



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

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RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

FEBRUARY 2026

“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

FEBRUARY 10, 2026

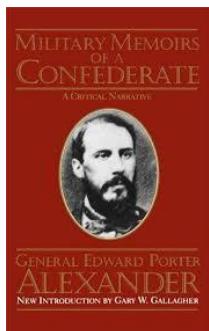
VIA ZOOM ONLY

DR. GARY GALLAGHER

**“THE BEST CONFEDERATE
MEMOIRIST:
EDWARD PORTER ALEXANDER’S
UNRIVALLED MILITARY ACCOUNTS”**

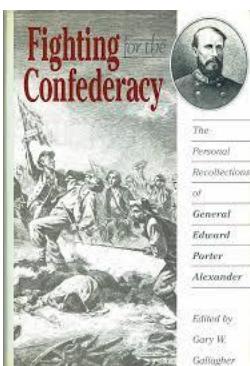


Edward Porter Alexander's two memoirs stand unrivaled among all accounts published by Confederate soldiers. Written over the course of a decade beginning in the late 1890s, they appeared in print more than eighty years apart as *Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative* (1907) and *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander* (1989).



This talk will explain the unusual gap between publication dates – as well as Dr. Gallagher's role in identifying and editing the second one. Alexander brought to both of his books analytical acuity, a gift for describing key scenes in dramatic and memorable fashion, and the perspective of one who literally had been at the center of operations in the Eastern Theater from First Bull Run to Appomattox. Although an ardent Confederate during the war, he wrote with almost none of the Lost Cause special pleading evident in the writings of most of his former comrades. He did embrace a form of sectional reconciliation by the time he wrote his recollections but never apologized for his military service in support of the breakaway slaveholding republic.

Gary W. Gallagher received his B.A. from Adams State College of Colorado (1972) and his M.A. (1977) and Ph.D. (1982) from the University of Texas at Austin. He began his academic career in 1986 at Penn



State University, where he taught for twelve years. In 1998, he joined the faculty of the University of Virginia and held the John L. Nau III Professorship in the History of the American Civil War and served as the founding Director of the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History.

He is the author or editor of more than forty books, including *The Confederate War* (1997), *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About the Civil War* (2008), *The Union War* (2011), *The Enduring Civil War: Reflections on the Great American Crisis* (2020), and *The American War: A History of the Civil War Era* (co-authored with Joan Waugh; 3rd ed., 2023).

He presented a 48-lecture course on the Civil War for The Teaching Company (now Wondrium) and has participated in numerous television projects in the field. He held the Cavaliers' Distinguished Teaching Professorship in 2010-2012 (the highest teaching award conveyed by the University of Virginia) and won the Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni in 2013. Active in the field of historic preservation, he was the first president, from 1987 to mid-1994, of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, the forerunner of The Civil War Trust (now the American Battlefield Trust).

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

<https://tinyurl.com/ye2853w7>

MEETING ID: 859 7712 0678

PASSCODE: 384130

You can log in using just these codes from your personal Zoom account.

We recommend that you sign in 5-10 minutes before the meeting starts to be sure your equipment is working and review some of the features.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Oh, the places we've met...

By the time you read this, most, if not all of you, will know that we are searching for a new location to hold our monthly meetings. I already have received a number of good suggestions in response to Ulli's email, and I assure you that the executive board will consider them all. We hope to find a suitable new location and announce it as soon as possible before our next in-person meeting in March.

While I had an entirely different topic for this month's article, I thought it might be appropriate to go down memory lane and look at the other places we have met since our founding in 1951. As recorded in Dan Balfour's Round Table history on our website, the Round Table met for the first time on February 8, 1951, at Fort Harrison, in a log cabin built in 1930 by the Richmond Battlefields Park Corporation. According to an article in the February 21, 1952 issue of the *Richmond News Leader*, the Round Table's meetings were first held on the second Thursday of each month. Although approaching 100 years in age, the cabin still serves as a visitor center. (Fun fact: the Round Table initially had a permit from the Henrico County Board of Zoning Appeals for a gun range on a member's property where they could fire old muzzle loaders that some of them owned.)

By at least June 1952, the Round Table was meeting in the "Terrace Room" at Byrd Airport (now Richmond International). Some of the meetings at this location were advertised in the *News Leader* as "Ladies' Night" meetings. Five years later, the Round Table was meeting in the historic Branch House (now the Branch Museum of Design), on Monument Avenue, and remained there at least through 1961. During this time span, the

annual banquet was held at least once in the Hotel Raleigh (now The Commonwealth on Capitol Square). At some time between 1961 and 1975, Dan notes that the Round Table met at Morton's Tea Room, on the corner of Foushee and Franklin Streets. In a *Style Weekly* article entitled, "Great Moments in Restaurant History," Morton's was described as "a private home upstairs and a restaurant down, with iced tea, good food, and hospitality...and legendary yeast rolls."

