



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
February 2020, Volume 17, Issue 2

Speaker: Eric Mink
Topic: "Molding a Legend: The Iron Brigade and the Summer 1862 Occupation of Fredericksburg"
When: Monday, February 10, 2020
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

"Molding a Legend: The Iron Brigade and the Summer 1862 Occupation of Fredericksburg" Eric J. Mink, February 10, 2020

The regiments of Brigadier General John Gibbon's all-Western brigade arrived opposite Fredericksburg, Virginia in early April 1862. The three regiments of infantry from Wisconsin, and one from Indiana, became one of the most famed fighting units in the Union Army, but during the spring and summer of 1862 they were still fairly untested and part of an occupation force on the war's frontier in central Virginia. Eric Mink will look at the four-month period Gibbon's regiments spent opposite Fredericksburg, a period when Gibbon molded the brigade into the fighting force it became and a period where the western regiments were confronted with Southern society and its institutions.

Eric is a graduate of Mary Washington College, where he earned a B.A. in Historic Preservation and American Studies. Eric has spent his career working for the National Park Service at many Civil War Battlefields, including Gettysburg National Military Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, and Richmond National Battlefield Park. For the past nineteen years, he has worked as historian and cultural resources manager at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

**"The Puzzling Portrait of Matthew Fontaine Maury"
by Scott Walker**

A Review of the January 2020 program by Greg Mertz

The skipper known only as "Captain Brown" of a ship named *Wright* was able to deliver coffee from Brazil to America in half the time that previous trips had taken. The reason: Brown had followed a set of maps and charts given to him by Matthew Fontaine Maury.

Maury is a person whose name we recognize when we read or hear it, but most of us don't really know him. But Maury is the father of modern oceanography, whose understanding of the ocean currents "turned sailing upside down" according to our speaker, Scott Walker.

Maury's father bought a farm just southwest of Chancellorsville from Lighthouse Harry Lee – one of many prominent Americans whose lives crossed paths with the scientist. Matthew was born there, but the family soon moved to Franklin, Tennessee to live near an uncle. The uncle had a friend in congress, named Sam Houston, who appointed Maury as a midshipman in

1825. Among his naval adventures were voyages taking Lafayette back home to France, and a cruise through the Strait of Magellan.

Maury married Fredericksburg's Ann Herndon, and the couple resided on Charlotte Street. When Maury was not at sea, his pay from the navy was cut in half. He supplemented his income by writing, particularly while he was recuperating from a stage coach accident in which his leg was gravely broken. He wrote a treatise on getting around the Strait of Magellan. He wrote under the pen name of "Harry Bluff" for a Richmond newspaper which had an editor named Edgar Allan Poe. With fifteen years of experience in the navy, he wrote recommending naval reform, including the need for a naval station at Pensacola, advocating for steam over sail, and arguing for the establishment of a U.S. Naval Academy. Maury also became the superintendent of the U.S. Gold Mine at U.S. Ford on the Rappahannock River.

In 1844 Maury returned to active duty at what we today recognized as the Washington, DC Naval Observatory. There in his work analyzing charts, Maury recognized certain patterns and made conclusions that won him awards. In 1855 he wrote the first textbook on oceanography. Becoming friends with congressman John Quincy Adams, who watched Maury walk to work, the legislator saw to it that a superintendent's residence was constructed for him.

Then came the Civil War. Maury paced in his office contemplating his decision, resigned from the US Navy, and offered his services to Virginia. Robert E. Lee, VMI superintendent Francis H. Smith, and Maury were appointed to prepare Virginia for its defense. During this time, Maury's family lived in the small house next to 214 Caroline Street here in Fredericksburg. Because the Confederate navy was so overmatched by the US Navy, Maury advocated the use of torpedoes (what we would today call a "mine"). He tested torpedo detonators in a bathtub at Richmond's Rocket's Landing.

Though brilliant, Maury was rather arrogant and managed to make enemies of important Confederate leaders including Jefferson Davis, Judah Benjamin and Stephen Mallory. He was sent to Europe – "to get rid of him," Walker surmised. While in Europe, he raised money for some ships used in Confederate service including the raider the CSS Georgia.

After the war, Maury initially went to Mexico and then to England, where his family was reunited with him after a six-year absence. When they returned to the United States, the Maury's were assisted by Chester Arthur, the Collector of the Port of New York. Maury accepted a position as a professor of physics at VMI and became interested in meteorology as well.

