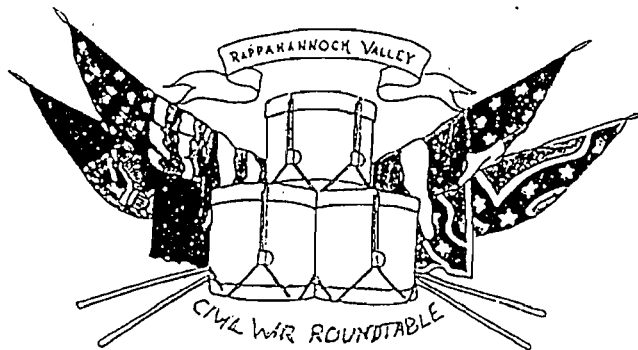


DRUM & BUGLE  
Voice of the Rappahannock  
Valley Civil War Round Table



December 1991

Vol. 2 No. 12

**AMBROSE E. BURNSIDE AT RVCWRT'S HOLIDAY BANQUET**

Speaker: **William Marvel**, author of several significant Civil War studies, including a forthcoming biography of Ambrose E. Burnside

Location: **Aunt Sarah's Restaurant**, on Route 3, west of I-95

When: **Monday, December 2, 1991**. Social at 6:30 p.m., dinner (this time \$15, to cover banquet and speaker expenses) at 7:00 p.m., program at 8:00 p.m. We are meeting on the first Monday of the month, instead of our regular second Monday, to avoid possible conflicts with other holiday events. We need to have an exact head count of attendees by Thanksgiving Day, November 28. Betty Ford and Julie Olsen will be calling members to determine entree preferences (choice of baked ham, baked fish, or seafood dinner), which the restaurant needs ahead of time, so have yours ready. Or, if you change your preference, have to cancel, or just think we might have missed you, call Betty at 659-0128 or Julie at 786-3427. Remember, Thanksgiving Day is the cutoff for reservations, changes, and cancellations.

Ambrose E. Burnside has been maligned by the contemporary press and by some of the major Civil War historians as one of the worst Union army commanders of the conflict. His bad reputation derives largely from the results of the Battle of Fredericksburg, fought within a few miles of our banquet site in December 1862. However, in his career as a corps commander, before and after Fredericksburg, Burnside was responsible for a number of Union successes, including the capture of Roanoke Island and the defense of Knoxville, and he came close to achieving a major victory in turning the Lee's right flank after crossing Antietam Creek. Join us to hear biographer William Marvel speak on the Civil War career of Major General Ambrose E. Burnside.

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Drum & Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. RVCWRT dues are \$10 per year, and membership is open to anyone interested in the study and preservation of Civil War sites.

Mac Wyckoff, president; Betty Ford, secretary; Greg Mertz, newsletter editor; Dane Hartgrove, treasurer; Lou Allahut, Julie Olsen, Mike Vice, Frank O'Reilly, Milt Ford, Lee Ann Williams, and Robert Williams--executive committee members.

## John Singleton Mosby

Some twenty stalwart RVCWRT members and their guests gathered around our square table on the evening of November 11 to discuss the career of Col. John S. Mosby and the exploits of his 43rd Battalion of Virginia cavalry. After a somewhat leisurely dinner which to this correspondent seemed better than usual, President Mac Wyckoff initiated the discussion by asking those present to assess conflicting conclusions by Civil War historians as to whether Mosby's efforts had in fact prolonged the war.

To sum things up in advance, comments pro and con were many and varied. Some held to the most recent interpretations by Dennis Frye and Jeffry Wert, that Mosby was a gnat or mosquito who inflicted no real damage on the Union war effort. Others emphasized the psychological impact of Mosby's raids on Lincoln and the Union high command in Washington, which may have prevented the release of additional men to reinforce Grant at Petersburg. Most seemed to feel Bruce Catton's claim that Mosby's efforts prolonged the war by six months was a bit overstated.

What set Mosby apart from other leaders of Confederate partisan units? The consensus was that Mosby was unique in emphasizing discipline and in not accepting Confederate deserters into his ranks. Mosby's Rangers were so successful against Union cavalry because most of them were superb riders mounted on superior animals, carrying multiple Colt revolvers which gave them an advantage in close-range firepower in their lightning assaults on unsuspecting Union forces. Mosby's men took many prisoners and captured substantial numbers of horses and firearms, besides destroying or otherwise depriving the Union army of much war materiel. However, these losses did not significantly impede the Union war effort. Mosby's depredations had little effect on Sheridan's operations in the Shenandoah Valley in the fall of 1864, and brought ruin to a portion of "Mosby's Confederacy" in the last months of that year. Still, it is difficult to gauge how much of a threat Mosby's Rangers seemed to be in the minds of Lincoln, Stanton, Halleck, even Grant and Sheridan. Did Mosby prolong the war by six months or any fraction thereof? You decide.

