



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

NOVEMBER 2024

"The Civil War was the biggest thing that ever happened to us. It was our Iliad and our Odyssey – and it remains our least understood war."

Bruce Catton

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**November 12, 2024
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
6:00 p.m.**

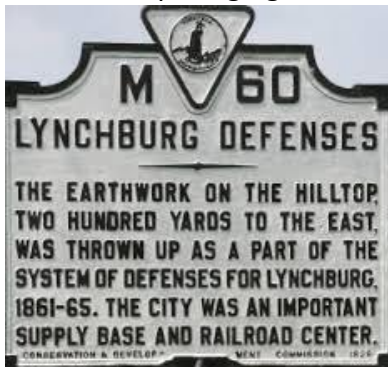
**Willow Oaks Country Club
6228 Forest Hill Avenue
Richmond, VA 23225**

ROBERT HANCOCK

**"The Slaughters of Lynchburg:
Where North Meets South"**



Mary Harker was a young Quaker girl from Mt. Holly, New Jersey. John Slaughter was a slaveholder living and working in Lynchburg, Virginia. In 1861 they had been married eight years and had three sons with a fourth child on the way. So how did these two people, with obviously disparate backgrounds, end up together? After all, John was teased that “the prettiest girl in New Jersey was marrying the ugliest man in Virginia.” Was it some sort of arranged marriage? How did Mary reconcile her Quaker upbringing with managing a home



with five enslaved servants? And would their relationship survive the war when Mary travels home to her parents and

John stays to defend Lynchburg against an approaching Union army.

Robert Hancock is the Director of Collections & Senior Curator at the American Civil War Museum. Robert grew up near Marye’s Heights in Fredericksburg, Virginia, overlooking the famous battlefield, and is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with degrees in Art History and Museum Studies. While the Civil War is his primary area of study, his other interests include the French First and Second Empire periods, military aviation, and English history and literature. He oversees the continuing preservation of the Museum’s diverse collection including the maintenance and interpretation of the Museum’s historic house, the White House of the Confederacy. Robert has been with the Museum since 1991.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

More than 100 of us listened to Bobby Krick last month in his talk about Rooney Lee. It was the best of what a good Civil War Roundtable does – it took a second team player with a great name, Rooney Lee – and made him come alive in our minds. Now, when we are reading about Brandy Station or White House plantation, he is more than just a name. And, along with Wade Hampton and Heros von Borcke, we know more about BIG men riding fast horses in the Confederate cavalry.

I would like to use this space to thank Bobby Krick for all he has done for all of us Civil War buffs. He has written, he has lectured, and he has led countless treks across too many battlefields to count. But he has also been one of the most outstanding leaders of the battlefield preservation efforts of the last three decades.

I have been involved in the preservation movement for many years and am now a member (small dollars, large interest) in the American Battlefield Trust, the Richmond Battlefield Association, the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, and the Shenandoah Battlefield Foundation, and I recommend membership in any or all of them to you. There is nothing better than going out on a battlefield and seeing the rolls and dips in the land, the meandering streams, and the steep hills that defined the tactical decisions made during the conflicts. And, when the tree lines are correct and you can see what they saw, the words and the maps in the books can come alive. On the other hand, when

the site of conflict has become a housing development or shopping center, we can never get that same sense.

For the preservation effort to be successful, a number of things need to happen. Let me list a few of them. The preservation organization needs to have inspired leaders at both the board and staff levels. Those of us who attended last year's annual dinner got to see Garry Adelman from the ABT. He's a prime example of inspiration. Partnerships between organizations need to be good. We have seen locally how a battlefield organization can partner with a more general land conservation group like the Capital Region Land Conservancy with great results. Look at the expansion at the Malvern Hill site as an example. And partnerships with federal, state, and local organizations can be powerful. The American Battlefield Protection Program and National Park Service are prime examples of federal help, and there are others. The Commonwealth of Virginia has been significantly involved from its early help at Brandy Station to the recent announcement about state parks in the Valley. And local governments, when inspired to look to future generations rather than current developers promising tax revenues, can be critical – saving Rural Plains could not have happened without Hanover County's assistance.

