written many books. His most recent is "Willie: The Game Changing Story of the NHL's First Black Player" which was named one of the Top 20 Books of 2020 by the CBC and nominated for a 2021 NAACP Image Award. He co-wrote A Quiet Life, a cybercrime thriller, with Will Cooper, Skyhorse Publishing, September 2024; The Glamor of Evil, a spy thriller novel, with Nancy Merritt Bell; Ice Capades: A Memoir of Fast Living and Tough Hockey, with Sean Avery, Dutton & Viking; 2014; The Codebreakers: The Secret Intelligence Unit that Changed the Course of the First World War, with James Wyllie. Ebury. He is currently co-writing Party Crasher: How Jesse Ventura Changed Politics in America, with Riley Rinehart, and Lou Vairo: Godfather of U.S. Hockey, which will be published by Rowman in 2024.

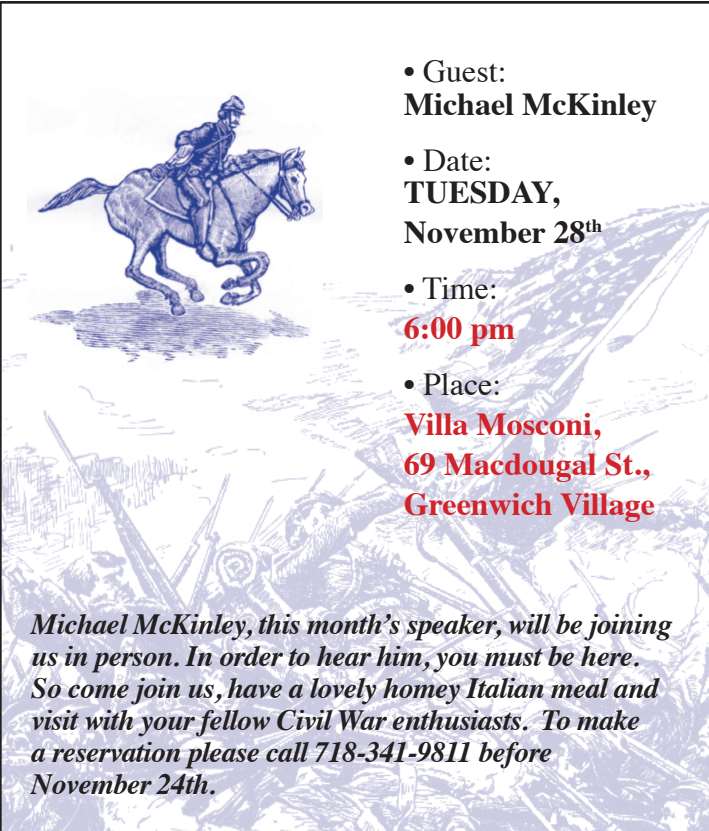
He also wrote Facetime: A Psychological Thriller, Amazon Publishing (commissioned by Amazon); The Penalty Killing: A Martin Carter Mystery, nominated for an Arthur Ellis Award as best first crime novel. McClelland & Stewart; It's Our Game: Celebrating 100 Years of Hockey Canada, Viking; Hockey Night in Canada: 60 Seasons, Viking; Hockey: A People's History, CBC, and McClelland & Stewart; Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey's Rise from Sport to Spectacle, Greystone; Yardley's Ace: Making and Breaking American Military Intelligence, Amazon Publishing (commissioned by Amazon); Finding Jesus: Faith. Fact. Forgery. Companion book to the CNN series he created with David Gibson.



FILM AND TV

For TV and Film, his most recent projects are Epstein's Shadow: Ghislaine Maxwell, co-creator and co-executive producer of the three-part series for NBC Peacock, and SKY UK, June 2021; Our Lady of Staten Island, a feature documentary created with Elissa Montanti, Alice Barrett Mitchell, and Nancy Bell which McKinley wrote, directed and produced shortly to go on the market; Lincoln's Law, a TV drama series, created with Mark Hoeger for Nightfox Entertainment; Dead Right, a TV drama series, with Night Fox Entertainment; Hot Springs, a feature film, with Michael Sofranko; Singers Anonymous, a TV reality series, created with Julia Amisano; Co-Executive Producer of the one-hour TV documentary Engraved on a Nation: Man versus Machine, TSN, February 2019; created, co-wrote and produced The Two Marys" for CNN, winner of the Gracie Award for Best Hour-long Documentary aired in the US; wrote dramatic sections of the "Solar Storm" and "Ice Storm" episodes of Perfect Disasters, Discovery Channel; wrote the dramatic sections of "Lost in the Snow" for "I Shouldn't Be Alive", Discovery Channel; created, co-wrote and produced The Mystery of Jesus for CNN; created and co-produced The Jesus Strand, a feature documentary, History TV, 2017; created and co-produced Finding Jesus: Faith. Fact. Forgery for CNN, 2015.

