



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

www.richmondcwrt.org

Ulli Baumann, President
804-789-9844
ullib1101@gmail.com

Waite Rawls, First VP
804-501-8436
waiterawls@gmail.com

Billie Raines, Second VP
804-291-6300
b.raines@live.com

Art Wingo, Treasurer
804-516-7508
[Art and Diane@comcast.net](mailto:Art_and_Diane@comcast.net)

Andy Keller, Secretary
804-382-6605
secretary.rcwrt@gmail.com

Board of Directors (2022):
Doug Crenshaw
Elaine Duckworth
Jack Mountcastle
Danny Witt

Editor/Webmaster: Ulli Baumann
ullib1101@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook:
[@richmondcwrt](https://www.facebook.com/richmondcwrt)

RICHMOND

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

NOVEMBER 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

November 15, 2022
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

6:00 p.m.

Willow Oaks Country Club
6228 Forest Hill Avenue
Richmond, VA 23225

William C. “Jack” Davis
With Sue Heth Bell

**“The Wharton’s War:
The Civil War Correspondence of
General Gabriel C. Wharton
& Anne Radford Wharton
1863-1865”**



Between March 1863 when they became engaged, and June 1865 when the war ended, General Gabriel C. Wharton and Anne “Nannie” Radford exchanged 524 letters. Miraculously, they all survive, and in them “Gabe” and “Nannie” discussed virtually everything—their growing love for each other, the course of the war, the Confederate political and military leadership, relations with the enslaved population in their family, hopes, fears, the future, and more. The letters are also a window on Southwest Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley in the war, where Wharton served most of his time in the Confederate army.

Their great-great-granddaughter Sue Heth Bell discovered the letters and saved them, and she and William C. Davis have edited them for publication. They have drawn from the letters selections that cover a host of topics and will present them in a “conversation” with Davis reading General Wharton’s extracts, and Ms. Bell reading Nannie’s.

William C. Davis, formerly Director of Virginia Tech’s Center for Civil War Studies, spent 31 years in editorial management in the publishing industry, consulted for numerous film and television productions, and was senior advisor for the A&E History Channel series “Civil War Journal.” Davis is the author of more than 50 books. He is the only four-time winner of the Jefferson Davis Award of the Museum of the Confederacy for works on the Civil War and Confederacy.

Sue Heth Bell, the Wharton’s great-great-granddaughter, discovered the cache of letters that became the foundation for this book while rummaging in her parents’ garage.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

“A picture is worth a thousand words,” as the saying goes. That was certainly true when Alexander Gardner, accompanied by James Gibson, took his photographs of the dead on the battlefield of Antietam just days after the battle. Gardner was working for Mathew Brady then and the photographs were exhibited in Brady’s Gallery in New York in October, just a short time after the battle. The public for the first time saw graphic images of the horrors of war. What made the experience even more gripping was the fact that these photos were taken in stereo view (or 3D).

An article in the New York Times stated that Brady has “done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it.”

I recently was on the battlefield at Antietam when I attended the annual seminar of the Center for Civil War Photography. For two days we went to the sites where Gardner and Gibson had taken their stereo views and tried to imagine what they had seen and experienced. The more than 100 photographs that they took between September 19 and 22, 1862 changed the way of war photography.

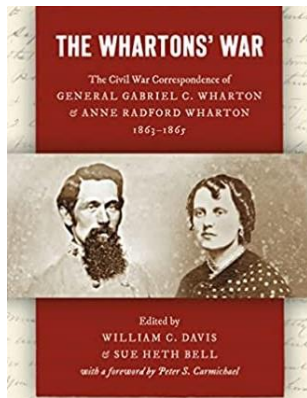
Another excellent way to study and learn about the Civil War is, of course, reading first-hand accounts by the participants, such as letters and diaries. And that is why I very much look forward to our dinner meeting when we will get a glimpse into war-time Virginia through the eloquent and descriptive letters that the Whartons exchanged.

