



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

**Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
May 2017, Volume 14, Issue 5**

Speaker: Frank O'Reilly
Topic: "Desperately Humiliated"; Burnsidess Mud March
When: Monday, May 8, 2017
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Abstract on our Scheduled Speaker for May 8, 2017, Frank O'Reilly

Our scheduled speaker on May 8th will be Frank O'Reilly, who will discuss *Burnsidess Mud March*. His book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign; Winter War on the Rappahannock*, released through LSU Press in December of 2002, highlights this event. O'Reilly received a nomination for the 2002, Pulitzer Prize in Letters for his book and his book did win the 2002, Capital District (Albany, NY) Book Award; the 2003, James I. Robertson, Jr. Book Award; the 2004, Daniel Laney Book Award; and the 2004, Richard Barksdale Harwell Book Award.

O'Reilly, received both a BA and MA in American History with a concentration on Early American Military History and on Civil War Studies. He did his undergraduate work at Washington and Lee University, prior to joining the U.S. National Park Service at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. O'Reilly, did work briefly at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA, but then returned to Fredericksburg as an Historian in 1990. He has also served as an Historical Consultant for the city of Fredericksburg.

Frank O'Reilly, has written articles on both the Civil War and the Mexican War for national and international journals; and personal introductions to many books. He released his first book on the Fredericksburg Campaign in 1993, titled *Stonewall Jackson at Fredericksburg*. O'Reilly, has appeared in a number of documentaries, and he has lectured extensively on military history to audiences around the world, including conferences in the United Kingdom at Oxford.

Currently, O'Reilly, is doing research for a book on the *Battle of Malvern Hill* and the *Seven Days Campaign* around Richmond.

"Civil War Soldiers Go West"

by Mac Wyckoff

A review of our April 10, 2017, program by Greg Mertz

Mac Wyckoff, is a founding board member and a past president of our round table. He gave a presentation on Civil War soldiers who wound up in the Pacific Northwest after the Civil War. The stories of two of these soldiers actually had further developments since Mac had agreed to present the program about a year ago.

Mac's program appropriately began with a soldier who had been born in Fredericksburg, Isaac Williams Smith. Who had graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1846, and the following year Smith saw service at the Siege of Vera Cruz in the Mexican War. As an engineer, Smith was later engaged in surveying boundaries for railroads and building lighthouses in the Pacific Northwest. When his native state of Virginia seceded from the Union, he fled the country to British Columbia, working there until he earned enough money to travel to Richmond and there offer his services to the Confederacy. Assigned to the engineers, Smith helped construct the defenses of Richmond and Petersburg. After the Civil War, Smith went back to Mexico to build a railroad from Vera Cruz to Mexico City. Eventually he returned to the Pacific Northwest, where he became the father of the Portland, Oregon water system. He was included on a list of the ten most prominent people in Oregon's history. A *Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp* was named in his honor, and he is buried in Portland's River View Cemetery.

Another Civil War soldier buried in River View Cemetery is Virgil Earp. His father-in-law did not approve of Earp's marriage to his daughter, Ellen Rysdam. When Earp left home to serve as a soldier in the 83rd Illinois, Mr. Rysdam deceitfully reported to Ellen that Virgil had been killed in battle. When Virgil returned home from the war, his wife and daughter were gone. His post-war career as a U.S. Deputy Marshall took him to Tombstone, Arizona where he was famously involved in the 1881 gunfight at the OK Corral. In 1898 Earp learned that his daughter was living in Oregon and he established a connection with her. Earp died and was buried in Oregon in 1905.

Jewett Williams likewise had an unusual relationship with his wife. Williams enlisted in the famous 20th Maine regiment in October of 1864. Williams divorced in 1871, only to remarry just a couple of months later. Then during a span in which both he and his wife were both alive, they each strangely reported themselves to be widower and widow. Williams lived in Everett, Washington (hometown of our own Marc Thompson) in 1892 and in 1922, he was admitted into the Oregon State Hospital for the Insane, where he died three months later. His remains were cremated and kept in a copper canister. In 2004, the remains of more than 3,000 former mental patients were discovered in storage. The remains of eighteen veterans were interred in a nearby National Cemetery, but since the 20th Maine was so prominent, a historian of the unit suggested that Williams be buried near others of the regiment. Plans were then made for his reburial in the Togus National Cemetery near Augusta, Maine. The Patriot Guard Riders motorcycle group transported the remains in a 3,200 mile relay from Oregon to Maine in August of 2016. However, at the last minute, a pair of distant cousins expressed their desire for Williams' remains to be buried in a family plot. Williams' was instead laid to rest in the Hodgdon Cemetery in Maine beside his parents and a sister on September 24, 2016.

Another soldier covered in Mac's program had a final chapter that ended even more recently than that of Williams. James Powers had joined the 12th Michigan in 1864, mainly guarding railroads in Arkansas. Powers farmed in Michigan, but suffered a stroke in 1915, and moved to Oregon to be near a son. Powers died there in 1921. Similarly to the story of Jewett Williams, the remains of Powers and his wife were practically forgotten; their remains were stored in the basement of a Unitarian Church, and later in a community storage unit in Seattle. Finally on December 10, 2016, their remains were buried in Tahoma National Cemetery.

