



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

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RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE SEPTEMBER 2023

“The Civil War was the biggest thing that ever happened to us. It was our Iliad and our Odyssey – and it remains our least understood war.”

Bruce Catton

**September 12, 2023
7:30 p.m.**

**At First Presbyterian Church
4602 Cary Street Road
Richmond, VA 23226**
(The parking lot is behind the church; go up the
steps to fellowship hall on the left)

DR. JONATHAN JONES

**“Civil War Veterans’
Addictions”**



In the wake of the Civil War, many veterans struggled with lingering pain and disabling illnesses. To cope, former soldiers often turned to opioids. Tens of thousands became addicted to the drugs.

Jonathan Jones will discuss how the opioid addiction crisis sparked by the Civil War affected veterans' lives and what this crisis can teach us about the Civil War's traumatic aftershocks in the postwar decades.

Jonathan S. Jones is an assistant professor of history at James Madison University. His first book, *Opium Slavery: The Civil War, Veterans, and America's First Opioid Crisis*, is forthcoming from UNC Press. Jones's research has also appeared in *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, the *Washington Post*, *Vice*, *NPR*, and other outlets. Jones received his PhD from Binghamton University in 2020.

In 2020-21, he was a Postdoctoral Scholar at Penn State's George and Ann Richards Civil War Era Center and from 2021-23 he was assistant professor of history at Virginia Military Institute.



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our son, Derek, has a service dog, a pitbull mix named Eleven. Eleven wears a vest with the inscription, "Not all wounds are visible." Were it not for that sweet dog, we don't know how Derek would deal with the occasional bouts of PTSD after his Afghanistan encounter with an IED. The term PTSD was not known during the Civil War, of course. Soldiers instead dealt with "invisible wounds."

During the Civil War opioids were first regularly employed as pain killers, many times administered in wrong doses, tragically leading to dependencies that lasted long after the war was over. Alcohol use was also rampant.

Fifty years later, during the First World War, little had changed, and morphine continued to be regularly used. I had a grandfather who was in the cavalry in that war. He was an Ulan in the 13th Hannover, and I have his diary, photos, souvenir items, and his uniform jacket and kepi. He was lucky and came home without any wounds, never in need of opioids. He was a quiet, hardworking farmer, and my favorite person in the world. His only "vice" was smoking filterless cigarettes.

Life in peacetime America for the Civil War veteran and the addictions they came home with will be discussed by Dr. Jones at this month's meeting.

We have an active Fall ahead with our field trip on October 28 and our dinner meeting on November 14. More information is in this newsletter on the following pages.

Ulli

**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS**

**Steve Gannon
David McKinney**

FIELD TRIP
Saturday, October 28, 2023

The Richmond Civil War Round Table is pleased to announce a Civil War educational tour of Grant's second attempt to capture the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, part of the Fourth Offensive of the Petersburg Campaign, August 18-21, 1864. The tour focuses on the Fight for the Weldon Railroad, a supply line running from Wilmington to Weldon, North Carolina, and then from Weldon on into the City of Petersburg. This vital railroad line carried supplies from the last seaport of the Confederacy to forces of General Robert E. Lee and the beleaguered cities of Petersburg and Richmond.

The caravan tour will begin at Richard Bland College, 11301 Johnson Road, Petersburg, VA. Check-in is at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 28, 2023 in the parking lot of the college. The tour will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and run until approximately 4:00 p.m. We will cover ten stops but will have an additional stop of approximately 30-45 minutes for lunch (BRING YOUR OWN) at a pavilion picnic area along the way.

This tour, led by RCWRT members Jerry Netherland and Mark Jacobson, will also showcase two core battlefield properties recently saved by the American Battlefield Trust and the

Petersburg Battlefields Foundation. The tour will visit public, National Park Service, and private sites.

Cost per person is \$15; however, anyone who would be willing to drive a group of members will have their \$15 covered. Let Billie know if you would be willing to be a driver. **Registration is now open. Please sign up with Art at the meeting, or send your check to: Art Wingo, 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059**

PARK NEWS

By Bert Dunkerly

Fort Harrison Anniversary Event
Richmond National Battlefield Park
September 30, 9-4

Fort Harrison was the largest Confederate fort defending Richmond. It was attacked and captured on September 29, 1864. Union troops hoped to advance on to the city but were stopped short of that goal. The next day, September 30, the Confederates counter attacked in an effort to retake the vital fort but failed. During the fall and winter, Union troops reconfigured the fort, and that November soldiers here voted in the 1864 election. Some of the garrison consisted of African American soldiers, and many of these USCTs voted for the very first time here. The fort, which still has outstanding earthworks, was also the very first Richmond-area battlefield to be preserved, in the 1920s.

