



Stuart Sanders, Author of "*Anatomy of a Duel: A Civil War Affair of Honor*"

June 4, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Carnegie Library Center, 731 College St., Shelbyville, KY

During the Civil War, when thousands of soldiers were slaughtering one another on battlefields across the nation, Union Colonel Leonidas Metcalfe fought a formal duel with William T. Casto, a pro-Confederate civilian near Maysville, Kentucky. The two duelists used rifles at sixty yards, and only one of them walked away. Stuart W. Sanders, Kentucky historian and author of *Anatomy of a Duel: Secession, Civil War, and the Evolution of Kentucky Violence*, will explore why Metcalfe and Casto engaged in this affair of honor, its ties to the secession crisis, and how it represents a compelling turning point in Kentucky history.

Sanders, who participated in the 2023 Kentucky Book Fair with his book, said it will appeal to “Civil War enthusiasts, those interested in Kentucky history, and readers who want to learn more about dueling and violence during the 19th century.” He went on to say that while most Americans “are familiar with dueling thanks to the musical *Hamilton*, the duel discussed in *Anatomy of a Duel: Secession, Civil War, and the Evolution of Kentucky Violence* was very different from the affair of honor fought between bitter rivals Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. While Burr and Hamilton used pistols and stood close to one another, the two duelists in my study fought with rifles at sixty yards. Like the Burr-Hamilton duel, however, only one of the antagonists survived.”

Historically, Kentucky is known for many things, and dueling is one of them. Between 1790 and 1867, forty-one documented formal duels took place in the Commonwealth. Some of the most famous figures in the state participated in these affairs of honor, desiring to correct any public humiliation they had suffered. Whether political, personal, or the cause attributed to something else, duels continued to be fought in Kentucky through the late nineteenth century.

Stuart W. Sanders is the author of five books, including *Perryville Under Fire: The Aftermath of Kentucky's Largest Civil War Battle*, *The Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky*, *Maney's Confederate Brigade at the Battle of Perryville*, *Murder on the Ohio Belle*, and his latest, *Anatomy of a Duel: Secession, Civil War, and the Evolution of Kentucky Violence*. In addition, Sanders has written for a wide range of magazines, journals and anthologies, and his guest columns about Kentucky history have appeared in more than fifty newspapers across the region. Sanders is the former Executive Director of the Perryville Battlefield Preservation Association, and currently serves as Director of Research and Publications at the Kentucky Historical Society.