



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

FEBRUARY 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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February 13, 2024

7:30 p.m.

At First Presbyterian Church

AND VIA ZOOM

4602 Cary Street Road

Richmond, VA 23226

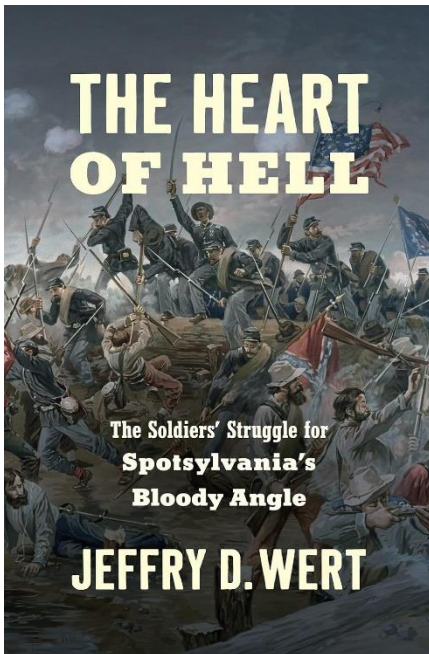
**(The parking lot is behind the church; go up the
steps to fellowship hall on the left)**

DR. JEFFRY WERT

“GENERAL, THEY ARE COMING”



The struggle over the fortified Confederate position known as Spotsylvania's Mule Shoe was without parallel during the Civil War. A Union assault that began at 4:30 a.m. on May 12, 1864, sparked brutal combat that lasted nearly twenty-four hours. By the time Grant's forces withdrew, some 55,000 men from Union and Confederate armies had been drawn into the fury, battling in torrential rain along the field works at distances often less than the length of a rifle barrel. One Union private recalled the fighting as a "seething, bubbling, soaring hell of hate and murder." By the time Lee's troops established a new



fortified line in the predawn hours of May 13, some 17,500 officers and men from both sides had been killed, wounded, or captured when the fighting ceased. The site of the most intense clashes became forever known as the Bloody Angle.

Military Historian Jeffrey

D. Wert in his book, "The Heart of Hell," draws on the personal narratives of Union and Confederate troops who survived the fight to offer a gripping story of Civil War combat at its most difficult. Wert's harrowing tale reminds us that the war's story, often told through its commanders and campaigns, truly belongs to the common soldier.

Jeffrey D. Wert is a retired high school history teacher and an award-winning Civil

War historian. His book on this presentation, "The Heart of Hell: The Soldiers' Struggle for Spotsylvania's Bloody Angle," received the 2023 Harwell Award of the Atlanta CWRT and the Laney Prize of the Austin CWRT for the best book published on a Civil War subject in 2022.

The book is available on Amazon:

[The Heart of Hell: The Soldiers' Struggle... by Wert, Jeffrey D. \(amazon.com\)](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0C8K8K8K8)

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86067327782?pwd=cTZNeK51d2liWmx0dDBBdGt4QWpndz09>

Meeting ID: 860 6732 7782

Passcode: 326862

We recommend that you sign on 5 – 10 minutes before the meeting starts to be sure your equipment is working and review some of the features. However, we hope to see many of you at the church to view the presentation on the "big screen."

Please be sure to thank the fantastic Brik Cash of First Presbyterian Church for his expertise and dedication in making these Zoom meetings possible for our group.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ulli and I are establishing a pattern. About a week after a meeting, she emails me to remind me to write the President's note. So I am writing this on January 15th, the day that Richmond is seeing its first

snow in a couple of years; and I am thinking how glad I am to be inside and warm.

It makes me remember one of the Civil War's strangest battles – the great Snowball Fight in the Army of Northern Virginia in 1863. As many of you know, I love to read original memoirs and had read several accounts of its participants, but I found the best account online and copy it here.

Two back-to-back snowstorms in February of 1863 provided the ammunition for a friendly snowball battle amongst rival divisions of Confederate troops near Fredericksburg, Virginia. On February 19, eight inches of snow fell on the region. Two days later, nine inches of snow fell. On February 25, sunny skies and mild temperatures softened the deep snow cover, providing ideal conditions for making snowballs. During this time, the Confederate Army was camped near Fredericksburg. Some of the Divisions of the army had been reorganized, which had created friendly rivalries between the Confederate brigades and regiments. This helped spark a huge snowball battle near Rappahannock Academy in which approximately 10,000 Confederate soldiers participated.



One soldier who participated in the snowball battle described it as “one of the most memorable

combats of the war.”

