



Founded at Fort Harrison
on February 8, 1951

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RICHMOND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

SEPTEMBER 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

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2026
7:30 p.m.**

**Weinstein JCC
5403 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226
(Sisisky Room; first room on the right as
you enter the building)**

MELISSA WINN

**"Grant's Conscience:
The Unique Camaraderie Between
Ulysses S. Grant and His
Chief of Staff John Rawlins"**



In this talk, Melissa discusses the life of Union General John Rawlins, the prewar origins of his close and unique friendship with General Ulysses S. Grant, and the many ways in which the lives and legacies of these two men not only intertwined during the Civil War, but for each of their lifetimes, and, likely, eternity.

Although barely mentioned in the personal

memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant, General John A. Rawlins, Grant's chief of staff, was



often considered his right-hand-man, closest confidante, and by some, even his conscience. So why the snub in Grant's two-volume recollections of the conflict in which they served side by side? In this talk, Melissa uncovers the myths and truths about their historic connection.

Melissa A. Winn is the Director of Marketing and Communications for the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Previously, she was the Marketing manager for the American Battlefield Trust and Director of Photography for HistoryNet, publisher of nine history-related magazines, including *America's Civil War*, *American History*, and *Civil War Times*. Melissa is a Senior Editor for *Military Images* magazine,



with a regular column focused on women and the Civil War. She is the editor of *Shavings* and *The Chronicle*, the member newsletter and magazine of the Early American Industries Association, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Civil War Round Table Congress and the Manassas Battlefield Trust; and serves as President of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

As some of you know, in June I started working two days a week as a historic site interpreter at the White House of the Confederacy, in Richmond. I have to admit that my knowledge of Jefferson Davis, his life, and his family was cursory at best prior to working at the house. But, before I could even lead my first tour, I had to learn a whole lot about the Davises and their world in a short amount of time. The more I have learned, the more my curiosity has grown.

This summer, I was able to feed that curiosity during two trips – the first to England and the second to Georgia. Neither trip was taken based on Civil War history, but both offered the opportunity for side trips to visit places that figured into the history of Jefferson Davis and his family. As some of you can undoubtedly relate, I was accompanied by loved ones who “tolerated” my diversions to allow me to satisfy my Civil War history appetite.

Along with my wife Tracy, we vacationed in England during late June and early July to celebrate our 30th anniversary. While we planned to spend most of our time in northern England, we also spent a few days in Bath and Liverpool. We knew our time in Liverpool would be short, so we planned only to take a “Magical Mystery Tour” bus to visit sites related to The Beatles. Although we didn't even have time to do the tour, on our way out of town, Tracy did indulge me with a quick visit to

a place in Liverpool called Abercromby Square. It doesn't appear on "must see" guides to the city, but it does have a Civil War connection.



After the Civil War, Jefferson Davis tried various ways, mainly unsuccessful, to find gainful employment. One of those possibilities took him and his wife Varina to Liverpool in August 1868, where he hoped to find employment in cotton brokerage or with the Royal Insurance Company. Neither venture worked out. During his first trip, Davis most likely visited Abercromby Square, and particularly Number 19 Abercromby, which was considered an "unofficial" White House of the Confederacy and still may have housed Confederate assets. When Davis returned to Liverpool in 1872 and 1874, he lived at Number 19 for part of his time there.

In the few minutes that I spent at Abercromby Square, I scampered in and around the perimeter, snapped a few photographs, and searched for Number 19. I finally managed to find it – about 30 yards behind our parked rental car and practically at my starting point! A work crew was doing some renovations to the entrance, obscuring the address on the side of the building. One of the crew was surprised, not surprisingly, that the building had been associated with the Confederacy. The only historic marker on the building honored Capt. Noel Chavasse (1888-1917), a Royal Army Medical Corps hero who lived there.

My second non-Civil War trip of the summer took us to Savannah, mainly to celebrate my daughter Lauren's birthday (UGA School of Law 2025 – Go Dawgs!). Once again, based on things I have learned since June, I managed to visit two sites associated with the

Davises. Like Abercromby Square, both of these locations were associated with the family's post-Civil War life.

After Jefferson Davis and his family were captured in Irwinville, GA, May 10, 1865, the former president was transported to Fort Monroe while Varina and the children were placed under house arrest in Savannah. For a time, they stayed at the Pulaski House, on the corner of Bull and St. Julian Streets at Johnson Square. While I had hoped the building might still be standing, or at least remembered by a historical marker, the site is now occupied only by a branch of Regions Bank. If there was a

plaque or sign, I didn't see it.

