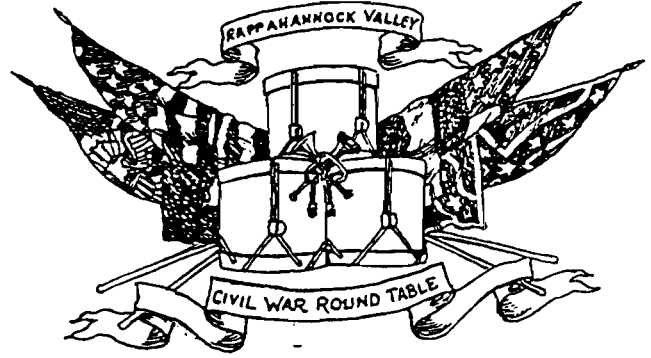


DRUM & BUGLE  
Voice of the Rappahannock  
Valley Civil War Round Table



Vol. 10, No. 12

December 1999

**Ambrose Burnside Rides Again**

Speaker: **Frank O'Reilly**

Topic: **New Perspectives on the Battle of Fredericksburg**

When: **Monday, December 13.** Social at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Location: **Holiday Inn North, on Rt. 17 in Stafford, near the I-95 interchange**

Dinner: The cost for dinner is \$14.00. Reservations are required and must be made by noon Friday, December 10. Make **reservations** by contacting **Mike Stevens** in any of the following ways: **371-3115 (telephone), 372-9860 (fax), <drmste@aol.com> (e-mail)**. If you make a reservation and find that you will not be able to attend the dinner, please call to cancel as soon as possible. **Please note: because the billing procedure of the Holiday Inn has changed, we now have to pay for all meals for which we have made reservations. If you make a reservation for dinner, then fail to show up, and we have to pay for your meal, you will be billed for it.**

Frank O'Reilly, an historian with Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, is an excellent speaker who has addressed RVCWRT on several occasions in the past. A graduate of Washington and Lee University and a huge fan of the University of Notre Dame's sports teams, Frank is the author of one of the best volumes in the H.E. Howard battles series, on the fighting at Prospect Hill during the Battle of the Fredericksburg. He has just submitted a manuscript to Louisiana State University Press on the Battle of Fredericksburg.

Frank will speak in part on the incredible bravery of the Union troops who assaulted the Sunken Road on December 13, 1862, as well as on the failure of various Union officers to coordinate the attack. He will probably have little to say on the equestrian abilities of Ambrose E. Burnside. That Union general had his headquarters somewhere besides his saddle during the battle, but the exact location has not yet been determined.

Suffice it to say that, since it is virtually impossible for RVCWRT to deal with the Battle of Fredericksburg without some derogatory mention being made of Milt Ford's favorite general, the floor (or whatever) is now open for further comments.

## FREDERICKSBURG - ADVANCING ON MARYE'S HEIGHTS

Excerpts from the Regimental History of the Tenth New York Volunteers National Zouaves, mustered into service April 26, 1861, mustered out June 30, 1865, as recorded by Charles W. Cowtan, late Adjutant of the Regiment and Brevet Captain U. S. Volunteers. 1882

"On the 24th, {Sept 1862} orders were received from Army Headquarters transferring the Tenth to the Second Army Corps ; General Sumners'. Camp was struck and a hearty goodbye said to our fellow soldiers of the 5th. from whom it seemed rather odd to part after having been so long and intimately connected. {The march led from Bolivar Heights to Rectortown through cold weather and light snow; reaching Warrenton Nov. 8th. where they said sad fairwells to General McClellan. }

About the 15th of Nov., the advance of the Second Corps arrived at Falmouth where French's division went into camp on the Rappahannock, opposite the city of Fredericksburg.

On the 21st., Fredericksburg was summoned to surrender by General Sumner..General Lee, however was rapidly concentrating his army on the heights west of the city and refused to accede to the summons...the Rebel sharpshooters continuing to hold possession of the houses along the river.

