



Founded at Fort Harrison
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RICHMOND

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

DECEMBER 2022

“The Civil War is the crux of our history. You cannot understand any part of our past, from the convening of the Constitutional Convention, down to this morning, without eventually arriving at the Civil War.”

Bernard de Voto

December 13, 2022

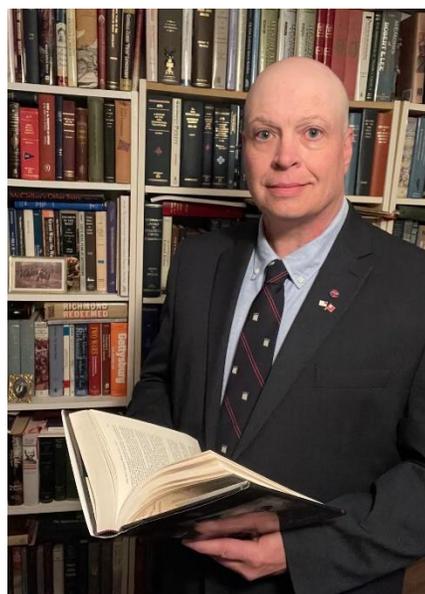
7:30 p.m.

**At First Presbyterian Church
4602 Cary Street Road
Richmond, VA 23226**

(The parking lot is behind the church; go up the steps to fellowship hall on the left)

Frank O’Reilly

**“Fredericksburg
and the Winter War on
the Rappahannock”**



The holiday season is often a sentimental time for reflection and making resolutions – a time for friends and family – and good will and peace. The 1862 battle of Fredericksburg occurred at the height of the holiday season – challenging all those notions. Families had been separated. Friends were dead. Widows and orphans stood where communities had once prospered. Still, soldiers and civilians found family among those who shared their ordeals, and the battle only heightened their resolutions going into New Years.

Frank O'Reilly's latest book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock*, received a 2003 nomination for the Pulitzer Prize in Letters. Released by LSU Press in December, 2002, it has won the 2002 Capital District (Albany, NY) Book Award; the 2003 James I. Robertson, Jr. Book Award; the 2004 Daniel Laney Book Award; and the 2004 Richard Barksdale Harwell Book Award.

Frank received both his BA and MA in American History with a concentration on Early American Military History and Civil War Studies. He did his undergraduate work at Washington & Lee University before joining the National Park Service at the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park. He worked briefly at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and then returned to Fredericksburg as an historian in 1990. Frank has been an historian for the battlefields for 34 of his 35 years of service.

Frank has written numerous articles on the Civil War and Mexican War for national and international journals; and introductions to quite a few books. In 1993, he released his first book on the Fredericksburg campaign titled, *Stonewall Jackson at Fredericksburg*. He has appeared in quite a few documentaries, on CSPAN, and has lectured extensively on military history

to audiences around the world, from the Pentagon to numerous conferences in the United Kingdom at Oxford.

Frank is currently writing a book on the 1862 Battle of Malvern Hill and the Seven Days' Battles around Richmond.



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Isn't it amazing how quickly a year goes by? We started 2022 with our meetings being held at the beautiful Virginia War Memorial. And it was a great place for nine months. Since July of this year, we are back in our home at First Presbyterian. Judging by the attendance since then, everyone seems to be happy that we're back in familiar surroundings.

Looking back, it was a joy and a privilege to be president of this wonderful round table this past year. We have a dedicated and enthusiastic executive team and board of directors that work so well together, and my thanks and appreciation go out to all of them. This month, we will be voting for three directors. Also, Waite, Billie, and I are running for reelection in our current positions for 2023 and this will be voted on by the members as well.

The speaker lineup for 2023 looks great and Billie is working on a field trip for next year as well. We have much to look forward to!

Thinking back to the years when my three children were all in the Army and all of them overseas over the holidays (two of

them deployed), I remember how hard that was on our family. We, however, had the modern convenience of Skype or Facetime, so we could at least see each other. Compare that to the lack and uncertainties of communication during the Civil War! How hard it must have been for families not knowing where their loved ones were, or even if they were alright and able to celebrate Christmas or Hannukah, if only in a small way.

Frank O'Reilly will speak to us about Christmas along the Rappahannock during the Civil War at this month's meeting. I look forward to hearing all about it.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, Happy Holidays.