Fortunately, because we live in a digital age, an Internet search will reveal a photograph of the



hotel and a transcribed copy of a letter that Varina wrote to Union Col. John J. Craven describing her time in Savannah.

The other site I visited in Savannah was conveniently located just across the street from the bank on Johnson Square. In 1886, Davis was invited to visit Savannah to rededicate the Nathaniel Green Monument. Although the monument was erected in 1846, it initially did not have inscriptions honoring the Revolutionary War hero. On May 6, 1886, Davis presided over the dedication of two bronze tablets, which were installed as part of the 100th anniversary of the city's Chatham Artillery. Davis used the opportunity to publicly defend states rights, which were reported by the Northern press as "inflammatory." You can read more about Davis's visit to Savannah in an interesting book called *The Death and Resurrection of Jefferson Davis* (2005), by Donald E. Collins.



Did you visit any Civil War sites this summer, especially some that are quirky, little

known, or out of the way? If so, you should write about your trip(s) in an upcoming newsletter. I know myself and other members of the Round Table would enjoy reading about them.

Dale

**CIVIL WAR QUOTES:
WHO SAID IT?**

1. "The great solicitude I feel for the safety of this army leads me to mention what I hoped never again to do – the subject of your drinking... and tonight when you should, because of the condition of your health if nothing else, have been in bed, I find you where the wine bottle has just been emptied, in company with those who drink and urge you to do likewise, and the lack of your usual promptness of decision and clearness in expressing yourself in your writing tended to confirm my suspicions."
2. "The suffering that must exist in the South the next year, even with the war ending now, will be beyond conception. People who talk now of further retaliation and punishment, except of the political leaders, either do not conceive of the suffering endured already or they are heartless and unfeeling and wish to stay at home, out of danger, whilst the punishment is being inflicted."
3. "Our most precious blood is now flowing in streams from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains and may yet be exhausted before we have succeeded. Then goes honor, treasure, and independence."
4. "You will, however, learn before this reaches you that our success at Gettysburg was not so great as reported – in fact, that we failed to drive the enemy from his position, and that our army withdrew to the Potomac."

5. "How many good, and how many mean people these troubles have shown us."

Answers on Page 6

**FIELD TRIP TO THE MARINERS'
MUSEUM
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA**

All members and friends of RCWRT are welcome to join us on Saturday, **October 24, 2026**, for a field trip to the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

COST: \$50 per person (includes transportation, van rental and gasoline; museum entrance fee and tour). You may register now by providing your check, made out to Richmond CWRT, to Art Wingo at the next RCWRT meeting, or mailing it to him at 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059 – registration closes after our October 13, 2026 meeting. Once registration closes, I will contact registrants about lunch orders and collect lunch money – see below. **NOTE:** Per the Museum – all registration and lunch payments are non-refundable.

LUNCH: Pre-ordered lunches will be available at the museum for the cost of approximately \$17-20. I will be taking lunch orders and collecting lunch money prior to trip departure and separately from the overall cost of the field trip. I need to arrange paid lunches by October 16, 2026 – so please bring lunch orders and payments to the October RCWRT meeting. Please see the attachment to the newsletter with the menu choices.

Mariner Museum experiences include: a 15-minute film about the Battle of Hampton Roads between the *USS Monitor* and the *CSS Virginia (Merrimack)*. Our museum guide will show us around the *USS Monitor* Center that houses the award-winning exhibit, *Ironclad Revolution*, as well as the

largest and most advanced conservation lab of any maritime museum in the world, The Batten Conservation Complex.

Please address any questions to Christine Wynd, RCWRT Second VP at:
email: cwynd60@gmail.com, or phone: 216-780-8177

Detailed Itinerary:

8:30 am: Depart Lowe's parking lot, 8001 Brook Road, 23227 (at Parham Road). We will make one stop at the rest area on I-64 in New Kent.

10:30 am: Arrive at the Mariners' Museum and meet our tour guide. Attend the Battle Theater and tour of the *USS Monitor* Center.

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm: Boxed Lunch catered by *Column 15 at the Mariners'* (Museum restaurant) – (to save time by staying for lunch at the museum). Christine Wynd will contact members who have registered for the trip so that menus are shared, lunch choices made, and lunch fees paid.

12:45 – 1:45 pm: Program: "*USS Monitor Unveiled*," to learn about current projects conducted by the Conservation Team of the *USS Monitor* Center (history about the crew – personal stories, historical accounts; also, rarely seen artifacts from the Civil War ironclad).