Ulli

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING – LAST CALL

There is still time to sign up for our Annual Dinner Meeting at Willow Oaks Country Club (6228 Forest Hill Avenue, Richmond 23225) on November 15. **Please note that this is the 3rd Tuesday, not our normal 2nd Tuesday. Also, remember that we will start earlier, with dinner at 6:00 p.m. and our program at 7:00 p.m.**

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).

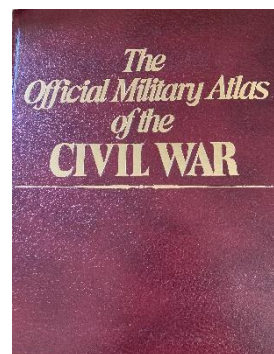


We are delighted that one of the round table’s favorites, William C. “Jack” Davis, will be our dinner speaker, talking about his latest book on the letters of General and Mrs. Gabriel Wharton. He will

be accompanied by Sue Heth Bell, a descendant of General Wharton. This should be a great topic for bringing your spouse. According to Gary Gallagher, “This is one of the best sets of letters from a Civil War participant I have read. This volume illuminates the Whartons’ marriage and the immense strain of war. Further, the book abounds with information and observation about notable Confederate military leaders, battles, and campaigns.”

Also, we recently received donations of two wonderful and familiar prints of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, along with The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War (containing all of the maps that accompanied the Official

Records). These three items will be offered at a silent auction at the dinner.



The cost this year has been raised slightly to \$40 per person, and \$35 per additional person.

Please confirm your attendance by sending a check – MADE OUT TO RICHMOND CWRT – to our Treasurer, Art Wingo, 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059. DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 10.

WILLIS CHURCH

By R.E.L. Krick

Think of the dozen or so otherwise obscure rural meeting houses that today have nationally recognizable names because of the Civil War. Salem Church. The Dunker Church. Sudley Church. Wilderness Church. Locally we have several, including Willis Methodist Church on the Frayser’s Farm/Glendale battlefield.

In the years before the Civil War the Methodists enjoyed a monopoly on religious activities in southeastern Henrico County. No other church of any denomination stood within several miles in any direction. A

congregation existed in the vicinity in the 18th century, and might have had a house of worship, but the Willis Church of Civil War fame probably was built in 1803. It flourished until 1862. On the morning of June 30, 1862, Union divisions commanded by Joseph Hooker and Philip Kearny (Third Corps), George A. McCall (Fifth Corps), and John Sedgwick (Second Corps) occupied various defensive positions just north and west of the church. The Federal army's wagon trains, cattle herds, ambulances, and other logistical baggage streamed past along the Willis Church Road, on their way to Malvern Hill and ultimately the James River. Late in the afternoon, the Confederate divisions of A.P. Hill and James Longstreet attacked, precipitating the battle known variously as Frayser's Farm, Glendale, Charles City Crossroads, Riddle's Shop, or Nelson's Farm.

As the single most recognizable landmark anywhere on the battlefield, Willis Church became a beacon for the wounded and probably the most active field hospital on the battlefield. At the height of its activity, it had more than 200 patients and 18 surgeons in attendance.

Federal surgeons devised a system to cope with the increasing flow of injured men. One doctor stood on the front porch of the church and greeted incoming patients. He provided first aid when appropriate. The men most badly wounded were sent "to the yard in the rear of the church." The others either went into the sanctuary or were left beneath the trees in the yard for further treatment. Most of the patients belonged to Hooker's division, with a few Pennsylvania Reserves and Second Corps men from Sedgwick's division mixed among them. One patient, who had been shot in the face with a rifle ball, spent the evening lying atop a board up against the back (west) wall of the

church, where "very often the bullets would strike the building, but I was not struck."