Ulli

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Ballots will be handed out and three directors positions, as well as president, first VP, and second VP will be voted on. The completed ballots will be placed in a box located on the table in the back of the room.

ANNUAL DUES NOTICE

Dues are now due and shall be paid to the Secretary **by February 15, 2023**. Individual dues shall remain at \$35, and Couples at \$45. To renew your membership, please see Andy at the meeting, or send a check – made out to Richmond CWRT – to Andy Keller, 9701 Fireside Drive, Glen Allen VA 23060.

OWN A PIECE OF HISTORY

An opportunity to own a piece of history is offered by the Gettysburg CWRT. In a summer storm in 1987 a tree fell on the edge of Herbst Woods near the Reynolds wounding marker. Dubbed the Reynolds Witness Tree, slabs of it were sold to various organizations, one of which was the

Gettysburg CWRT. The wood blocks from the slab were converted into desk pen sets.

This Spring a box containing unfinished wood blocks was found at the Adams County Historical Society. After some research, it was determined that these blocks were from the same project and were from the Reynolds Tree. They are offered at \$50.00 and will be shipped for \$10.00. Each pen set will be numbered and include a Certificate of Authenticity. It is a rare opportunity to own a piece of Battle of Gettysburg history. The order form can be downloaded from the Gettysburg CWRT website: www.cwrtgettysburg.org.

PLEASE NOTE:

The Cold Harbor Visitor Center is closed for the Winter and will reopen March 1. The grounds and trails are open. Remember that Winter is a great time to hike the trails and see the trenches that are hidden by foliage.

PARK NEWS

Happenings at Richmond National Battlefield Park

By Bert Dunkerly

Although it is a Civil War park, Richmond National Battlefield Park also preserves other periods of history in its boundaries. In early January the park, in partnership with Henrico County Parks, Henrico County Libraries, and St. John's Church are commemorating the Revolutionary War in Richmond with a series of special activities.

British general Benedict Arnold arrived in Virginia with British and Loyalist troops, and moved up the James River in early January, 1781. After a brief skirmish on Chimborazo Hill (later the site of the Confederate hospital), the British occupied

the town, and destroyed supplies. These events are free and open to the public:

Thursday, January 5

7 pm: "The Revolution in Virginia" program by author and historian Mike Cecere
Libby Mill Library, Libbie Lake East Street, Henrico, VA 23230

Saturday, January 7

9 am – 4 pm: Living history demonstrations with reenactors at Chimborazo Park, 3215 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23223

Noon: British reenactor march from Chimborazo to St. John's Church, public invited to march along!

1 – 4 pm: Historian presentations at St. John's Church

Sunday, January 8

10 am: Battle of Richmond Walking Tour (1.5 miles), meet at Chimborazo Park

1 pm: Revolutionary Richmond Walking Tour (2 miles), meet at Farm Fresh parking lot, 2320 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23223

For more information:

bert_dunkerly@nps.gov

DINNER MEETING

Members and friends of the round table enjoyed a terrific program at our annual dinner meeting at Willow Oaks Country Club. Jack Davis and Sue Heth Bell spoke on their book, *The Wharton's War*.



Attendance at dinner meeting: 60

We now have 3,092 followers on Facebook

**AFTER THE CIVIL WAR
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...
...CLARA BARTON**



Clara Barton

Clarissa Harlowe Barton was born on December 25, 1821 in Oxford, Massachusetts. She was a hospital nurse in the Civil War, a teacher, and a patent clerk.

Victims of the Baltimore Riot on April 19, 1861 were brought to Washington, D.C., where Clara Barton was living at the time. She went to the railroad station when the victims arrived and provided crucial assistance to the wounded. It was on that day that she identified herself with army work and began her efforts towards collecting medical supplies for the Union soldiers. She gained support from other people who believed in her cause and these people became her patrons.

After the war, she ran the Office of Missing Soldiers, at 437 ½ Seventh Street, in Washington, D.C. The office's purpose was to find or identify soldiers killed or missing in action. Barton and her assistants wrote 41,855 replies to inquiries and helped locate more than twenty-two thousand missing

men. Barton spent the summer of 1865 helping find, identify, and properly bury 13,000 individuals who died at Andersonville prison camp. She continued this task over the next four years, burying 20,000 more Union soldiers and marking their graves. Congress eventually appropriated \$15,000 toward her project.

