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RICHMOND

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

OCTOBER 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

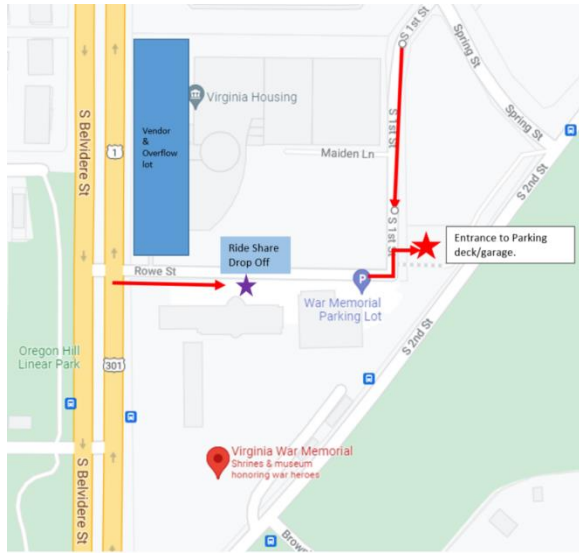
October 12, 2021

7:30 p.m.

**“The Battle for Richmond,
May 31 – June 1, 1862:
Struggle for the Adams House”
By Victor Vignola**

**In-person meeting at our new venue,
The Virginia War Memorial, 621 S.
Belvidere Street, Richmond, 23220.
Please park in parking deck P3 (see
map on page 2) and take the elevator
to the main lobby where a security
guard will direct you to the VMI
Alumni Hall of Honor, our meeting
place. The gate to parking deck P3
will be open from 7:00 p.m. until 7:45
p.m.**

*****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.*****



Coming in the Spring of 2022 is a Savas-Beatie publication covering a detailed study of the May 31, 1862 fight at Fair Oaks Station on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia. The struggle for the Adams House, on a late Saturday afternoon, became the signature moment of Brig. Gen. Edwin Vose “Bull” Sumner’s military career as troops he commanded repulsed a Confederate force under General Joseph E. Johnston.

Sumner’s leadership, and that of Brig. Gen. Darius Couch, at the Adams House preserved the right flank of the Third Corps of George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac from being overwhelmed by Johnston’s command. Later that evening, General Johnston suffered wounds, which prompted Confederate President Jefferson Davis to promote General Robert E. Lee into field command of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Previous to the research conducted by Victor Vignola, a long-time student of the Civil War, the struggle for the Adams House and the fighting near Fair Oaks Station has received little attention. When discussing the Fair Oaks fight, historians mention the

timely arrival of Sumner’s reinforcements, an overview of the fighting that includes the death of Brig. Gen. Robert Hatton, and the wounding of James Pettigrew, Wade Hampton and Johnston. Historians mention few details regarding the story of the soldiers engaged in the struggle for the Adams House.

The lack of Confederate after-battle reports and a reliance on Federal reports by historians contributed to the lack of a comprehensive study of this phase of the battle from being completed. Victor Vignola conducted an in-depth study by amassing many threads of information from letters, diaries and other accounts, gathering the soldiers’ and the leadership’s story regarding the fighting at Fair Oaks on May 31 and June 1, 1862.

The result of Vignola’s research has led to the piecing together of the threads revealing how Sumner benefitted from the use of the terrain features in crafting a defensive position in repulsing the Confederate advances. His research includes passages from Hampton’s Legion, the brigades of Pettigrew, Law and Hatton and Federal regiments such as the 1st Chasseurs (65th New York), 31st and 61st Pennsylvania, 20th Massachusetts, and Lieutenant Edward ‘Ned’ Kirby’s 1st US Battery.

Prior to Vignola’s research only generic maps related to the fighting at Fair Oaks have existed. The development of his maps and research into the tactics employed now permit a fuller understanding of the battle.

The Adams House property is the only hallowed ground on the Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) battlefield where development has not taken over. The house became a hospital after the battle and is the location where James Pettigrew received treatment

and where the amputation of Brig.Gen. Oliver Otis Howard’s arm occurred.