On Saturday, September 30, the park will host an event at the fort from 9 am to 4 pm. The visitor center, with film and exhibits, will be open. Reenactors, including Round Table members, will represent the Confederate and Union

troops, including USCTs. There will be artillery and rifle demonstrations, presentations on voting, displays on engineering and fortifications, the preservation of the park and Civilian Conservation Corps, and military camp life. Doug Crenshaw, from our Round Table, will give a guided tour at 3 pm.

For more information visit the park's Facebook page or www.nps.gov/rich.



ANNUAL DINNER MEETING By Waite Rawls

The last two decades have been remarkable for the preservation of battlefield land around Richmond. From small areas preserved and a dearth of signs around Gaines' Mill, Cold Harbor, and Malvern Hill, these critical battlefields have seen exponential growth in preserved acreage. Other, smaller battlefields – New Market Heights, Deep Bottom, Fair Oaks – have seen their first preservation victories. If all of this has happened recently, what will the next couple of decades bring?



There is simply no one who could come close to Garry Adelman to walk us through these victories and hopes. Garry is known to

many of you who have done tours or watched

videos of the American Battlefield Trust. Garry is officially the Chief Historian of the Battlefield Trust, but we will need to fasten our seatbelts for his presentation about recent and future battlefield preservation around us. Garry's engine takes high octane fuel, and when Garry opens the throttle, look out! His high energy is as informative as it is infectious. We look forward to a real treat.

We have a new menu this year: House Salad with Balsamic and Ranch dressings; Chicken Marsala; Herb Roasted Salmon with Dill Mustard Cream Sauce; Roasted Creamer Potatoes; Buttered French Beans with Blistered Tomatoes; Freshly Baked Rolls and Butter; Dessert. **The cost this year is \$40 per person. You may register now with Art at the meeting or by sending a check to Art Wingo, 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059.**

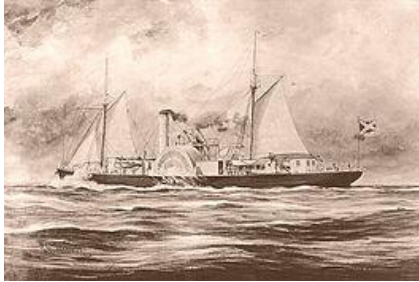
GARRY IS A VERY POPULAR SPEAKER. MAKE SURE TO REGISTER EARLY.

BLOCKADE AND BLOCKADE RUNNERS By Jim Wudarczyk

Those who are old enough to remember the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 may recall how in October of that year President John F. Kennedy called for a quarantine of the waters around Cuba. Kennedy purposely avoided the term blockade because that would constitute an act of war. While, in effect, there was no real difference between the quarantine and blockade, the president was putting a diplomatic spin on the issue. After days of waiting to see who would blink first and praying that we would not have a nuclear confrontation, the Soviets backed down from installing missiles in Cuba and the United States agreed to move missiles from Turkey.

A little over a hundred years before, another American president was confronted with the issue of declaring a blockade. Known as the "Anaconda Plan," Lincoln's top military advisors recommended using the federal navy to encircle all points of entrance and exits to the Confederacy and slowly squeeze the South into submission.

Like most plans, they usually work better on paper than they do in practice. While eventually the Anaconda Plan was successful, the American navy faced formidable challenges. With the Confederate States of America claiming a coastline that



stretched from Virginia to Texas, the navy would have to patrol 3,500

miles of coastland, as well as effectively block 189 harbors, inlets, and river mouths. In order for the Union forces to achieve their objective, the naval and military forces had to capture all major ports in the South. Thus, for the first two years of the war, the federal navy only had limited success.

Working against the federal plan in the early days of the war was the fact that the navy had fewer than 40 ships on active duty. To make the situation worse, only a few of the ships were modern steamers.

It cannot be stressed enough how important cotton was to the economy of the United States. Before the outbreak of the war, two-thirds of the revenue generated by the United States came from the exportation of cotton. In his book, *Trading with the Enemy: The Covert Economy During the American Civil War*, Philip Leigh contends, “Without this valuable crop, America would have had a major trade deficit. Since the deficit had to be paid with gold, the federal currency would have been further depreciated and would depress the national economy.” Leigh also noted that by 1860, Great Britain was importing 1.23 million pounds of cotton.

What hurt the Confederacy during the first year of the war was the fact the 1860 cotton harvest was extremely bountiful, which enabled both the Northern textile manufacturers and those in Great Britain to stockpile supplies in the event that war would

erupt. With a somewhat decreased demand for cotton in 1861, the Confederacy was not able to generate as much in revenues as it had hoped for the purchase of arms and munitions.