Strong pickets were thrown out along the Union side of the stream for a distance of several miles, the enemy's outposts being stationed opposite. The weather was rainy . As Dec. arrived the nights became bitterly cold and it was with considerable difficulty that the pickets were enabled to keep themselves from freezing while on post. Education was common among the ranks and soldiers would vary the talk around the bivouac fires with opinions concerning the different manoeuvres of their army and prophecies as to the results...criticizing with unsparing tongue the tactics of their superiors. Diaries of obscure soldiers have proved of great benefit to historians. An enlisted man wrote from Falmouth to his family, soon after arriving at Falmouth.

"Again, we have been chasing the Rebels . We are camped but a few rods from the spot where we laid one night last August while marching up towards Bull Run, and after tramping through and over some of the most mountainous and stony parts of Virginia, here we go again, waiting for something to turn up and as far from the end, apparently as ever. We hurried from Warrenton to this place as if Old Nick himself were after us, over stony and muddy roads and sometimes no roads at all..and we have laid here five days doing nothing. Yesterday, it commenced to rain and has fallen in torrents, raising the river greatly. The Johnnies are hobnobbing with us from their side of the river and coffee, bacon and tobacco somehow change hands very often.

The army had been divided into three Grand Divisions..Right, Left and Centre. Gen Sumner had been placed in command of the former, composed of the Second and Ninth Corps: Gen. Couch assuming command of the Second Corps in Sumner's stead. Aquia Creek, where it empties into the Potomac, was established as the base of supplies; piers and roads were constructed and immense quantities of stores conveyed thither for the use of the large army computed at over 100,000 men, now in the vicinity of Fredericksburg.

The pontoons did not reach Falmouth until the 22nd and 23d, giving the Rebels ample time to concentrate on the hills behind the city.

Early on the morning of Dec. 11th., the sound of heavy artillery aroused the army. Gen. Burnside had opened fire upon the city and defenses behind it with 163 guns. Orders were received by the Tenth to be in readiness. Nearly all day the siege artillery in position opposite Fredericksburg belched forth its thunders, shelling the houses and streets, in order to drive from their concealment the Rebel sharpshooters who covered the river with their rifles. Under cover of the storm of shot and shell, the construction of the pontoon bridges was begun directly fronting the city and also about three miles below.

The next morning, after some perilous work and most daring bravery on the part of several hundred men of the 7th. Michigan and 19th. and 20th. Massachusettes, a foothold was gained on the Fredericksburg side, and the advance force drove the remaining Rebel skirmishers from the houses. Couch's Second Corps immediately crossed, and skirmishers were advanced to and beyond the outskirts, while the regiments bivouacked in the streets, remaining inactive during the remainder of the day.

The weather grew colder. Nearly all the officers of the National Zouaves were quartered together in a comfortable and nicely furnished house. The house seemed to have been hastily deserted, and eatables were plentiful and articles of luxury and knickknacks were plentifully abundant, proving that the former occupants were anything but needy. The regiment bivouacked in open air. Fires were built and around these clusters of the men congregated, commenting upon the events of the day and what might take place on the morrow. "Skirmishing" for apple-jack and tobacco had been going on...the latter luxury was more plentiful in the Tenth than it had ever been before. Many

filled the breasts of their blouses with the hard pressed cakes, and in several cases severe wounds were prevented, during the action of the following day, with bullets striking the plugs and grazing them, or being imbedded in the tobacco, causing the bearer nothing worse than a severe knockdown or stunning.

Sumner's and Franklin's grand divisions had both crossed the river and were in position, but a heavy fog had obscured the view a great part of the day. Saturday (13th.) came and the fog still hovered around the city and adjacent country. It was nearly noon before necessary preparations were made. Then Kimball's brigade (the First) advanced, followed by the Third Brigade, commanded by Col. J.W. Andrews, in which was the Tenth NY. This was in turn followed by the Second Brigade, under Col. Palmer of the 108th NY Vol.

The division, in its passage through the city, was necessarily obliged to march in columns through parallel streets, partly in view of the enemy, whose batteries opened upon the regiments immediately. Col. Bendix in command of the Tenth was here wounded in the throat by a splinter or fragment of a shell. The command of the regiment devolved upon Capt. Winchester. Upon reaching open ground, orders were given to deploy by brigades and although fences and other obstacles prevented as speedy an execution of the order as was desirable, the brigades formed and advanced upon the slopes, while a direct and enfilading fire was doing great execution in the ranks. Capt. Winchester here fell mortally wounded by a shell. At a moment when the main portion of the regiment were lying flat upon the ground, in order to shield themselves as much as possible, Winchester daringly remained upon his feet, insisting that while in command of the regiment, he "would stand until he was knocked down".