When he died, he was buried in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery between James Monroe, who signed his commission as a midshipman, and John Tyler, who signed for the establishment of the naval observatory. One of the monuments on Richmond's Monument Avenue memorializes Maury. Several US vessels have been named after Maury; most recently the *USNS Maury* a *Pathfinder*-class survey ship, was launched in 2013.

Locally, the destruction of his home resulted in the creation of Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. A monument on Charlotte Street, next to the Post Office complex, marks the site of his home.

In 2006, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) took a trip to enjoy the New England fall foliage. They visited a museum in Salem, Massachusetts that had been the Salem Marine Society. The society had a portrait of Maury displayed in his honor, but in May of 1861 the picture was turned so it hung upside down. It still hung that way in 2006. The group did not want to disrupt the historic act, but wanted to enhance the story and worked to have Maury's image displayed in the room along with an interpretation of the interesting story leading to his portrait being used as a symbol of dissatisfaction over Maury's decision to support the Confederacy.

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 cwrtdinner@yahoo.com

**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 2020. Dinner Meetings are held at the UMW's Jepson Center located at:

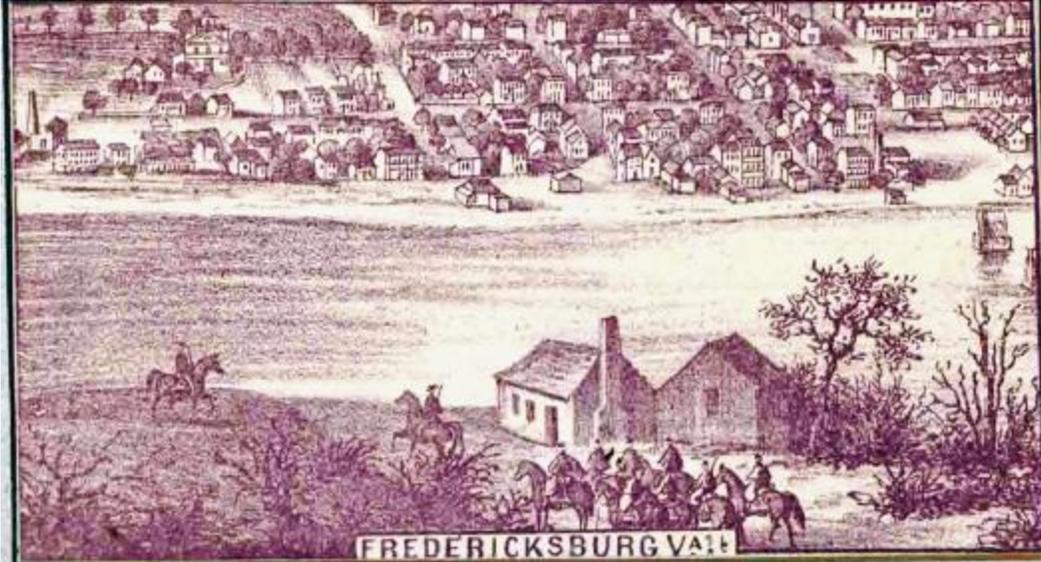
[1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA](http://1119HanoverStreet.com)

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 2020 Program Year:

Feb. 26, 2020	Chris Kolakowski	"Perryville and the Kentucky Campaign"
Mar. 25, 2020	Dr. Caroline E. Janney	"Burying the Dead, But Not the Past. The Ladies Memorial Association"
Apr. 22, 2020	Gordon Rhea	"The Generalship of Lee and Grant in the Overland Campaign"
May 27, 2020	John Biemeck	"Civil War Ordnance"
Jun. 17, 2020	Paul Kahan	"The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant: Preserving the Civil War's Legacy"



From the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS)- Massachusetts Photograph Collection.

Did You Know?

Each month we will put in an interesting fact about this area out there that you may not have known about.

Traffic on Route 3. We all know it and many times dislike dealing with it. But it could have been so much worse.

Did you know there was a tollbooth on what is now Route 3/Plank Rd?

The westbound lanes are the original Orange Turnpike. Before you reach Salem Church there is a Taco Bell on the westbound side. A new Mission BBQ just went in the same area. Around where the Taco Bell is stood a tollbooth. This means that tollbooth stood in the middle of the Battle of Salem Church. Can we all imagine what driving on Route 3 would be like today if we had a tollbooth there?

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:	John Sapanara	Member at Large:	Robin Donato
Vice President/Membership:	Paul Stier	Member at Large:	John Griffiths
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