

DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table



Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter December 2009, Volume 6, Issue 12

Speaker: Mr. Richard Lewis

Topic: Virginia's Civil War Sesquicentennial Presentation

When: Monday, December 14, 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 our December dinner program speaker

Our speaker for the December dinner meeting will be Richard Lewis, National Public Relations Manager for the Virginia Tourism Corporation located in Richmond, Virginia. An avid Civil War enthusiast, Mr. Lewis' presentation will center on Virginia's upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration. Additionally, Mr. Lewis will discuss the Virginia Tourism Commission's planned activities in Virginia during the coming year

The March to Gettysburg by Bradley Gottfried A Review of the November Speakers Program By Greg Mertz

At our November meeting, Dr. Bradley Gottfried, spoke to us about the content of one of his books, *The Roads to Gettysburg*. Using the same format as his book, Dr. Gottfried detailed a day by day explanation of key events early in the Gettysburg Campaign. Gottfried provided highlights from June 3 through July 2, 1863. The program gave round table members an appreciation for the many aspects of this famous campaign that are often overlooked. We got a feel for just how dispersed Confederates were during much of the campaign and why. We saw the problems both armies had in determining where the opposing armies were located and why. We also learned of the heat endured by both armies and the forced marches made by some units of the Federal army, which caused Gottfried to comment that it was a wonder the Federal army won the battle after such exhausting marches.

The Gettysburg Campaign got underway on June 3, 1863, as the first of the three Confederate corps withdrew from their camps around Fredericksburg. On June 5, Confederate army commander, Robert E. Lee, dispatched another corps, leaving only A.P Hill's corps of 25,000 men to face the Federal army across the Rappahannock numbering 90,000 soldiers.

On June 4, Federal army commander Joseph Hooker reported that some of the Confederates had left their camps, and the next day, sought advice from Washington on whether he ought to attack Lee or march on Richmond. General-in-Chief, Henry Halleck, responded with an important directive outlining Hooker's objectives to protect Harpers Ferry and

to defend Washington. A few days later, Lincoln instructed Hooker that Lee's army, not Richmond, was to be his objective.

On June 6, Hooker sent a portion of his VI Corps across the Rappahannock to test the Confederate strength, and concluded that a sizeable number of Confederates were still at Fredericksburg. Lee halted the advance of the two infantry corps until he could determine the intent of the VI Corps movement.

Even though Hooker had yet to figure out just where the Confederates who left Fredericksburg had gone, he was aware of the Confederate Cavalry build-up in the Culpeper area. These Southern cavalymen were in position to screen the march of the two infantry corps, which were also in Culpeper, poised for the first leg of the march to Pennsylvania. Confederate cavalry corps commander J.E.B. Stuart took advantage of the rare consolidation of his corps by holding reviews on June 5 and June 8, 1863.

Hooker decided to strike the Confederate cavalry in the opening engagement of the campaign on June 9 at Brandy Station. Federal cavalry surprised the Confederate cavalry, though the Southern horsemen retained the field. One consequence of the battle was that Hooker was denied any useful information regarding the whereabouts of the nearby Confederate infantry. Another possible outcome of Brandy Station is that Stuart may have spent the remainder of the Gettysburg Campaign seeking to redeem his reputation. Lee resumed the march to Pennsylvania, 18 hours after the Battle of Brandy Station.

The Confederate vanguard, under Richard S. Ewell, headed toward Winchester and its Federal garrison under Robert Milroy. Though Milroy was ordered to withdraw to Harpers Ferry on June 11, he declined, declaring that he could defend his position against any number of Confederates. The next day Hooker concluded that Washington may be threatened and put half of his army on the road to Centreville. Also on June 12, Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin called for volunteers to deal with the eminent emergency, retaining local control of the troops rather than enlisting the men in Federal service.

The distance between the head of the Confederate army at Martinsburg and its tail at Fredericksburg on June 14, was 90 miles and Lee was convinced that all Federal troops opposite Fredericksburg were moving north. Only then did Lee commit his last corps under Hill to the march. Not until twelve days into the campaign were all Confederate forces on the move.

Also on June 14, Milroy decided to evacuate Winchester, slipping out of the city under the cover of darkness in the early hours of June 15. Ewell anticipated just such a maneuver, and was waiting behind a railroad grade at Stephenson's Depot. Milroy lost 2500 of his 8000 men in this Confederate victory in which Ewell seemed to be a fitting replacement for Jackson.

