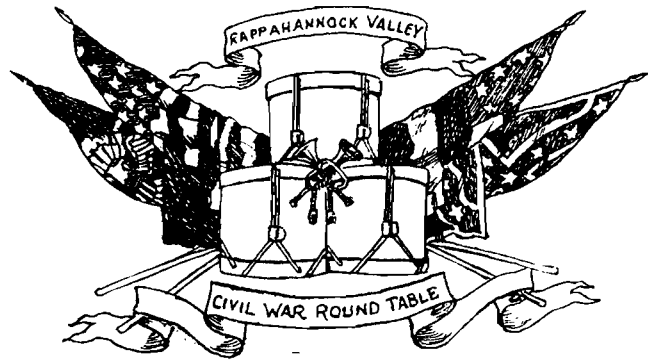


DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock
Valley Civil War Round Table



December 1995

Vol. 6. No. 12

"The Evolution of Grant's Leadership May 5-12, 1864"

- Speaker:** Gordon C. Rhea
- Topic:** Ulysses S. Grant's Leadership From the Wilderness to the Bloody Angle
- When:** Saturday, December 9, 1995. Social at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:45 p.m.
- Location:** SOPHIA STREET STATION, 503 Sophia Street at the intersection with Lafayette Boulevard in downtown Fredericksburg
- Dinner Cost & Reservations:** The cost for dinner is \$14.00. Reservations are required and must be made by Tuesday, December 5 by calling either Betty Ford at 659-0128 or Mac Wyckoff at 786-2470. (Please make any cancellations as soon as possible.)

Note: Our special December banquet meeting is on a SATURDAY, not the traditional second Monday.

Gordon Rhea is a lawyer with offices in both Washington, DC and the Virgin Islands. His book The Battle of the Wilderness: May 5-6, 1864 was a History Book Club selection and was awarded the 1994 Jules and Frances Landry Award. He has also written the first part of a two volume study of the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, covering the dates of May 7-12, which is at the publishers and will be released in the fall of 1996. Since he has thoroughly studied the first eight days of the campaign, Rhea will share with us his thoughts and discoveries of how Grant's leadership changed over that critical week.

Drum and Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Dues are \$15 per year for individuals, \$25 for families, and \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the preservation of Civil War sites. J. Dane Hartgrove, president; Mac Wyckoff, vice-president; Jeff Driscoll, interim treasurer; Greg Mertz, newsletter editor; Melanie Jordan, secretary; Milt Ford, immediate past president; Lou Allahut, John Graham, Tom Quigley, Bob Roser, Ned Hall and Marc Thompson--executive committee members.

Dot Kelly Finds Longstreet's Performance Deficient at Knoxville

The Federal force's were victorious in the Knoxville Campaign because of Gen. Ambrose Burnside's "excellent handling of his troops" and because Confederate leader James Longstreet experienced a great deal of "discord" within his command." This is how Dot Kelly introduced the Knoxville Campaign at our November meeting, as she addressed us within a mile of the first Burnside-Longstreet confrontation.

Burnside's campaign in autumn of 1863 was the first serious attempt to hold East Tennessee for the Union and provide the loyalist living there protection. Lack of transportation through the region contributed to the independent, clannish nature of the area residents, and their different perspective compared with the remainder of the state. While the entire state rejected secession the first time it was brought to a vote, the second time--when the state indeed passed an ordinance of secession--East Tennessee still voted against it by a margin of 3 to 1. The residents even petitioned the state in hopes of creating a new state of East Tennessee. Instead of granting permission, the state government responded by sending state troops into the region--troops which became the basis for the subsequent Confederate Army of Tennessee. East Tennessee had been the objective of several planned invasions--often as a result of Tennessee's loyal Senator Andrew Johnson, who made sure that Union strategy considered the Federal supporters in the eastern part of his state--but shifting priorities sidetracked all earlier plans.

