



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

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RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

AUGUST 2026

"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."

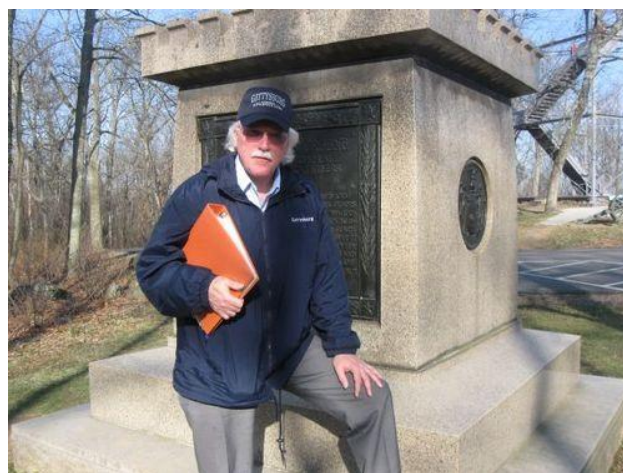
Bruce Catton

**AUGUST 11, 2026
7:30 p.m.**

**Weinstein JCC
5403 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226
(Sisisky Room; first room on the right as
you enter the building)**

DR. CHARLES FENNELL

**"Culp's Hill and the Failure of
Sustainable Restoration"**



Culp's Hill is the forgotten gem of the battlefield of Gettysburg. It receives only a fraction of the visitation that Little Round Top and the Angle receive and yet it is as important if not more so to the outcome of the battle than the more famous parts of the field. When the National Park was forced to close Little Round Top due to heavy visitation that impacted the physical resources, it was decided to restore and interpret a portion of Culp's Hill to get more visitors to go there and in effect relieve some of the attrition on Little Round Top. This then is the story of the failed attempt to restore one of the most significant parts of the Battlefield of Gettysburg.

Charlie Fennell was born in Western Pennsylvania just a little north of Pittsburgh on the Allegheny River. He became



interested in the American Civil War during the Centennial in the 1960's. He made his first pilgrimage to Gettysburg in 1964 as an eleven-year-old and he always hoped he could return there some

day. Charlie turned his youthful exuberance for the Civil War into a professional passion.

He has received three higher education degrees, all in American History with his final degree being a PhD in History from West Virginia University in 1992. His dissertation topic was *"The Attack and Defense of Culp's Hill."*

After retiring from teaching at the college level for forty-one years he continues to pursue his passion as a Licensed Battlefield Guide at the Gettysburg National Military Park, a position he has had for forty years. Charlie and Joleen, his wife of forty-six years, live in Hanover, Pennsylvania, where they raised their three children. Charlie is happy to let you know that he has returned to Gettysburg and spends two-thirds of the days of the year there. Life is good.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

I can't believe it's been five years since I attended my first meeting of the Richmond Civil War Round Table. It was March 8, 2022, at the Virginia War Memorial. The speaker was Greg Clemmer. It would be another year before I finally made the decision to become a member. Then, before I knew it, I was serving as Second Vice President (Ulli has exemplary powers of persuasion).

Call me a slow learner, but it wasn't until I became president that I truly came to appreciate what a wonderful and historic organization we have. We are the second oldest Civil War Round Table still meeting in the United States. We annually attract the best Civil War historians in the land, and a number of them have told me that it was "an honor" *for them* to be invited to speak *to us*. As of last month, we had 150 members, plus 4,786 followers on Facebook! So far in 2026, we have averaged 87 attendees per meeting, some of whom came as guests and now are members.

If you were at last month's meeting, I hope you caught my opening remarks about our financial health. Because our expenses exceeded our income (which comes totally through our annual membership fees), we had to cash in one of our certificates of deposit to help pay the bills. Still, we have another cd worth more than \$9,800 that we can access, so there's no reason to circle the wagons. That money came from each of us, and it's there if we need it. If you want a current snapshot of our finances, make sure you read Art Wingo's treasurer's report, which is attached to this newsletter.

So, why have our expenses exceeded our income? The main reason is the monthly facility rental fee increase we incurred by moving from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to the Weinstein Jewish Community Center and the Virginia War

Memorial. While the difference was substantial, from \$100 a month at St. Stephen's to \$260 and \$250 at the JCC and the VWM respectively, the board discovered through our research that the rate we paid at St. Stephen's was an anomaly in the Greater Richmond area. Most facilities offer rates like the JCC and VWM, or even higher. And if you have attended meetings at the JCC, I think you will agree it is a much better facility overall than St. Stephen's. While our friends at the VWM have let us know that we are always welcome to meet there, we are hoping that we can solidify a long-term commitment with the JCC for years to come.

The main reason we exist is to offer you the opportunity to hear great talks from great Civil War historians and to expand your knowledge and appreciation of the Civil War in the process. Our dues make that happen by paying for the monthly facility rental, lodging for out-of-town speakers, and travel expenses for speakers, and dinner for them before the meeting. If you like the speakers we've been having – and our monthly attendance figures indicate that you do – then I think you will all agree that your money is well spent.

