



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

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RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

DECEMBER 2025

"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

DECEMBER 9, 2025

7:30 p.m.

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
6000 Grove Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226**

(From the parking lot, enter the church
through the double glass doors and follow
signs to the Large Fellowship Hall)

DR. ELIZABETH VARON
**"Loyalty and Dissent in the
Civil War Era: The Strange
Careers of Elizabeth Van Lew,
Joseph T. Wilson, and
James Longstreet"**



When Fordham University Press published a volume of essays entitled *New Perspectives on the Union War*, in 2018, they called the co-editors “two of the most prominent nineteenth-century American historians in the nation.” Although one of those editors (Gary Gallagher) has since left us for the West Coast, the other editor will be the speaker for our last meeting of 2025.

On Tuesday, December 11, Dr. Elizabeth R. Varon will present “Loyalty and Dissent in the Civil War Era: The Strange Careers of Elizabeth Van Lew, Joseph T. Wilson, and James Longstreet.”

Varon will explore the remarkable lives of Union spy Elizabeth Van Lew, USCT veteran/historian Joseph T. Wilson, and Confederate general-turned Republican James Longstreet, and use them as windows into debates over what constituted a “true” or loyal Southerner – and as examples of how the Civil War and Reconstruction both pitted the South against the South. This is the second time that Varon has spoken to our Round Table.

Varon, who grew up in Northern Virginia, is the Langbourne M. Williams Professor of American History at the University of Virginia and a member of the executive council of UVA’s John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History. Her books include *Appomattox: Victory, Defeat, and Freedom at the End of the Civil War* and *Armies of Deliverance: A History of the Civil War*, which won the 2020 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize.

Her most recent book, *Longstreet: The Confederate General Who Defied the South* (Simon & Schuster, 2023), was reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Atlantic*. Last year, it won the inaugural American Battlefield Trust Prize and was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* biography prize, among other honors. Varon’s current project is a biography of humanitarian Clara Barton.

Liz Varon will bring at least 25 copies of her *Longstreet* book. They will be only \$10 each (has to be cash payment and she won’t be able to make change).

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

I want to thank the RCWRT Board and membership for allowing me the privilege to serve as your president. I especially want to thank the ten past presidents that allowed me to interview them for my monthly president’s message. Those conversations meant a great deal to me personally and serve as a great reminder of the reasons we are proud of our 74-year history. As I join the list of past presidents, I would like to share a few thoughts on what the opportunity has meant to me.

I volunteered to serve as 2nd VP after being a member for only two months. What I lacked in knowledge I hoped I could make up for with enthusiasm. Over the past four years the Round Table has expanded my knowledge by exposing me to some of the greatest authors of our time, providing an opportunity to tour historic sites and battlefields and best of all, make life-long friends. I truly thank each Board member that I had the pleasure of serving with and learning from. The fact that we continue to have men and women willing to step up and serve our membership is perhaps our organization’s greatest asset.

I’ve had so many wonderful experiences this year, culminating with my November 8th trip to my hometown, Culpeper, Virginia, for Lt. Gen. A.P. Hill’s 200th Birthday Celebration. It was the most perfect Fall day for a walking tour with Virginia Morton, author of one of my very favorite books, “Marching Through Culpeper.” Virginia is a delightful story teller and to hear her tell those stories while standing in the historic Hill Mansion, just around the corner from my grandmother’s home, was a unique privilege.

I rode by my childhood home on Lee Street in the Grandview subdivision where every street is named for a

prominent Confederate, a fact I hadn't realized until many years later walking my young daughter through the neighborhood. I visited the Culpeper Museum where my second great uncle, Marcellus Kilby, has his name inscribed along with that of A.P. Hill and all the sons of Culpeper who sacrificed their lives for, to quote Patrick Falci, "Home, Family, Virginia." That afternoon I visited my grandparents' gravesite at Fairfield Cemetery. Walking just down the hill, I attended the A.P. Hill Memorial Association's gravesite service honoring General Hill's 200th birthday. My favorite performing historian, Patrick Falci, presented his tribute "Home, Family, Virginia." Ulli introduced me to Patrick at the 2023 Reinterment Service for General Hill. At that time I asked if he would be interested in speaking to our Round Table. He graciously accepted and I am honored to call him my friend.

