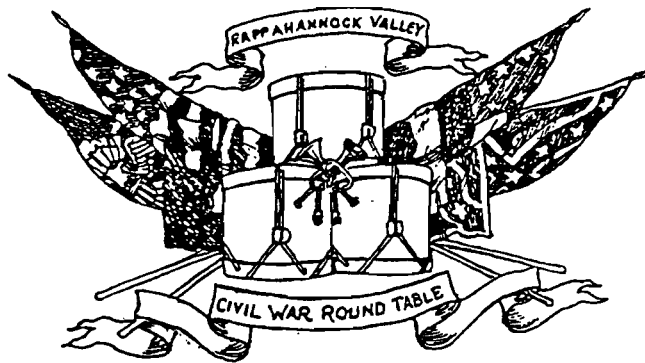


DRUM & BUGLE  
Voice of the Rappahannock  
Valley Civil War Round Table



Vol. 13, No. 12

December 2002

**Keeping Faith with What Happened on Our Battlefields**

Speaker: **Robert Lee Hodge**

Topic: **Civil War Preservation**

When: **Monday, December 9, 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: **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED, AND MUST BE MADE BEFORE THURSDAY, December 5. Failure to make a reservation, or showing up unannounced, means you will NOT be served dinner, but are welcome to attend the meeting. Cost of the dinner is \$15. You are also welcome to eat dinner in the regular section of the restaurant. To make reservations, e-mail Mac Wyckoff at [mwyckoff@erols.com](mailto:mwyckoff@erols.com) (preferred), or call (540) 786-2470 and leave a message on his answering machine. 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**

Robert Lee Hodge has become famous as the result of the coverage he received in Tony Horwitz's otherwise execrable book *Confederates in the Attic*. Despite his seeming inability to show proper respect for Southerners and their heritage, Horwitz writes well. His depiction of Hodge as a dedicated hard-core re-enactor who strives to emulate the life of Confederate soldiers paints our speaker in nothing short of heroic colors. However, some NPS personnel may find the "where" and "how" of Hodge's portrayals objectionable. [Should Hodge decide to demonstrate his portrayal of a Civil War soldier's bloating corpse, some of our members may also find him objectionable.] Besides his role in the re-enactor community, Hodge is also a major supporter of Civil War battlefield preservation, as evidenced in his work for Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and Friends of Fredericksburg Area Battlefields. RVCWRT's twin mission is Civil War battlefield preservation and Civil War education. Come join us for what promises to be an interesting perspective on both!

## From the Editor

I'm glad I don't live in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. Now, don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with most of the people that live there. The county's got nice scenery, and of course it's home to four of the most important battlefields of the Civil War. Yes, I know, the Battle of Fredericksburg was fought partially in the city that bears that name, but some good stuff in that battle took place in Spotsylvania County too.

No, I'm glad I don't live in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, for a very specific reason. It's not because I don't have to spend parts of each day driving on Virginia Route 3, although that *would* be a really good reason not to want to live in Spotsylvania County. It's not because the sprawl along Virginia Route 3 is enough to make anybody who remembers what that road was like before major development hit the Fredericksburg area feel like they're listening to fingernails being dragged across a blackboard every time they have to pass through it – another really good reason not to want to live in Spotsylvania County. And it's not because Spotsylvania County's water situation is beginning to resemble that of Los Angeles because of too much demand on a finite resource. Which of course is true.

No, I'm glad I don't live in Spotsylvania County because in the not too distant future, people who *do* live there are going to be looked upon as major weirdos, maybe even pariahs. Why? Because people who live in Spotsylvania County are going to be identified as the people who let unbridled developers come into their area and build a HUGE new TOWN of CHANCELLORSVILLE that clogged their roads beyond road rage, put them into virtually continual water rationing, and created acres and acres of new sprawl that looked nice for about five minutes before it turned into Anywhere, USA.

But that's not all. People who live in Spotsylvania County in 2002 will go down in history as the folks who literally killed the goose that laid the golden egg, by making Civil War tourism in their county an endangered and soon to be extinct species. Does anybody reading this piece NOT think that McLaws Wedge, which CVBT spent so much time and energy and money to preserve for the National Park Service, won't become another field on which to fly kites and ride horses a few years down the road? How about having Easter egg hunts on some of that open space at Spotsylvania Court House? Why can't kids ride their ATVs along the trenches at the Bloody Angle? Ray Smith's new public will want places to recreate, and what better place is there than the nearby hallowed ground of the county's four Civil War battlefields?

