WILLIAM PISTON

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

William Garrett Piston is a native of Tennessee who moved to Springfield in 1988 and taught history at Missouri State University until he retired in 2017. He is the author, co-author, and editor of numerous books and articles, most of which focus on the Civil War in Missouri. He has twice been awarded the State Historical Society of Missouri’s Annual Book Award and has been a frequent speaker at professional, educational, and civic venues across the nation. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Foundation and the Friends of the Missouri State Archives.

AVAILABLE PRESENTATIONS

SOWING THE WHIRLWIND: MISSOURI AND THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR

Missouri’s application for statehood and admission to the Union placed Missourians at a confluence of political, racial, and social issues that eventually tore the nation apart. Historian and author William Garrett Piston explores Missouri’s role in the famous compromises in 1820 and 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and the Dred Scott Decision of 1857, to examine how and why the Constitution and the American political system were unable meet the stresses accompanying the expansion of slavery into the West.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND: THE GUERRILLA CONFLICT IN CIVIL WAR MISSOURI

Popular focus on notorious guerillas has obscured the complexity of Missouri’s civil war within the Civil War. The consequences of the conflict were not limited to those who took up arms. Historian and author William Garrett Piston will focus on the disorder that engulfed Missouri’s social structures, economic systems, and political institutions between 1861 and 1865. Although the war was a great tragedy, it overturned gender and racial norms in ways that produced opportunities for women and African Americans even amid hardship.

SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION

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