



**THE DRUM & BUGLE**  
**Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table**  
**March 2026, Volume 23, Issue 3**

**Speaker:** Madeline Thompson  
**Topic:** “Clara Barton”  
**When:** March 9, 2026  
**Location:** Brock’s Riverside Grill  
**Times:** Social Time Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm  
**Our Website:** [www.rappvalleycivilwar.org](http://www.rappvalleycivilwar.org)  
**Our Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/rvcwrt](http://www.facebook.com/rvcwrt)

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**Madeline Thompson “Clara Barton”**

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine's Madeleine Thompson will be highlighting the remarkable discovery of the Missing Soldiers Office, operated from 1865-1868 by Clara Barton. This discussion will explore Barton’s life, her pivotal role during the Civil War, her efforts in identifying missing soldiers, and the impact of her work on humanitarian efforts. Additionally, Madeleine will shed light on the preservation process that brought this once-forgotten site to its current life as a museum. Attendees

will gain insight into Barton's enduring contributions and the museum's role in preserving and educating on this important history.

Madeleine Thompson is the Site Manager of the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum, part of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, in Washington, D.C. She holds a Master of Arts in Sexual Dissidence from the University of Sussex in Brighton, England, where her dissertation examined themes of feminine resistance, religion, and medical practices within the medieval bedroom. Madeleine earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from West Virginia University, with minors in History and Women's and Gender Studies. Prior to joining the Museum, she worked as a talent acquisition specialist at a biopharmaceutical company. Though she has familiarity with modern healthcare, her passion has always centered on history—a calling she now pursues through preserving the history of Clara Barton's groundbreaking work at the Missing Soldiers Office.

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**“To the Bitter End: The Final Battles and Surrender at Appomattox Court House”  
by Bert Dunkerly**

**A Review of the February 2026 Program by Greg Mertz**

Historian Chris Calkins conducted research which greatly contributed to the understanding of the battles that took place and the details of the surrenders occurring at Appomattox Court House. The pair of books that Calkins wrote in the 1980s documenting his work have long been out of print, but he desired that they be updated and put back into print. Our speaker, Bert Dunkerly, and fellow historian Patrick Schroeder have done just that for their friend and colleague, and Dunkerly shared some of those highlights with our round table.

Most people associate town of Appomattox Court House with the meeting between Federal Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee during which Lee surrendered his army on April 9, 1865. Few people are aware of the fighting that occurred nearby, on April 8-9. Likewise, the details of the surrender parade and the disbanding of the Confederate army were not known until Chris wrote his book.

The goal of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, after evacuating Richmond by marching west, was to seek an opportunity to turn south and link up with the Army of the Tennessee in North Carolina. But Federal forces in pursuit had kept pace with Lee's men, blocking every attempt to turn south, during what Dunkerly called "a grueling week of marching and fighting." Grant's men forced the Confederates to continue tromping to the west to a place they never intended to go – Appomattox.

On the evening of April 8, 1865, the Battle of Appomattox Station occurred two miles from the village of Appomattox Court House. It was a unique battle fought between Federal cavalry charging Confederate artillery with no infantry units on either side. The battle sealed the fate of the Confederates as the blue-clad horsemen blocked the road Lee's forces had planned to take. The Federal mounted branch also captured locomotives filled with supplies at the station, depriving Confederates of some desperately needed provisions.

April 9 was Palm Sunday. Confederate 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps commander Gen. John B. Gordon was given the task of breaking through the Federal blocking force that morning. While Gordon's men initially shoved the Federal cavalrymen back, the Confederates soon encountered the Federal 25<sup>th</sup> Corps in their front -- to the west, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps with Gen. George Custer's cavalry division on their left flank -- to the south. At 11:00 am Lee sent out a white flag.

Under the flag of truce, Lee requested to meet with Grant. A basic agreement was made that afternoon in the home of Wilmer McLean. But it would be up to three subordinates from each army appointed as commissioners, to decide exactly how the surrender would take place.

It was determined that a printing press should be set up in the Clover Hill Tavern so the Confederate soldiers could be issued printed paroles, proving their status, as well as enabling the former soldiers to utilize some transportation available to them, as well as obtain rations from federal supply depots as they made their way home. Of the 60,000 Confederate soldiers that had evacuated Petersburg and Richmond, 28,231 paroles were issued at Appomattox Court House.

Each branch of the Confederate army surrendered on a different day. On April 10, some 2,000 cavalrymen turned over their weapons and equipment,

but were allowed to keep their horses. On April 11, the artillerymen hauled some 100 cannon into the village and turned them over to the Federal soldiers.

Then on April 12, the largest surrender took place as each Confederate infantry division took their turn formally capitulating. A federal division lined up on both sides of the road leading into the village. Each Confederate division marched between their former enemies, stacked their muskets in the road, laid down their equipment, and some turned over their battle flags. After the Confederate foot soldiers from that division marched off, the Federal soldiers gathered up the materials that had been left and stacked it behind them, clearing the road for the next division.

While the ceremony was to have taken place in silence, some of the former adversaries recognized each other and commented on having faced them on a particular battlefield. A few jeers were made as well. After the parade and formal surrender, the Confederates returned to their camps and received their parole passes.