{From the Philadelphia Weekly, "French's division was the first to rush to the assault. When it emerged from cover and burst out in the open, in full view of the enemy, it was greeted with a frightful fiery eruption from all its batteries on the circling summit. The ridge concentrated upon it the convergent fire of all its enginery of war. You might see at a mile the lanes made by the cannon balls in the ranks. You might see a bursting shell throw up into the air a cloud of earth and dust, mingled with the limbs of men. The batteries in front of the devoted division thundered against it. To the right, to the left, cannon were answering each other in a tremendous battle chorus, the burden of which was "welcome to these madmen about to die".

The advancing column was a focus, the point of concentration of an almost a semi-circle of destruction. It was a centre of attraction of all deadly missiles. At that moment a single division was going up alone in battle against the Southern Confederacy, and was being pounded to pieces. It continued to go up, nevertheless, towards the stone wall, towards the crest above. With lips more firmly compressed, the men closed ranks and pushed forward. The storm of battle increased its fury upon them; the crash of musketry mingled with the roar of ordnance from the peaks. The stone wall and the rifle pits added their terrible treble to the deep bass of the bellowing ridge. The rapid discharge of small arms poured a continuous rain of bullets in their faces...they fell down by tens, by hundreds. When they had gained a large part of the distance, the storm developed into a hurricane of ruin. The division was blown back as if by a breath of hell's door suddenly opened..shattered, disordered, pell mell, down the declivities, amid the shouts and yells of the enemy, which made the horrid din demoniac. The division of French fell back; losing nearly half its numbers.

Hancock immediately charged with five thousand men, veteran regiments, led by tried commanders. They saw what had happened; they knew what would befall them. They advanced up the hill; the bravest were found dead within twenty-five paces of the stone wall. It was slaughter, havoc, carnage. In fifteen minutes they were thrown back with a loss of two thousand. Hancock and French, repulsed from the stone wall, would not quit the hill altogether. Their divisions lying down on the earth, literally clung to the ground they had won. They could not go forward and would not go back. All the while the batteries on the heights raged and stormed at them. Howard's division had been sent to support them; Sturgis' and Gettys' divisions of the Ninth Corps, advanced on the left of the Second Corps, making attacks but gaining no ground. Humphrey's division, of Gen. Hooker's command, made the final attack toward dusk with unloaded muskets. They were swiftly thrown back with a loss of half their numbers. And now the sun had set.

After dark the 1st brigades of the Second Corps were withdrawn to the city. The ambulance corps was busy succoring to the wounded, and burial parties were detailed to hide from sight the bodies of the hundreds who had fallen in death. Portions of the Fifth and Ninth Corps had relieved the Second, and prepared to face a long night's vigil. The enemy was awake and inclined to follow up their success as closely as possible.

The troops of the Second Corp rested on their arms in the streets. Some sat on curbstones, meditating. Others lay on the pavement trying to forget the events of the day in sleep. Little was said; deep dejection burdened the spirits of all. No one noticed the extreme December cold.

Steadily, the wounded were carried by to the hospitals near the river. The hospitals were a harrowing sight; the sights and scenes of a field hospital are not to be minutely described.

The Tenth Regiment had taken less than two hundred officers and men into action. Capt. Geo. F. Hopper, still in command of the regiment on the 18<sup>th</sup>, reported officially to the Adjutant General at Washington that "Twelve officers went into action, only three of whom escaped uninjured" and that the total loss off the regiment, in killed wounded and missing was 67.

The Tenth NY carried the following battle names on their colors: Norfolk, Gaines' Mill, White Oak Swamp, Malvern Hill, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Bristoe Station, Mine Run, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Totopotomoy, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Strawberry Plains, Deep Bottom, Ream's Station, Boydton Rd., Hatcher's Run and The Surrender of Lee.

--- The above passage was contributed by Associate Editor Betty Ford

### Larry's Q & A

Some of the more familiar Civil War figures were born in the month of December. Can you match them with their dates of birth?

