



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
November 2021, Volume 18, Issue 11

Speaker: Doug Crenshaw
Topic: Richmond 7 Days
When: Monday November 8, 2021
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
Our Facebook: www.facebook.com/rvcwrt

Please make dinner reservations through John Sapanara via email rappcwevents21@gmail.com or by phone 540-479-1299. He will contact you with confirmation. Please reserve by the Thursday before the Monday dinner meeting date. If you wish to be placed on the "permanent reservation" list, please advise John. Members on this list do not need to make reservations every month - their attendance is assumed unless they cancel beforehand. Member dinner price is **\$30**. This price also applies to non-member attendees who join at the meeting, or to guests invited by members. Non-member dinner price is \$35.

DINNER MEETING NOTES

We will continue to award two door prizes - \$50 gift certificates to Brock's Riverside Grill – at every meeting. Every dinner attendee receives a complimentary ticket and is automatically entered into the drawing. Used books contributed by members will now be available for a donation of your choosing – no raffle tickets needed. A “free” table near the stairway will usually have a variety of magazines, pamphlets, ephemera and books in lesser condition. Notices of events and other items of Civil War interest will be posted on bulletin boards across from the “free” table.

“Doug Crenshaw: Richmond 7 Days”

Doug Crenshaw studied history at Randolph-Macon College and the University of Richmond. A volunteer for the Richmond National Battlefield Park, he is a Board member of the Richmond Battlefield Association, president of the Richmond Civil War Roundtable, a volunteer at the Virginia War Memorial, and is a speaker, presenter and tour leader. His book, *Fort Harrison and The Battle of Chaffin's Farm*, was nominated in the nonfiction category for a Library of Virginia Literary award. Doug has also written *The Battle of Glendale: Robert E. Lee's Lost Opportunity*, and *Richmond Shall Not Be Given Up!* A survey and tour of the Seven Days campaign, which was a finalist for the Army Historical Foundation Distinguished writing award. Doug has just completed a guidebook on Civil War Richmond with Bert Dunkerly, a book on the Peninsula Campaign with Drew Gruber, and is also working on a study on the Confederate High Command during the Seven Days.

It was June 1, 1862. Union General George McClellan was almost close enough to Richmond for his heavy guns to open up on the city. Confederate commander Joseph Johnston had been severely wounded the previous day, and President Davis handed over the responsibility for the defense of the capital to Robert E. Lee, a soldier with an excellent reputation, but short on experience in leading a large army. The pressure was almost overwhelming. What would Lee do?

Join us for a conversation on Lee's strategy, its results, and its lost opportunities. A new army would emerge, and the ramifications of the campaign would be profound.

**“U.S Grant (First Person)”
by Brian Withrow**

A Review of the October 2021 Program by Greg Mertz

Our round table members were asked to imagine that we had changed the year of our presentation to 1865, just six months since the Army of Northern Virginia surrendered at Appomattox Court House. Our speaker, Brian Withrow, had the challenge of portraying Ulysses S. Grant as he may have addressed an audience at that point in time.

Grant was uncomfortable in social settings, and was a man of few words, who would not likely have spoken for 45-minutes straight, so our round table vice president, Paul Stier, portrayed Fredericksburg Civil War era mayor Montgomery Slaughter, and asked General Grant a series of questions. Withrow responded with the brief answers one might expect of Grant, in a manner consistent with what Grant would have felt or would have known in the fall of 1865, while also portraying Grant as someone awkward in such a setting and unaccustomed to public speaking.

Withrow also entertained questions from the audience, also in first person. When asked questions about situations where Grant’s understanding and opinion had changed from the end of the war to when Grant wrote his memoirs, Winthrop answered that it was too close to the end of the war to comment on the topic. Winthrop responded to a question about Henry W. Halleck in such a fashion. During the war years, Grant had felt that Halleck supported him, but Grant would learn after the war that Halleck had actually been responsible for obstructing Grant’s efforts on some occasions.

Withrow concluded his program by telling us a bit about his approach to interpreting Grant and some of his experiences in portraying the general.

Among the topics that Withrow addressed was the surrender at Appomattox Court House. Grant had thought about the terms to be offered to Gen. Robert E. Lee and his Confederate soldiers for some time prior to their eventual meeting. Grant, Gen. William T. Sherman, and Admiral David D. Porter had all met with President Lincoln on board the River Queen in March, 1865 to discuss dealing with the potential surrender of forces. Grant noted that Lincoln stressed that the Union victory should be without reparations or

punishment. The terms Grant offered to Lee on April 9, 1865 were consistent with the wishes of Lincoln.

On the following day, Grant and Lee met again, with Lee expressing concern for the safety of his soldiers as they returned home, asking if they could be given proof that they had surrendered. Grant knew that John Gibbon's corps had a number of portable printing presses and assigned his command the task of printing up parole passes for the Confederates to take along with them during their journey home.

The president had invited Grant and his wife Julia to attend the play at Ford's Theater on the fateful night when Lincoln was assassinated, but the Grants had planned to go to Burlington, New Jersey to visit their children. Grant received a telegram summoning him to return to Washington after the shooting. Some people called for vengeance in retaliation for killing Lincoln. Many southern leaders openly declared the assassination as despicable, and President Andrew Johnson called for everyone to remain calm. After the conspirators met their fate, many felt that more punishment should still be delved out. Withrow indicated that Grant was reminded of Lincoln's comments during their meeting on the River Queen, pleading that there had been enough bloodshed. The punishment should end with those directly involved.

While Congress had passed the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, it had yet to be ratified by the states by the fall of 1865. Withrow's portrayal of Grant had the general state that while the war was over, winning the peace would be just as difficult.

Withrow also interpreted Grant as pointing out how circumstances had governed the course of his life, pointing out as an example how even his name was changed. He was born Hiram Ulysses Grant, but the nomination letter called for the admission to West Point for a cadet named Ulysses S. Grant. Withrow as Grant joked that the army does not make mistakes. But this incident forced Grant to change his name.

Attending the U.S. Military Academy was not of Grant's choosing either. Grant's father wanted his son to receive an education and insisted that he go to West Point. Withrow indicated that cadet Grant was delighted when he heard a rumor that the academy was going to be closed down.

That Grant would be called a butcher was also an example of how circumstances affected his life. Grant and Sherman met in Nashville to discuss the burden of putting down the rebellion in the election year of 1864. They determined to attack simultaneously on all fronts to overwhelm the Confederate forces in the field. Grant simply developed a strategy that took advantage of the strength and the manpower of the Union forces.

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF FREDERICKSBURG SCHEDULE

Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg holds monthly meetings (usually the fourth Wednesday) at the Jepson Alumni Center at University of Mary Washington. Further details are available on their website at www.cwrta.org. Here is their schedule for the next three months:

October 27 - Old Alleghany: The Life and Wars of General Edward Johnson, Greg Clemmer

November 17 - The Generalship of Lee and Grant in the Overland Campaign, Gordon Rhea

Seven Pines and the Prelude to the Seven Days

We hope those of you that could go enjoyed Marc Thompson's tour of the Seven Days battlefields. It was outstanding and unforgettable. As luck would have it, Doug Crenshaw will be talking about this action at our next meeting. Here is article from Doug on Emerging Civil War about the Battle of Seven Pines. The battle that saw Joe Johnston wounded and Robert E. Lee emerge. Seven Pines will lead us into the Seven Days.

<https://emergingcivilwar.com/2018/10/03/place-holder-for-doug/>

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. Yearly membership dues are \$35 for

individuals and \$45 for families. Membership is open to anyone interested in the military, political and social history of the American Civil War.

The RVCWRT Executive Committee:

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