



Founded at Fort Harrison
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RICHMOND

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

MAY 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

May 10, 2022

7:30 p.m.

**At the Virginia War Memorial
621 S. Belvidere Street
Richmond, VA 23220**

**“THE UNION DRUMMER BOY:
A LOVE OF HISTORY AND HISTORICAL
PRESERVATION AS EXPERIENCED BY ONE
OF AMERICA’S FOREMOST CIVIL WAR
MILITARIA SHOPS”**

By Brendan Synnamon



At age eleven, Brendan Synnemon discovered his family's history in the Civil War. He had ancestors that fought on both sides of the war – two brothers for the North in Pennsylvania, one for the South in Missouri. These two halves of the fractured, war-torn family came together in 1989 when researching his family's lineage and sparked a lifelong interest in American history. He began collecting artifacts from the war at age twelve and, less than a year later, opened his first store with his father. This led to over thirty years of experience collecting, buying, and selling historic items related to the war.

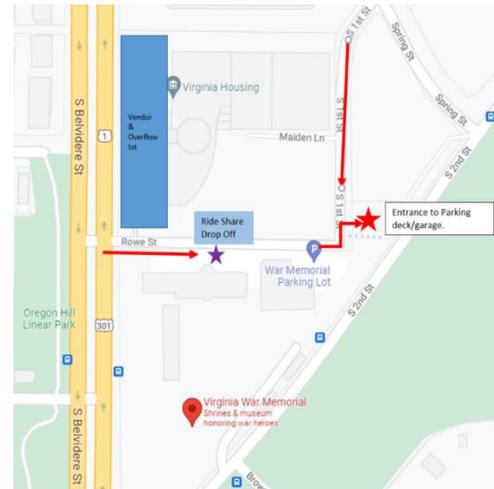
One of his primary focuses within this field has been verifying the authenticity (or lack thereof) of these items through forensics and material culture. Over the years he has been fortunate enough to handle items belonging to some of the most influential members of early American history, including President Abraham Lincoln, General Ulysses S. Grant, and General Robert E. Lee. Being a certified appraiser has given him access to examine treasures that are not on exhibit to the public and he has viewed private collections that could rival any institution.

Brendan currently owns and operates *The Union Drummer Boy*, a Civil War artifact gallery in Gettysburg, PA, and travels the country acquiring pieces and curating collections.

Virginia War Memorial Foundation is not a sponsor of this event.

*****Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear face coverings inside the Virginia War Memorial. Those who are not vaccinated are required to wear face coverings and are encouraged to maintain social distancing.*****

Please park in the parking garage (see map) and take the elevator to the main lobby where a security guard will direct you to the VMI Alumni Hall of Honor.



A Word from the President

I recently went to Gettysburg – again! I truly have lost count of how many times I have been there. I don't go that often anymore since we moved to the Richmond area in May of 2015, but when we lived in Pennsylvania, Gettysburg was my second home – especially for the last nine years when we lived only a little over an hour away in Lancaster. But even from Pittsburgh before that (28 years) I went about four or five times a year.

This time, I participated in a fantastic tour of Meade's Pipe Creek Circular Line led by Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guides Jim Hessler and Chris Army. Also on hand with commentary was local legend Dean Shultz on whose property is located Neill Avenue, the "Lost Avenue."

Having just finished Kent Masterson Brown's book, "Meade at Gettysburg," this

was an opportunity not to be missed. There is simply nothing like being on the actual locations where momentous events happened. Union Mills, Middleburg, Westminster, Union Bridge.... none of these sites, of course, look as they did in 1863, but the waysides and historic markers installed by Civil War Trails are at all these sites. I am sure we will hear more on all of this from our July speaker, Dr. Jennifer Murray, whose topic is "Meade at War."

Of particular interest to me was the railroad depot at Union Bridge. It was here that the body of General John Reynolds was sent in a makeshift coffin. At a local undertaker's shop a permanent coffin was built and the body was sent to Reynolds' home in Lancaster via Baltimore and Philadelphia. Reynolds was buried in Lancaster Cemetery on July 4, 1863. During our years in Lancaster I often passed by the Reynolds house in the city. After the battle thousands of wounded soldiers followed on the same route through Westminster to Baltimore on the Western Maryland Railroad.