The battle started on the morning of February 25, 1863, when General Hoke’s North Carolina soldiers marched towards Colonel Stiles’ camp of Georgians, with the intent of capturing the camp using only snowballs. The attacking force, composed of infantry, cavalry, and skirmishers, moved

in swiftly. Battle lines formed and the fight began with “severe pelting” of snowballs. Reinforcements arrived from all sides to assist the brigade under attack. Even the employees of the commissary joined the snowball battle. Soon, the attacking soldiers were pushed back.

Hoke’s beaten soldiers retreated back to their camp. Colonel Stiles then held a Council of War on how best to attack the retreating force. He decided to organize his men and march directly into their camp, with snowballs in hand. When Stiles’ forces finally arrived in Hoke’s camp, they were quite surprised to find that their adversaries had rallied and filled their haversacks to the top with snowballs. This allowed Hoke’s soldiers to provide an endless barrage of snowballs “without the need to reload.” The attacking force was quickly overwhelmed and many of their soldiers were captured and “whitewashed” with snow. The snowball battle came to an end and both brigades settled back into their respective camps. The captured prisoners were quickly paroled and returned to their camp, to much heckling from fellow soldiers. It was noted that Stonewall Jackson had witnessed the snowball battle. One soldier remarked that he had wished Jackson and staff had joined the fight so he could have thrown a snowball at “the old faded uniforms.”

The weather turned mild and rainy in the following days. Other snowball battles were documented during the Civil War – including a snowball fight at Dalton, Georgia – but the Snowball Battle of Rappahannock Academy was unique in size, strategy and ample snow cover. The depth of the snow cover on the day of the battle was documented in a soldier’s diary to be 12 inches.

Waite

ANNUAL DUES NOTICE

By Andy Keller

The annual dues season is upon us. They are due by February 15, and since the February meeting will again be a Zoom meeting, I might not be at the church to collect dues. It is therefore incumbent on you to mail them to me by the February 15 deadline.

I suggest that you set up payment with your bank or credit union’s bill pay program and let them pay the postage for you. When you set it up make it an annual payment so you will be set for future years as well. The current dues of \$35/\$45 are unlikely to change anytime soon. Make checks payable to RCWRT and mail them to c/o Andy Keller, 9701 Fireside Drive, Glen Allen, VA 20360-6280.

Another alternative is to give your check to Art, who – weather permitting – will be at the church for the meeting.

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

**MEG AYLNER
COLLEEN CALLAHAN
JOE FARLEY
MARILYN JONES**

ADOPT-A-MONUMENT

If anyone from the Round Table would like to check on the Connecticut Monument at Cold Harbor in February, please reach out to Ranger Bert Dunkerly: bert-dunkerly@nps.gov.
The Round Table has adopted the monument as part of the Park’s Adopt-A-Monument program.

THE ROUND TABLE IN 1955

The following article appeared in the Ashland *Herald-Progress*, March 31, 1955:

“The Richmond Civil War Round Table will meet Monday, April 4, at 3:30 in the historic Garthright house in Hanover County as the guests of the Pamunkey Senior Women’s Club. Both Pamunkey Clubs have used the house, used as a hospital in the civil war, as a meeting place since last September, with permission from the National Park service.

Several prominent guests are expected and the meeting is “loaded with surprises,”



said Samuel J. Moore, Jr., who is in charge of the

program. Richmond author Clifford Dowdy and J. Ambler Johnston, considered an authority on battlefields around Richmond, are on the program.

Hanover County Delegate Edmund T. DeJarnette has accepted an invitation and Hanover supervisors Cabell Luck, E.C.C. Woods, and J.Z. Johnson are also being invited, Rogers said.

Near Garthright House, which served as a hospital on the line separating Northern and Confederate troops, took place some of the bloodiest fighting in America.

Color will be added to the April 4 oratory by the presence of a uniformed squad of Troop I Second Virginia Cavalry, dressed as Confederate soldiers. The troop’s Stars and Bars, a gift from the Round Table, will fly from the lawn of Garthright House while across Star Route 156 Old Glory will fly high above Cold Harbor Cemetery.

Rogers said the visit to Garthright House is the first of a number of out-of-city activities of the Round Table. The unit will attend the North-South Shoot at Fort Lee May 7 and 8 and will visit the Fredericksburg area battlefields May 11-15, when the Chicago Round Table holds its annual battlefield tour there.

After the Garthright House meeting, Rogers said, there will be a trek to the Watt House, which Round Table members are seeking to have rehabilitated prior to the 1957 Jamestown Exposition. Watt House was a Federal general's headquarters.