As a journalist, he has written for The Guardian, The Daily Mail, Los Angeles Times, Sports Illustrated, Vancouver Sun, National Post, Saturday Night Magazine, Chicago Sun-Times, Food & Wine, New York Observer, New York Daily News, Politics Daily, Washington Post, The Players Tribune, America Magazine, Comic Relief US, and has won national news and magazine writing awards. He is a citizen of Canada, Ireland and the United States and lives in Brooklyn, New York. Please see www.libertayo.com for a digital sampling of Michael McKinley's work.



• Guest:
Michael McKinley

• Date:
**TUESDAY,
November 28th**

• Time:
6:00 pm

• Place:
**Villa Mosconi,
69 Macdougall St.,
Greenwich Village**

Michael McKinley, this month's speaker, will be joining us in person. In order to hear him, you must be here. So come join us, have a lovely homey Italian meal and visit with your fellow Civil War enthusiasts. To make a reservation please call 718-341-9811 before November 24th.

2023 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2024

• Tuesday, November 28th •
Michael McKinley

• December 20th •
No Meeting

• January 2024 •
TBD

President's Message

The holiday season is usually a time for us to gather around friends and family, to celebrate the new year and to reflect on the events of the past year. And, what a year 2023 has been. Ongoing conflicts between Ukraine and Russia and Israel and Palestine made me pause and reflect on our own Civil War. Today, we can send missiles over 3,500 miles crossing borders, destroying buildings and killing so many people. And I wonder if being so far from away from the slaughter makes it easier, so that war has become very impersonal. But the Civil War was different, it was up close and personal. Think Pickett's charge where a total of 6,555 were killed and 4,019 wounded. Can you imagine being a young Confederate soldier, being ordered to charge the Union troops waiting below and know with almost certainty that you would be killed. I wonder what went through their minds. But while war has changed, one thing, however, has not, the grief and pain that war leaves behind. So while the methods of war has changed, it is those left behind that have to bear the results.



Now on a brighter note. On a beautiful crisp October 21, several members of the round table took Metro North up to Peekskill, NY to the Lincoln Depot Museum, where we were given a private tour of the museum by Michael Bennett. The focus of the museum is 'Lincoln and New York'. Did you know that Lincoln stopped in Peekskill and addressed the citizens for just one minute before the train pulled away? Also, I bet you didn't know that Peekskill is also famous for

ProRodeo Hall of Famer Harry Tompkins, who was an eight-time world champion – including five bull riding titles (1948-50, '52, '60), one bareback riding win (1952) and two all-around crowns (1952, '60), passed away in Stephenville, Texas. He was 90. Who knew that?

We wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving!

Pat Holohan



Pat Falaci presents Michael Bennett with a plaque of Harry Tompkins.



Members of the Civil War Roundtable visiting the Lincoln Depot Museum.

THE DISPATCH



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Question of the month:

How much water was needed to float an Eads-built gunboat, such as those used against Fort Henry?

WITNESSES TO FBI HUNT FOR DESCRIBE HEAVILY LOADED ARMORED TRUCK, SIGNS OF A NIGHT DIG

MICHAEL RUBINKAM | SAT, OCTOBER 7, 2023, 12:10



Civil War Gold-FBI Dig

This 2018 photo released by Federal Bureau of Investigation shows the FBI's 2018 dig for Civil War-era gold at a remote site in Dents Run, Penn., after sophisticated testing suggested tons of gold might be buried there. (Federal Bureau of Investigation via AP)

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PENFIELD, Pa. (AP) — In the heart of Pennsylvania elk country, Eric McCarthy and his client, Don Reichel, woke before sunrise to scour the forest for so-called “brown gold,” a rack of freshly shed antlers to add to Reichel’s collection.