I loved Kent Brown's book – and I really loved doing the tour with these knowledgeable guides after I read it. Spring is here. Take advantage of the great weather and places finally opening up again to visit a battlefield or historic site – with book in hand.

Ulli

BUS TRIP TO LEXINGTON

After a two-year hiatus it is finally time to go on a bus trip again! The date is **Saturday, June 11**, and registration is now open. The price per person is \$45 and you may send your check, made out to Richmond CWRT, to Art Wingo, 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059; or you can pay Art at the meeting.

The increase in the price (by \$10) since our last bus trip is due to higher gasoline costs and the longer distance. But.... We feel it is well worth it because Waite worked out a fantastic itinerary. Also, the visit to Lexington and its sites ties in with the speaker, Col. Keith E. Gibson, Executive Director of the VMI Museum, at our meeting just a few days later.



Stonewall Jackson Cemetery

We will meet our bus at 8:00 a.m. at the Gaskins Road Park & Ride, Commuter Drive (Fairfield Inn & Suites parking lot), Glen Allen, 23060. We anticipate arriving in Lexington around 10:30 a.m.

Following is the agenda for the day (please see the full itinerary attached to the newsletter):

- 10:30-11:15 Lee Chapel and Museum (Col. Gibson will join us)
- 11:15-11:45 Walking tour down Letcher Avenue to VMI's Memorial Hall – Waite discussing VMI's naming/commemorations discussions
- 11:45-1:00 Memorial Hall, New Market mural and VMI Museum
- 1:00-1:45 Lunch (please bring your own)

1:45-2:00 Bus to Stonewall Jackson House
 2:00-2:45 Stonewall Jackson House
 2:00-3:00 Bus to Stonewall Jackson Cemetery
 3:00-3:30 Stonewall Jackson Cemetery
 3:30-6:00 Return to Richmond

**AFTER THE CIVIL WAR
 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO....
 ...HENRY RATHBONE**



Henry Rathbone

Henry Reed Rathbone was a United States military officer and diplomat who was present at the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Rathbone was sitting with his fiancée, Clara Harris, next to the president and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, when John Wilkes Booth entered the presidential box at Ford's Theatre and shot Lincoln in the head. When Rathbone attempted to prevent Booth from fleeing the scene, Booth stabbed and seriously wounded Rathbone.

Although Rathbone's physical wounds healed, his mental state deteriorated in the years following Lincoln's death as he anguished over his perceived inability to thwart the assassination. He married Clara Harris on July 11, 1867, and the couple had three children.

Rathbone resigned from the army in 1870, but he struggled to find and keep a job due to his mental instability. President Chester A. Arthur appointed him as the U.S. Consul to the Province of Hannover in 1882 and the family relocated to Germany where his mental state continued to decline.

On December 23, 1883, Rathbone attacked his children in a fit of madness and fatally shot and stabbed his wife, who was trying to protect the children. Then he stabbed himself five times in the chest in an attempted suicide. He was charged with murder but declared insane. He was committed to an asylum for the criminally insane in Hildesheim (near Hannover) where he died on August 14, 1911. He was buried next to his wife in the city cemetery of Hannover/Engesohde. The graves no longer exist. The Rathbone children were sent to live with their uncle, William Harris, in the United States.

Adapted from *The Wikipedia Legends of the Civil War*

Editor's Note: Hildesheim is my hometown.

The asylum is no longer standing.

The church it was affiliated with, St. Michael's, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, is still there.

HEADS UP

Next month's meeting (June 14) will be our last meeting at the Virginia War Memorial. On July 12 we will be back at our old meeting place, First Presbyterian Church.

