



Founded on February 8, 1951

RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

March 2021

“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

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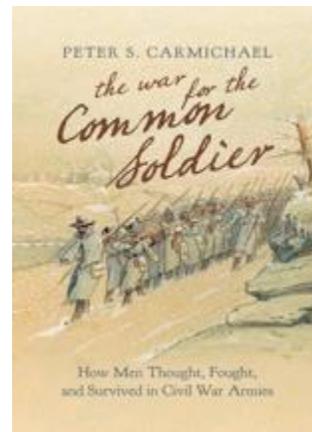
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**March 9, 2021
7:30 p.m.**

“The War For The Common Soldier” by Dr. Peter Carmichael

**Please note: This will be a Zoom meeting!
For instructions on how to download the
free Zoom App, the meeting number and
pass code please see page 3.**



How did Civil War soldiers endure the brutal and unpredictable existence of army life during the conflict? This question is at the heart of Peter Carmichael’s sweeping new study of men at war. Based on close examination of the letters and records left

behind by individual soldiers from both the North and the South, Carmichael explores the totality of the Civil War experience – the marching, the fighting, the boredom, the idealism, the exhaustion, the punishments, and the frustrations of being away from families who often faced their own dire circumstances. Carmichael focuses not on what soldiers thought but rather how they thought. In doing so, he reveals how, to the shock of most men, well-established notions of duty or disobedience, morality or immorality, loyalty or disloyalty, and bravery or cowardice were blurred by war.

Digging deeply into the soldiers' writing, Carmichael resists the idea there was a "common soldier" but looks into their own words to find common threads in soldiers' experiences and ways of understanding what was happening around them. In the end, he argues that a pragmatic philosophy of soldiering emerged, guiding members of the rank and file as they struggled to live with the contradictory elements of their violent and volatile world. Soldiering in the Civil War, as Carmichael argues, was never a slate of being but a process of becoming.



Peter S. Carmichael is Robert C. Fluhrer Professor of Civil War Studies at Gettysburg College and Director of the Civil War Institute. He received his Ph.D. in History from Penn State University in 1996. His academic interests include 19th-century U.S. history, Civil War and Reconstruction, southern history, public history and cultural history. *The War For The Common Soldier* is his most recent book and was published by University of North Carolina Press in 2018.

His previous books include *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War and Reunion* (2005) and *Lee's Young Artillerist: William R.J. Pegram* (1995). In addition to his books, he has also published a number of articles for both scholarly and popular journals, and he speaks frequently to general and scholarly audiences.

Carmichael has recently appeared on the PBS Robert E. Lee documentary for the American Experience series and on the popular TV show "Who Do You Think You Are."

After completing his doctorate at Penn State University under Dr. Gary W. Gallagher, Professor Carmichael went on to teach at Western Carolina University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and West Virginia University, before coming to Gettysburg College. In addition to holding seasonal interpretive positions at several National Park service sites, Carmichael served as Gettysburg National Military Park's first Scholar-in-Residence in 1999, and has developed a lasting relationship with the NPS. In addition to overseeing multiple interpretive workshops for National Park Service staff, he directed a 2010 seminar at Gettysburg NMP to discuss new interpretive approaches to the Civil War sesquicentennial and co-directed the joint GC/GNMP conference.

ZOOM SIGN ON INFORMATION

By Andy Keller

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83471506220?pwd=Sy9jYlZDenVabTVld1d0WTE1UHNnUT09>

Or <https://tinyurl.com/RCWRT2021>

For Audio only call +1 301 715 8592. Long Distance Rates may apply

Meeting ID: 834 7150 220

Passcode: 481366

To participate in a Zoom session, your computer will need a camera function, standard for most laptops, Smart Phones and tablets. I would suggest reviewing the camera function before that time. We recommend that you join 5 - 10 minutes before the meeting starts, to be sure that your equipment is working and review some of the features. You will be unmuted on admittance during that time for socializing, but you should mute yourself when requested. We hope to record the meeting so if you are unable to attend please send a request for the recording to Secretary.RCWRT@gmail.com.

A Word From The President

By Doug Crenshaw

What If?

I was recently asked what might have happened if Joe Johnston had not been wounded at Seven Pines. It's an intriguing question. If Lee had not taken command, would Richmond have fallen? If that happened, could the Confederacy have continued the war? Richmond was more than the capital; it was the leading industrial city in the South and a vital railroad hub. If the war ended in 1862, how would the reunited nation have looked, as compared to 1865?

Of course, there are many other "what ifs" to ponder. The most obvious is to

wonder what might have happened had Jackson not been wounded. But there are others... what if Lee had gone to the right at Gettysburg instead of attacking on July 2? What if Albert Sidney Johnston had not been killed so early in the war? What if A.P. Hill had been healthy at North Anna? What if Grant had not been sent East? What if Sherman had not taken Atlanta before the 1864 election? You can create your own list. In the end, we all know what happened, but it sure is interesting to think and talk about!