How can any group of elected officials be so crass and cavalier toward the people who elected them as the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors? Those "worthies" seem poised to approve Ray Smith's plans for his Town of Chancellorsville at the earliest opportunity. Certainly the County Planning Commission has greased the skids for that momentous decision, refusing even to give Smith's opponents an opportunity to fully state their case before ramming through a motion approving Smith's proposal.

Who in their right mind would let the Town of Chancellorsville happen to their community if they had any way to stop it? Apparently, the good people of Spotsylvania County. So, if you live in Spotsylvania County, and you ARE in your right mind, GET OUT THERE AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! Remember those antiwar protestors back in the Sixties? Well, now's your chance to use some of their tactics in support of a really good cause. Since I don't live in your county, I wouldn't want to be accused of being an outside agitator. But surely there are people out there who remember the sit-ins, the protest walks, the protest songs.... Who gets to sing "We Shall Overcome" this time – the good guys or Ray Smith?

***Return to Bull Run Revisited***  
**by John Hennessy**  
**November Meeting Reviewed by Mac Wyckoff**

Historians love to criticize history books. At our November meeting, historian John Hennessy reviewed his own book, *Return to Bull Run*. Hennessy, currently the Chief Historian at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, is considered a leading authority on 2nd Bull Run, also known as 2nd Manassas. His presentation coincides with the 10th anniversary of the publication of his book.

Any author, if he is intellectually honest with himself, will admit that his book contains at least some factual errors and some passages that he would rewrite differently if given the opportunity to do so. Hennessy told the audience that for several years after he finished his book, he did not even want to think about the Battle of 2nd Manassas. But with time, he found himself thinking about his book and its subject. What he has found a decade later is not so much factual mistakes as missed opportunities for interpretation. As Hennessy put it, the facts haven't changed, but he himself has changed. His book is a tactical/strategical look at the 2nd Manassas Campaign. In fact, it is an extremely good study that will probably stand the test of time as the definitive book on the subject. However, Hennessy's vision has expanded beyond the tactical maneuvering on the battlefield to see how the campaign fit into the bigger picture of the war and the even bigger picture of American history.

Hennessy explained his missed opportunities on the Confederate side. He feels that he failed to fully develop the story of the emergence of the General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia during the 2nd Manassas Campaign. Lee took command of that army on June 1, 1862, and at that point gave it the name it would make famous. Lee inherited an army that had retreated all the way up the Virginia Peninsula from Williamsburg to Richmond. This perceived Confederate failure to drive a Union army success away from the new nation's capital, combined with other Union successes elsewhere, seemed to indicate the war was almost over. In a stunning turnaround, in late June the Confederates drove the Union army away from Richmond. Then Lee led his army north. By the end of August, Lee had reached the vicinity of Bull Run, where the first major clash of the war had occurred 13 months earlier. Hennessy now believes he should have placed more stress on the incredible significance of this emergence of Lee's army in changing the course of the war.

Hennessy also wishes he had more fully developed the character of Lee as a military leader. In the 2nd Manassas Campaign, we see for the first time Lee's strategic vision. He had made changes in commanders and in the command structure, and those changes paid major dividends that August. At a time when most generals lacked competence and modesty, Lee combined ability and humility, an amazing combination. Lee was always focused on what he could do to hurt his opponent, and did not worry about what his opponent might do to him. This is exactly the vision that General Ulysses S. Grant brought to Virginia in 1864. We see in this campaign that Lee's goal was not just to destroy the enemy army, but to use victories on the battlefield to win victories in the political arena that would achieve Confederate independence.

Hennessy had hoped to spark debate by daring to criticize Confederate icon "Stonewall" Jackson's fighting abilities. He feels that Jackson was only a mediocre general. He praised Jackson for making a spectacularly lengthy flank march to reach Manassas, but added that Jackson's battlefield performance was less than stellar. He cited the fight at Brawner's Farm as an example of Jackson's poor performance. With a 20,000-man advantage in numbers, Jackson

could gain no better than a draw. He also criticized Jackson for being slow to act on August 30, while praising Longstreet for acting quickly. This interpretation runs counter to the standard appraisal of the actions of these two men. He feels that Longstreet has been unfairly criticized for failing to obey Lee's orders and for obstructing his commander's intentions. Hennessy feels that Longstreet's weakness was not his ability as a military tactician, but his personality. Looking back on the reception of his book, Hennessy was disappointed that no one took issue with him and opened a meaningful discussion of Jackson and Longstreet's generalship.