Later this year, you will be receiving a membership survey. The Round Table officers and board members want to know your opinion about what we are doing well as an organization, what we might need to improve upon, what you think needs to change, and what you think needs to stay the same. Some of the survey questions will be financial in nature, to include asking if you think our monthly dues need to be increased. If we do decide that dues need to be increased, that decision will not be made by me, the other officers, or the board members. That decision can only be made through a formal vote by *all members*.

The best thing we can do as members, in my humble opinion, is to get more people to join our Round Table. The more members we have, the less chance we will have to increase dues. It should be an easy sell. What other organization do you know that offers the opportunity to monthly hear from the likes of Frank O'Reilly, Gary Gallagher, Bobby Krick, Lesley Gordon, Mike Gorman, Elizabeth Varon, Jack Davis, Garry Adelman, Jonathan White, Caroline Janney, and on and on, for less than \$4 a meeting? I can't think of one.

Finally, on behalf of myself, the other officers, and the board members, I sincerely hope that one or more of you will consider serving as an officer, and particularly as our next Second Vice President. My leadership journey has been a labor of love and one I would take again in the future. If you do decide to serve as our next Second VP, I can assure you that you will not walk alone. The present leadership will be there to lend a helping hand and to offer suggestions if you need them. Plus, when you become President, you get to wield a really cool, and historic, gavel.

Dale

CIVIL WAR QUOTES WHO SAID IT?

1. "Ours is not a revolution. We are a free and independent people, in states that had the right to make a better government when they saw fit."
2. "Lincoln always showed a generous and kindly spirit toward the Southern people and I never heard him abuse an enemy. Some of the cruel things said about President Lincoln, particularly in the North, used to pierce him to the heart."
3. "There is nothing left but to go to General Grant; and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

4. "This was one of the most graceful and daring rides known to military history."
5. "My God, what misery this dreadful war has produced; and how it comes home to the doors of almost every one!"

Answers on Page 6

FIELD TRIP TO THE MARINERS' MUSEUM **NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA**

All members and friends of RCWRT are welcome to join us on Saturday, **October 24, 2026**, for a field trip to the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia. We begin by visiting the museum's Battle Theater to learn about the Hampton Roads naval battle between the *USS Monitor* and the *Merrimack* (*CSS Virginia*). Next, we meet our guide who will show us around the *USS Monitor* Center, which houses the award-winning exhibit *Ironclad Revolution* as well as the largest and most advanced conservation lab of any maritime museum in the world, The Batten Conservation Complex.

Experiences include:

- Watching a 15-minute film that provides a play-by-play of the Battle of Hampton Roads. **Please be advised that this presentation has unexpected loud sounds and flashing lights that may be disorienting for some visitors.**
- Walking the deck of the full-scale *Monitor* replica.
- Getting a bird's eye view of *Monitor's* turret, Dahlgren guns, and steam engine undergoing conservation treatment.
- Going back in time as you explore the building of *CSS Virginia* from the salvaged *Merrimack* at Gosport Navy Yard.

- Venture upstairs to the Batten Conservation Complex Clean Lab to see conservators at work!
- A program entitled: "The *USS Monitor* Unveiled" with speaker, Will Hoffman, Director of Conservation and Chief Conservator at the Museum

Planned Itinerary:

8:30 am: Depart Lowe's parking lot, 8001 Brook Road, 23227 (at Staples Mill Road). We will make one stop at the rest area on I-64 in New Kent.

10:30 am: Arrive at the Mariners' Museum and meet our tour guide. Attend the Battle Theater and tour of the *USS Monitor* Center.

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm: Boxed Lunch catered by *Column 15 at the Mariners'* (Museum restaurant) – (to save time by staying for lunch at the museum). Christine Wynd will contact members who have registered for the trip so that menus are shared, lunch choices made, and lunch fees paid.

12:45 – 1:45 pm: Program: "*USS Monitor* Unveiled." Description: Learn about current projects being conducted by the Conservation Team of the *USS Monitor* Center. Get to know what life was like for the crew of the *USS Monitor* through their personal stories, historical accounts, and rarely seen artifacts from the Civil War ironclad.

1:45 – 2:45 pm: Self-guided time to explore museum and gift shop/bookstore.

3:00 pm: Return to Richmond with estimated arrival time of approximately **5:00 pm**.

REGISTRATION FEES/COSTS for the tour are \$50 per person; this includes transportation (van rental and gasoline), museum entrance fee, and tour. The boxed lunches will be an additional charge. You may register now by providing your check, made out to Richmond CWRT, to Art Wingo at the next meeting, or mailing it to him at 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen VA 23059.

****PLEASE NOTE:** *Registration fees/checks will NOT be accepted after October 13, 2026. Christine Wynd will collect money for boxed lunches once all interested members have registered for the trip.*



EVENTS OF INTEREST

August 15: 6:00 p.m. - History at Sunset Tour of ***The Battle of Burgess' Mill***. The Battle of Burgess' Mill, also known as the Battle of Boydton Plank Road and/or The First Battle of Hatcher's Run occurred in October 1864. With the added pressure of the 1864 Presidential Election, U.S. Lieutenant General Grant's strategy for the sixth offensive centered on cutting off the Boydton Plank Road and ultimately reaching and cutting the Southside Railroad.

