Keeping the Big Apple in the Union

Speaker: Chris Kolakowski
Topic: New York City in the Civil War
When: Monday, April 8, 2002. Social at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:45 p.m.
Location: Aunt Sarah’s Restaurant, near Route 3 west of Interstate 95.
Dinner: NEW POLICY: RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED, AND MUST BE MADE BEFORE THURSDAY, April 4. Failure to make a reservation, or showing up announced, means you will NOT be served dinner, but are welcome to attend the meeting. Cost of the dinner is $14. You are also welcome to eat dinner in the regular section of the restaurant. To make reservations, call Mac Wyckoff at (540) 786-2470 and leave a message on his answering machine or e-mail mwyckoff@erols.com. If you make a reservation and find you cannot attend, please call as soon as possible to cancel. If you make a reservation and don’t cancel, and this results in the Round Table paying for your meal, you will be billed for it.

Our Speaker and Topic

Chris Kolakowski is a Fredericksburg native who has worked at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park for the past five years. A graduate of Emory and Henry College with a double major in history and mass communications, he has written articles on the 14th Brooklyn Regiment, also known as the 14th New York State Militia Regiment, and on the Battle of the Wilderness. Besides his Civil War expertise, Chris is also interested in the Napoleonic Wars and the American Revolutionary War. This fall he will begin studying for a master’s degree in public history at SUNY Albany.

Chris will provide a general overview of the issues that confronted New York City residents during the Civil War, including those that created a substantial pro-secession element within the city. He will also give an account of the massive draft riots that took place in the city in the summer of 1863, and which prompted the Lincoln Administration to divert troops that had fought at Gettysburg from pursuit of Lee’s army to quell these outbreaks.
From the Editor

Best wishes to our dedicated vice president, Mac Wyckoff, for a rapid and complete recovery from the stroke he experienced shortly before our last meeting. The stroke does not appear to have impaired his ability to use a computer or to be a spectator at sporting events. Mac evidently was able to fly to Las Vegas to view the beginnings of the NCAA Basketball Tournament last week, so he has not been physically impaired in areas that matter. Oh yes, and he’s back at work too.

There is no review of the March meeting in this issue because that meeting started well before it should have. RVCWRT meetings are supposed to start at 7:45 p.m. That’s what the membership voted to do. That’s what it says on page 1 of this newsletter. A young man from Mary Washington College showed up at 7:45 p.m. on March 11, only to find the speaker’s talk halfway over. Hopefully, he will come to another of our meetings, one that starts when it’s supposed to.

Calendar

Friday, March 1-Tuesday, April 30 – Fredericksburg Area Museum Civil War exhibit *Voices of the Civil War* in the third-floor gallery. A variety of first-person narratives based on various archival materials help visitors better understand what daily life was like during the war on both the home front and the battlefield.

Thursday-Sunday, April 4-7 – 24th Annual Confederate Historical Institute Conference, Fredericksburg. The theme is Jackson’s Final Hours, with Ed Bearss. For information, contact Jerry Russell, 501-225-3996.

Thursday-Sunday, April 4-7 – Museum of the Confederacy’s 7th Annual Celebrate South Weekend, with a focus on Louisiana. For information, call 804-649-1861, ext. 19.

Monday, April 8 – RVCWRT meeting. Chris Kolakowski speaks on New York City in the Civil War.

Thursday, April 11 – FoFAB education program, Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 1201 Caroline St., Fredericksburg, 7-9 p.m. Heidi Reid, a former guide at the Lincoln-Herndon Law Office in Illinois, speaks on the early life of Abraham Lincoln and his assassination.

Friday-Saturday, April 19-20 – Stonewall Jackson Symposium, Lexington. Speakers will include Robert K. Krick, Richard McMurry, Keith Bohannon, and Eric Mink. For information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Jackson Symposium, Stonewall Jackson House, 8 East Washington Street, Lexington, VA 24450.

