



THE MAN BEHIND THE CANE

Preston Brooks, Political Violence, and the Road to the CW

In 1856, South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks assaulted Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner with a cane in the US Capitol, defending his family's honor and the rights of slaveholders. In beating Sumner unconscious, Brooks fueled a nationwide clash over slavery that ended in civil war. Quigley uses Brooks's life to examine the deeper currents propelling the United States to the brink of destruction. Brooks's story reveals the increasingly fraught relationship between words and violence

Examining enduring issues of masculinity, honor, and free speech, *The Man Behind the Cane* shows how words and violent behavior became perilously entangled in the fight over slavery and casts new light on the origins of the Civil War-and the ongoing dangers of political violence in our own time.

PAUL QUIGLEY

May 8, 2026 @ 7p.m. EASTERN

Register: <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/events.html>