Victor Vignola lives in upstate Orange County, New York, home of the 124th New York ‘Orange Blossoms.’ He has written articles on various Civil War topics and helps deliver tours at various Civil War sites. In his previous life, Vic’s career specialty included executive level labor and inter-agency relations with the New York State Office of Mental Health.

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

FINAL BOOKS FOR BUCKS SALE

Look for some exceptional opportunities to buy excellent books at the October meeting. All of the books on the “Books for Bucks” table will be sold at deep discount and selected video products will be available in this final fund-raising sale. Hardbacks just \$5.00. Paperbacks for only \$1. Videos at special prices.

Don’t miss this opportunity! “Books for Bucks” will not be coming back.

A Word from the President

We had a very nice meeting at the Virginia War Memorial in September. There was an excellent room to meet in, and the speaker discussed Lincoln’s spies, which was very interesting. This month Vic Vignola will be talking about Seven Pines. Bert Dunkerly and I had the pleasure of spending a day with him on the Fair Oaks portion of the battlefield, and he was fascinating. I’m really looking forward to hearing him, and I think you will enjoy him, too.

The facility at the War Memorial is extremely nice, and it is easy to get to. When you arrive, park in the garage (not outside), and take the elevator up. It’s been a while since we’ve seen each other, so come out and let’s have some fun.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Doug



Attendance at September meeting: 30

November Dinner Meeting

As announced in the September newsletter, our dinner meeting at Willow Oaks Country Club will take place on Tuesday, November 9 (our regular meeting day), at 6:00 p.m.

We were able to reschedule our speaker, Jan Croon, from last year and look forward to her presentation on her excellent book, "The War Outside My Window: The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham, 1860-1865," a topic that should be of interest to everyone.

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. The price is – as in previous years - \$35 per person/\$70 per couple. There will be a cash bar as well (cash only).

To register, please send your payment ([make check out to Richmond CWRT](#)) to our Treasurer:

Art Wingo
1414 Patriot Circle
Glen Allen, VA 23059

Or, you may see Art at the meeting.

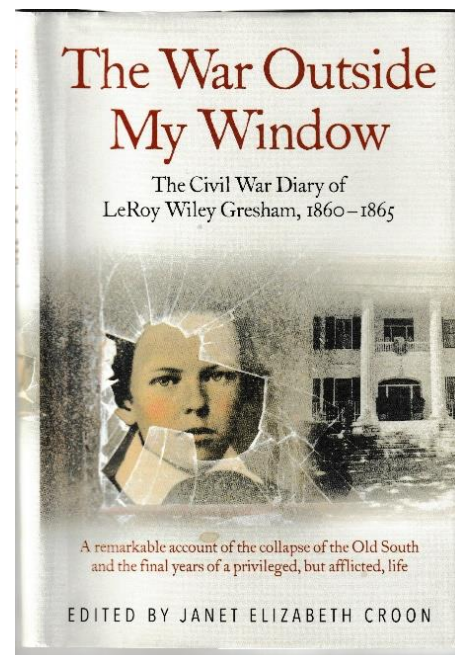
"The War Outside My Window" is a remarkable account of the collapse of the Old South and the final years of a privileged, but afflicted, life.

LeRoy Wiley Gresham was born in 1847 to an affluent slave-holding family in Macon, Georgia. After a horrific leg injury left him an invalid, the educated, inquisitive, perceptive, and exceptionally witty 12-year-old began keeping a diary in 1860 – just as secession and the Civil War began tearing the country and the world apart. He

continued to write even as his health deteriorated until both the war and his life ended in 1865. His unique manuscript of the demise of the Old South is lauded by the Library of Congress as one of its premier holdings.

LeRoy read books, devoured newspapers and magazines, listened to gossip, and discussed and debated important social and military issues with his parents and others. He wrote daily for five years, putting pen to paper with a vim and tongue-in-cheek vigor that impresses even now, more than 150 years later. Unbeknownst to LeRoy, he was chronicling his own slow and painful descent toward death in tandem with the demise of the Southern Confederacy.

Gary Gallagher calls it a "remarkable diary that illuminates important aspects of mid-19th-century American life." Caroline E. Janney says that the diary "offers a powerful, entertaining, and insightful glimpse into the world of the Civil War from an unlikely author."