Confederates under Simon Buckner occupied East Tennessee when Burnside initiated his campaign. In the last week of August, 1863, Buckner was called to reinforce Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. Longstreet, with the Army of Northern Virginia's First Corps was also part of that concentration of Confederate forces joining Bragg and contributing to the victory at Chickamauga, Georgia on September 19-21, 1863. But after this success, the Confederates were unable to focus on the opportunity to lay siege and capture William B. Rosecrans' defeated Army of the Cumberland. The bickering which so plagued the primary western army, flared up again. At a time when Longstreet's Corps was badly needed to finish off Rosecrans, Bragg divided his forces and the corps was sent away--believed to have primarily been a move to rid the army of the corp's leader, as Longstreet and Bragg were active participants in the verbal sparring following Chickamauga. Longstreet's new objective was Burnside.

But harmony among the officers in Longstreet's own corps was no better than that among the officers in Bragg's army. Longstreet's relations with division commander Lafayette McLaws were strained since Gettysburg. Micah Jenkins and Evander Law each vied for permanent command of the same division. As Jenkins temporarily directed the division during the Knoxville Campaign, Law--serving as a subordinate--apparently sought to undermine his superior. Jerome Robertson, commander of the Texas Brigade, was also the source of discord.

As Longstreet headed from Chattanooga toward Knoxville, he was frustrated by the progress of his advance. The railroad engines he used to transport his men lacked adequate power to such a degree that soldiers had to jump off the train as it climbed steep grades. Longstreet complained that his 60 mile journey to Sweetwater, Tennessee--midway from Chattanooga to Knoxville--took twice as long by train than it would have taken his men to march. Longstreet's supplies were deficient. He grumbled that his command was not even prepared to subsist, not to mention carry on an active campaign.

The Federal force Longstreet pursued enjoyed several small successes in the time span immediately after Buckner's departure. Burnside's men arrived at Knoxville September 1-3, and were greeted with cheering, United States flags waving, and food being distributed. Burnside proceeded to Cumberland Gap, where the Confederate garrison was captured, and he pushed back Confederate cavalry units in the northern part of East Tennessee. As Longstreet advanced on the Federals, Burnside proposed a move away from Longstreet. His plan was to draw the Confederates even further away from Chattanooga, in hopes that Longstreet would take himself out of supporting distance from Bragg's army--and it worked. Burnside moved with speed and successfully fought off Longstreet at Lenoir's and Campbell's Stations. Burnside did a fine job of holding Longstreet back, enabling him to reach Knoxville. As Burnside's cavalry fought to gain time for the Federals to construct earthworks, 30 year-old Gen. William P. Sanders was mortally wounded on Nov. 18, and a former Confederate fort incorporated into the Union lines was re-named in his honor. Longstreet attempted to lay siege to Knoxville, but he failed to close off a pontoon bridge across a river, allowing one supply line open, even though it had been demonstrated to Longstreet that the Federals were not completely cut off.

Longstreet planned--and postponed--several attacks against Knoxville. Assaults were cancelled due to weather, decisions to change a night attack to a daylight attack, to await reinforcements, or thoughts of attacking at a different location than had been planned. The subsequent attack on Fort Sanders was even altered several times before it got underway. Artillerist E.P. Alexander, who had just painstakingly completed the task on manhandling his guns into position to enfilade Fort Sanders was upset when his role was diminished. While another change was to make the offensive a surprise attack, the Confederates drove in Federal skirmishers at 11:00 p.m. on the night before the attack, leaving little doubt where the main effort would be made.

As McLaws prepared his men for the assault, Longstreet told him that he had seen a sentry walk across the ditch in front of the fort, and assured his division commander that it was only waist deep and that ladders would not be needed. At dawn of November 29, 1863 Confederate artillery shelled Fort Sanders as a signal. The 4,000 Confederates set to attack had no doubt that they would succeed in taking the 440 Federals within the fort. McLaws' men advanced, an encountered telegraph wire strung up knee high between tree stumps. This was not the only unforeseen obstacle, however, as they soon discovered that the ditch in front of the fort was 12 feet wide, 6 to 8 feet deep--rather than waist-deep--with a parapet of another 12 feet. The Confederates struggled to gain a grip or foothold on the 20 foot wall which had iced over in the cold weather, but they did climb the wall, and colors of the 13th Mississippi, 17th Mississippi, and 16th Georgia flew on top of the parapet. But in less than 30 minutes it was all over, and the corps suffered what Kelly described as its "greatest humiliation" of the war.