1:45 – 2:45 pm: Self-guided time to explore museum and gift shop/bookstore.

3:00 pm: Return to Richmond with estimated arrival time of approximately **5:00 pm**.



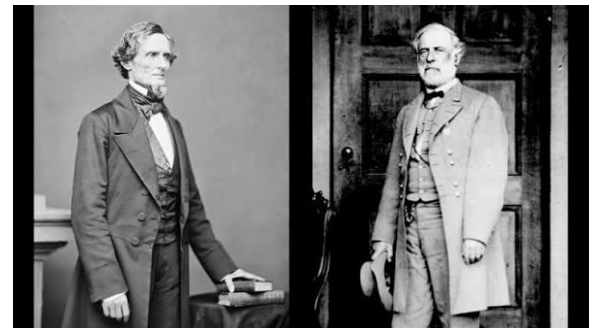
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

WILLIAM C. "JACK" DAVIS
**"Jefferson Davis and R.E. Lee:
A Model
Relationship?"**



For our annual dinner meeting this year we will try something different. Willow

Oaks Country Club is undergoing renovations all year and no events can be held there. So, we arranged with the JCC to hold it in our usual meeting place instead. However, our regular Tuesday in November is not available, so we will have it two days later on **Thursday, November 12, with dinner at 6:00 p.m., and our program beginning at 7:00 p.m.**



Dinner will be catered by Mission BBQ and consist of: Sliced Brisket, Pulled Chicken, Mac-N-Cheese, Cole Slaw, Slider and Cornbread Combo, and four different BBQ Sauces; Kettle Chips, Brownie and Cookie tray; Lemonade and Unsweet Ice Tea. We have also received a one-day Banquet License from the Virginia ABC, so please bring your own bottle (wine or beer). The cost for the dinner is \$40 per person.

More information will be in future newsletters, but you may register now by sending a check – **made out to Richmond CWRT** – to Art Wingo, 1414 Patriot Circle, Glen Allen, VA 23059. Or, you can give your payment to Art at one of the upcoming meetings.

You won't want to miss one of our favorite and much-in-demand speakers, Jack Davis!

EVENTS OF INTEREST

September 26, 10:00 a.m. – Walking Tour of Malvern Hill Battlefield. A Park Ranger from Richmond National Battlefield Park will offer a guided walking tour of the Malvern Hill Battlefield. This 90-minute tour will offer an overview of the July 1, 1862 battle that marked the end of the Seven Days Battles. The tour will cover about a mile-and-a-half of uneven ground. Wear appropriate shoes for the terrain and bring water to stay hydrated. Meet your guide at the Malvern Hill Battlefield parking area at 9175 Willis Church Road, Henrico, VA 23231.

September 26, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. – 162nd Anniversary New Market Heights Battlefield Tour. Join the Battle of New Market Heights Memorial and Education Association for a walking tour of the battlefield. The tour will start at Four Mile Creek Park/Virginia Capital Trail parking lot's center gazebo at 3256 New Market Road, Henrico, VA 23231. About 1.5



– 2 miles of walking over occasionally uneven terrain, including periods of standing. Wear comfortable shoes and bring water and bug spray.

NEW CIVIL WAR BOOK

A new book honoring the late James I. “Bud” Robertson, Jr. is available now. The book contains a collection of essays that explore several aspects of the Civil War that were subjects of Bud’s long and productive career of research, writing, and teaching. ***And Rest in the Shade of the Trees*** (Laurel Hill Publishing) contains essays by William C. “Jack” Davis, Allen C. Guelzo, Emory M. Thomas, Brian Steel Wills, and others. The book is available on Amazon. Autographed copies by publisher Tom Perry (who was a student of Dr. Robertson) can be purchased at <https://laurel-hill-publishing-llc.square.site/>

Answers to ‘Civil War Quotes’

1. Gen. John A. Rawlins, letter to Gen. Grant, June 6, 1863
2. Ulysses S. Grant in a letter to his wife, Julia, April 25, 1865
3. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet in a letter to CS Secretary of War, James E. Seddon, September 26, 1863
4. Gen. Robert E. Lee in a letter to his wife, Mary, July 12, 1863
5. Sarah Morgan Dawson, June 4, 1862, in *A Confederate Girl's Diary*, 1913

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 13: Troy Harman, *All Roads Led to Gettysburg*

November 12: (Annual Dinner Meeting) 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*

Attendance at August Meeting: 55