

DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table



Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter July 2009, Volume 6, Issue 7

Speaker: Lauren Thompson

Topic: Fraternization Between The Armies at Fredericksburg – Winter of 1862-63

When: Monday, July 13, 2009

Location: Brock's Riverside Grill

Times: Social begins: 6:00 p.m., Dinner served: 6:45 p.m., Meeting begins: 7:30 p.m.

Abstract on Lauren Thompson our scheduled July Program Speaker

Lauren Thompson is a native of Pittsburg, PA. She has an undergraduate degree in History from Marietta College and she is presently pursuing a Masters in Civil War History at West Virginia University. This is Lauren's second year as an intern at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Her subject for this month's meeting will be the fraternization between Union and Confederate pickets along the Rappahannock River during the winter of 1862 - 1863.

Both military and academic scholars alike have mentioned the fraternization in various literatures, but constantly dismiss these acts as simply boredom or for the trading of goods. Lauren intends to look beyond this argument and share her analysis of this critically significant experience for the men on both sides. What began as shouting jokes across the river, turned into some of the most interesting soldier discourse of the war. Men spent several hours behind enemy lines conversing with one another. She asks "How could these men spend a winter sharing intimate details with one another as friends, then pick up their rifle's in April to meet again across that deadly space at Chancellorsville?"

"European Perspectives on the Civil War"

A Review of our June, 2009 Program by Greg Mertz

Our June speaker; Lee Stone, introduced his topic; the European perspective of our nation's most trying period by indicating that Europe viewed the American Civil War as a distraction or as a side show. Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia were each too focused on the balance of power in Europe to pay much attention to what was going on in "the backwater of America." European armies saw themselves as the experts in military affairs and believed that the inferior American armies had nothing to offer of any substance regarding changes in tactics and weaponry.

One of the most significant associations between European powers and the American armies was the supply and procurement of small arms. The European nations typically retained their best weapons and offered their oldest surplus guns to the Americans. The best weapons procured from Europe were some 900,000 Enfield rifles produced by private firms in Britain, and the Austrian Lorentz rifles, of which nearly 100,000 were sold to the Confederacy and about 225,000 sold to the United States. Most of the imported artillery was from Great Britain, with just a few Austrian cannon. The Confederacy procured some of the most advanced artillery designs with the Blakely rifles and the breach-loading Whitworth cannon.

At the start of the war, Stone indicated that “many British aristocrats were pleased to see the upstart American democratic experiment seemingly going down in ruin...” The Confederacy was also held in favor in Britain as the source of 80% of the cotton needed to supply their textile mills, and as a market for British manufactured goods. The North was conversely viewed as a competitor of British products.

British sympathy for the South faded when its cotton was withheld in an attempt to coerce Britain into recognizing the Confederacy. Stone concluded that the diplomatic tactic failed for four reasons. First, British officials resented the arrogance of the Confederate efforts to manipulate them. Second, because of Southern bumper crops of cotton prior to the outbreak of the war, British warehouses were full into 1862. Third, by the time the surplus of cotton ran out, the Confederates could not get cotton through the United States Navy’s blockade, and Britain developed other sources of cotton. Fourth, British workers showed solidarity, assuring United States leaders that they would not support the “slave power.” In addition to the problems the British had with the Confederacy, Britain had also become dependent upon grain imports from the United States.

United States and British relations were strained in the fall of 1861 when Charles Wilkes, the commander of the USS San Jacinto stopped the British mail steamer Trent on its way to England. Aboard the Trent were Southerners James Mason and John Slidell along with their secretaries, traveling to Europe to represent the Confederate cause. Wilkes took the four men off of the Trent and allowed the steamer to continue. The British government objected vehemently. The British seizure of Americans on the high seas had been one of the primary causes of the War of 1812, and now in 1861 the United States was committing the same offense that it had opposed just a few decades earlier. The hypocrisy did not go unnoticed. Lincoln, adhering to the philosophy of one war at a time, released Mason and Slidell. Britain still sent troops to Canada, just in case war erupted.

Tensions between the United States and Britain were again stressed in the spring of 1862. The screw sloop ‘Enrica’ left the Laird shipyard in Liverpool, England, but once outside of British waters became the CSS Alabama, one of the most famed Confederate warships. Charles Francis Adams, the equivalent of the U.S. ambassador to Britain at the time, protested. The British government subsequently directed that two ironclads then being constructed for the Confederate navy should be purchased by the Royal Navy instead.