- |                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. James J. Archer, CSA        | A. December 2, 1821  |
| 2. Rufus Barringer, CSA        | B. December 3, 1826  |
| 3. Clara Barton (USA)          | C. December 5, 1839  |
| 4. Zachariah Chandler (USA)    | D. December 6, 1833  |
| 5. George A. Custer, USA       | E. December 10, 1813 |
| 6. Thomas C. Devin, USA        | F. December 10, 1822 |
| 7. John W. Geary, USA          | G. December 13, 1818 |
| 8. Charles Griffin, USA        | H. December 19, 1817 |
| 9. Charles G. Harker, USA      | I. December 19, 1814 |
| 10. Henry Heth, CSA            | J. December 25, 1821 |
| 11. Micah Jenkins, CSA         | K. December 29, 1808 |
| 12. Andrew Johnson (USA)       | L. December 31, 1815 |
| 13. Mary Todd Lincoln (USA)    | M. December 30, 1819 |
| 14. William W. Loring, CSA     | N. December 18, 1825 |
| 15. William Mahone, CSA        | O. December 2, 1835  |
| 16. Joseph K. Mansfield, USA   | P. December 16, 1825 |
| 17. George B. McClellan, USA   | Q. December 1, 1835  |
| 18. George G. Meade, USA       | R. December 4, 1818  |
| 19. John S. Mosby, CSA         | S. December 1, 1826  |
| 20. Samuel A. Mudd (?)         | T. December 22, 1803 |
| 21. Albert Pike, CSA           | U. December 20, 1833 |
| 22. Joseph O. Shelby, CSA      | V. December 29, 1809 |
| 23. Edwin M. Stanton (USA)     | W. December 12, 1830 |
| 24. William B. Taliaferro, CSA | X. December 28, 1822 |
| 25. Stand Watie, CSA           | Y. December 12, 1806 |
| 26. Henry A. Wise, CSA         | Z. December 3, 1806  |

### IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Yes, friends, another year is almost over, and it's time to renew your RVCWRT membership, this time for the year 2000. Since we made it past 1865, a change in the millenium shouldn't be a big problem. FYI, dues are \$25 per family, \$15 per individual, and \$7.50 per student. Pay Mike.

**A Country Divided by Extremists:  
The South's Fire Eaters vs. The North's Radical Abolitionists**  
by Dane Hartgrove

November Program Reviewed by Mac Wyckoff

At the last RVCWRT Executive Committee meeting, some time was spent discussing the appropriateness of the position taken by a very high ranking official in the Washington office of the National Park Service. She advocates that every presentation by a park employee working on a Civil War battlefield include mention of the cause of the war. While this may sound simple enough to accomplish, the problem lies in the complexity of the causes of the war. The topic is not one that can be effectively covered in 30-second sound bites. If this philosophy is implemented by the National Park Service, historians at the Bloody Angle, for example, would have little time left to talk about what happened at the Angle once they finish a lengthy lecture on the causes of the war.

Topics like the causes of the war are best covered by reading or by classroom lectures and discussions. In preparation for our October 2000 field trip to Charleston, South Carolina, we will have several lectures plus a discussion of the causes of the war. The first of these programs was presented by Dane Hartgrove, a long-time member, at our November meeting. Dane discussed extremists in both the North and South and the effect they had on leading this country to war.

Dane began his talk by mentioning that although slavery fostered most of the angry words, it was economic differences that underlay the controversy. There were also political, philosophical, and religious considerations dividing North from South that underlay the slavery question. These differences date to before the establishment of the nation. The two sections wrangled over the admission of free and slave states to the Union, producing a series of compromises in the first half of the 19th century. At the same time, it became common for Northern churches to take an uncompromising stand against slavery. Many sincere Protestants began to echo the long-held position of the Quakers, who were willing to translate thought into action when it came to slavery. It was Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker, who nurtured William Lloyd Garrison's career as an abolitionist.

The best known of the abolitionists, Garrison collaborated with Lundy in publishing a weekly newspaper, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. While Lundy stuck to the traditional Quaker position of non-violence, Garrison soon became more militant. However, his militancy applied to words rather than deeds. He became the first American to demand the immediate and complete emancipation of the slaves. Through *The Liberator*, the most famous periodical of the anti-slavery movement, Garrison lashed out at slavery, slave owners, and those who tolerated the institution of slavery. By 1841, he had become a disunionist, calling for the North to secede from a nation that protected slavery. He refused to accept compromise and welcomed secession of the Southern states in 1860 and 1861.