But the key to every instance of successful preservation is simple to say and hard to achieve. There needs to be a willing seller – whether in a fee simple transaction or a conservation easement. The people who want to

preserve the land need to know the people who own the land – what motivates them today, what they want to do with and for their family, how they feel about what occurred on their property a century and a half ago, how badly they need or want money. We need to know that the easiest thing for them to do and the easiest thing for the local government organization to approve is a sale to the developer who shows up with plans for a shopping center or data center or housing development. The best thing for them to do is to think about what THEIR LAND means to current and future generations who want to understand better what happened there so many years before.

Let me now circle back to Bobby Krick. It is my feeling that, in the last three decades, the area around Richmond has seen more important battlefield land protected than anywhere else in the country. Gettysburg and Sharpsburg have seen significant expansions, but they were already big. The area around Fredericksburg, where there was so much fighting in 1862 and again in 1863 and again in 1864, has seen significant growth in protected land. But I think that the preservation actions around Richmond have been more significant. We hear people like Gary Gallagher claim that The Seven Days Battle was the real “turning point” of the war, yet the importance of gigantic battlefields like Gaines Mill/Cold Harbor or Malvern Hill were hard to appreciate because such small areas were preserved. Today huge tracts have been added to both, and the changes in the tree lines at

Malvern Hill can now allow a visitor to get a sense that the battle could be called “not war, but murder.” The Adams farm tract, once described by Ed Bearss as the most important unprotected land in America, is now protected. And smaller places of conflict at Deep Bottom or New Market Heights are being saved and opened to the public.

All of these places have Bobby Krick’s fingerprints on them. Bobby is the person who knows all of those landowners, and their kids, and their plans, and their interests. Bobby is the person who has helped them understand what happened on their land. And Bobby has been the one who steered them into becoming the willing seller that is required. So we are not the only ones who owe him thanks. Future generations owe him as well.

Waite

**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBER:**

CHARLES NELSON

**SPECIAL EVENT AT RICHMOND NATIONAL
BATTLEFIELD PARK**

by Bert Dunkerly

1864 was a year of decision, on battlefields and at ballot boxes. Richmond National Battlefield Park is hosting an “Election Day 1864” special event.

On September 29 and 30, the Army of the James captured New Market Heights and Fort Harrison renaming it Fort Burnham. Fourteen African American soldiers of the United States Colored Troops, or USCTs,

were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions in the assaults.

In 1863, Ohio passed a law specifically allowing absentee soldier voting. Among those soldiers were Black troops of the 5th United States Colored Troops (USCT), whose racial makeup made them eligible to vote in Ohio’s elections. Thirty-nine days after capturing Fort Harrison, on November 8, 1864, they cast 194 votes for Abraham Lincoln. These are the first known Black soldier votes in Virginia, and likely the entire South.

At stake was a second term for President Abraham Lincoln, which would mean almost certain military victory for the

United States in the Civil War, a revival of the 13th

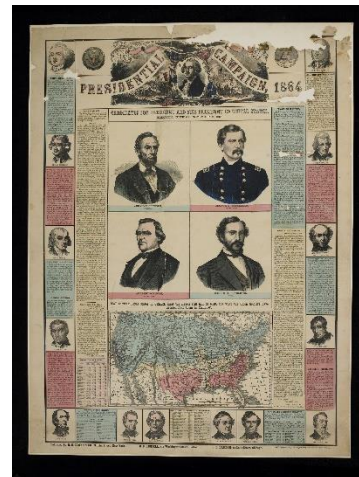
Amendment (voted down earlier in the year) and with it

a permanent, nationwide end to slavery, and at least

the beginning of a national conversation about possible Black citizenship in a reunited country.

Join us on Saturday, November 2, for a commemoration of the 160th anniversary of the memorable 1864 election at Fort Harrison/Burnham – 8761 Battlefield Park Rd, Richmond, VA 23231.

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., interactive historical election day activities for children and adults
10:00 a.m., Black Soldiers Guarding the Front Lines: A tour of Fort Harrison/Fort Burnham and its role in the battles for Richmond by Ranger Bert Dunkerly



11:00 a.m., 194: The 5th USCTs Vote at Fort Burnham – tour talk by Ranger Mike Gorman
12:00 p.m., Corresponding with History: Interactive living history presentation, a conversation with “Thomas Morris Chester,” the only African American reporter for a Civil War daily newspaper, and his firsthand reporting of election day 1864

1:00 p.m., Black Soldiers Guarding the Front Lines: A tour of Fort Harrison/Fort Burnham and its role in the battles for Richmond by Ranger Bert Dunkerly

2:00 p.m., 194: The 5th USCTs Vote at Fort Burnham – tour talk by Ranger Mike Gorman
3:00 p.m., Corresponding with History: Interactive living history presentation, a conversation with “Thomas Morris Chester,” the only African American reporter for a Civil War daily newspaper, and his firsthand reporting of election day 1864

2025 SEMINAR ANNOUNCED

The Central Virginia Battlefield Trust (CVBT) just announced the date and schedule for their 2025 Spring Seminar. It will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Tabernacle United Methodist Church's Multipurpose Space, 7310-A Old Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22407.