Hennessy then shifted to the Union side. He feels badly that he missed finding the memoirs of General John Pope, the Union commander at 2nd Manassas. The irony is that the memoirs appeared in serial form in a 19th-century publication called *The National Tribune*. Hennessy looked at every issue of this publication on microfilm, but when he discovered that the Civil War material always appeared on the second page, he proceeded to skip directly to page two in each issue. He thereby missed Pope's memoirs, which were printed on the first page. He said that the memoir (which has recently been published) did not tell him much new about Pope's actions in the 2nd Manassas Campaign, but revealed a great deal about Pope's personality.

Hennessy feels that his biggest missed opportunity was not developing the role that this campaign played in the bigger picture of the war. He should have elaborated on how the character of the war was changing in the late summer of 1862. Prior to this, General George McClellan had commanded the Union war effort with the idea of winning the war and restoring the Union but not disturbing Southern society. John Pope arrived on the scene to conduct a much harsher war involving civilians as well as the military. This change of policy had the backing of President Abraham Lincoln. Pope's defeat in this battle delayed implementation of this policy on a large scale for two years. It was finally put into practice by General William Tecumseh Sherman in Georgia and South Carolina and by General Phil Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley. However, the senseless destruction and looting that occurred on the streets of Fredericksburg in December 1862 was a direct response to this policy change.

Hennessy noted that the military is always the most conservative element of society. During the first years of the war, the Union Army of the Potomac was dominated by a group of very conservative Democrats. Generals McClellan, William Franklin, Fitz-John Porter, Baldy Smith and William H.T. Brooks openly spoke out for the need to protect the Southern way of life. All would be removed from the army by the spring of 1863. Democrats like George Meade and Winfield Scott Hancock that kept their political opinions to themselves saw their rank and responsibility increase.

In the end, Hennessy felt that his book focused too much on the tactical details of the battle and not enough on the greater importance of the campaign. There was more at stake than who won or lost the battle. Rather than rewrite the book, he plans to set forth his current vision of the campaign and the war in a new effort.

### **Dues Increase**

RVCWRT has not increased its dues for several years, and expenses for such items as postage and printing have been going up. Accordingly, the Executive Committee has voted to increase dues to \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families, effective for 2003. Dues may be paid to Treasurer Conway Richardson at any RVCWRT meeting, or mailed to RVCWRT at P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

Larry S. Chowning. *Soldiers at the Doorstep: Civil War Lore*. Centreville, Maryland: Tidewater Publishers, 1999. xii, 129 pp. Illustrations, index. \$19.95.

When the temperature and humidity are right, my wife and I enjoy exploring the tidewater areas of Virginia. The Northern Neck and the Middle Peninsula have a long and fascinating history, but very little has been written on what happened there during the Civil War. On a recent visit to Urbanna, I was very pleased to find a small book, recently published, that somewhat redresses this lack of Civil War coverage.

Larry Chowning, a reporter for the local Urbanna weekly, has written several books on Virginia watermen and the Chesapeake Bay. Three years ago, he came out with *Soldiers at the Doorstep*, a collection of 19 historical vignettes that illuminate several facets of local life in the Civil War era. Chowning basically is recounting stories that he was told by earlier generations of his family or by their contemporaries. Some of these tales can be corroborated from other sources, and of course some cannot. However, Chowning is both a good writer and a good storyteller, so all are worth reading. Summaries of a few of the stories will give the reader a better idea of what to expect.

Union gunboats kept a fairly close watch on the Virginia coast during the war, and several of the stories relate to events that took place on the water. One story tells of a small Confederate vessel that was chased into Urbanna Creek by a larger Federal vessel. The Confederate craft managed to avoid capture because she drew less water than her pursuer and could sail further up the creek, but there was no escape.