October 1975 found us meeting at First Congregational Christian Church, 3000 Grove Avenue (now All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church). This may have started our trend of holding our meetings in churches, which has continued until today except for a brief stint during the Covid-era at the Virginia War Memorial. Longtime member Sandy Parker said the Round Table was meeting at Boulevard Methodist Church when she joined in 1976. At the time, she said people had to get on a waiting list to attend because there were so many people on our membership rolls. The Boulevard location has proved to be our longest running location, with meetings held there for about 34 years. Because the church was closing, we moved to First Presbyterian Church in 2009 and remained there until coming to St. Stephen's last year.

Having met in at least eight different places during the past 74 years, changes in location, while usually not desirable, are part of our Round Table's history. Locations change, but one thing stays the same: we are a dedicated group of people who enjoy getting together and learning more about the Civil War, the most pivotal event in our nation's history.

So regardless of where we meet, I have one question: Who's bringing the iced tea and yeast rolls?

Dale

ANNUAL DUES NOTICE

Dues are due and should be paid to the Secretary by February 15, 2026. The dues are \$35 for individuals, and \$45 for couples living at the same address.

You may send a check – made payable to Richmond CWRT – to Andy



Keller, 9701
Fireside Drive, Glen
Allen, VA 23060.

As an added convenience you may also pay your dues via Venmo to **Leroy-Keller-3**.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

**HOLLY DARTEZ
RICHARD DAVENPORT
KIM RHODES**

FIGHTING FOR THE CONFEDERACY

".... Some extensive fires had been burning in the city for some time, particularly up toward the Tredegar Works & the arsenal; & towards daylight we heard terrific explosions at Chaffin's Bluff, where our gunboats were all burned & blown up.

Soon after daylight I noted canal boats on fire in the canal, & at last one of them either drifted, or in some mysterious way got directly under the bridge. One of my batteries was still behind, but presently, when flames began to rise through all the cracks in the floor, with my staff we spurred across lest we should be cut off. Some soldiers, however, in the nick of time, managed to push the burning boat out, & presently my last battery came along & then we all crossed. It was after sunrise of a bright morning when from the Manchester high grounds we

turned to take our last look at the old city for which we had fought so long & so hard. It was a sad, a terrible & a solemn sight. I don't know that any moment in the whole war impressed me more



deeply with all its stern realities than this. The whole river front seemed to be in flames, amid which occasional heavy explosions were heard, & the black smoke spreading & hanging over the city seemed to be full of dreadful portents. I rode on with a distinctly heavy heart & with a peculiar sort of feeling of orphanage."

Edward Porter Alexander

MY CIVIL WAR STORY

"I would like to give you one of my stories about the Civil War. Many, many, many decades ago before my wife and I got married, she taught at Manchester Elementary School in Manchester, MD. I was there one time to help with a field trip. They had a very large bronze plaque in the ground in front of the school. It read, "Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, June 29, 1862."

I looked at the thing thinking something was wrong. McClellan was not in the this area in 1862. Then it finally dawned on me. They got the year wrong. The only thing of any importance that ever happened in this town, and they got the year wrong.

Meade had sent Sedgwick and his VI Corps to Manchester to secure the eastern flank of his (Big) Pipe Creek Line. And who knows the difference between a corps and an army anyway."

**Richmond CWRT Member
Herb Loveless, MD**

CIVIL WAR QUOTES**WHO SAID IT?**

1. "My people are going to war, and war for their liberty. If I don't come and bear my part they will believe me a coward – and I will feel that I am occupying the position of one. I must go and stand my chances."
2. "If England would join the South at once, the Southern armies, relieved of the present blockade and enormous Yankee pressure, would be able to march right into the northern states."
3. "I consider it an officer's duty to look after the welfare of his men."
4. "I cannot but feel that giving command to McClellan is equivalent to giving Washington to the rebels."
5. "If men make war in slavish obedience to rules, they will fail."

EVENT OF INTEREST

Saturday, March 14: 10:00-11:30 AM, 2026 Annual Meeting of Petersburg Battlefields Foundation. Free and open to the public.