CIVIL WAR TRIVIA

From the August issue of *Civil War News*

1. He picked up 8th Infantry colors when Longstreet was WIA at Chapultepec
2. He led CS forces in Oklahoma and wrote Southern words for Dixie
3. "Last land battle of the Civil War"
4. Union artillery forced this brick and masonry fort to surrender in less than two days
5. General who "didn't know his headquarters from his hindquarters"
6. Ironclad that helped break Union blockade at Charleston
7. He led defense at Shiloh's "Hornet's Nest"
8. US cannon designer and manufacturer who operated West Point Foundry
9. "Farthest west land battle of the Civil War"
10. Key component of portable, floating bridge

Answers on page 6

REMAINING MEETINGS IN 2021

November 9 (Dinner Meeting): Janet Croon, "The War Outside my Window" (see article on page 4)

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

LOOKING AHEAD TO 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 (friend of Waite), "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"

We hope that you are as excited as we are about next year's programs and look forward to "re-enlisting" in the round table.

ABOUT OUR NEW MEETING PLACE

Many of our members have asked over the past several months when and where we would be meeting in person again. While it is not possible to meet at First Presbyterian right now, the board felt it was important to find a meeting place that would allow us to do so in a safe environment. After all, nothing compares to in-person get-togethers with your fellow Civil War enthusiasts! Thanks to the hard work of Jack Mountcastle we have found that place in the Virginia War Memorial,

where we will have our meetings for the foreseeable future.

The War Memorial is a beautiful building, as most of you know, has convenient parking, and has a fantastic room where our meetings will take place: the VMI Alumni Honors Hall. It has a big screen, and there is seating for about 100 – so plenty of room if you choose to “social distance.”

We hope to see many of you there in October. Let’s get together again!

EVENTS OF INTEREST

October 8-10: Central Virginia Battlefield Trust’s Conference in celebration of their 25 year anniversary. Key note speaker is A. Wilson Greene. Tickets are \$175 per person. Additional details and registration at: www.cvbt.org, or call 540-374-0900.

November 6: Shenandoah University’s McCormick Civil War Institute’s fall seminar and tour, “We Shall Have Graveyards at Every Door.” The Lower Shenandoah’s Border Region during the Civil War with Prof. Jonathan Noyalas. Registration fee is \$25. www.su.edu/mcwi.

November 13: 40th Central Virginia Military Antique Show at Richmond Raceway, in conjunction with the Central Virginia Civil War Collectors Association. Show hours are 9-5, admission is \$10/adults, children free. www.MilitaryAntiqueShow.com.

REMEMBERING ED BEARSS

In collaboration with the family of Edwin C. Bearss, the Battlefield Trust has established a special memorial fund to be used to preserve battlefields of the Vicksburg campaign, an area of special importance to Ed. Details and a donation mechanism are available via the Trust website:

www.battlefields.org/remembering-ed-bearss.

A memorial service originally planned for October 9 on the Manassas battlefield has been postponed indefinitely by the Bearss family. The Trust will collect written messages and recollections on behalf of the family until the memorial service is held. Such letters, cards and remembrances may be addressed to: Bearss Family c/o American Battlefield Trust, 1156 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

OTHER NEWS

Emerging Civil War (ECW) has selected Dr. Gary W. Gallagher as the 2021 recipient of the ECW Award for Service in the Field of Civil War Public History. Bert Dunkerly noted that “Gallagher’s impact on the field has been immeasurable. He cares about all aspects of the history field.”

At the awards ceremony, which was also a 10 year anniversary celebration of *Emerging Civil War*, **Doug Crenshaw** and **Bert Dunkerly** did not receive awards but perhaps deserved one. They put together a joint presentation on Joseph Johnston with about two hours’ notice to pinch hit for a scheduled presenter who couldn’t make it.

Their joint book, “Embattled Capital,” received a great review in the October issue of *Civil War News*.

Trivia Answers:

1. Lt. George Pickett
2. General Albert Pike
3. Palmito Ranch, Texas
4. Fort Pulaski
5. General John Pope
6. CSS *Palmetto State*
7. Gen. Benjamin Prentiss
8. Robert P. Parrott
9. Picacho Peak, Arizona
10. Pontoon