Saturday, April 20. – Museum of the Confederacy program, 1201 Clay St., Richmond. A Confederate volunteer drafted for further service offers his opinions of the Confederacy’s first military draft in 1862, 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 11 – FoFAB-sponsored walking tour of the Federal attacks at Second Fredericksburg, led by NPS historian Chris Kolakowski, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Tour begins at the BB&T parking lot, 400 George Street, rain or shine.

Monday, May 13 - RVCWRT meeting. David Roberts speaks on “St. Mary’s County (Maryland) during the Civil War: A Community behind Enemy Lines”

Saturday, May 25 – Luminaria in the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, 8-11 p.m.

Monday, June 10 - RVCWRT meeting. Jim Morgan speaks on “Sixties’ Music: The Songs of the American Civil War”

Saturday, June 15 – FoFAB-sponsored walking tour of Kershaw’s Brigade at Fredericksburg, 7:00-8:30 p.m., led by NPS historian Mac Wyckoff. Tour begins at Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor’s Center, rain or shine.

Monday, July 8 - RVCWRT meeting. Open

Monday, August 12 - RVCWRT meeting. Mark Bradley speaks on “The Surrender at the Bennett House”

Monday, September 9 - RVCWRT meeting. Chris Fonvielle speaks on “The Defenses of Wilmington”

Monday, October 14 – RVCWRT’s annual discussion meeting will compare the surrenders at Appomattox and the Bennett House.

Friday, October 25-Monday, October 28. RVCWRT’s fall field trip to North Carolina, including Fort Fisher, Averasboro, Bentonville, and the Bennett House.

Monday, November 11 - RVCWRT meeting. Open

Monday, December 9 - RVCWRT meeting. Open

Reviewed for H-South by Christine Dee, History of American Civilization, Harvard University

**Confederate Losses and Union Gains: New Perspectives on Southerners and the Civil War**

William Freehling's *The South vs. The South* is an innovative narrative of the Civil War that focuses on the vast number of southerners, both white and black, who opposed the Confederacy. These "anti-Confederates," as Freehling terms Border State whites and slaves in the Confederacy, composed half of the southern population and were crucial to Union victory. By dividing the southern home front, by weakening the Confederacy militarily, and by contributing manpower and material to the Union, anti-Confederates made a crucial contribution to the Union war effort, hastening the end of the war and aiding the Union in its victory.

Building on the social and economic diversity of the South he documented in *The Road to Disunion,* Freehling suggests that anti-Confederates derived their strength from the weakness of slavery in the Border South. While slavery mired the Lower South in an agricultural economy and stunted population growth, its weak hold in Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri allowed the Border South to follow a different economic path, one that featured industrial development and sustained population increase. At the same time, the Border South, especially its cities, encouraged slaves to flee from the Deep South. During the war, the exodus continued, aided by Union policies under which blacks garrisoned military posts. As Freehling points out, black soldiers were crucial in the western theater of the war, providing manpower that enabled both Grant and Sherman to succeed in the east.

In arguing that anti-Confederate southerners played a central role in Confederate defeat, Freehling shifts historical debate to ground that is at once familiar and novel. Historians such as Drew Gilpin Faust and Paul Escott have identified internal disaffection as the primary cause of Confederate defeat, while Gary Gallagher has suggested that whites in the Confederacy maintained their support for the government even as military losses ended the war. (See Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); Paul D. Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave Off Defeat* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.)

*The South vs. the South* expands the scope of inquiry, looking beyond internal fissures within the Confederacy to the divisions in broader southern society. In Freehling's telling, anti-Confederate whites undermined the Confederacy by remaining outside the nation while slaves sapped Confederate unity from within and, once enlisted into the Union Army, from without. Together, both groups guaranteed that the Union would have more men for the army, a greater industrial capacity, and ultimately less territory to conquer while denying the Confederacy the same benefits. The Confederacy lost, Freehling suggests, largely because anti-Confederates waged a war against Confederate southerners (p. 201).