Updates from PBF and Petersburg National Battlefield and panel discussion: "The Legacy of the Petersburg Breakthrough" with Kenny Bage, President, The Breakthrough Foundation; Colin Romanick, Executive Director, Pamplin Historic Park; and Tom Gilmore, Chief Land Preservation Officer, American Battlefield Trust.

Doors will open at 9:30 AM, breakfast snacks and bottled water will be available. Civil War artifacts/relics on display. Half-price admission to Pamplin Park on March 14 available for meeting attendees.

A PRESERVATION SUCCESS STORY

"We did it! The most important unprotected battlefield land in the United States – hundreds of critical acres associated with the overlapping Battle of Gaines' Mill and the Battle of Cold Harbor – is saved forever.

More than 25 years ago, we at the American Battlefield Trust committed to these hugely significant battlefields. We had already preserved 655 acres when a remarkable opportunity arose in 2020: More than 600 acres across eight tracts of pristine battlefield land became available for preservation. With deep-pocketed developers closing in, we knew we had to act fast, and our members came through.

Our friend and renowned historian Ed Bearss once said: *"Even if you have to sell every other piece of battlefield land the Trust has ever saved in order to preserve this land, you should do it. It's that important!"* Thanks to the incredible generosity of Trust members, and a sympathetic landowner willing to let us configure the transaction over the course of several years, it didn't come to that. But with the property lying inside the authorized boundary of Richmond National Battlefield Park and ineligible for federal matching grants – and a price tag that placed it among our ten largest-ever transactions – the task was still daunting.

Thankfully, Trust donors once again demonstrated their devotion to this effort and answered numerous calls for support, pushing us across the finish line in late autumn 2025. This important land is now counted among the more than 1,200 acres we have saved at Gaines' Mill and Cold Harbor – never mind the 30,000 acres saved across the Commonwealth of Virginia and the 60,000 acres we have saved nationwide. This is an achievement many long years in the making, which makes the victory all the more sweet!"

From *Hallowed Ground*, Winter 2026 Issue

Answers to "Civil War Quotes"

1. Brig. Gen. E.P. Alexander
2. Brig. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard
3. Maj. Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain
4. U.S. Sec. of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase
5. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant

FRATERNIZING WITH THE ENEMY

"It did not seem as though we were at war with them."

Union Soldier Ezra G. Huntley, in his diary after he and comrades met with Confederates during a pause in the fighting for Petersburg, Virginia, March 20, 1865

"It is the strangest picket I ever saw. Instead of cracking away at each other every time a head is visible each side lounges about carelessly, and talk and laugh with each other."

Confederate soldier William Calder, in a letter to his mother shortly after the Battle of Fredericksburg, January 10, 1863

"Johnny Reb – is the Fifty-third Virginia still on this line? I have two friends in that regiment – got acquainted with them while exchanging papers, and think they are nice fellows, from appearances. Toss your reply over as I do this."

Note from a Union soldier, wrapped around a minie ball and tossed toward Confederate lines at Petersburg, Virginia, as reported by a Confederate soldier in the September 15, 1864 issue of the "Mobile Advertiser & Register"



From *Civil War Monitor*,
Fall 2025 issue

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 10: **Wayne Motts**, Lee's *Maryland Brigadier: The Life and Times of Confederate General James J. Archer*

April 14: **Rick Hatcher**, *Fort Sumter: "This Work is the Key to the Entrance of This Harbor"*

May 12: **Jim Hessler**, *Lee's Other Lieutenants: Richard Ewell and A.P. Hill on July 1 at Gettysburg*

June 9: **Cory Pfarr**, *Longstreet at Gettysburg: The Allure and Endurance of the "Lee Intended" Arguments*

July 14: **Frank O'Reilly**, *Retreat from Victory: The Battle of Malvern Hill and the End of the Seven Days, July 1, 1862*

August 11: **Dr. Charles Fennell**, *The Restoration of Culp's Hill: The Sad State of Historical Preservation at Gettysburg National Military Park*

September 8: **Melissa Winn**, *Grant's Conscience: The Unique Camaraderie Between Ulysses S. Grant and his Chief of Staff John Rawlins*

October 13: **Troy Harman**, *How Did Technology Shape North and South in the Lead-up to War as well as Shape Wartime Strategies*

November 10: Dr. William C. "Jack" Davis**, *Jefferson Davis and R.E. Lee, A Model Relationship?*

December 8: **Hampton Newsome**, *Gettysburg's Southern Front: Opportunity and Failure at Richmond*

**Dinner Meeting



Attendance at January Meeting: 66 (40 in person, 26 via Zoom)