The possibility of either Britain or France recognizing the Confederacy practically disappeared after the Battle of Antietam in the fall of 1862 and the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Neither country could support and defend slavery once the United States had declared the freedom of slaves in the South to be an official war aim.

In 1862, France realized that a consequence of the American Civil War was that the United States was unable to enforce the Monroe doctrine – a proclamation that the United States would view European colonization in the western hemisphere as an act of aggression. France sent Maximilian to Mexico, ostensibly seeking unpaid debts, and in 1864 he was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico. By 1866, with the Civil War over and 50,000 United States soldiers massed on the Mexican border and the battle-hardened U.S. Navy threatening to cut off communications, France decided to withdraw its troops from Mexico. The Mexican people revolted, leaving Maximilian to face a firing squad.

When Russian fleets arrived at American ports in the fall of 1863, United States officials viewed it as a gesture of support, in contrast to the strained relations with Britain and France. The

Russian Baltic fleet arrived in New York harbor, spending the winter in eastern U.S. ports. The Russian far eastern fleet likewise arrived in San Francisco harbor. The Russians were treated with much hospitality. The Russians were not offering support to the United States, however, but they were seeking sanctuary. The Russians had lost the Crimean War to the British and French in 1856, and also they had lost their only warm water ports in the Black Sea. When the Russians brutally put down a revolt in Poland, they feared retaliation from British and French fleets, hence their arrival in American ports.

Stone concluded his program by providing brief sketches of a few of the tens of thousands of foreign born participants or observers of the Civil War. Prussian Heros Von Borke served on J.E.B. Stuart's staff until wounded at Middleburg during the Gettysburg Campaign. Irishman Patrick Cleburne was a skillful division commander in Army of Tennessee when killed at Franklin. British Arthur Freemantle observed the Battle of Gettysburg from the Confederate side of the field. Though a professional German officer, Franz Sigel proved to be an inept Federal general. Russian John Turchin commanded a brigade in the Army of the Cumberland. Frenchman Regis De Trobriand commanded a brigade in the Army of the Potomac. German Hubert Dilger was awarded the Medal of Honor at Chancellorsville. British George Bell received the Medal of Honor as captain of the USS Santee in Galveston Bay.

“The End of Sail, the Beginning of Steam and Iron”
Award Winning Essay By Kyle Allwine
By Jim Smithfield

Our 2009 winner of the RVCWRT \$3,000.00 student scholarship award is Kyle Allwine, a graduating senior from King George High School. Kyle has been accepted at The University of Mary Washington and will begin his studies there this fall. Kyle and his parents have accepted our invitation to attend the July 13th RVCWRT Dinner Meeting, where Kyle will be recognized. At that time, Kyle will present a short synopsis of his winning essay to our membership present. This is an excellent, well written and through essay and his reading should not be missed, we should all try to attend the July 13th dinner. Next month's issue of Drum & Bugle will carry Kyle's essay for those unable to attend his reading at our July dinner meeting...

RVCWRT Ball Caps
By Conway Richardson

Reminder to all members: There are still a few RVCWRT ball caps available. The ball caps will continue to be on sale at our monthly dinner meetings. The cost is only \$15.00 per ball cap. To reserve a ball cap, please contact Conway Richardson @ (540) 548-2112.

Civil War Media Reviews
By Joe Truglio, Vice President, Phil Kearny CWRT

Raphael Semmes and the Alabama: by Spencer C. Tucker (NF) This is a small book compared to most, and it deals with the problems arising with field armies during major battles. The book is less than 100 pages and yet it is filled with information. The author gives us a clear view of the technology, logistics, personalities, etc. of the times. After having read this book, I came away with a much better understanding of the difficulties of getting orders carried out in a nineteenth century combat situation. This is truly a worthy effort and therefore well worth reading...

First In Defense Of The Union: by John D. Hoptak (NF) This is the story of those first units responding to Lincoln's call for troops to defend Washington City. These men were from Pennsylvania and arrived in the Capitol on April 18, 1861. The author describes their journey to the City and gives us their history. He includes capsule biographies of participants, including their fates after the War. Rosters of the units are provided. This is nice account of a group of valiant men who have been all but forgotten by history...

I Take My Pen In Hand - A Family's Civil War Legacy

By Jim Smithfield

In last month's newsletter, I noted that while in Atlanta I had the pleasure to meet Joyce Height, a very lovely lady. Joyce allowed me the honor of copying her family's treasured collection of letters, documents and photographs from or relating to William Henry Harrison 'Hat' Bosworth (her great grandfather) and Miles L. Bosworth, his first cousin. This family notebook containing unique and interesting material was compiled by Joyce's sister, Jean Taylor Silver who had rewritten and corrected the text. However, I felt that the grammar and any misspellings should not be altered from the original text.