On that same day Confederate raiders under Albert G. Jenkins reached Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. They were predominantly looking for horses and seeking African Americans to be sent south into slavery.

Lincoln called for an additional 100,000 militia. Interestingly, the greatest responses were from New York and New Jersey – motivated, as Gottfried pointed out, from preventing the Confederates from reaching their states.

By June 16, the Pennsylvania capital city of Harrisburg was in a panic. Free blacks were impressed into service to build fortifications. The next day, 37,000 militiamen poured into Harrisburg, placed under the command of Darius Couch, former II Corps commander who resigned because he could no longer bear to serve under Hooker.

Meanwhile Hooker was still trying to figure out the strength of the Confederate force that had ambushed Milroy at Winchester. Those forces had been shielded from view by the Blue Ridge Mountains, with Stuart's cavalry protecting the gaps. Hooker's cavalry sought to gain the gaps, fighting a series of battles with Stuart, on June 17, 19 and 21 at Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville, Virginia. Though Stuart did a fine job of protecting the gaps, this mission hampered him from gathering information about Hooker's army.

Without a clear understanding of Hooker's activities, Stuart decided to advance to Pennsylvania by riding in the rear of the Federal army. Stuart's ability to keep Lee informed of

Federal movements were severely hampered when Hooker decided to move north toward Frederick, Maryland on June 25th. This was at the same time that Stuart had just started a parallel march east of the route of Federal army. Stuart's attempts to notify Lee that the Federal army was once again on the move were not successful.

On June 26th, Early's Confederates captured 175 young militiamen at Gettysburg – five days before the start of the battle. The condescending Early then sent these “boys” home to their mothers.

Hooker concluded on June 27th that he did not have the capabilities of protecting both Washington and Harpers Ferry, and he offered his resignation. Most likely this was a ploy to have the Harpers Ferry garrison placed officially in his control; but Hooker's resignation was accepted by Lincoln. George G. Meade, who had written to his wife that he did not have the necessary connections to ever lead the army, found himself in command. He hastily tried to determine the position and condition of the army he had just inherited.

Early reached York, Pennsylvania, on June 28th and threatened to burn the town unless the city fathers could pay a \$100,000.00 ransom. Other elements of Early's division under Gordon reached the Susquehanna River at Wrightsville, Pennsylvania, but were unable to cross because the bridge over the river had been burned. Stuart captured 125 wagons, when within 10 miles of Washington, and Gottfried felt that Stuart might have been able to make a raid into Washington had he not been hampered by these wagons.

On June 29th, the scout Harrison, informed Longstreet that the Federal army had crossed the Potomac and that Meade commanded the army. Since Stuart's couriers never made it through, this was the first inclination Lee had that the Federal army was so close at hand. On that same day, many Federal units are on the verge of exhaustion.

The Federal army entered Pennsylvania on June 30, 1863, and Pettigrew's brigade of Confederate infantry encountered Buford's Federal cavalrymen on the outskirts of Gettysburg, and concluded that these men were not the militiamen that the Confederates had encountered before, but were advance elements of the main Federal army. All of the elements were in place for the most climactic battle of the war.

“RVCWRT Elections”
Announcing openings for elected ‘Board’ positions
By Jim Smithfield

In January of 2010, the RVCWRT will be holding our general elections for the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Under the Articles of our recently passed Constitution, each newly elected position will be for a two year term of office. More information is available through the RVCWRT web-site on the various functions of each board member. To place your name as a candidate on the ballot, please contact Bob Jones at 3dognight@bigplanet.com

Did You Know...
By Jim Smithfield

... that, Robert E. Lee's Civil War military tactics were studied in military academies around the world, from St. Cyr, France to West Point until after World War One?

... that, on January 1, 1865, the Confederate fighting forces reported that over 55% of their soldiers were listed as absent?

... that, the total number of black soldiers and sailors who served in Union forces totaled just under 200,000 men?

... that, the Confederacy had twenty-two ironclad vessels and all of them were placed into service by war's end?

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

By Jim Smithfield

This month's letter is from 'Hat', to his sister, and is sent from Port Hudson, LA where 'Hat' and Miles are now stationed. It is marvelous that after more than one full year away from family and home that 'Hat's' outlook and attitude towards the war remains positive...