One hill over, a team of FBI agents was also hunting for gold. The metallic yellow kind.

The FBI’s highly unusual search for buried Civil War-era treasure more than five years ago set in motion a dispute over what, if anything, the agency unearthed and an ongoing legal battle over key records. There’s so much intrigue even a federal judge felt compelled to note in a ruling last week: “The FBI may have found the gold — or maybe not.”

Now, two witnesses have come forward to share with The Associated Press what they heard and saw in the woods, raising questions about the FBI’s timeline and adding plot twists to a saga that blends elements of legend, fact and science — and a heavy dose of government secrecy.

The FBI insists nothing came of the 2018 excavation in Dents Run, a remote wooded valley about 110 miles (177 kilometers) northeast of Pittsburgh. But a treasure hunter who led FBI agents to the hillside where an 1863 gold shipment might’ve been buried is challenging the government’s denials. How could the dig have come up empty, he asks, when the FBI’s own scans showed the likelihood of a buried metal mass equaling hundreds of

millions of dollars in gold?

McCarthy, a 45-year-old elk guide, recently decided to share his story because he thought the treasure hunter, Dennis Parada — who spent years looking for the gold before approaching the FBI with his findings — has been treated unfairly.

“I have no ties to anybody here. It’s just I felt like they were wronged,” McCarthy explained.

In an interview at a remote hunting camp about 25 miles (40 km) from Dents Run, McCarthy recalls hearing the unexpected clang of heavy equipment as he worked his way up the mountain in near-darkness.

Later that day, while breaking for lunch, McCarthy and Reichel watched a trio of armored trucks rumble past. One of the vehicles rode low, as if it was carrying a full load.

“They took something out of Dents Run,” McCarthy insists now. “Something heavy.”

Reached by phone, Reichel, McCarthy’s 73-year-old shed hunting client, corroborated his account of hearing early-morning clatter and seeing a loaded truck on March 14, 2018.

Their recollections echo earlier statements from residents who told the AP of hearing a backhoe and jackhammer overnight and seeing a convoy that included armored trucks.

Parada, co-founder of the treasure-hunting outfit Finders Keepers, has long suspected the FBI of conducting a secret overnight dig for the gold and spiriting it away. The FBI’s warrant to excavate the site limited work to 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The agency denies it dug after hours, and says it recovered nothing of value from Dents Run.

There’s little historical evidence to substantiate old stories that an Army detachment lost a gold shipment in the Pennsylvania wilderness. But the legend inspired generations of treasure hunters.

Scientific testing had suggested Parada was on to something.

The FBI said in a 2018 court document that its own geophysical consultant identified an underground metallic mass weighing up to 9 tons, suggestive of gold, at the site identified by Finders Keepers. A federal judge approved

the FBI's request for a search and seizure warrant. Parada hoped to earn a finder's fee from the potential recovery.

On the second day of the dig, McCarthy and Reichel awoke at 4 a.m. and were on the mountain sometime between 5 and 5:30, splitting up to increase their odds of finding an elk shed.

McCarthy said he could hear the distant hum of an engine as soon as he got out of his truck. The noise grew louder as he walked up the hill, and he heard what sounded to him like heavy equipment meeting earth.

Cresting the ridge, McCarthy spotted the FBI operation on the opposite slope, about 400 yards (meters) away. He saw lights powered by a generator. A parked excavator. A smaller piece of equipment moving up and down the hill. A brown-black gash in the earth. People huddling under a canopy.

"It looked to me like they were wrapping up a dig," he said.

Reichel, who was farther away, said he heard machinery from the top of the ridge.

"I can hear some machines, or something, clanging and banging and roaring and all that stuff," said Reichel, a retired manufacturing worker. He said he was too far away to be able to see anything.

An FBI timeline says the search team didn't arrive at the dig site until 8 a.m. that morning, and an excavator operator arrived even later. That's well after the time McCarthy and Reichel say they detected signs of activity.

The pair reconvened for lunch several hours later. It was then, they said, that a convoy of unmarked SUVs and armored trucks went past. McCarthy and Reichel said one of the three armored trucks seemed to be weighed down.

"Eric and I both made the comment that one must be loaded." Reichel said.

"It was loaded to the gills," said McCarthy.