She continued to live in her Glen Echo, Maryland home which also served as the Red Cross Headquarters upon her arrival to the house in 1897. Barton published her autobiography in 1907, titled *The Story of My Childhood*. On April 12, 1912, at the age of 90, she died in her home. The cause of death was pneumonia.

Adapted from The Wikipedia Legends of the Civil War



Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Museum in Washington

WAR TIME NEWS

Richmond, June 4, 1864

“When the Yankees opened this year’s campaign against Richmond, no fewer than 225,000 men, converging from different directions, were assigned to the purpose of destroying the rebel capital, and therefore sounding the death knell of the entire rebellion. This concentration of so enormous a force at one point is awe-inspiring, and we must give credit to Grant, the creator of this plan, for realizing that only through such an overwhelming

concentration of the Northern forces is there even the slightest chance that this campaign against Richmond will succeed.

If we consider the results which have been achieved to this point by this awe-inspiring concentration of men and materiel, the results dwindle to rather insignificant results, and the enemy finds that his primary objective, the capture of Richmond, remains as distant as it was before the opening of this year’s campaign. Crook burned a bridge and Kautz damaged several miles of railroad tracks, damage which has long since been repaired. Sheridan was able to advance to within a few miles of our city, destroying a sizeable cache of meat, but it was only due to lack of energy on the part of the local commander and the untimely death of our brave Stuart that Sheridan was able to retreat with his nearly surrounded troops to rejoin the main army under Grant. Butler was so unceremoniously thrown back by Beauregard and his brave troops after Butler’s initial successes as he marched against Richmond and Petersburg that Butler has exchanged the role of besieger for the role of the besieged.

All of Grant’s attempts to advance against Richmond from the north have failed because Lee has observed Grant’s every move, he has accepted every battle offered by Grant, and Lee and his brave troops have fought for every inch of ground that Grant has tried to take. However, Grant finally succeeded when he moved southeast along the course of the North Anna River on the north side of the river while our army was on the south side of the river. However, Lee soon overtook him again and the scouts from both armies kept an eye on each other as the two armies continued downstream, and so, because of the course of the river, we find that the theater of war has shifted to our immediate vicinity.

Grant certainly could have achieved this outcome much more conveniently and saved himself the loss of 60,000 dead and wounded had he chosen the York River and the James River as his base of operations from the outset.

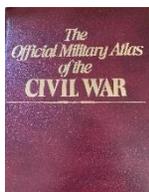
Certainly, many hardships and trials lie ahead in the near future, but the end result of Grant's grand campaign will only resemble his predecessor McClellan's, whose 145,000 men suffered such a rout at the Chickahominy that the ruins of that proud army were glad they succeeded in reaching the protection of their gunboats.

All we need in these trying days are perseverance, courage, and a firm faith in the righteousness of our cause, in Lee's wisdom and generalship, and in the courage and bravery of our troops. If we are able to hold fast, these trying days will pass and the long-awaited peace will blossom from this latest Yankee failure to capture "the Rebel capital" by force."

From *The Richmond Advertiser*
Thank you, Bert Dunkerly

SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction that was supposed to take place at our dinner meeting never happened. Therefore, we will have it at our December meeting instead – just in time for gift giving.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 10:* Kent Masterson Brown, "Lee's Retreat from Gettysburg"

February 14:* Joan Waugh, "The Election of 1868"

March 14: Kristopher White, "The Ides of May: The Wounding of James Longstreet"

April 11: John Hennessy, "Subordinate Command in the Army of the Potomac"

May 9: Robin Snyder, "The Job of a Battlefield Park Superintendent"

June 13: Clay Mountcastle, "Confederate Guerrillas and Union Generals who Hated Them"

July 11: James Hessler, "East Cavalry Battle at Gettysburg"

August 8: Emmanuel Dabney, "Broader Recruitment Training of USCT"

September 12: Johnathan Jones, "Veteran Addictions"

October 10: Rob Havers, "What British Military Learned from the American Civil War"

November 14:** Annual Dinner Meeting, Speaker and Topic TBD

December 12: Jake Wynn, "Civil War Medicine"

*January and February meetings will be via Zoom

**Date subject to change

IN MEMORIAM

We recently learned of the passing in late October of former round table member, Patricia (Pat) Walenista, who was also very active with the Richmond Battlefields Association and the Turner Ashby Society.

Our condolences and sympathy to her family and friends.