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RICHMOND

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

NOVEMBER 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

November 9, 2021

6:00 p.m.

**Dinner Meeting at
Willow Oaks Country Club
6228 Forest Hill Avenue
Richmond, VA 23225**

**“The War Outside My Window:
The Civil War Diary of
LeRoy Wiley Gresham,
1860-1865”
By Jan Croon**



Invalid teenager LeRoy Wiley Gresham left a seven-volume diary spanning the years of secession and the Civil War (1860-1865). He was just 12 years old when he began and he died at 17, just weeks after the war ended. His remarkable account spans the gamut of life events that were of interest to a precocious and well-educated Southern teenager – including military, political, religious, social, and literary matters of the day. This alone ranks it as an important contribution to our understanding of life and times in the Old South. But it is much more than that. Chronic disease and suffering stalk the young writer, who is never told he is dying until just before his death.

His diary is also the only known account of the Civil War from the perspective of a young male non-combatant. These five years of detailed entries make LeRoy's diary an exceedingly rare (and perhaps unique) social history from the nineteenth century. LeRoy's diary offers an inside look at a fateful journey that robbed an energetic and likeable young man of his youth and life.

Jan Croon's presentation covers the process of researching and developing the book, and goes into the background of LeRoy's story, including his medical diagnosis. An overview of the various changes in Macon society as well as LeRoy's reaction to events during the Civil War is a focal point of the presentation, assisted with images in an accompanying PowerPoint.

Janet E. Croon holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, Modern European History, and Russian Language and Area Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1983), and a Master's Degree in International Studies from the University of Dayton (1985). She taught International Baccalaureate History for

nearly two decades and developed a deep interest in the Civil War by living in northern Virginia. This is her first book.

DINNER INFORMATION

There is still time to register for the dinner. If you have not done so yet, please send your check to our treasurer, **Art Wingo, 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059, by November 5.**

The cost is \$35 per person/\$70 per couple.

The buffet in **The River Lounge** will consist of fried and baked chicken, garden salad, vegetable, mashed potatoes, spaghetti with Marinara sauce, rolls and butter, dessert and coffee/tea. There will be a cash bar as well (cash only).

As far as COVID regulations are concerned, masks are not required for fully vaccinated guests. If you feel more comfortable, though, wear a mask when not actively eating and drinking. We will have tables of six instead of eight as in the past.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with profound sadness that we learned of the passing of William S. "Sam" Craghead. Sam was president of the Richmond Civil War Round Table in 2001 and also an active staff member at the Museum of the Confederacy. Sam was a long-time member of the round table until he moved back to the Midwest where he passed away this past July. Our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Sam's family.

His many friends in the Richmond area remember Sam fondly.

A Word from the President

I first met Sam Craghead a number of years ago when I was first getting seriously interested in the Civil War. For me, it was a case of the right person coming along at the right time. Sam was so friendly and supportive. We went on a tour of one of the Deep Bottom battlefields, and I was amazed at how much he knew and how gracious he was with his time. Sam also was involved with the Richmond National Battlefield Park's living history programs. I knew nothing about Drewry's Bluff, but he taught me all about it and why it was so important.

At the time, Sam was working at what was then known as the Museum of the Confederacy, and was a member of the round table and he encouraged my involvement. When he left for the Midwest, I felt a sense of loss of a friend and mentor. It just goes to show the impact that can be made when someone takes the time to help someone else! I know a lot of people will miss Sam and mourn his loss. But – I am very grateful to have known him.

Doug

Attendance at October meeting: 57

REMAINING MEETING IN 2021

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

CIVIL WAR TRIVIA

From the September issue of *Civil War News*

1. Supply Organization for an Army
2. Fake cannon
3. He attacked Lawrence, Kansas
4. US river warship captured by CS, then blown up on Atchafalya River
5. Medicine used to treat Malaria
6. Confederate artillery position during 1861 Potomac Blockade
7. Another name for Blakeslee cartridge boxes
8. Tennessee lawyer and politician general captured at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg
9. US wooden gunboat that fought CS ironclads off Charleston Jan. 31, 1863
10. New Jersey Union general who graduated in same class as U.S. Grant

Answers on page 6

ADOPT-A-MONUMENT

Richmond National Battlefield Park thanks the members of the round table for cleaning the Connecticut Monument at Cold Harbor. Members then enjoyed a tour of Fletcher's Redoubt by Bert Dunkerly, a site not yet open to the public.





John McKenna, Ulli Baumann, Lynette Alley, Waite Rawls, Andy Keller, Art Wingo (left to right)

SPECIAL RAFFLE COMING IN JANUARY 2022

“Books for Bucks” may be gone, but a special raffle will be held in January.

Through the generosity of Ms. Kitty Snow, daughter of former round table member, the late Howard Lynch, we have received a nicely framed print of General Stonewall Jackson. Ms. Snow has donated this print so that we may use it as the prize in a fund-raising raffle.