Afterwards, Longstreet "sat in a cloud of indecision," said Kelly. He eventually learned that William T. Sherman was on his way toward Burnside with a relief force to lift the siege. As operations around Knoxville ended, the next phase for the Confederates was one of assigning blame. Longstreet accused McLaws and dismissed him, but McLaws demanded formal courtmartial proceedings to decide his innocence or guilt. Of the three charges leveled against McLaws, he was found guilty of one--not sending ladders along with his attack column. Kelly pointed out that McLaws lost this count largely upon procedural rulings, as the judge would not admit as evidence Longstreet's comments about the ditch being waist deep. The outcome of Knoxville requires looking no further than Longstreet's conduct.

APCWS Move to Hagerstown--A Place the Organization Can Thrive

An Editorial by Greg Mertz

Next month, some members of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) staff will begin their work-day in Hagerstown, Maryland, as the organization establishes its headquarters there. It will gradually phase out the current Fredericksburg office. The move is in the best interest of the organization and the Fredericksburg area should send them on their way to Hagerstown with heartfelt best wishes, and an appreciation of what the organization gains by the move. The organization will be able to do much more for Civil War preservation in Hagerstown which it could not do here in Fredericksburg. The APCWS will devote money to battlefield purchases which otherwise would have gone to rent, will receive free professional services, will have the potential to recruit members visiting the office, can better demonstrate examples of successful local preservation groups, and its president can more easily utilize his professional network.

APCWS has always prided itself in assuring members that their contributions go almost exclusively to buying battlefields--not toward paying overhead costs. Generous donations from Mr. Gilder helped APCWS get on its feet, via grants to pay much, if not all of the rent, and staff expenses during those early years. Whereas some organizations might take such a "crutch" for granted, the APCWS wisely saw the need to wean themselves from what was unintended as help with their start-up costs, and make sure that money spent on rent would not translate into less money spent on Civil War battlefields. The Hagerstown incentive offers 10 years of free rent in the Elizabeth Hager Center with an option to renew for another 10 years. Figuring rent would cost \$20,000 per year, that computes to a potential of \$400,000 to be spent on battlefields rather than overhead.

A Hagerstown public relations firm has added to the package some free services to APCWS. Incidentally, publicity leading to increased tourism is what the Hagerstown area hopes to gain from the deal. APCWS's presence will help attract attention to the area's rich Civil War history, enabling city and Washington county officials to capitalize on the area's history more than it has done. In an effort to expose people to Hagerstown who might return and tell others of their experiences, most major hotels offer APCWS members a 30-40% discount. About the only commitment expected of APCWS is to hold a certain number of Civil War conferences based out of Hagerstown.

The APCWS office will be in the same building as the Hagerstown-Washington County Tourist and Visitation Center, providing the staff with an opportunity to meet with people interested in the Civil War who may not know about the organization. Although an earlier proposal to have an office in the same building as a Sharpsburg visitor center would have brought exposure to even more students of the Civil War, the APCWS needs to grow to be even more successful. Any opportunity to share information about what the group has done would be welcomed. Although Fredericksburg obviously receives more visitors than either Hagerstown or Sharpsburg, the APCWS offices were not at or along the way to any of the area's numerous historic attractions, and therefore potential new members would not find themselves at the APCWS doorstep. Such is not the case when sharing the building with the visitor center, as at Hagerstown.

The Hagerstown area offers an opportunity to demonstrate how other local historic preservation organizations have succeeded. Why is this important? The APCWS cannot and does not expect to raise 100% of the money needed for individual battlefield projects. It

works with partners--local organizations--to keep APCWS apprised of the availability of battlefield lands, to provide a heads up on changes in land use status and other threats to battlefields, and to assist in raising funds. Typically, APCWS provides matching grants to projects, with the local organizations coming up with the other portion. Often these local organizations need some guidance on what to do. In my opinion, four such local organizations have gone through the trial and error process of finding out what works and what does not in local preservation efforts, and have made major strides in preserving battlefields--the Kansas City Civil War Round Table and its Monnett-Westport fund to preserve portions of the Westport, Missouri battlefield; Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Save Historic Antietam Foundation; and the Central Maryland Heritage League, which has acquired land at Fox's and Turner's Gaps on South Mountain and hired their first paid staff member this past year. The later two of those organizations are based near Hagerstown. When new local groups from around the country come to Hagerstown to approach APCWS for financial help and advice on preserving their local battlefield, APCWS can point to Save Historic Antietam Foundation and Central Maryland Heritage League on subjects from how to approach rezoning, to how to raise funds through raffling prints, or selling a square foot of battlefield. The state of Maryland has also demonstrated progressive ways of preserving battlefields, from which local organizations can examine and share such examples with their own state officials. Maryland is a real "think tank" in battlefield preservation.