By the way, if you enjoy visiting battlefields (and who doesn't?), this time of year is perfect for it. The leaves are off the trees, there are no ticks and chiggers, and you can *really* see the terrain. Take advantage of it!

*Happy Anniversary
To Us*

The Richmond Civil War Round table is 70 years old. Following is a short history of the round table, written by our member, Dan Balfour.

The Richmond Civil War Round Table was organized seventy years ago in 1951 at Fort Harrison. The first meeting resulted from an announcement published in the Richmond Newsleader asking anyone interested in forming a group to discuss the Civil War to meet at a cabin at Fort Harrison. As a result several men began monthly meetings and organized as a round table following the examples of the first ones, the Chicago and D.C. round tables.

The first members included J. Ambler Johnston (whose father was a Confederate

veteran), Hobson Goddin (still a member), Bill Mallory (a Navy World War 2 veteran who corresponded with Douglas Freeman while at sea), and Louis Manarin (of the Virginia Library). They met monthly, first at Fort Harrison, then at an airport restaurant usually with members as speakers, but included occasional outside speakers, including Douglas Freeman and probably Clifford Dowdey. The group then was men only and grew in membership as the Centennial approached.

The round table almost folded after 1965 but due primarily to the efforts of member of many years, Judge Doug Tice, the round table regrouped and expanded its membership. In those days the club met for dinner and a program and later met at Morton's Tearoom. Programs over the years included debates, quiz competitions by members divided into corps, and members' favorite personal war anecdotes/ relic/ book nights. There were two field trips per year: a one or two overnight trip to Antietam, Gettysburg, or Harper's Ferry, and a day trip, usually in the Fall.

Over the years our round table would sometimes host and join other round tables visiting Richmond, including Chicago and Cincinnati. Some members would portray war figures, including Sam Moore as Jeff Davis and Doug Tice as Robert E. Lee for guest round tables or civic groups. Over the years we grew from 30 plus to today and met at various times at VCU, First Colony Furniture, and a church on Grove Avenue. Many years ago dinner meetings ended and women joined. Two early lady members were Judy Anthis and Sandy Parker. Sandy and her mother for years would be the after meetings refreshment committee of two serving layer cakes, pies, cookies, etc. I recall, regretfully, that over the years we have only attracted one or two black

members, usually park service rangers. As I recall, one gave a program on Buffalo Soldiers. Our members have usually also come from Petersburg, Fredericksburg, Williamsburg, and Charlottesville.

Over the years our officers have worked hard to keep our group superb. Among our past presidents one, Dan Jordan, stands out. He personally knew so many national authors that we began to have more out of town celebrity speakers and he conducted our debates and quiz programs. In the really old days (60s and 70s) with fewer members, I recall J. Ambler Johnston, Hobson Goddin, Bill Mallory, and Roland Galvin as so knowledgeable that they could just give programs or start debates extemporaneously (and often did). One regret is that we have attracted few high school students or local history teachers as members.

A Book Recommendation

By Joe Childress

April 1865

A few years ago, I happened to attend a convention in Richmond that attracted people from all over the United States. Although few had any knowledge of the Civil War, many were interested in Richmond's then-standing monuments and Richmond's history. Three areas of interest were especially strong: slavery, secession, and the post-war fate of Confederate leadership. In the interest of comity, I generally refrained from engaging on these topics. Recently, I found a book that I can recommend to address these issues and more. That book is *April 1865* by Jay Winik.

In the brief (24 pages) Prologue the author presents a concise, interesting

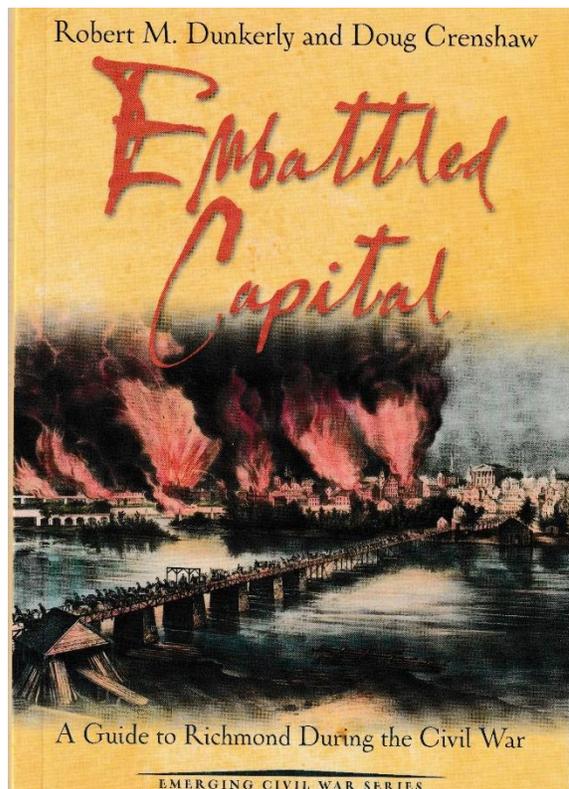
discussion of pre-Civil War views of slavery, states rights, and secession. Using Thomas Jefferson as a representative, he explains the dilemma facing the country over the first two issues, and also discusses the relationship between state vs federal power, and citizens' primary loyalty.