Major Granville Owen Haller had a unique experience connected with the *Battle of Fredericksburg*. The Pennsylvania native desired to attend West Point, but future Union Grand Division Commander at Fredericksburg, William B. Franklin received the appointment for which Haller had applied instead. Haller entered the army in 1839 without being educated at the Military Academy. His extensive military experience included significant service in the Pacific Northwest. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Haller found himself in command of the 93rd Pennsylvania, the army headquarters guard of George B. McClellan. After McClellan's tenure with the army concluded, Haller served during the Fredericksburg Campaign and in the aftermath, he and two other officers had a hot toddy involving a toast on December 17, 1862. One of the officers present, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Clark Wells, indicated that Haller expressed disloyal sentiments, and Haller was dismissed from the service in July of 1863. The real reason for his dismissal, though, was likely his association with McClellan. Not until 1879, would a court of inquiry be convened, and the third person at the gathering, Major Charles Whiting provided

testimony leading to Haller's exoneration. Haller moved to Seattle, where he died and was buried in Lake View Cemetery.

Thomas Jones Thorp served in the 85th New York, being wounded at *Seven Pines*, and in the 1st New York Dragoons and being captured at *Trevelyan Station*. Thorp, then escaped from the Confederate prison camp. In 1891, Thorp moved to Oregon and while living in Corvallis, met Confederate veteran John Richard Newton Bell.

Bell had been a member of the 26th Virginia and had also been captured during the Civil War – he had been captured by Thorp's regiment! Bell was an ordained minister and he officiated over the funeral of his former captor. Bell is said to be the first ever football mascot for Corvallis College, the school that would become Oregon State University. Bell also established a major social event for the school by gathering after football victories to throw his hat across the river. Former track and field and football stadiums had been named in Bell's honor.

Benjamin Lee Arnold was a member of the 14th Virginia and a participant in Pickett's Charge in the *Battle of Gettysburg*. He became the second president of Corvallis College and had the corps of cadets wear uniforms of Confederate gray. He hired a fellow Pickett's Charge veteran of the 38th Virginia, Benjamin Hawthorne, to chair the school's agriculture department. Hawthorne later went to the University of Oregon to found their psychology department.

Wyckoff, now residing in Eugene, Oregon, after retiring from working as a park historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park blended the skills of his profession with the history of his retirement home to present a unique program to us, telling the stories of a variety of Civil War soldiers who ended up living in the Pacific Northwest.

The following events already occurred prior to this newsletters publication

RVCWRT Honored by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT)

At the April 10th dinner meeting of the RVCWRT, Tom Van Winkle, President of the CVBT announced their new *Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award*, he displayed the award trophy and then announced that the RVCWRT had been selected as the very first recipient of this award. The 2017, award was presented at the CVBT Banquet and their Annual Meeting on Saturday evening, April 29th. The award is named in honor of their past president, Dr. Michael P. Stevens, who was also a past president of the RVCWRT.

The award came with two tickets to each of the four CVBT events at their 2017, Annual Meeting Weekend: a bus tour on Friday, April 28th; a bus tour on Saturday April 29th; the annual meeting banquet on Saturday April 29th with speaker Gordon Rhea; and a bus tour on Sunday April 30th.

The RVCWRT had auctioned off one ticket to each event and added supplemental funds to the award donations to: *Friends of Cedar Mountain*; *Friends of the Wilderness*; and the *Brandy Station Foundation* for battlefield preservation. A second ticket to each event was donated to local NPS Interns and to local history teachers.

The RVCWRT is extremely honored and grateful to receive the very first Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award

Reminder: Please contact Bob Jones to order dinner in advance
To confirm reservations: Telephone Bob Jones @ 540-399-1702 or send an e-mail to
cwrtdinner@yahoo.com or bobnpeg1954@gmail.com

The RVCWRT Bulletin Board

By Jim Smithfield

RVCWRT maintains a special bulletin board that is placed against the right side wall where guests enter the dining room. This Bulletin Board is utilized during each of our dinner meetings. Members will find many different articles about the Civil War placed there. These are there to be

requested by members for personal reading. Also, there is information posted on the bulletin board on upcoming Civil War related events, along with various items of interest. Along with the various posted announcements, Civil War articles and related material will be placed there. These items may each be requested and borrowed to take home to read.

THE RVCWRT 2017 BUS TOUR

Saturday, May 20th, 2017

Determined to Stand and Fight: *The Battle of Monocacy*
and

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine

Cost: Prior to May 1st, for members and their guests the cost is reduced to \$ 90.00 each

Cost: After May 1st, for members and their guests the cost will be \$100.00 each

Bus Tour: Includes lunch, necessary site fees at *Monocacy Battlefield*, handouts and a scholarly lecture at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD, titled "*Mythbusters*" The True Story of Civil War Medicine.