Providing a key leadership role in the establishment of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation was current APCWS president, Dennis Frye. Dennis hails from Maryland's Pleasant Valley and has lived all of his life in that area. He has established important contacts with SHAF, other organizations, historians, and government officials in the region. The ability of Dennis to network with those with which he has connections and exchange ideas on state of the art successful methods, will pay back many dividends to APCWS in Hagerstown.

Back when 2/3 of APCWS was Will Greene and Mark Stephens, Fredericksburg is where those historians had their contacts--I know that I spoke with Mark professionally on a weekly basis, and I would imagine that Will had regular conversations with Bob Krick and his contacts as well. The same has got to be true for Dennis Frye. It is important for him to be able to utilize the network he has established. Returning Dennis to the area where he knows so many people who have been involved in dynamic acts of saving battlefields will improve APCWS's effectiveness.

Much had been said about the move to a site in close proximity to Harpers Ferry was simply to allow the new president, Dennis Frye, to retain his home in that area. Why was APCWS headquartered in Fredericksburg in the first place? Because its first president, Will Greene, (then called an Executive Director) was living in Fredericksburg when he was asked to take a leave of absence from the National Park Service and provide the critical leadership for what was little more than a worthy idea. There were no other logical factors making Fredericksburg the APCWS headquarters than that.

Many members of our Round Table--particularly those who volunteered in the office or worked hard on our own projects to raise funds for APCWS--are sad to see them leave. But for a variety of reasons, Fredericksburg is not the best location for APCWS. As they leave our area, we should pass along our best of wishes and a tip of the hat for a job well done. We should also have expectations of even better things as they go to Hagerstown--a place with the formula to enable APCWS to thrive.

Calendar of Events

- December 2-3--Fredericksburg's Christmas Candlelight Tour, Historic Fredericksburg Foundation Inc., 11-5 Sat., 11-8 Sun., tours of 9 historic homes and Shiloh (New Site) Baptist Church decorated for the holidays, carolers and musicians, refreshments, horse-drawn carriage rides, holiday gift shop. Tickets--\$18 for adults, \$8 for students--may be obtained through Dec. 1 at the Fredericksburg Visitor Center, Spotsylvania Visitor Center, Belmont or HFFI office. (\$25 for adults and \$12 for students on day-of-tour.) 373-1776.
- December 3--Museums by Candlelight tour sponsored by Frederick Historic Sites Consortium, Maryland, includes Monocacy National Battlefield, Civil War era Santa, (301) 662-3515.
- December 4--Old Salem Church Holiday Music Program, 7:30 p.m., music and carols performed by Salem Baptist Church choir, parking at the new lot on Rt. 3, 373-6124. Note that the proper date is Monday, December 4, as some lists of holiday activities have publicized the wrong date.
- December 9--Christmas in Camp Open House, Fort Ward Museum, Alexandria, 1-4, military and civilian interpreters, Santa Claus, refreshments, music, 11:30 a.m. talk "We Were Marching on Christmas Day," (703) 838-4848.
- December 9--Special RVCWRT Saturday meeting, Gordon C. Rhea, speaker.
- December 10--Battle of Fredericksburg 133rd Anniversary Ceremony, 2:00 p.m. at the Richard Kirkland Memorial on Sunken Road, speaker John Hennessy, living history units, field music, color guards, wreath presentations, and donation of an original Irish Brigade drum for display at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, 373-6124.
- December 10--Battle of Fredericksburg car caravan tour conducted by Don Pfanz of southern end of the battlefield, 9:30-12:30, meets at Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center, sponsored by John Pelham Historical Society, 373-6122.
- December 10--Battle of Fredericksburg walking tour conducted by Frank O'Reilly of the attack of the Irish Brigade, 12:00-1:45, meets at city dock and ends at the Kirkland Memorial in time to participate in the anniversary ceremony, sponsored by the 28th Massachusetts living history unit, which will be marching the tour route in uniform, 373-6122..
- January 20--Annual ceremony honoring Gens. Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. Jackson and their birthdays, at the Lee-Jackson monument (impressive dual equestrian statues) at Art Museum and Wyman Park Drive, Baltimore, Maryland, 11 a.m., (410) 296-9235 or (410) 747-3271.
- January 20--15th Annual Lee/Jackson Ball at the Chamberlin Hotel, Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia, (pre-registration by Dec. 15), (804) 421-7450 or (804) 421-7221.
- January 31-February 3--"4th Annual Sarasota Civil War Symposium", Sarasota, FL, includes Gary Gallagher, Bob Krick, Peter Cozzens, Wm. Glenn Robertson, John Y. Simon, sponsored by Civil War Education Assn. 800-298-1861.