Port Hudson La Nov the 18th 1862

Remembered Sister

Your kind and welcome letter of the 23 came to hand to day and I was glad to hear from you I am well at present with hope this may find you the same We are having the easiest of times we have ever had We dont have any guard duty to do now All we have to do is to drill one hour in the forenoon and one in the afternoon Over where we made the charge on the 27th it is all on fire The grass is up to a mans wast Thar is about three 3000 acres of it It runs like a horse race Thar was some recruits come for the regiment came to day I think they had a pretty good initiation They was fired into up about 21 miles from here by the guerrillas but they did not hurt any of them The gunboats soon put a stop to their fun and made them leave their hiding place Last night we killed a beef Thar is lots of cattle running around in the fort but they dont let us have meat only once in five days So we went out and helped ourselves last night We catch a cow that dressed about 600 and killed her Thar was 6 of us We went out at 6 o'clock killed and dressed her and got back at 7 just one hour We took her legs and head n' innards and put them in an old well We give the Capt 20 pounds of it and the six of us kept the hind quarters and give the fore quarters to the CO You wanted me to write to you whether you had wrote any things or not you have not I suppose they think because I wrote to have note took up and the interest added to it you had been writing me about it You ask Chuck how much my wool come to this year We have been fireing at a target to day about two miles off We hit it We fire tuesdays wednesdays and Saturdays I think I shall have lots of relations that I have not seen They seem to be pretty good stole that dried fruit that was sent by the Captain I got one 50 part of them Thar was a boat burt to day with three days mail on it from this place It had one 100 thousand dolars of coton on it I had my likeness taken last sunday and sent it to Father In about two weeks I will have my photograph taken and send it to you They hant got ready to take yet I can get them for three dolars for half a dozen I am going to send a paper with a ring to Johny Gleason and book mark made out of a Rebels leg I will direct it to you You may think curious of my sending it It will not hurt you for I have carried it a good while

Wm. H 'Hat' Bosworth.

Civil War Media Review

By Joe Truglio, President, Phil Kearny CWRT

First In Defense Of The Union by John D. Hoptak (NF) This is the true story of the first units to respond to Lincoln's initial call for troops to defend Washington City. These men were from

Pennsylvania and they arrived in the Capitol on April 18, 1861. The author describes their journey to the City and he gives us their history. He includes capsule biographies of the participants, including their fates after the War. Rosters of the units are provided. This is a nice account of a group of valiant men who have been all but forgotten by history.

Lincoln Revisited: Edited by John Y. Simon, Dawn Vogel, and Harold Holzer. (NF) This is a series of 18 essays written by an equal number of historians covering many aspects of Lincoln's life and career. It is the type of book that can easily be read at leisure, i.e., one essay at a time. Each is excellent in its own right. For me it is the perfect volume: read an essay, reflect on it, seek out more information on the subject and then go on to the next in no particular order. In fact I did just that and I found it fulfilling. So will you, if Lincoln is your cup of tea.

RVCWRT Ball Caps
By Conway Richardson

Reminder to all members: We still have RVCWRT ball caps available. These ball caps will continue to be on sale at our monthly dinner meetings until all have been sold. Cost remains only \$15.00 per ball cap. To reserve a ball cap, please contact Conway Richardson @ (540) 548-2112.

Getting to know your Board
By Jim Smithfield

As noted, in previous Newsletters, beginning after the elections for your Board of Directors and Executive Committee in January 2010, there will be a new feature coming to this Newsletter. Each month, we will introduce each member of your Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Each member will provide a brief Bio of who they are and note any goals they have for the RVCWRT. These "write-ups" will each include a photo of that month's featured Board Member. Our first featured Board Member will of course be our President...

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

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.

KING GEORGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Invites you to a book signing...Disaster on the Potomac: The Sinking of the *Wawaset*
Written by ALVIN OICKLE

Meet the author, ALVIN OICKLE, whose book provides a vivid account of the August 8, 1873 burning of the elegant *Wawaset* Steamboat in the Potomac River off the shores of King George County. Of the 150 passengers on board, 76 drowned or died from their burns.

Sunday, December 6, 2009 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Caledon Natural Area, 11617 Caledon Road, King George, VA 22485

Chances sold for an Original Artwork by artist ANNE DOYLE; the artwork depicts the *Wawaset* disaster and was used for the cover of the book.

Refreshments Served

Book Sales on Premises

Other KGCHS Collectibles & Gifts Available

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
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