The Confederate vessel's captain arranged to have his cargo unloaded and hidden by the locals, then took the empty craft out to a point where her sinking would not impede navigation and set her afire. The locals hid captain, crew, and cargo until the Federals had left the area. The captain then made arrangements to ship his cargo to its destination overland, and to thank his protectors, gave them an earthenware pitcher from his destroyed vessel. The pitcher is now a cherished Chowning family heirloom.

Three generations of one family's women lived in Falmouth during the war. Yankee soldiers took all their food, and the one woman of childbearing age lost three children to starvation in the war years. The family's menfolk with the Confederate army would slip across the Rappahannock to visit home occasionally, but couldn't be allowed in the house because their clothes and hair were full of lice. The women could get food by cooking for Yankee soldiers and keeping part of their fare, but they hated Yankees with a passion.

After the war, when Union veterans would visit Falmouth, the women forbade their children to speak to them. John Wilkes Booth was a hero to these people. With all the trees in Stafford County cut down by the Yankees for firewood, some members of the family had to move across the river to Fredericksburg after the war. Prior to World War II, Memorial Day in Fredericksburg was celebrated with a march to the Confederate Cemetery, where schoolchildren decorated the graves of the war dead with flowers. None of the locals ever set foot in the National Cemetery on Memorial Day.

Chowning has included several stories about what life was like for slaves in the area before and during the war. In one account, an old slave woman hides a young white boy under her petticoats to keep him from being taken away by a Union patrol during the war. According to the story, boys near military age were rounded up as a matter of policy to keep them from joining the Confederate army, and the local perception was that they were taken away and killed. By hiding the boy, the slave woman was saving his life.

At Nesting Plantation in Middlesex County, the master issued four guns to his slaves for use in protecting the property from Yankee incursions. At war's end, that master told his slaves that they were all free, and that they could go or stay as they pleased. Those families that stayed were each given a cow, in return for which they had to deliver to the master half the calves it produced. The slaves didn't cheer or celebrate, because they didn't know what it meant to be free. Before the war, the same master refused to allow his slaves to worship at the Baptist church he attended. The master's wife arranged to get him drunk and amorous one night so that some black lay preachers, called chairbackers, could hold a mass baptism in a nearby millpond.

When Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick's Yankee cavalry raided Middlesex County, one family saved their favorite horse by hiding it in an upstairs room in their house. At another house, Kilpatrick's raiders stole the family silver – all except a ladle that fell out of a Yankee trooper's trouser pocket as he galloped away. During the war, some families who lived on tidal creeks made salt by evaporating water collected from the incoming tide. At Appomattox, one young Confederate soldier stood up to a Yankee ruffian who was making himself obnoxious to a young lady, whom the young Southerner later married. One plantation owner protected his home from Yankee incursions by giving cornstalks cut to the length of muskets to his slaves and drilling them in the manual of arms; from a distance, this display fooled Yankee raiders into thinking the property was occupied by Confederate forces.

Before Union Major General George B. McClellan settled upon the Peninsula Campaign, he considered the possibility of using Urbanna as a staging area for his advance on Richmond because it was an excellent deep-water port. Union warships bombarded the town at one point, and cannonballs hit several homes and public buildings, but the only thing killed was a rabbit. One family at Stingray Point in Deltaville had sons serving in both the Union and Confederate armies. When both boys were home on leave at the same time, they took turns persuading their comrades not to harass their mother. The husband of another Deltaville matron fought for the Union. During a Yankee foraging raid, the woman managed to persuade the officer in charge not only to leave her cow alone, but also to give her some chickens taken from her neighbors, for whom she kept them safe, sharing the eggs.

Besides masters and slaves, there were, of course, free blacks in the area. Chowning recounts the story of how one old freedman, whom the locals considered slightly "touched in the head," helped some slaves obtain meat for the winter. Their master claimed that he had no meat to give his slaves because the Yankees had stolen it all, but the slaves knew he had a smokehouse full of hams. One day, in their master's absence, they slaughtered a hog, threw the carcass in a wagon, and brought it to the old freedman's cabin. The slaves knew their master would search for his missing hog, and begged the old man to help them hide it. The old man's wife was away, so he told them to put the carcass in his bed, then fastened one of the wife's bonnets to cover its head. When the master arrived in search of his hog, the old freedman appeared to be in mourning for his wife who, he said, had passed away recently. The master, about to enter the cabin, asked what had killed her. When the old man replied that she had died of diphtheria, the master beat a hasty retreat. The slaves shared their pork with the old freedman and his wife.