Mosby's postwar career also received attention, notably from RVCWRT guest Steve Gambaro, who felt that Mosby deserved credit for championing Grant's presidential campaigns in 1868 and 1872 in an effort to bring about reconciliation between North and South. Mosby's Republican affiliation brought him appointments to various government posts, including that of U.S. Consul at Shanghai, China, in the 1880s. Mosby traveled widely in his later years; during a stay in California, he was introduced to young George S. Patton, Jr., an event which the future Third Army commander would later recall with near reverence. Mosby by then was a little old man, stoop-shouldered and cantankerous; it was the Mosby legend that affected Patton, as it does us.

RVCWRT BUYS 1/2 ACRE AT FISHER'S HILL

Thanks to a generous benefactor who prefers to remain unnamed, the Rappahannock Valley CWRT has met its \$572 commitment to APCWS for the purchase of one-half acre of land on the Fisher's Hill battlefield. All \$572 came as contributions from our members.

In return for our contribution, the Round Table will receive a copy of the Don Troiani print "The Bonnie Blue Flag". The print depicts a moment during the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse when a group of Stephen Ramseur's men, ordered forward to repel the Union breakthrough at the Mule Shoe, spontaneously began to sing this Southern anthem as they prepared to move out.

This valuable print will be raffled off at our May meeting, which will be held on the battlefield at Spotsylvania Courthouse (weather permitting). Proceeds will be used for additional Round Table preservation efforts. Stay tuned for more information about the raffle in coming months.

If you wish to suggest a Civil War site that you think the RVCWRT should consider donating funds to help preserve, please get in touch with a member of the Executive Committee. The Committee is here to "execute" your wishes, but we can't do that very well unless you tell us what you want.

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HELP BRANDY STATION

The Brandy Station Foundation could still use your help in writing letters of support for the battlefield's listing in the National Register of Historic Sites. For those of you who live in the 7th Congressional District, this would be a good opportunity to introduce yourselves and your concerns to your new representative, George Allen.

His address:           Honorable George Allen  
                          House of Representatives  
                          Washington, DC 20515

Letters should be short and to the point, no longer than one page. Simply state that you favor preservation of the Brandy Station Battlefield, that you support the National Park Service study and recognition given to the site, and that you advocate the retention of the Secretary of the Interior's designation of eligibility for Brandy Station's listing on the National Register of Historic Sites. It only costs you a few minutes of your time and one 29-cent stamp. If you can, give a copy of your letter to Greg Mertz or any of the other RVCWRT officers, and we will get it to the Brandy Station Foundation for inclusion its file of efforts to neutralize the misinformation being spread by the "Citizens for Land Rights" organization.

## HANSBOROUGH RIDGE ADDED TO VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

A 110-acre parcel of Hansborough Ridge, the site of the 1863-1864 winter encampment of part of the Army of the Potomac, has been included on the Virginia Landmarks Register at the request of the Brandy Station Foundation. The decision to place the site on the register came during a meeting of the Virginia Historic Resources Board (HRB) in Richmond on October 9.

Hansborough Ridge, located northeast of Stevensburg, still retains physical evidence of the encampment, including hut sites and trenches. The area is also closely associated with the Battle of Brandy Station, and is already on the register in that connection.

In addition to approving the Hansborough Ridge nomination, the HRB endorsed a "multiple property documentation form," which outlines the overall scope of the winter encampment and its historic significance. This will make it easier to have other campsites in Culpeper and Fauquier Counties included on the Virginia Landmarks Register in the future.

Inclusion of Hansborough Ridge on the state register initiates an additional submission to the National Parks Service, which will decide whether the ridge should be included on the National Register of Historic Places.

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## SOUTH MOUNTAIN BATTLE SITE PURCHASED

The Central Maryland Heritage League has purchased a 22-acre parcel located at the base of Turner's Gap along Alternate Route 40 (the former National Pike) on the site of the Battle of South Mountain. Fought on September 14, 1862, between Lee's rear guard and McClellan's advancing Army of the Potomac, the encounter effectively ended the Army of Northern Virginia's Maryland campaign and forced Lee to concentrate his forces at Sharpsburg to accept battle.