In closing, I challenge our membership to make a point of continuing to invite a guest to our meetings. It was at the invitation of Donald Currin that I attended my first Round Table meeting in October 2021. Donald, you opened a door to a whole new world. A fascinating world of learning about a significant time in American history and even more importantly, a significant time in my family's history. I truly value your friendship, your always solid advice and your continued support and encouragement.

When I took on the office of president I dedicated my service to the memory of two men who generously shared their love of the study of The War Between the States and encouraged my own interest: my childhood friend, Glenn Allen, and my uncle, Scott Harlow. I hope I have brought honor to your memory.

Billie


ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Director ballots will be distributed and collected at the water cooler table next to our meeting room. Your completed ballots will be placed in a box at that same location. If you take your ballot into the meeting room to think about it, please return it to the ballot box before the meeting begins.

Vote for up to three past presidents to serve as directors for the following year. All other offices, except for the Past President, will be handled by a voice vote before the speaker is introduced. The membership will also vote on the dues level for 2026.

ANNUAL DUES NOTICE

Dues will soon be due and should be paid to the Secretary by February 15, 2026. Unless the membership approves a change, the dues will remain \$35 for individuals, and \$45 for Couples living at the same address. If you pay your dues at the December meeting you will be paid for the year even if the dues are increased.

You may pay your dues in person to Andy Keller at the meeting or send a check –  **made out 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**. If you pay in cash, please have the exact amount and wait for a receipt. For those who wish to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please add an additional \$20.

Please note: Our January and February speakers are presenting via Zoom, but, weather permitting, we will still meet in person.

MEET YOUR CANDIDATE FOR SECOND VP

Christine A. Wynd, PhD, RN

Dr. Christine Wynd retired from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing as Professor and Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education/Chair, Department of Family and Community Health Nursing. A nurse for 48 years, the majority of Dr. Wynd's career was geared toward nursing education, administration, and leadership. She coordinated a master's level nursing administration track and directed a PhD in Nursing program at the University of Akron, Ohio. She also served as Dean of Nursing at Ursuline College, Cleveland, Ohio, and was President/Dean of Mount Carmel College of Nursing, Columbus, Ohio.



Dr. Wynd received her academic degrees from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, the Ohio State

University, Columbus, Ohio (MS in Nursing), and Saint John College, Cleveland, Ohio (Bachelor of Science in Nursing). Her research focus included health promotion, especially smoking cessation; she presented and published her research both nationally and internationally.

Colonel (Retired) Wynd spent 30 years in the U.S. military, in both the Navy and Army Nurse Corps, and was Chief Nurse of two separate Army Reserve Combat

Support Hospitals. She was also the Individual Mobilization Augmentee, Office of the Assistant Chief, Army Nurse Corps, Department of Army, Washington, D.C. She is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA (Class of 1998).

Her hobbies include hiking, traveling, and HISTORY!!!!

DANNY WITT'S WESTERN BATTLEFIELDS TOUR

We conclude Danny's report this month with three more battlefields he visited on his camping trip this Summer.

PERRYVILLE, KENTUCKY, October 8, 1862

Union General Don Carlos Buell and Confederate General Braxton Bragg fought here in the largest battle in Kentucky. Though a tactical Confederate victory, the battle is considered a strategic victory for the Union because the Confederates withdrew from Kentucky. With 7,600 combined casualties, this is the bloodiest battle in the state. When Bragg withdrew after the battle, it left the state in Union hands for the rest of the war.

Start your visit today with a stop at the visitor center. There is a descriptive film, unfortunately no map to follow along, a small museum, and gift shop. The battlefield is crisscrossed by about 20 miles of hiking trails, but only a 3.5 mile driving tour with signage. Strange that the largest battle in the state has the smallest driving tour. You can view Doctor's Creek, the focal point of the battle. Across the road is a wartime house, but it is private property. There are no monuments on the field.