While Dane had time to give a brief sketch of several other important abolitionists, space limits me to merely mentioning them. He discussed the three Tappan brothers, Presbyterian minister Theodore Weld, and the Beecher family, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* helped popularize the anti-slavery movement. The abolitionists included women like Lucretia Coffin Mott, who was also important in the women's rights movement, and blacks like Frederick Douglass. This group also included people from the upper South. Among these was Moncure Daniel Conway, who was born just down river from Falmouth. Conway became a Unitarian minister in Washington, D.C., but his denunciations of slavery from the pulpit eventually cost him his job. John Brown differed from those mentioned above in that he advocated, as well as practiced, violence as a means to end slavery.

These and other intelligent and articulate people found an outlet to voice their opinions in anti-slavery publications, in church, and at anti-slavery meetings, but did not dominate Northern politics until the Republican Party was created in the 1850's. The formation of this party meant that the abolitionists now possessed the political machinery to gain control of the government. The splitting of the Democratic Party at their 1860 convention in Charleston assured the election of a Republican president, causing

South Carolina to secede. Four months later cannon fire erupted in Charleston Harbor.

Meanwhile, in the South equally radical and articulate men were at work in constructing the path toward eventual war. The man who drove the nails into the coffin-lid of Democratic Party hopes in 1860 was South Carolina-born William Lowndes Yancey. Although educated in the North, he returned to South Carolina, where he practiced law and edited a newspaper before moving to Alabama about 1837. Yancey served two years in Congress before resigning because the political process seemed inadequate and superficial to him. Like Garrison, Yancey despised the art of compromise that is the basis of politics and what had held the nation together on the slavery question. Beginning in 1848, Yancey advocated the spread of slavery to the territories as the population spread west across the continent. Yancey's opinion that the South could not receive justice in the Union and therefore must secede were forcefully stated in his newspapers and in his brilliant orations.

While Yancey was the most prominent secessionist, there were others, including Virginians Nathaniel Beverley Tucker and Edmund Ruffin. Tucker favored secession as early as 1820 on the grounds that the South's agricultural economy could not survive being teamed with the North's industrialism. Ruffin defended slavery in articles written in the Richmond and Charleston newspapers and in Southern journals. Second in importance to Yancey was Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina. His fiery views during the nullification controversy of the 1820's became modified by the influence of John C. Calhoun to bring about a peaceful solution. But in the 1850's, Rhett returned to his hard-line position, supporting secession through his newspaper, *The Charleston Mercury*. In 1858, Yancey and Rhett decided that the best chance for secession would come if a Republican was elected president in 1860. Their work paid off when the Democratic Party split, resulting in the election of Abraham Lincoln. Next April's RVCWRT program will deal with this election and its importance on the road to war in Charleston Harbor.

In summary, Dane emphasized three main points. First, secession was only the last act of a larger controversy that had divided American society. The opposition of the Northern radicals to the way of life prevailing in the South could only be viewed from that quarter as an implied, if not overt threat, to the financial well-being of many Southerners. In its most radical form, it also represented a threat to the lives of the Southern people.

Second, the election of Lincoln was viewed in the South as tilting the balance away from a Federal government that defended the rights of slave owners to one under which those rights would be limited and ultimately extinguished. During the discussions prior to the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Lincoln offered to support a constitutional amendment that would guarantee the continued existence of slavery where it was already established. However, its implication that slavery could not be expanded to the territories would have tilted the political balance against the South. Lincoln's compromise had no meaning for Southerners, especially since many had already opted for secession.

Third, the real cause of the war was the gradual erosion of goodwill and desire to follow the normal practice of compromise. Extremists in both the North and the South (and he only had time to mention a few), through their passionate speeches and writings, had influenced a generation of Americans. People ceased to see the viewpoint of the other side. Once good men and women, North and South, stopped reasoning together and started condemning each other's viewpoints, the social fabric of America was ripped in two.

