



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
January 2019, Volume 16, Issue 1

Speaker: Ryan Quint
Topic: "A Troubled Town: Dranesville and its People, 1861."

When: Monday, January 14, 2019
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

January 14, 2019 - Ryan Quint: "A Troubled Town: Dranesville and its People, 1861."

Ryan Quint grew up in Maine and then moved to Virginia to attend the University of Mary Washington. After graduating with a degree in history, Ryan worked as a National Park Service historian at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and as a docent for the George Washington Foundation. He is the author of "Determined to Stand and Fight: The Battle of Monocacy, July 9, 1864." He is a contributor to the Emerging Civil War blog and the former Membership Chairman of our Round Table. Ryan currently works at Colonial Williamsburg.

Ryan's presentation will focus on the people of Dranesville (Fairfax County) throughout 1861, culminating with the battle in December. It won't be so much a battle presentation as a talk focused on the intersection of the town's politics and drama in the first year of the Civil War.

"I Would Still be Drowned in Tears" – Spiritualism in the Lincoln White House
by Michelle Hamilton
A Review of the December 2018 Program by Greg Mertz

Our speaker, Michelle Hamilton described both Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd as people who grew up in paranormal environments. William Herndon, law partner and biographer of Lincoln, wrote of the southern Indiana frontier community in which young Abraham was raised by stating: "these people were brimming over with superstition.... They believed in the baneful influence of witches, pinned their faith to the curative power of wizards in dealing with sick animals, and shot the image of a witch with a silver ball to break the spell she was supposed to have over human beings."

Lincoln's cousin reported that during one of their flatboat trips down the Mississippi to New Orleans that he made with Abraham (either in 1828 or 1831) that Lincoln visited a voodoo fortune teller. The priestess told Lincoln that he would be president of the country. She also told him that he would end slavery and that she hoped she would live long enough to witness it.

Lincoln's first law partner John T. Stuart, indicated that Lincoln had many dreams, which Stuart attributed to Lincoln's bad digestive system interfering with Lincoln's sleep. Lincoln believed that dreams were sent by God as a hint of something to come. Lincoln would continue to have the conviction that dreams possessed some meaning throughout his life.

Mary Todd's mother died in her childhood so she and her siblings were reared by an enslaved woman called Nanny Sally. One of the ways in which she sought to maintain discipline over the children was by telling them that Jay birds were sent by the devil to report back to hell every Friday on any misbehavior the Jays witnessed. One of Mary's siblings recalled that Mary once taunted the Jays, and when one of the birds squawked at Mary, it sent her fleeing and screaming.

Among the prominent activities attributed to paranormal behavior in the nineteenth century was the witch that haunted the Bell family in Tennessee in the 1810s to 1820s. John Bell is one of only a few people in the United States who is said to have been killed by a haunting.

A factor that contributed to the appeal of Spiritualism was the corresponding advent of Evangelicalism. Evangelical Christians taught that everyone had the ability to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, and many churches changed their stand on infant baptism. They now felt that babies and young children should not be baptized. Only when a child was eight to twelve years old could they understand and confess that they were sinners, accept Christ as their savior and be baptized. That meant there was a very real possibility that children who died before reaching the age in which they experienced a spiritual awakening might go to hell. Considering the high number of children to die at young ages at the time, it was very disturbing for some parents to contemplate that their beloved children might suffer for eternity.

The beginning of Spiritualism with the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York in 1848, filled a void created by the Evangelical movement by being able to communicate with children who had died. The sisters heard a series of bangs and knocks in their house. They eventually became able to communicate back with the spirit through raps and taps. The spirit explained that he had been murdered, and then started to engage in gossip about neighbors, and later he discussed religion with traveling ministers. Among the religious matters that the spirit indicated that the pastors had gotten wrong

was in regard to children; the spirit indicated that heaven was full of children, and as proof he brought over the spirit of a neighboring child. The Fox sisters went on tour, lecturing and spreading word about Spiritualism.

As the Fox sister shared their beliefs, others learned that they could also communicate with spirits and would set up small séance circles. Women were the mediums at the séances. Women – especially unmarried women – were seen as inherently good and pure.

Spiritualism would never become popular in the South because Spiritualists also supported abolition of slavery. Among the other causes that Spiritualists embraced were temperance, women's rights and prison reform. Not only was Spiritualism not embraced in the South, it was also viewed as dangerous.

Among the messages from beyond that Spiritualists received was that there was indeed a heaven. Their loved ones were in heaven and were happy. Their loved ones looked forward to reuniting with them in heaven. Loved ones on earth should not grieve too strongly for them because everything was actually fine.