CIVIL WAR TRIVIA

From the March 2022 issue of *Civil War News*

1. Copperhead Leader
2. Jackson's most famous campaign
3. Battle that slowed invasion of New Mexico
4. Official name for ironclad that fought the *Monitor*
5. Union Brigade commander killed on Little Round Top
6. Stannard led troops from this state as he attacked Pickett's men July 3, 1863
7. Confederate stronghold that surrendered July 4, 1863
8. North Carolina Civil War governor
9. French term for cavalry outpost
10. Experimental, 121 barrel/cylinder cannon

Answers on page 6

NEW MEMBER
A warm welcome to our new
member,
Dale Harter

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Civil War Times Illustrated issues, 1974-1977 (well-loved, with some pencil markings and some water stains), and special *CWTI* issues for the following battles: Fort Sumter; First Manassas; Jackson's Valley Campaign; Antietam; Fredericksburg; Chancellorsville; Gettysburg; Vicksburg; Chickamauga; Chattanooga; Atlanta Campaign; Petersburg; Appomattox; and Guerrilla Warfare.

Contact John Coski at jmcoski1@gmail.com.

AREA EVENTS OF INTEREST

Petersburg National Battlefield and the Petersburg Battlefields Foundation are offering four **FREE** programs discussing key events during the Petersburg Campaign this summer, as follows:

May 21, 6:00 p.m.: *Prelude to Breakthrough!*

Following the Confederate repulse at Fort Stedman on the morning of March 25, 1865, the Army of the Potomac's VI Corps attacked the picket line of A.P. Hill's Corps at the Jones Farm, helping set the stage for the final Breakthrough on April 2. This guided tour will focus on the Battle of Jones' Farm and its consequences for both sides.

June 18, 6:00 p.m.: *Charge of the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery Unit.*

On June 18, 1864, the men of the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery Unit charge toward the Confederate defenses east of the city of Petersburg. Within ten minutes, 2/3 of the entire unit will become casualties. Join a ranger to learn more about that fateful charge.

July 16, 6:00 p.m.: *Tunneling Under the Enemy.*

During the summer of 1864, Union soldiers undertook a task that had never been accomplished; they began digging a 500 foot military tunnel that would take northern troops under the Confederate defense line. It was an engineering marvel, led by Col. Henry Pleasants of the 48th Pennsylvania Regiment. Join a ranger to learn more about how the tunnel was accomplished as well as efforts to hide its existence from the Confederates.

August 20, 6:00 p.m.: *Explosion at City Point.*

City Point, Virginia, besides being the location of General Grant's Headquarters, was the location of a huge supply base that kept Union forces well supplied throughout

the Siege of Petersburg. Confederate troops were well aware of the strategic and logistic importance of City Point. On August 9, a huge explosion ripped apart the ordnance wharf, killing dozens and wounding well over a hundred people, including civilians. Join the ranger guided tour to learn more about this destructive event.

Each tour lasts about 60 minutes. For meeting spots or to learn more, call 804-732-3531, ext. 200.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

(taken from *Civil War Round Table Congress* notifications)

June 10-12, 2022: *The Seven Days' Battles*, bus and walking tour with Robert E.L. Krick. One evening and two full days of tours covering the Seven Days. Bobby Krick is an unparalleled guide to the series of titanic clashes launched by Robert E. Lee on the outskirts of Richmond. Itinerary and Registration:

<https://whtours.org/the-seven-days-battles.html>.



Ed Bearss

June 26, 2022: This would have been Ed Bearss' 99th birthday. The Bearss Family and American Battlefield Trust have organized a Celebration of Life for Ed, beginning at 1:00 p.m., on land owned by the ABT adjacent to the Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg. Everyone is invited to attend.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 14: Col. Keith Gibson, "Thomas J. Jackson: Lexington, The Institute, and a Legacy"

July 12: Dr. Jennifer M. Murray, "Meade at War"

August 9: Michael C. Hardy, "Feeding the Army of Northern Virginia"

September 13: Dr. Gary Gallagher, "The Overland Campaign"

October 11: David Keller, "Military Prisons of the Civil War, A Comparative Study"

November 8: Annual Members Dinner William C. "Jack" Davis and Sue Heth Bell, "The Letters of Gen. and Mrs. Gabriel Wharton"

December 13: Frank O'Reilly, "The Battle of Fredericksburg and Christmas Along the Rappahannock"

Attendance at April Meeting: 62



Trivia Answers:

1. Vallendingham
2. Valley Campaign
3. Valverde
4. CSS Virginia
5. Strong Vincent
6. Vermont
7. Vicksburg, Mississippi
8. Zebulon B. Vance
9. Vidette
10. Volley Gun