This famous portrait of Jackson was painted by Confederate veteran and highly regarded 19th century artist, Virginian John A. Elder. He completed many portraits of Confederate leaders after the Civil War and also depicted the counterattack of General Mahone’s troops at the *Battle of the Crater* in a well-known painting that hangs in the Commonwealth Club in Richmond.

1 ticket for \$5 or 5 tickets for \$20. See Jack Mountcastle at the January meeting.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT POSITION

As 2021 is rapidly coming to a close, we are looking for a volunteer to step up and assume the position of Second VP. From someone who has “been there,” it is a highly rewarding and fun activity and has become a lot easier in some respects. For instance, the lugging of multiple bags of books to the meetings for the “Books for Bucks” part has been eliminated.

Following are the duties of the Second Vice President:

- Assist the RCWRT President and First Vice President as necessary
- Plan a day-long Saturday bus trip to area site(s) for a date in mid- to late June. Have agenda and bus contract in place by the end of March so that the trip can be advertised in the April, May, and June newsletters.
- Secure speakers for each month in the following year (2023), keeping in mind that the November meeting is a dinner meeting.

- Try to have commitments from 2023 speakers by the end of July 2022.
- Set up dinner meeting with Willow Oaks Country Club.
- Develop a budget for the speakers in 2022 that can be shared with the Executive Committee.
- Bring name badges to the meeting and lay them out on the tables and retrieve them at the end of the meeting.

Keeping in mind that this is a three-year commitment, please consider serving your round table as Second Vice President, First Vice President, and President.

As First Vice President, you will meet the speakers that you booked the previous year at their hotel (if they're from out-of-town), take them to dinner and the meeting. You will introduce the speakers and assist them with book sales.

As President, you will open and run the meetings and write a monthly message for the newsletter.

Contact any of the board members for more information.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

The painting that will be raffled off in January was painted by John Adams Elder. Here is some background on him.

John Adams "Jack" Elder, son of a shoemaker, was born on February 3, 1833 at the family home, 1111 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg. His artistic talent was evident at an early age.

Wealthy old lawyer John Minor became Jack's patron. Thanks to Mr. Minor, by the age of seventeen John

Elder was the pupil of Daniel Huntington in New York City. His first portrait there depicted one of the Vanderbilts.

John Elder then studied for five years in Duesseldorf, Germany, where he won the academy prize. He returned to Fredericksburg and opened a one-room studio at the old Exchange Hotel. After that studio was destroyed in a fire, John established a studio in the Valentine Building at Broad and 9th Streets in Richmond. During the early days of the Civil War, he was an artist for *Southern Punch* magazine.

He was in Fredericksburg on the morning of December 11, 1862 when Federal troops began shelling the town. The next day he enlisted as a private in the Confederate Army serving as an aide to Major William H. Caskie.

After serving the Confederacy until Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, John Elder exchanged his rifle for his artist's brush. John Elder painted the Confederacy's heroes and battles - including eight portraits of Robert E. Lee - governors and other major Virginia officials and scenes of life in old Virginia.



The Battle of the Crater by John Elder

In 1887, John Elder spent a month at Beauvoir, Jefferson Davis' Mississippi home, where he painted a full-length portrait of the Confederate president. However, the artist's visit to Beauvoir had an unfortunate result: Elder contracted malaria and was never well again. His health gradually failed, and he died at 2 o'clock in the morning of February 24, 1895 in the same house where he was born.

OUR SCHEDULED SPEAKERS IN 2022

January 11: Dr. Caroline Janney, "Ends of War: The Unfinished Fight of Lee's Army after Appomattox"

February 8: Kevin Pawlak, "Water to His Front, Water to His Rear: Robert E. Lee Defends the Confederate High Water Mark at Sharpsburg"

March 8: Gregg Clemmer, "Why the Civil War Still Lives"

April 12: Gordon Rhea, Esq., Topic TBA

May 10: Brendan Synnamon, "The Union Drummer Boy: A Love of History and Historical Preservation as Experienced by One of America's Foremost Civil War Militaria Shops"

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, Topic TBA

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

November (date TBD): Annual Members Dinner

William C. "Jack" Davis, Topic TBA

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

A memorial service for Gary Cowardin with burial of his remains will take place on Saturday, November 13, at 1:00 p.m. at Forest Lawn Cemetery, 4000 Pilots Lane, Richmond, 23222. Members of the Richmond Civil War Round Table are invited to attend.

Last, but certainly not Least...

By unanimous vote at the October meeting, Lifetime Membership was awarded to Jack Mountcastle. We are indebted to Jack for his many contributions and his tireless efforts on behalf of the round table. He is a most worthy recipient and we thank him.

The three other Life Members are Hobson Goodin, Douglas Tice, and Sandy Parker.

Please contribute to your newsletter with articles, such as book reviews, your favorite battlefields, generals, etc. Your articles are always welcome.

Trivia Answers:

1. Quartermaster Dept.
2. Quaker Guns
3. William Quantrill
4. USS/CSS *Queen of the West*
5. Quinine
6. Quantico Creek
7. Quick loaders
8. General William A. Quarles
9. USS *Quaker City*
10. General Isaac Ferdinand Quinby