I visited this battlefield for the first time 30 years ago and expected more from this visit, but came away feeling disappointed. I think all you get is how hilly the area is and there was a battle there, pointed out by a few signs. After visiting bigger National Park battlefields, I think I was

looking for more. Having said this, please don't hesitate to visit this State Historical Site if in the area. As we know, any site that is saved is worth visiting.

ISLAND MOUND, MISSOURI, October 29, 1862

Close to the Kansas/Missouri border, halfway between Kansas City and Springfield, Missouri, is the Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site. The 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry marched to the area to clear out the rebel guerrillas and Confederate recruiters on Hog Island on the Marias-des-Cygnes River. The result was a two-day battle over and around Island Mound which included prairie fires, charges, and hand-to-hand combat. Today there is a trail (three-quarter mile?) that circles Island Mound and a number of signs describing the battle. Not big but well done.

CAMP NELSON NATIONAL MONUMENT

The U.S. Army established Camp Nelson as a fortified supply depot in April 1863. Over the next three years the site evolved into a massive recruitment and training center for USCT and a refugee camp for their families. In early 1864 Ulysses S. Grant visited the camp and determined it was not needed for defense. After becoming a



National Monument in 2018, Camp Nelson has developed into a premier National Park. Start your visit with the film and museum located in the Visitor Center, and continue on to the only house

(no entry) that stood when the camp was there. Replica barracks will show you a soldier's life and there is more under development. A trail will take you past the

northern and eastern edge of the park along the fortification line and site of the forts located there. Located next to Camp Nelson National Cemetery, this National Monument is well worth a visit.

I hope you have enjoyed this trip through some Western Civil War history. I look forward to hearing your comments and opinions if you have been to some of these, or learned something if you haven't.

R. Danny Witt

Editor's Note: Our first speaker in 2026 (via Zoom) will be Ranger Steve Phan, Chief of Interpretation at Camp Nelson.

CIVIL WAR QUOTES WHO SAID IT?

1. "I never was an Abolitionist, not even what could be called anti-slavery, but I try to judge fairly and honestly and it comes patent to my mind early in the rebellion that the North and South could never live at peace with each other except as one nation, and that without slavery."
2. "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead."
3. "McClellan was, he is and he will always be, even were his pistol pointed at my heart, my dear, loved friend. May God bless him and spare his life."
4. "I am disgusted with the generalship displayed. Our men have in many instances been foolishly and wantonly sacrificed."
5. "I don't fear McClellan or anyone in Yankeedom."



REBS ON YANKS

"I had rather be dead than to see the Yanks rule this country."

*Jesse Person, 1st NC Cavalry,
In a letter to his sister, August 21, 1862
Person was killed the next year at
Gettysburg*

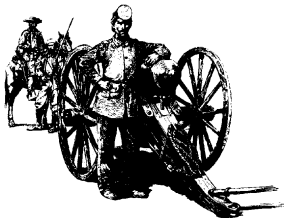
"These Yankees had heavy cloth and cassimere uniforms, and many of them heavy army overcoats – everything in fact, necessary to their comfort – while their victorious escort were clothed in coarse homespun, with wool hats on their heads. It was a striking illustration of that great truth that fine clothes do not make man honest, moral, wise or great; if it were so, these Yankees would never had been found in arms against us."

*A soldier in the 19th Georgia Infantry,
On observing Union prisoners being
Escorted under guard, in a letter to
An Atlanta newspaper,
October 27, 1861*

"I think those people make the most delicious bread I ever tasted."

*A Confederate soldier on
the Pennsylvania
Dutch farmers he and
his comrades
Encountered on their
march to Gettysburg,
In a letter to an Alabama
newspaper,
July 18, 1863*

**From The Civil War Monitor,
Summer 2025**



Answers to "Civil War Quotes"

1. Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant
2. Admiral David S. Farragut
3. Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett
4. Col. Emory Upton (after Cold Harbor)
5. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet

2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

January 13:* Steve Phan, *Birthplace of Liberty: Camp Nelson and the Civil War*

February 10:* Dr. Gary Gallagher, *The Best Confederate Memoirist: Porter Alexander's Two Influential Books*

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*

***Zoom Meeting**

**** Dinner Meeting**

**Attendance at November Dinner Meeting:
45**