Bus departure: Bus leaves from the *Gordon Road Commuter Lot* at 8:00 a.m. on May 20th, returning at 6:00 p.m.

Tour Guides: Ryan Quint and Marc Thompson will be our Tour Guides for this trip.

• For information or reservations contact Bob Jones @ bobnpeg1954@gmail.com or call 540-399-1702

The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg

By Bob Jones

As a courtesy, the RVCWRT is providing as a regular feature each month, the ongoing scheduled speakers for the CWRTF's Program Year. The *Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg* normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except for the meeting being held on the third Wednesday in June 2017). Their Dinner Meetings are held at the MWW's Jepson Center located at 1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA, dinner cost is \$32.00 for each person. Reservations should be made by telephoning 540-361-2105. As noted below, the scheduled speaker for the upcoming May 24, 2017, program will be Patrick A. Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder will be presenting "Pardons and the Amnesty Oath and The Oath of Allegiance of Confederate Soldiers."



CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers For the 2017 Program Year

MAY 24, 2017 PATRICK A. SCHROEDER, NPS - Pardons and the Amnesty Oath and The Oath of Allegiance of Confederate Soldiers

JUN 21, 2017* SHANNON. PRITCHARD – Collecting the Confederacy

(*This date occurs on the 3rd Wednesday during the month of June)

Moments from the Battlefield and the Homefront An All-Encompassing Civil War Living History Event

Students of the American Civil War:

On the weekend of May 6 – 7, 2017, our *National Park Service*, in conjunction with multiple *Living Historian Organizations*, will present to the public a full spectrum event that will cover unique aspects of the *Battle of the Wilderness*.

Having never been brought together into a single location, these interactive activities will allow for a new understanding of what occurred here before, during, and after the battle. Taking place at *Ellwood* and the *Tapp Farm Field* the public will be able to take advantage of the NPS interpretive programs and the in-depth *Living History* presentations to learn what happened.

Each month a new article will be posted that will highlight a different *Living History Organization* who will participate in this event. The presented information will allow the public to have a better understanding of what will be made available to them when they arrive on either day. These multiple programs are perfect for the serious student or someone who is new to the area and wants to learn something about our Civil War. Regardless of how much they knew before they arrived, it is hoped that upon departure all participants will have a better appreciation of what occurred on this sacred ground.

As promised, the first featured unit will be *Company K, 1st South Carolina Infantry, Provisional, "Irish Volunteers"*. On both days of this event you will find the Irish Volunteers out at the *Tapp Farm* where they will participate in multiple NPS led maneuver and firing demonstrations. To learn more about them, please continue to read on.

Company K, 1st South Carolina Infantry, Provisional, was a unit whose members came mostly from the Charleston area. The unit was known as the *Irish Volunteers* and it was originally formed in 1787, as a militia unit. The *Irish Volunteers* remained a State Militia unit up until the *Spanish – American War*.

This unit was organized into the Confederate service on June 25, 1861, and fought in almost all major battles in the Eastern Theatre with the *Army of Northern Virginia*. It was led by such notable commanders as Maxey Gregg, Samuel McGowan, Edward McCrady, and C.W. McCreary. The unit distinguished itself at the *Battle of Gaines Mill* on June 27, 1862, and again at the *Battle of Spotsylvania* on May 12, 1864.

The original Civil War unit had a total of 2,120 men serving in its ranks during the four years of civil war and had a total of 18 officers and 101 men surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

The mission of today's Irish Volunteers is: To preserve and protect the memory of those men who served in the company from 1861 – 1865 and those who fought and died for South Carolina and *The Confederate States of America*. As civilians of the company, to portray the families of those men who served, to honor preserve, protect, and honor the memory of all those who fought on both sides in the War for Southern Independence. Preserve and honor their memories and ensure that the families, too, are not forgotten. To accurately portray the trades, occupations, and pastimes of the period and to aid in the preservation of battlefields and all other sites and objects relevant to the War for Southern Independence.



Participating Units

CWCS – Civil War Civilians of Spotsylvania – Elaine Sturgeon, miselaineus@yahoo.com

CWIA – Civil War Impressionist Association – Brian Withrow, bnwithrow@outlook.com

1st S.C. Infantry "Irish Volunteers" – Troy Fallon, jtfmaf@embarqmail.com

2nd U.S. Cavalry "Dragoons" – David Michel, usdragoons@aol.com

3rd U.S. Infantry "Buffsticks" – Paul Stier, stierdog@hotmail.com

NPS – Artillery Crew – Peter Maugle, peter_maugle@nps.gov



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 individuals, \$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 Meetings:	Bob Jones	Webmaster:	Dan Augustine
Vice President:	John Sapanara	Membership:	Ryan Quint
Secretary:	Ben Keller	Research/Historian:	Joyce Darr
Treasurer:	Bob Pfile	Member at Large:	John Griffiths
Assistant Treasurer:	Barbara Stafford	Member at Large:	Conway Richardson
Meeting Scribe:	Greg Mertz	Member at Large:	Paul Stier
Newsletter Editor:	Jim Smithfield	Past President:	Marc Thompson

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