While there was a decreased demand for cotton by England in 1861, President Jefferson Davis made the erroneous decision to let cotton rot on the wharfs to deprive France and England of raw materials for their industries. Davis believed that a decrease in the supply of cotton would force both France and England to support the Confederacy. This decision hurt the South more than it hurt Europe.

Since the Confederate navy was relatively small, the Southern government depended largely upon private ships to haul freight to Cuba, Mexico, and England. As the Union was slowly able to gain control of the Mississippi River and blockade key shipping ports in the South, blockade running became a very lucrative business.

Even in the great Civil War novel (and later movie) *Gone With The Wind*, one of the main characters, Rhett Butler, made a considerable fortune as a blockade runner. The fictional character owned four ships that carried cotton to England and returned with luxury items. The novel’s author, Margaret Mitchell, demonstrated how lucrative blockade running could be by having the character Rhett Butler offer \$150 in gold for a dance with the recently widowed Scarlett O’Hara.

It is interesting to look at David Walbert’s examination of some of the “Cargo Manifests of Confederate Blockade Runners.” This study reveals that among the items in demand in the South were casks and cases of wine, brandy, whiskey, and distilled spirit, as well as general merchandise, quinine, candles, chests of tea, cases of mustard and starch, barrels of beer and ale, sugar, tin, gunpowder, salt, coffee, boots, clothing, hams and cheese, molasses, telegraph wire, saddlery, silk, handkerchiefs, shovels, and saltpeter.

Of course, the downside of blockade running was the chance of getting caught and not only losing your cargo, but the ship as well. Captured vessels were auctioned by the federal government. Known as Prize Laws, half the proceeds from the sale of captured vessels would go to disabled sailors and the other half would go to the officers and crew of the ship that captured the blockade runner.

New Orleans, Galveston, and Mobile were all major shipping ports and conduits for the cotton industry to make its way to Mexico, Cuba, and Europe. Between September 1860 and August 1861, Mobile alone shipped 456,421 pounds of cotton with a value of \$25 million. By 1863, the blockade of Mobile was proving more effective, and the value of cotton exported from the city fell to \$3 million. To make matters worse for the Confederate States of America was the fact that New Orleans, which was the South's largest port for the exporting of cotton, fell early in 1862 to Union forces.

The capture of Mobile Bay by the Union fleet in August 1864 virtually ended blockade running. According to the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, "Although accurate numbers are difficult to find, historians have estimated that between 32,000 and 35,000 bales of cotton were successfully shipped out of Mobile and past the blockade to Havana in the 30 months between February 1862 and August 1864. Even with the increased price for cotton, this still amounted to less than one-third of the commerce conducted in a single year before the outbreak of war."

In a commentary on "Admiral Samuel Lee's Report on the Capture of Confederate Blockade Runners November 30th – December 3rd, 1862," the author notes, "The cat and mouse game between blockade runners and the Navy continued throughout the war, with both sides able to point to some successes."

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EVENTS OF INTEREST

October 4: John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at UVA – 2023-24 Crozer Lecture by Yael Sternhell of Tel Aviv University, 5:00 p.m. in the UVA Special Collections Library auditorium. Professor Sternhell will discuss her forthcoming book, *War on Record: The Archive and the Afterlife of the Civil War*. The Crozer Lecture is free and open to the public. Paid parking is available nearby at the Central Grounds Parking Garage located near the UVA bookstore.
<https://naucenter.as.virginia.edu/2023-24-crozer-lecture-yael-sternhell>.

October 21-22: The 159th Anniversary Reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek recreating the last major battle in the Shenandoah Valley will be held at 8437 Valley Pike in Middletown, VA. Battle scenarios, music, and medical, military, and civilian demonstrations. Period merchants, food vendors onsite. Children 6 and under are free. For more information: 540-869-2064.

FREMANTLE ON LEE...

"General Lee is, almost without exception, the handsomest man of his age I ever saw. He is 56 years old, tall, broad shouldered, very well made, well set up, a thorough soldier in appearance, and his manners are most courteous and full of dignity. He is a perfect gentleman in every respect. I imagine no man has so few enemies or is so universally esteemed. Throughout the South, all agree in pronouncing him to be as near perfection as man can be. He has none of the small vices, such as smoking, drinking, chewing, or swearing, and his bitterest enemy never accused him of any of the greater ones."

From: *Three Months in the Southern States, 1863*

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 10: Rob Havers, "Anticipation of War in U.S. Military Society in the Antebellum Period"

November 14: Annual Dinner Meeting, Garry Adelman, "Preservation Accomplishments in the Richmond Area & Future Plans"

December 12: Jake Wynn, "Civil War Medicine"

Attendance at August Meeting: 47