*The South vs. the South* progresses through the war chronologically, fulfilling Freehling's call to reintegrate narrative into historical scholarship. (See William W. Freehling, *The*
Reintegration of American History: Slavery and the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.) By centering his analysis thematically on the divisions between southerners and their impact on the war, Freehling illuminates such important issues as the conflicts between free and slave labor, how white racism permeated both the North and the South, Lincoln’s advance towards emancipation, the collaboration between slaves and Union soldiers in bringing about emancipation, and Americans’ persistent suspicion of centralized government. In broad strokes, the author depicts the interplay between northern and southern home fronts, the relationship between political and military developments, and how both were influenced by anti-Confederate southerners.

Concerning fugitive slaves, Freehling suggests their nonviolent resistance undermined slavery before the war, especially in the Border States. During the war, they were agents in their own emancipation, the author maintains, successfully negotiating Northern whites’ desire to destroy the cornerstone of the Confederacy and whites’ fear of black violence. Blacks, by assuming the roles of “the nonviolent runaway and cooperative soldiers,” played a significant part in anti-Confederate efforts (pp. 25-27, 134-135). The work also succeeds in casting well-known events of the war in a new light, including the 54th Massachusetts Regiment’s assault on Fort Wagner, Grant’s siege of Vicksburg, and the Massacre at Fort Pillow. Moreover, by measuring the role anti-Confederates played in the war, Freehling reminds us of the importance of the western theater in both emancipation and the ultimate defeat of the Confederacy.

In its appeal to both scholars and a broader audience, The South vs. the South generally succeeds in providing something for everyone: a new paradigm for understanding Confederate defeat; a treatment of the role the Border South played in the war; the consideration of blacks as political and military agents in Union victory; a revisiting of legendary wartime battles and figures in a compelling storyline. Its broad appeal, however, also contributes to its major shortcoming. In striving to produce a pithy and compelling narrative, Freehling’s prose is at times awkward and occasionally tasteless. We learn, for example, that ordering Union troops through Baltimore was a mistake by Lincoln’s administration and that the neutral city “vomited all over the mistake and then with nothing left in its stomach, went back to trading with the North” (p. 50). Repeatedly we read that Lincoln issued “no papal bulls against comets” (pp. 123, 124). Moreover, the description of Patrick Cleburne as “an Irish anomaly” for giving up alcohol reads as a bigoted generalization, as does his reference to Cleburne as “a crony with no blarney” (p. 189). Found in the midst of otherwise engaging prose, such statements detract from the author’s significant insights.

The South vs. the South is a work of substance and creativity. Its argument that divisions within southern society, specifically between Confederates and anti-Confederates, advanced the Union war effort and hastened Confederate defeat is persuasive, strengthening historians’ claims that the outcome of the Civil War hinged more on political and social conditions than on military campaigns. The broad and sweeping narrative also suggests that more work should be done to detail the role that borderlands - those places not easily characterized by distinctions between North and South - played in shaping the war. Freehling’s integration of state and national developments also suggests the need to integrate the growing number of home front studies into larger interpretations that will illuminate the regional, economic, and political diversity that divided a nation in war and continued to shape its future in peace.
Drum and Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable, 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. Jack Barnes, President; Mac Wyckoff, Vice President; Brad Henderson, Secretary; Conway Richardson, Treasurer; Elsa Lohman, Immediate Past President; Dane Hartgrove, Newsletter Editor; Dorothy Emery, John Graham, John Griffiths, Tom Quigley, Chuck Siegel, and Mike Stevens, Executive Committee members.

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable
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Don't Forget: Dinner Meeting, Monday, April 8.
Contact Mac Wyckoff before Thursday, April 4, for reservations at:
(540) 786-2470 (voice) or <mwyckoff@erols.com> (e-mail)