What a Difference a Day Makes

Work Project at Aquia Landing a Success

by Milt Ford

On Saturday, November 18, 1995, ten of our preservation oriented members met at the Patawomeck Band Memorial Park at Aquia Landing. They came with chain saws, digging bars, lopping shears, brush hooks and muscle for a day of service in a Confederate fort within the park. The weather cooperated perfectly--cool and cloudy.

A massive Poplar tree, approximately 36 inches in diameter, on top of the fort was felled with a tremendous thump over the edge of the crest--thanks to board member John Graham and his friend, John Sinn. (The immense root system of the tree, intertwined with the earth walls of the fort, could potentially rip out a large section of the wall, should the tree blow over in a storm. The removal of the tree is a preventative measure to assure the fort's preservation.).

A number of slightly smaller trees from inside and around the fort were also taken down to clear the inner area of brush, and improve the visibility. After cutting the trees into more manageable sizes, the pieces were moved to the rear of the fort or lined up to serve as rustic benches. The area was cleared of debris and was soon looking great. It is hard to believe that the redoubt was taken to this stage of restoration so quickly!

The work was accomplished through the combined efforts of our two experts in large tree removal, Enos and Ellen Richardson, Bud and Thelma Altemus, Dane Hartgrove, Steve Gambaro, and Betty and Milt Ford. This hard-working group then repaired to the adjacent "camp" of the Fords for chili, corn bread, hot soup and apple pie. Everyone felt extremely satisfied with the morning's labor. The entire Round Table greatly appreciates their efforts on behalf of our organization.

Betty and Ellen have already scoped out areas for planting wildflowers, to be undertaken soon. Steve Gambaro has made two great signs to be installed in the park. A two feet by three feet marker describes the action which occurred at Aquia Landing on May 31 and June 1, 1861. Another sign, three feet by four feet, is to be erected on an Indian remains reburial site located at the top of the hill.

For all members who missed the work party, we invite you to join us for a future work project day and see what a difference a day makes!

Mark Your Calendars for the 1996 Field Trip

On October 26-27, 1996 our Round Table will embark upon its first ever overnight field trip. Our destination will be Gettysburg. Our tour guide will be a 16-year veteran of the park, and arguably the most knowledgeable person on the Gettysburg as well as Maryland Campaign--D. Scott Hartwig. This is an opportunity you will not want to miss.

Preserving the Rappahannock Valley The Theme of the 1996 Preservation Conference

The 1996 Preservation Conference will be held Saturday and Sunday, March 30-31. The format will be slightly different than the past three conferences, providing our hard-working board with a variation which will not be as labor intensive. It will consist of two days of tours and a banquet.

The Saturday tour will feature Mac Wyckoff conducting a tour of the northern end of the Fredericksburg Battlefield during the morning, and Frank O'Reilly showing participants the southern end of the battlefield in the afternoon. John Hennessy will speak at the Saturday evening dinner banquet. The Sunday tour will consist of a Kelly's Ford Battlefield tour in the morning with Greg Mertz, and an afternoon tour of Brandy Station, conducted by either Bud Hall or Greg.

The entire proceeds from the conference will be donated to the APCWS for the preservation of Brandy Station. The cost will be \$75 for the full package, \$50 per day, or \$35 for the Saturday banquet.

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