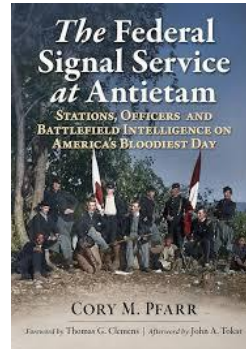
Meet at Pine Grove Baptist Church (parking lot), 22218 Dabney Mill Road, Petersburg.

The program is free and the duration is 60 to 90 minutes. This program is presented as part of a partnership between Petersburg National Battlefield and Petersburg Battlefields Foundation. Questions, call: 804-732-3531.

August 21: Richmond CWRT member **Karl Rhodes** will be featured on CWRT Congress' Friday Lecture Series. Karl will be speaking on his book ***Peggy's War***, a real story of Anabaptist Margaret "Peggy" Rhodes (Karl's ancestor) and the young Mennonite and Dunker men she protected during the Civil War. The program begins at 7:00 p.m.

Register (for free) at www.cwrtcongress.org/events/fridays.html/

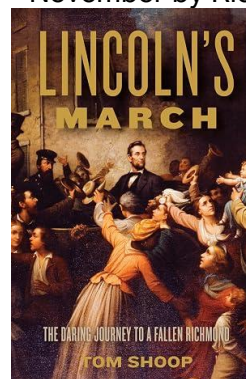
NEW CIVIL WAR BOOKS



The Federal Signal Service at Antietam by Cory Pfarr has now been released. Cory was our June speaker. This deeply researched study shows that the Federal Signal Service's role was far from that of an anonymous adjunct but rather was vital to command and control in the Maryland campaign. The book is available on Amazon.

Author Robert Thorp has written two Civil War Navy related books: *Mersey Built – The Role of Merseyside in the American Civil War*, published in 2017; and *The Life and Times of Captain John Low – An Englishman in the Confederate States Navy*, newly published in 2026. Both books are available in hardback, paperback, and e-book format. If purchased directly from the publisher, Vernon Press, the 2026 book currently has a launch offer of 30% discount available by using code HNTYWL at checkout.

And a heads-up to a book coming out in November by Richmond-based historian and author, Tom Shoop. *Lincoln's March: The Daring Journey to a Fallen Richmond* will be published by the University of Virginia Press on November 10. The book sheds some light on Lincoln's 1865 visit to Richmond. More information about the



book can be found at: <https://www.upress.virginia.edu/title/10230/> *Lincoln's March* may be pre-ordered at UVA Press and Amazon.

A FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

The Battle of Gettysburg resulted in more than 51,000 casualties; the deadliest engagement ever fought on American soil.

A Field of Remembrance transforms a number from history books into a landscape of remembrance. For \$18.63 per flag, a reference to the year of the battle, anyone may sponsor one or more commemorative American flags. Together, those flags will create a field of 7,000 near the Eternal Light Peace Memorial, symbolizing the thousands of soldiers killed during the battle, making the human cost of the battle visible in a way statistics alone cannot. The flags are placed in the field for viewing from November 12 to 23.

The Eternal Light Peace Memorial stands on Oak Hill, where Union and Confederate veterans gathered in 1938 for the 75th anniversary of the battle.

Nearly a century later, the Field of Remembrance will stand nearby, connecting today's acts of remembrance to that larger story of sacrifice, healing and national unity.

A Field of Remembrance supports the Gettysburg Foundation's work in partnership with the National Park Service, including the reopening of the David Wills House, where President Lincoln spent the night before he made his remarks at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery.

To purchase your flag(s), go to:
www.gettysburgfoundation.org.

Answers to 'Civil War Quotes'

1. Jefferson Davis, in a speech in Augusta, Georgia, October 3, 1864
2. Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs, Vol. 2*, 1886
3. Gen. Robert E. Lee on April 8, 1865, a day before he surrendered
4. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet about JEB Stuart's ride around the Union Army, June 12, 1862
5. Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade in a letter to his wife, April 13, 1865

**A WARM WELCOME
TO OUR NEW MEMBERS**

RANDALL AND PATRICIA WALDROP

We now have 150 members and 4,786 followers on Facebook.

IMPORTANT UPDATE

Due to a scheduling conflict at the JCC, we had to change the date of our dinner meeting to Thursday, November 12. Fortunately, Jack Davis can fit us into his busy schedule and he will be our speaker on this new date. More information about the dinner will be in the September newsletter.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

September 8: Melissa Winn, *Grant's Conscience: The Unique Camaraderie Between Ulysses S. Grant and his Chief of Staff John Rawlins*

October 13: Troy Harman, *All Roads Led to Gettysburg*

November 12: (Annual Dinner Meeting) Dr. William C. "Jack" Davis, *Jefferson Davis and R.E. Lee: A Model Relationship?*

December 8: Hampton Newsome, *Gettysburg's Southern Front: Opportunity and Failure at Richmond*

Attendance at July Meeting: 84