Among the practices engaged in by the Lincolns was Mary being "mesmerized" or hypnotized in an unsuccessful attempt to treat migraine headaches early in their marriage. The teachings of Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer were that natural energy transference occurred between all objects and it was believed that a patient might be healed through essentially hypnosis and the moving of hands over their body. While under the trance, many claimed to have either seen spirits or gained clairvoyant powers.

When the Lincoln's son Robert was bitten by a dog and it was feared he would contract the fatal rabies disease, Abraham took his son to Terre Haute, Indiana to be treated by a stone mass from an ox or another large animal. The treatment was also used for poisonous snake bites.

In 1864 Lincoln revealed to a friend a reoccurring dream he had had shortly after his election to office in 1860. Lincoln had laid down and saw his image in the glass of a bureau, except that he had two faces -- one face noticeably paler than the other. Abraham shared the dream with Mary, who thought it meant that he would have two terms, but would not live to complete the second term. The country would hear the story for the first time in 1865 after Lincoln's assassination.

When the Lincoln's son, Willie died February 20, 1862 at the age of eleven, Mary Lincoln was so distraught that Abraham warned her that if she could not control herself, he would have her admitted into an insane asylum. She pulled her out of depression in séances, which Abraham participated in as well. Nettie Coburn became the most popular medium at the White House, coming regularly from the summer of 1862 to January 1865. After Mary's half-sister Emilie Helm's husband was killed, she moved into the White House for a while in 1863 and 1864. Emilie wrote of a conversation they had regarding Mary communicating with Willie at a séance. Mary said, "if Willie did not come to comfort me I would still be drowned in tears ... he lives, Emilie." Emilie wrote of her reaction: "It is unnatural and abnormal, it frightens me."

Ongoing Reminder

Please contact Bob Jones to order your dinner in advance or to confirm your dinner reservation. Please call Bob Jones @ 540-399-1702 or send him your e-mail at cwrtinner@yahoo.com

ATTENTION - The 2019 Membership Drive has - ATTENTION

After 31 December 2018, if we have not received your membership renewal then regretfully the next time that we see you in 2019 you will be charged full price for participation in one of our Dinner Meetings, Bus Tours, or other special activities. Also, until we have received your renewal you will no longer receive any of our e-mail notifications.

That being stated, there is a silver lining within this potential bad news. The next time that we happily see you in 2019 you will have the opportunity to on-the-spot, renew your membership and therefore be able to continue to enjoy the privileges that are currently afforded to you.

Don't delay, renew your membership **Now**.



The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg By Bob Jones

As a courtesy, the RVCWRT provides as a regular feature each month, the ongoing scheduled speakers for the CWRTF's 2018 Program Year. The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except for one meeting held on the third Wednesday of June 2018). Dinner Meetings are held at the UMW's Jepson Center located at [1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA](http://1119HanoverStreet.com), dinner cost is \$32.00 per person. Advance reservations should be made by email: dinner@cwrtf.org or telephone: 540-361-2105.

CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers for the 2018 and 2019 Program Year:

January 23, 2019	Robert Dunkerly	"Civil War Railroads"
February 27, 2019	Dr. Bradley Gottfried	"Maps of the Battle of Fredericksburg"
March 27, 2019	Bob O'Connor	"James Hanger and the Hanger Company"

April 24, 2019	Mark Tooley	"The 1861 Peace Conference"
May 22, 2019	Patrick Schroeder, NPS	"Zouaves: America's Forgotten Soldiers"
June 19, 2019	Dave Bastion	"The Vicksburg Canal"
SEPT. 25, 2019	Brian E. Withrow	"Ulysses S. Grant in Character"
OCT.23, 2019	Michael K. Shaffer	"In Memory of Self and Comrades: Thomas W. Colley's Recollection"

Who we are

The Drum and Bugle Newsletter is published monthly, by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Each month, The Drum and Bugle newsletter is also placed on our web-site, www.RVCWRT.org. Yearly membership dues are \$35.00 for an individual, \$45.00 for families, and only \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the ongoing preservation of Civil War sites.

The RVCWRT Executive Committee:

President/Dinner Meeting:	Bob Jones	Membership:	TBD
Vice President:	John Sapanara	Member at Large:	Robin Donato
Secretary:	Melanie Jordan	Member at Large:	John Griffiths
Treasurer:	Bob Pfile	Member at Large:	Barbara Stafford
Assistant Treasurer:	Ben Keller	Media & Events Coordinator:	Paul Steir
Meeting Scribe:	Greg Mertz	Past President:	Marc Thompson
Membership Chair:	Paul Steir	Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:	Dan Augustine

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Post Office Box 7632
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404