Not so, the FBI says. While "appropriate vehicles and equipment" were brought to Dents Run, armored trucks were not among them, said Carrie Adamowski, an FBI spokesperson.

After the FBI told Parada the dig came up empty, he filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit seeking records. In 2022, a judge forced the FBI to release a trove of photos and documents, but Parada is pursuing additional material including an operational plan. A federal judge told the FBI last week it needed to come up with a better justification for keeping the disputed records under wraps.

Parada, meanwhile, hasn't given up his search in the Dents Run area. He's now seeking to partner with the state conservation agency, which owns the land, on a new excavation.

"It's a part of our history that's hidden away," Parada said, "and I think it's time that should be told."



AP Sept. 20, 2018 file photo, Dennis Parada, right, and his son Kem Parada stand at the site of the FBI's dig for Civil War-era gold in Dents Run, Pa. Government emails released under court order show that FBI agents were looking for gold when they excavated Dent's Run in 2018, though the FBI says that nothing was found. The treasure hunters have filed suit against the Justice Department over its failure to produce documents related to the FBI's 2018 search for Civil War-era gold at the remote woodland site. (AP Photo/Michael Rubinkam, File)



HOW THE RIFLE CHANGED THE CIVIL WAR

Rifles, by contrast, had a much greater range than muskets did—a rifle could shoot a bullet up to 1,000 yards—and were more accurate. However, until the 1850s it was nearly impossible to use these guns in battle because, since a rifle's bullet had roughly the same diameter as its barrel, they took too long to load. (Soldiers sometimes had to pound the bullet into the barrel with a mallet.)

In 1848, a French army officer named Claude Minié invented a cone-shaped lead bullet with a diameter smaller than that of the rifle barrel. Soldiers could load these “Minié balls” quickly, without the aid of ramrods or mallets. Rifles with Minié bullets were more accurate, and therefore deadlier, than muskets were, which forced infantrymen to change the way they fought: Even troops who were far from the line of fire had to protect themselves by building elaborate trenches and other fortifications.

“Repeaters”

Rifles with Minié bullets were easy and quick to load, but soldiers still had to pause and reload after each shot. This was inefficient and dangerous. By 1863, however, there was another option: so-called repeating rifles, or weapons that could fire more than one bullet before needing a reload. The most famous of these guns, the Spencer carbine, could

fire seven shots in 30 seconds.

Like many other Civil War technologies, these weapons were available to Northern troops but not Southern ones: Southern factories had neither the equipment nor the know-how to produce them. “I think the Johnnys [Confederate soldiers] are getting rattled; they are afraid of our repeating rifles,” one Union soldier wrote. “They say we are not fair, that we have guns that we load up on Sunday and shoot all the rest of the week.”

Answer

A: Four feet of water.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

From the officers and board of
the CWRTNY to our valued
members:

Happy Thanksgiving and a Safe
and Happy Holiday Season!



Written by James Ryder Randall in response to the April 19, 1861 shooting of Baltimore civilians who had attacked soldiers from the 6th Massachusetts Infantry as they marched to Washington. Randall's poem was a call for Maryland to secede from the Union and became a popular rallying cry. Although Maryland did not join the Confederate cause, it did adopt "My Maryland" as its state song in 1939.

Maryland no longer has a State Song. Formerly "Maryland, My Maryland" had been designated as such, but was repealed as the State Song effective July 1, 2021 (Chapters 148 & 149, Acts of 2021).

MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND

BY JAMES RYDER RANDALL

I

The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle queen of yore,
Maryland! My Maryland!

II

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland!
My Mother State! to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life or death, for woe or weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland! My Maryland!

III

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,-
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland! My Maryland!

IV

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,
Maryland!
Come with thy panoplied array,
Maryland!
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
Maryland! My Maryland!

V

Come! for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!
Come to thine own anointed throng,
Stalking with Liberty along,

And sing thy dauntless slogan song,
Maryland! My Maryland!

VI

Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain-
Sic semper! 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back amain,
Maryland!
Arise in majesty again,
Maryland! My Maryland!

VII

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland! My Maryland!

VIII

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll, Better the shot, the
blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the Soul,
Maryland! My Maryland!

IX

I hear the distant thunder-hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb-
Huzza! She spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! She burns! She'll come! She'll come!
Maryland! My Maryland!

From: maryland.gov