Mustered on August 20, 1861, in Kalamazoo, Michigan; 'Hat' and Miles served in Company H, Sixth Regiment, Infantry Michigan Volunteers until 1864. The youngest of thirteen children sired by Luther Boomer Bosworth, 'Hat' enlisted at seventeen. Material presented in these articles was discovered in a living room table, in the farmhouse of Luther Frederick Bosworth, son of 'Hat' Bosworth and grandfather to Joyce and Jean.

Like most of his generation, 'Hat' had only limited formal education and in various ways his letters may seem tedious! The letter as presented below is from 'Hat' and was written from Camp McKim, Baltimore, MD to his father. Notable is his spelling, which overall is not bad considering. 'Hat's' use of capitalization and the fact that he didn't use periods or commas may be a challenge, but I felt it's important to present these letter verbatim. This is the first letter to be displayed...

Camp Mckim Baltimore Md October 1861

Dear Father

I take my pen in hand to inform you how I am getting along I have had the Measles and been in the hospitle but am better now so that I am round the Camp I was glad to hear from you we have to eat in the morning patatoes fried meat Coffee and Bread we live well I have no reason to Complain we have (missing word) had our pay for 11 days we will draw pay for two months the first of November we do not know how long we shall stay here Miles sends his best respects to you all he is on guard to day the boys are cutting all sorts out front some rastling some playing leap frog some playing cards it is after noon I will finish my leter I have just been out and seen the oddfellows bury one of their number it is raining now thare is everything going on in Camp thare is one fight a Corpril and a private the later was to much the boys will not have to drill this after noon direct your leters Camp Mckim Baltimore Md Company H 6 rejiment Mich infantry some of the (missing word) are cleaning their guns some writing letters we have meeting evry sunday and we all have to go some Boys wont go they put them in the guard house we do not get any news about the war here not half so much as you do thare I am glad that you sent me the republican it seems like home to read it but I must bring my letter to a close no more this time write as soon as you get this give my love to all tell Ben to write

('Hat's' letter was unsigned)

Remember: Contact Bob Jones to order your dinner in advance and to save a buck!

Telephone 540-399-1702 or e-mail 3dognight@bigplanet.com

On October 3, 2009 the RVCWRT Celebrates our 20th Anniversary at Farley **By Jim Smithfield**

This year, our organization celebrates a significant milestone in our history! The RVCWRT has been around for twenty-years and we plan to continue growing. Also we will be celebrating twenty-years of continued support for Battlefield Preservation, Scholarships and our informative Dinner Meetings. We are holding our celebration at Brandy Station Battlefield, at the Wellford House, also known as "Farley." Our celebration begins at 1:30 p.m. on October 3rd of this year and please note, that this will be a catered event. Tours of 'Farley' will be available from 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. and are open to all attendees. Come-on; plan on attending, it's on a Saturday and the cost is only \$20.00 per person. We have over three-months until the event and that's plenty of time to plan on attending. Guests are welcome, we just need to know how many for our caterer! Additional news on our celebration will follow in future newsletter issues...



Farley after Brandy Station in 1864

History at Sunset **Ferry Farm and Pine Grove: In the Path of the Union Army** **By Allan Zerkle**

Friday, July 12, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

The folks at Ferry Farm will make their new exhibit on the archeology of the Civil War available to those taking the tour, starting at 6 p.m. on Friday, June 12th, before the History at Sunset tour of Ferry Farm. If you come a bit early, you can stroll through the exhibit (which is very good) and talk to some of the staff there. The exhibit is in the archeology lab in the visitor center at Ferry Farm.

Join Historian John Hennessy and Archeologist Paul Nasca in walking the land where young George Washington grew up and where Union soldiers later fought. Meet at George Washington's Ferry Farm, 268 King's Highway, i.e., Virginia Route 3, Falmouth, VA.

The Drum and Bugle Newsletter is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Dues are \$30.00 for individuals, \$40.00 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. Marc Thompson, President; Greg Martin, Vice President and Program Chair; Bob Jones, Secretary; Bob Pfile, Treasurer; Barbara Stafford, Asst. Treasurer; Dan Augustine, Web Site Administrator; Jim Smithfield, Newsletter Editor; Tom Quigley, Membership Chairman; John Graham, John Griffiths, and Greg Mertz, Members of the Board of Directors.



Farley as it is today

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