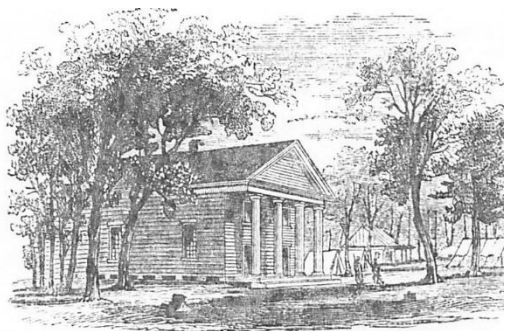
The surgeons worked unceasingly until beyond midnight. Their indoor patients lay on the floor, atop cushions taken from the church pews. The pews themselves "were all ripped out and converted into amputating tables...and the floor of the building is entirely covered with blood," wrote one doctor. A Pennsylvania physician recalled that "Arms and legs were piled...in one corner of [the] church," a sight "terrible to behold." Word came that the Federal army was continuing its retreat toward the James River. A few surgeons remained behind to care for the patients. Doctor N.F. Marsh of the 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry found himself the senior surgeon on the ground and commanded the hospital for the next week. On July 1 he had a brief interview with Stonewall Jackson, who directed him to R.E. Lee for assistance in securing Confederate supplies for the suffering wounded, although it took four long days for anything to arrive.

A stream of curious visitors came to the church in the week following the battle. Confederate general Roger A. Pryor was there, no doubt to argue politics with a helpless audience. A Federal chaplain who had stayed behind went into the church then, too, and remembered a poignant discovery. "Near to the pulpit was lying on the floor a dead officer; he had just departed." The cleric found the dead man clutching a pocket testament. It proved to be the corpse of Sgt. Joel Chester, 3rd Pennsylvania Reserves, of George G. Meade's brigade. Men who died at the church filled temporary graves adjacent to the building, both Union and Confederate, "with hardly a memorial to designate them."

For decades afterward, the church leadership remained mindful of the historic

events that had ensnared their building in 1862. A visitor to Willis Church in 1900 wrote of unrepaired bullet holes in the wooden walls. "Imprints of them were thick around and inside the Willis Church," he noticed. The bloodstains on the chapel floor remained undisturbed. When the church members finally put in a new and better floor, they took pains to cover the original and leave it intact beneath the new one.

Those steps to protect the visible reminders of the battle proved to be useless because disaster struck the historic church on New Year's Eve, 1946. A fire destroyed everything. The congregation determined to rebuild on the same spot. The new church, which looked almost precisely like the old one except it was brick rather than frame, opened on May 16, 1948. To add some secular appeal to the ceremony, the church leaders brought in Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman to give a speech. Members of the congregation proudly told everyone that Winston Churchill had assisted in their recovery. A ban on sending cash out of postwar England had prevented him from making a straight donation; instead, he sent three signed photographs of himself to be sold or auctioned. Freeman likely helped with those arrangements. Bing Crosby also sent in a donation, although how he heard about it and why he cared are not of record.



Willis Church in May 1866
The tents belonged to the reburial crews then establishing the Glendale National Cemetery

Today the rebuilt church still serves as a visible landmark on the battlefield. At least four Confederate soldiers – all local men who survived the war – are buried in the church cemetery. Across the road, the Glendale National Cemetery holds the remains of nearly every Federal soldier who died at the battle, no doubt including those who expired inside Willis Church and beneath its surrounding trees.

*Sincere thanks and appreciation to
Bobby Krick for this article*

PARK NEWS:

Happenings at Richmond National Battlefield Park

By Bert Dunkerly

On Saturday, November 12, at 2 p.m., Park staff will give a presentation on the creation of the park and the work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The program will include early preservation of the battlefields, and highlight the work done by the CCC which can still be seen today.

The free program will take place at the Varina Library, 1875 New Market Heights Road, Henrico, VA 23231.



**LOOKING AHEAD
SCHEDULED SPEAKERS FOR 2023**

- 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"

*The January and February meetings will be Zoom meetings

REMAINING MEETING IN 2022

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

Attendance at October Meeting: 60

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER:

JAMIE BRYANT

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

We all enjoy the PowerPoint presentations by our excellent speakers. But, do we really appreciate how and by whom they are made possible? Jack Mountcastle makes sure that everything is in order before every meeting - along with Brik Cash of First Presbyterian Church.

Now Jack is (really) ready to pass on the responsibilities of audio/visual duties and we are hoping that someone will step up to take over for him. Jack has tirelessly served in this capacity, and we owe him a tremendous amount of gratitude. PLEASE consider taking over for Jack and talk to him at the meeting, or send him an email: mtcastle@comcast.net.



Burnside Bridge, Antietam