Despite problems with the microphone, Dane got us off to a great start in better understanding the complex causes of the war. While the causes of the war have little to do with understanding the furious fighting at Spotsylvania and its importance, it is crucial to understand why a signal shot was fired over Fort Sumter on the morning of April 12, 1861, launching the bloodiest war in American history.

## Ellwood's Second Season

Ellwood had 2,105 visitors between May 29, when it was opened to the public for the second year on weekends and holidays, and October 11 when it closed for the year. The 1799 house in the Wilderness battlefield was open to the public last summer for the first time since the National Park Service acquired the property in 1977.

Ellwood is the resting place of General Stonewall Jackson's arm, amputated during the Battle of Chancellorsville. Ellwood, then known as the Lacy House was a Confederate hospital in May 1863. During the Battle of the Wilderness, it was Union General Gouverneur Warren's headquarters and the site of Union artillery and supply forces. During that battle, Union forces reformed several times in the fields south of the house after being repulsed by Confederates entrenched along what is now Hill-Ewell Drive.

This year's visitors came from Alaska, the many of the Lower 48, Canada, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and Great Britain. Last year, 1,824 people visited Ellwood. The increased number of visitors came despite the absence of the kind of publicity that accompanied last year's announcement of Ellwood's opening. Especially noteworthy was the number of tour buses that visited the house this year.

The Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield, which supplies volunteers to staff the house when it is open and performs routine maintenance during the year, invites anyone interested to volunteer. Call Brad Henderson at 972-3297 e-mail him at [hbh4@juno.com](mailto:hbh4@juno.com) for information.

## Calendar of Events

**Thursday, December 9** - FoFAB meeting, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Rappahannock Regional Library, 1201 Caroline Street. Greg Kurtz on the November 7, 1863, fighting at Rappahannock Station.

**Saturday, December 11** - Ford Maune will lead a walking tour of Prospect Hill, site of the Union breakthrough during the fighting on December 13, 1862, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Meet at tour stop 4 on the Fredericksburg Battlefield. Sponsored by FoFAB. For information, call (540) 972-9954.

**Monday, December 13** - RVCWRT meeting. Frank O'Reilly speaks on the Battle of Fredericksburg on its 137th anniversary.

**Monday, January 10** - RVCWRT meeting. Eric Mink speaks on William Gilham.

## Answers to Larry's Q & A

1H, 2A, 3J, 4E, 5C, 6F, 7M, 8N, 9O, 10P, 11Q, 12K, 13G, 14R, 15S, 16T, 17B, 18L, 19D, 20U, 21V, 22W, 23I, 24X, 25Y, 26Z

## RVCWRT SNOW POLICY

If the weather is questionable, i.e., snow or freezing rain, call Elsa (540-373-6122) or Mac (540-371-0802) at the Park the day of the meeting. They will tell you whether the meeting has been cancelled or not. Elsa and Mac will also leave a message at the Holiday Inn North as to whether or not the meeting will take place. Please don't endanger yourself by leaving home without checking first.

Drum and Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable, P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA. 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. Elsa Lohman, President; Mac Wyckoff, Vice President; Chuck Siegel, Secretary; Mike Stevens, Treasurer; Melanie Jordan, Immediate Past President; Dane Hartgrove, Newsletter Editor; Jack Barnes, Richard DiNardo, Steve Gambaro, John Graham, John Griffiths, Tom Quigley, Executive Committee members.

### RVCWRT SNOW POLICY

If the weather is questionable, i.e., snow or freezing rain, call Elsa (540-373-6122) or Mac (540-371-0802) at the Park the day of the meeting. They will tell you whether the meeting has been cancelled or not. Elsa and Mac will also leave a message at the Holiday Inn North as to whether or not the meeting will take place. Please don't endanger yourself by leaving home without checking first.

### IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Time to pay your RVCWRT dues, that is. Pay Mike Stevens ASAP, please.

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



MAC WYCKOFF 99  
11610 ENCHANTED WOODS WAY  
FREDB'G VA 22407-8674

**Don't Forget: Dinner Meeting, Monday, December 13.**  
**Contact Mike Stevens by noon on Friday, December 10, for reservations at:**  
**371-3115 (voice)/372-9860 (fax)/<drmste@aol.com> (e-mail)**