As the author points out, there never was a consensus on the Constitutional right of secession. There had been several pre-war threats of secession from states as diverse as New Jersey, California, Oregon, and Utah. Even the New England states threatened secession. Considered together, there were "unbroken links of secessionist threats." The pro-secession opinion (now largely rejected) is supported by quotes from prominent Americans, including John Quincy Adams.

The main body of the book, as the title implies, is devoted to the final days of the war, including the evacuation of Richmond, the surrenders of Confederate forces at Appomattox Court House and the Bennett Farm, and Lincoln's assassination. These events are well-known to round table members, but the novice reader will find the story compelling.

As the war drew to a conclusion Lincoln's attention turned to reuniting the country. The Epilogue discusses the terms of surrender, explaining the reasons why the Confederate military and civilian leaders were not subject to trials, execution, or lengthy imprisonment. Lincoln's administration provides a model of reunification which could be instructive to our current government. Those who looked at Richmond's monuments and said, "They should have all been hung," will also find this part of the book enlightening.

Another Recommendation...



Embattled Capital: A Guide to Richmond During the Civil War by our own Bert Dunkerly and Doug Crenshaw is now available. Part of the Emerging Civil War series, it is a comprehensive and wonderful guide to anything "Civil War Richmond." Available from the publisher, Savas Beatie, at www.savasbeatie.com, or from Amazon.

This Month In Civil War History

March 4, 1861: Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as President of the United States.

March 11, 1861: The Confederate Constitution is adopted.

March 9, 1862: The Battle of Hampton Roads is the first ever naval battle between two ironclads, as the USS Monitor fights the CSS Virginia of the Confederate States Navy.

March 26-28, 1862: At Glorieta Pass, New Mexico, Confederate forces from Texas reach the high point of their campaign to take control of the far West from the Union. The Union forces are pushed back across the pass, but a successful attack on the Confederate supply train and the loss of the horses forces the Texans to retreat.

March 9, 1863: A Confederate raid led by John S. Mosby swoops in on Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia, capturing Union General Edwin Stoughton in his nightshirt. In addition to Stoughton, there are two other officers and thirty enlisted men captured as well as 58 horses. Mosby's Rangers are on their way to becoming a legend and Mosby himself becomes the 'Grey Ghost.'

March 10, 1863: Lincoln offers amnesty to thousands of Union deserters if they will surrender and return to their units. By this time, the armies on both sides have massive desertion rates.

March 4, 1864: The "Stars and Bars" is adopted as the official flag of the Confederacy.

March 5, 1864: A long planned raid on Richmond fails and its commander, Ulric Dahlgren, lies dead. Supposedly, papers found on his body contain orders to capture and execute Jefferson Davis and the members of the Confederate cabinet.

March 19-20, 1865: The Battle of Bentonville pits 20,000 Confederates led by Johnston against Sherman's invading Federal forces in the last major battle of the war. Johnston succeeds in delaying but not in stopping the Union invasion.

Source: Gaston County Public Library

Upcoming Meetings

(Until further notice, all meetings will be via Zoom)

April 13: Hampton Newsome, "The Fight for the Old North State"

May 11: Jim Hessler, "Gettysburg's Peach Orchard: Longstreet, Sickles, and the Bloody Fight for the 'Commanding Ground' along the Emmitsburg Road"

June 8: Nathan Hall, "The Spies of Richmond"

July 13: Jim Gindlesperger, "Fire on the Water: The USS Kearsarge and the CSS Alabama"

August 10: Dr. Charles Fennell, "The Battle of Culp's Hill on July 3, 1863"

September 14: Douglas Waller, "Lincoln's Spies: Their Secret War to Save a Nation"

October 12: Victor Vignola, "The May 31, 1862 Battle of Fair Oaks: The Struggle for the Adams House, Bull Sumner's Glory Day"

November 9 (dinner meeting):

Janet Croon, "The War Outside my Window: The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham 1860-1865"

December 14: Scott Mingus, "The Battle of Second Winchester: The Confederate Victory that Opened the Door to Gettysburg"

If you were unable to join us at last month's meeting, here is a link to the recorded program:

<https://tinyurl.com/Gene-Schmiel>