Sometimes we need to look beyond accounts of the war's major events, to set aside the theorizing of specialists, and get back to people's stories of what happened down the street or around the corner during those four years of national upheaval. The War Between the States wasn't something abstract or theoretical, bounded by tropes and metaphors. It was fought or endured by real people who lived in this area around 140 years ago. Writers like Larry Chowning do the historical community a great service by helping it keep that in mind.

## Calendar

**Monday, December 9** - RVCWRT meeting. Robert Lee Hodge speaks on "Civil War Preservation"

**Monday, December 9** – Old Salem Church Christmas program, 7 p.m. Refreshments will follow this 30-minute program. If you're first in line for the cookies and punch, exit promptly, and drive at the maximum speed allowed (assuming optimum traffic conditions), you should manage to make it to the RVCWRT program too. For additional information, call 371-0802 or 373-6124.

**Wednesday, December 11** - Robert K. Krick speaks on "Under War's Savage Heels: Fredericksburg in the Civil War," 7:30 p.m., Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg.

**Thursday, December 12** - Elsa Lohman speaks on "The Battle of Fredericksburg." FoFAB program, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Room 2, Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg. For more information, contact [robwilliams@erols.com](mailto:robwilliams@erols.com).

**Friday, December 13** - Reception and Book Signing. Join Frank O'Reilly on the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg for a signing of his new book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock*, 7-9 p.m., at Fredericksburg Square, 525 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg. Tickets must be purchased in advance for the reception. This program is sponsored by Central Virginia Battlefields Trust; for tickets or more information, call (540) 659-6819 or visit [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org).

**Sunday, December 15** - Battle of Fredericksburg Annual Ceremony. Frank O'Reilly will lead a two-hour walking tour following the path of the Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg beginning at noon at the city dock. The NPS will sponsor an anniversary program at the Richard Kirkland Memorial in commemoration of the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg at 2:00 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be held in the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center, 1013 Lafayette Boulevard. For additional information, please call 371-0802 or 373-6124.

**Tuesday, January 14** - Dr. Thomas Wheat speaks on "The State of Medical Knowledge on the Eve of the Civil War." **Note: this is a Tuesday instead of a Monday night.**

**Monday, February 10** - Paul Duvall speaks on "Civil War Medicine."

**Monday, March 10** - Annie Bartholomew speaks on "Clara Barton in the Civil War."

**Monday, April 14** – Speaker and topic to be announced at a later date.

**Monday, May 12** - Dr. Thomas Lowry speaks on "Sex in the Civil War."

**Monday, June 9** - Speaker and topic to be announced at a later date.

**Monday, July 7** - Dr. Peter J. D'Onofrio speaks on "Medical Advances of the Civil War." **Note the change to the 1st Monday of the month.**

**Monday, August 11** - Mac Wyckoff, Chris Kolakowski, and Dane Hartgrove speak on "The Lives and Experiences of Captured Soldiers."

**Monday, September 8** - Speaker and topic to be announced at a later date.

**Monday, October 13** - Discussion of Grant's policy of ending prisoner-of-war exchanges.

Drum and Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable, P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Dues are \$20 per year for individuals, \$30 for families, and \$10 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.

### **Slate of Candidates for RVCWRT Elections**

At our January meeting, we will elect officers and Executive Committee members for 2003. The following have agreed to serve in the capacities indicated: Mike Stevens, President; Mac Wyckoff, Vice President; Brad Henderson, Secretary; Conway Richardson, Treasurer; Jack Barnes, Immediate Past President; Dane Hartgrove, Newsletter Editor; Joe Bon Giovi, Dorothy Emery, John Graham, John Griffiths, Greg Mertz, Tom Quigley, and Chuck Siegel, Executive Committee members. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the January meeting.

### **PAY YOUR 2003 DUES NOW**

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



Mac Wyckoff 2002  
11610 Enchanted Woods Way  
Fredericksburg, VA 22407-8674

**Don't Forget: Dinner Meeting, Monday, December 9.**  
**Contact Mac Wyckoff before Thursday, December 5, for reservations at:**  
**<mwycckoff@erols.com> (e-mail) or (540) 786-2470 (voice)**