The Seminar, “The Road to Fredericksburg,” will focus on topics and events that happened in the late summer and fall of 1862 and that led up to the Army of the Potomac and Army of Northern Virginia clashing at the Battle of Fredericksburg. Scheduled speakers are:

Dennis Frye, “Lee’s Achilles: Harpers Ferry and the First Invasion”

Greg Mertz, “Jackson is With You! Confederates Turn the Tide at Cedar Mountain”

John Hennessy, “The ‘Moral Spectacle’ of Freedom: The Union Army and the Slow End of Slavery in Central Virginia, 1862”

James Broomall, “Another Ball’s Bluff: The Battle of Shepherdstown and the End of the Maryland Campaign”

Frank O’Reilly, “McClellan to Burnside: Command Change in the Army of the Potomac”

In addition to the speakers, the National Museum of Civil War Medicine will have a display of artifacts from their collections.

Tickets are \$50 and include a box lunch. This was an immensely popular event last year and tickets will go fast. Registration is now open at www.cvbtt.org.

From the Round Table Archives **RCWRT BULLETIN –** **Volume 1, Issue 10,** **October 1958**

Chickahominy Redoubts and Breastworks Assured Preservation

Through the generosity of the E.I. DuPont de Nemours Company, the Richmond National Battlefield Parks Area will become the beneficiary of an 85 acre tract of land on the eastward approach to Mechanicsville at the crossing of the Chickahominy River. On the heights of this tract, which overlooks the scene of the beginning of the Seven Days Battles, there remain in well-preserved condition redoubts covering artillery positions and other earthworks of the Richmond Outer Defense Line. These were thrown up in June of 1862 under the personal direction of General Lee, who had just been placed in command of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The Northern artist, A.R. Waud, sketched these defenses from the Mechanicsville side during the opening fight and one of his drawings appears in Battles and Leaders. The site provides a choice “take-off”

position for the trip around the Seven Days Fields and will be developed as such by the National Park Service, according to Richmond Battlefield Parks Area Superintendent, Wallace T. Stephens.

On October 22nd the deed to this property was formally tendered to Elbert Cox, Director of National Park Service Region I, in an impressive ceremony attended by representatives of the Park Service, the DuPont Company, the Richmond Civil War Round Table and the Virginia Historical Society. The presentation was made by Dr. Rollin F. Conaway, Manager of the DuPont textile fibers plants in Richmond. Fellow Round Tabler Ambler Johnston was an inspirational force and a prime mover in the negotiations which resulted in this most generous donation. We of the Richmond area are proud of his accomplishment and most grateful to the donors. This acquisition marks another highlight in the heritage-preserving activities of men who were close friends and neighbors of the late Dr. Douglas S. Freeman.

The Watt House Now Occupied

Mr. Joseph P. Cullen, Historian for the Richmond National Battlefield Parks Area, is now established in the restored Watt House, the headquarters of General Fitz-John Porter commanding the Fifth Corps at the Battle of Gaines Mill (First Cold Harbor) on June 27, 1862.

This structure has been restored in a masterful way to conform in every known detail to the house as it stood at the time of the battle, except for the installation of

modern utilities. While the house itself will not be open to the public the surrounding grounds will be.



The Watt House

Chimborazo Facility

Mr. Wallace T. Stephens reports that the reconditioning of the Headquarters Building Reception Center and Museum for the Richmond National Battlefield Parks Area at Chimborazo is virtually completed, and that upon arrival of the exhibits and other interior furnishings the facility will open to the public. The formal dedication date of this facility, which had previously been announced as Memorial Day, May 30, 1959, is as yet undecided, but a definite date will be set for some time next Spring.

LAST MEETING IN 2024

December 10: Sarah Kay Bierle, "John Pelham: His Five Years at West Point"

The schedule for 2025 will be published in the December issue of the newsletter.

Attendance at October Meeting: 102