Mrs. Ross Walker, president of the Pamunkey Women's Club, said the National Park Service, under the direction of Wallace Stephens, superintendent of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, and the club are restoring Garthright House. The club's interior decoration of the building is partly complete.

**Many thanks to Bobby Krick
for this article**

SALUTE TO OLD DOMINION

Governor Glenn Youngkin joined American Battlefield Trust staff and Board members on October 13, 2023 in Williamsburg at the Trust's 2023 Grand Review event. During his remarks, Youngkin announced he had approved all seven of the Trust's applications to the Department of Historic Resources for grants awarded through the Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund (VBPF) program to preserve hallowed ground. The following day, the governor's office announced more than \$1.3 million in grant funds will be allocated to protect approximately 211 acres of battlefield land throughout the Commonwealth.

In his remarks to Grand Review attendees, he thanked Trust members, donors, staff, and Board members for their "lifetime dedication to freedom and history. A lifetime dedication that we know will benefit

generation after generation after generation."

"To keep these memories alive, these battlefields must be preserved," he said. "So that we can remember not just the geography, but we can remember the deeds, the heroism that were demonstrated on them."

*Adapted from Hallowed Ground,
Winter 2023 edition*

From the Round Table Archives RCWRT BULLETIN – APRIL 1981

How Tredegar in Richmond Got Its Name

Francis B. Deane, Jr., an experienced Virginia blast furnace operator, interested a group of Richmond businessmen in financing construction of an iron works that would exploit the growing local market for railroad iron. They secured a Charter from the State Legislature on February 27, 1837. Reeve Davis, a young engineer trained at the famous iron works at Tredegar, Monmouthshire, Wales, designed the new mill and it was named after the Welsh works in his honor. Permission to use the name was granted by the Welsh owners to Francis B. Deane, Jr.

The Welsh pronounce the name as "Tred ee gar," most Virginians pronounce it as "Treddy gar." Tredegar is no longer located in Richmond. It is now called the Tredegar Company and is located at 5020 Castlewood Road, Richmond, Virginia 23234, which is in Chesterfield County.



The site of the original company in Richmond is now owned by Ethyl Corporation and they have restored one of the buildings which was built during the war.

**Many thanks to Dan Balfour
for this contribution**

ANOTHER AWARD....

.... for Vic Vignola’s “CONTRASTS IN COMMAND!” The New York Civil War Round Table recently awarded their prestigious Fletcher Pratt Award to Vic for best non-fiction book on the Civil War published during 2023. Vic joins previous honorees such as Kent Masterson Brown, Ed Bearss, Gordon Rhea, Shelby Foote, Bruce Catton (who was the first winner in 1956), and, of course, Gary Gallagher - among many others. Quite an accomplishment for a first-time author!

EVENT OF INTEREST

March 9, 2024: Central Virginia Battlefield Trust’s Spring Seminar, “War in the Balance,” at the historic Wilderness Baptist Church’s fellowship hall from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The seminar is focused on the often ignored but historically important events in central and northern Virginia that occurred between the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863 and the Battle of the Wilderness a year later.

Speakers include historians and authors Mike Block, Dan Davis, John Hennessy, Kevin Pawlak, and Ted Savas. Civil War relics will be on hand for viewing and select authors will have books for sale. A box lunch is included in the \$40 registration fee.

For more information and to purchase tickets, go to www.cvbt.org, 2024 Spring Seminar.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with regret and sadness that we learned of the passing of long-time Round Table member, James Cox, on January 19, 2024.

Our sincere condolences and sympathy to his family and friends.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 12: Carolyn B. Ivanoff, “Clara Barton: The Life and Legacy of an American Icon”

April 9: Dr. Christian B. Keller, “Southern Strategies: Why the Confederacy Failed”

May 14: Patrick Falci, “The Man in the Red Shirt: The Life of A.P. Hill”

June 11: Wayne Motts, “Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg”

July 9: Frank O’Reilly, “Yellow Tavern and the Death of JEB Stuart”

August 13: Brad Gottfried, “The Antietam Paintings by James Hope”

September 10: Scott Mingus, “If We Are Striking for Pennsylvania: The Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac March to Gettysburg”

October 8: Bobby Krick, “W.H.F. ‘Rooney’ Lee”

November 12: **Annual Dinner Meeting**

Dr. Gary Gallagher, TBA

December 10: Sarah Bierle, “John Pelham: His Five Years at West Point”

Attendance at December Meeting: 47
(Zoom only)

SNOW POLICY

In case of inclement weather, please check the Richmond school district’s policy. If schools are closed, so is the church and our in-person meeting will be cancelled. This will not affect any online meeting previously scheduled.