

Dinner Program

Friday, April 24th

“Pinkerton ~ The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”

Presented by Nick Smith

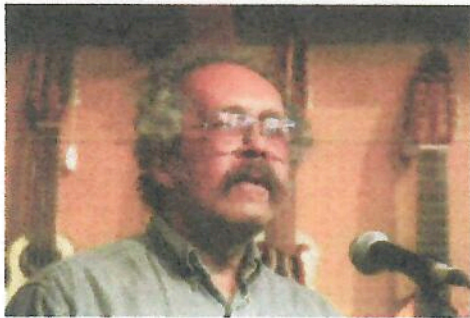
Pinkerton: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly *Presented by Nick Smith*

Allan Pinkerton was the self-described hero who saved Lincoln, gave McClelland the information he needed, and created the first big detective agency, the one that inspired the nickname "private eye." He was the first to employ female detectives, but also the first to get one of his own detectives hanged as a spy, in an international incident involving the U.S., the Confederacy, and Great Britain. His biography and the books written about his agency were largely based on his own versions of events, some of which were ghostwritten into fictionalized accounts to make them more exciting. Was he a patriotic hero, an opportunistic businessman, or something entirely different?

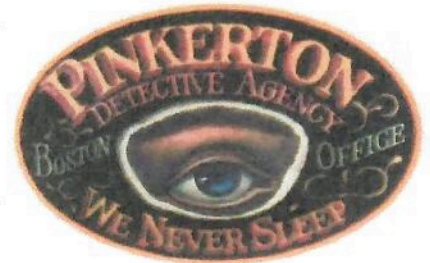


Antietam, Maryland. L-R: Allan Pinkerton, President Lincoln, and Major General John A. McClelland.

Our Guest Speaker, Nick Smith, is a teller of historical tales for adult audiences and traditional tales for all ages. In addition to putting on shows and helping run festivals.



"Nick has been interested in history, especially of the Civil War, since childhood. He encountered and devoured the Bruce Catton books, becoming fascinated with the historical simulation games that allowed players to think through historical events by playing them out on a map. He encountered and joined a Civil War Roundtable in the 1980s, which later led to his becoming an associate member of the Sons of Union Veterans, helping a local camp with cemetery research. He is the past camp commander of the Rosecrans Camp, S'U'V'C'W, and is the president of the Pasadena Civil War Roundtable, which presents talks by both members and academic historians on a variety of subjects related to the Civil War and its time period. He has been helping to put on Memorial Day ceremonies at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena, at which he and other researchers have located approximately 700 graves of Civil War veterans. Nick has given talks at roundtables, historical



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conferences, and for various historical organizations, on topics ranging from the popularity of historical board games to overlooked moments in history.

He has spoken on why Dan Sickles may not have been a complete idiot as a general, and how he got away with murder and set a major legal precedent in the process. He has given a talk about the overlooked 55th Massachusetts Infantry, companion regiment to the more famous 54th, and about why one of its corporals has a bust posted at the battlefield of Shiloh, where he could not legally have fought. He co-curated a museum exhibit at the Pasadena Museum of History on the contributions of Civil War veterans to the development of Southern California culture.

Nick is currently conducting research on the children of abolitionist John Brown, but has taken time away from this project to create a program for OUR conference on the history of Allan Pinkerton in connection with the Civil War. Did he save Lincoln's life, or did he muddy the trail of a dangerous threat to peace? "Did he provide McClelland with information to help his work as a general, or did he fail in a way that prolonged the War? This and more will be discussed.



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