The site includes an historic house, once a tavern, dating from the 1700s, which the League may convert into a museum or visitor's center. "The primary benefit to Marylanders, and all Americans, is that we have taken action to preserve elements of our heritage," League president George Brigham said. The group purchased the land because it was threatened by development. The League is currently negotiating to purchase another 10-acre parcel in the same area.

The money for the League's purchase came from a low-interest loan from the Maryland Environmental Trust, which was formed in 1967 by the Maryland General Assembly to conserve the state's environment. Virginia lawmakers, take note!

RVCWRT FIELD TRIP SET FOR APRIL 25

On Saturday, April 25, 1992, the Rappahannock Valley CWRT will host a field trip to the sites of the Seven Days battles around Richmond. (Of course, it might be Six Days by then if West Sand & Gravel takes a big enough bite out of Malvern Hill; see last month's Drum & Bugle for details.) We will rendezvous with our guide and our 23-passenger bus in Richmond, which allows us to hold the price down to \$10 per person. Those RVCWRT members wishing to participate should get their \$10, in cash or check made payable to the round table, to field trip coordinator Lou Allahut ASAP. As with last year's field trip, we will take reservations from everyone, members and non-members alike, on a first-come, first-served basis. Don't be left out! Get your \$10 to Lou Allahut now, before we publicize this event further.

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ACCIDENTS MAR LATE SUMMER REENACTMENT EVENTS

Unexplained accidents at a Labor Day weekend event in Monroe, NY, and a September 14 event in Freehold, NJ, raise the question of whether someone out there wants to put a little involuntary realism into Civil War reenactments, or (more likely) a few reenactors need to be less careless.

According to the October issue of The Civil War News, a Labor Day weekend event at the Museum Village in Monroe, NY, included the discovery that a length of rope had been stretched across a path along which the Union cavalry, led by event coordinator William Podszus, was to travel. The rope was found by a unit of Union sharpshooters, and the trap eliminated before any harm was done.

"It was a case of reckless endangerment," Podszus said. "If it had been successful, not only would horse and rider be hurt, but most likely any infantry standing nearby. It could have been really serious."

On September 14, 1991, during a reenactment of the "Cornfield" action from the Battle of Antietam held at Monmouth Battlefield State Park in Freehold, NJ, a tampion apparently fired from the rifle of an unknown Confederate reenactor pierced the side of a drum carried by 13-year-old John Travis. Travis normally serves with his father in the 5th New York Zouaves, but that day was with the National Regiment. The projectile penetrated the drum's side, bounced off a rim, broke through the drumhead, and hit the drummer's belt before falling harmlessly at his feet. The event coordinator immediately called a ceasefire, and the National Regiment marched off the field "for safety reasons." Capt. Tony Daniels of the 3rd New Jersey, the host unit, warned: "Maybe we are taking this [reenacting] too lightly. ...Many of us tend to get negligent and careless.... Let's get our acts together and from now on, let's do it right and safe, because if we can't, it's bye, bye." Enough said.

Next Meeting

January 13 Aunt Sarah's. Local historian Homer Musselman will speak on the 47th Virginia Infantry.

New Books

Noah Andre Trudeau. The Last Citadel: Petersburg, Virginia, June 1864-April 1865. Little, Brown, 1991. 514 pp.

Michael B. Ballard. Pemberton: A Biography. University of Mississippi Press, \$29.50.

Hal Bridges. Lee's Maverick General: Daniel Harvey Hill. Reprint by University of Nebraska Press, \$11.95 ppb, \$30 hardcover.

Dee Brown. Grierson's Raid. Reprint, Morningside Press, \$19.95.

Larry V. Daniel. Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in a Confederate Army. University of North Carolina Press, \$22.50.

William C. Davis. Jefferson Davis. HarperCollins, \$35.

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table  
P.O. Box 7632  
Fredericksburg, VA 22404

LETTERS  
JOIN APCWS

Dues \$10.00  
Casey about selling book  
Ellen's side Book  
Noel - June or July  
Monday Dec 6

rac  
Mark  
Milton - Treasurer  
Beth - Secretary  
Greg - Immediate Past President  
Julie  
Frank  
Lee Ann  
Robert