Grant and Lee met briefly on horseback again on April 10. The two generals rode a short distance away from their staffs for a private conversation. It is commonly believed that the topic was regarding whether Lee could surrender all Confederate forces, beyond capitulation of just the Army of Northern Virginia. By that afternoon, both generals had left Appomattox. Lee was escorted by Federal cavalry back to Richmond, over a three-day journey.

Since the war was still taking place with other Confederate forces in the field, most of the Federal forces left Appomattox shortly after Lee agreed to surrender to Grant. The Federal VI Corps, for example went to Danville, Virginia to continue on to North Carolina and assist Federal Gen. William T. Sherman combat Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. Other Federal troops went to the Confederate supply hub of Lynchburg, while others returned to Richmond and Petersburg. After the fighting ended, Federal soldiers worked with the Freedman's Bureau, issued rations to impoverished civilians, and rebuilt railroads as they transitioned into reconstruction.

The McLean House was purchased for the purpose of being shipped to Chicago and rebuilt for a World's Fair, but the investors ran out of money after dismantling the house, and so stacks of building materials sat there for

decades. Souvenir hunters took some of the pieces of the house until Appomattox Court House became a national park in the 1940's. When the McLean House was reconstructed in the 1950's, it was rebuilt on its same foundation with the remaining original materials incorporated into the structure.

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### **Important Information about the Park's Buildings**

I would like to thank Alan Zirkle for putting this message out with his History Alert emails. If you are not subscribed to Alan's emails, here is some important maintenance and hours information for the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center and Chatham Manor. Upcoming maintenance projects will cause Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center and Chatham to close on August 4, 2025. Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center will close for 6 to 7 months while the building undergoes multiple construction projects including the installation of a fire suppression system, a waterline upgrade project, and an electrical system upgrade. The Park Store next to the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center will remain open daily, 9 am-5 pm, and park staff will be available to provide education and orientation to the battlefield through mid-October, after which park staff will be available on a reduced schedule.

The Chatham gate will remain open 9 am-5 pm through the duration of the project. Chatham will close for about a year for an interior rehabilitation project that will include lead paint encapsulation, new carpet, and plaster repair. Chatham underwent a fire suppression system installation this past year, but it has been partially open throughout the summer for increased visitation in the interim between these two large projects.

To explore these locations independently, check out the self-guided audio tours of the Sunken Road and Chatham available on the NPS App and online at [go.nps.gov/frsp-tours](https://go.nps.gov/frsp-tours). Park staff look forward to welcoming visitors to our upgraded facilities in spring and summer 2026!

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## **Friends of Central Virginia Battlefield Trust**

As you know CVBT is a land trust. We focus on purchasing endangered battlefield properties. We do produce a large three-day annual conference, standalone events and need to interpret and maintain our lands, we need help in all of these. In the past, CVBT has had individuals from organizations assist us, and we are grateful, but now we would like to create an official volunteer group who would enjoy being part of CVBT's volunteer core.

We have created "**The Friends of CVBT.**" The intent is for this all-volunteer group is to be the "On Call" core of CVBT's volunteer group assisting in events and battlefield related needs. Active volunteer members will have the unique opportunity to be involved with events hosted by nationally acclaimed historians, assist in tours, and work on preserved battlefields. Participating volunteers will also be enrolled in the membership ranks of CVBT every year they contribute. CVBT will provide each volunteer with a CVBT volunteer staff shirt and CVBT official hat to wear at events or whenever wanted. We will be limiting this new group to 18 volunteers.

CVBT is now beginning our 27th year of preserving our local battlefields, the very battlefields you study and walk upon. We would be honored to have you join the ranks of CVBT volunteers to help us further our mission of preserving our Nation's history.

If interested please email our Executive Director **Terry Rensel** at [executivedirector@cvbt.org](mailto:executivedirector@cvbt.org) .

Office: 540-374-0900

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## **CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF FREDERICKSBURG (CWRTF)**

CWRTF meets 9 times a year on designated Wednesdays at Mary Washington Jepson Alumni Executive Center, 1119 Hanover Street. They offer a buffet dinner followed by a Civil War-themed presentation. Reservations are required. Speaker/topic schedule can be found on their website at [www.cwrtof.org](http://www.cwrtof.org), and will be updated here. Below is the schedule starting in September 2025 and going to June 2026.

February 25, 2026

**Meade and Lee's Commanding Machines at Gettysburg**

Speaker: Doug Douds

March 25, 2026

**The Richmond Bread Riots**

Speaker: Ashley Whitehead Luskey

April 22, 2026

**John Brown: Igniting the Keg**

Speaker: Dennis Frye

May 27, 2026

**The Appomattox Campaign**

Speaker: Hampton Newsome

June 17, 2026

**Teacher, Preacher, Soldier, Spy: John R. Kelso**

Speaker: Christopher Grasso

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**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. The newsletter is available on our website at [www.rappvalleycivilwar.org](http://www.rappvalleycivilwar.org). Yearly membership dues are \$40 for individuals and \$50 for families. Students are free. Membership is open to anyone interested in the military, political and social history of the American Civil War.

**Newsletter Editor and Webmaster:** John Roos

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## **The RVCWRT Executive Committee**

**President:** Charlie Seifert

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