



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
January 2020, Volume 17, Issue 1

Speaker: Scott Walker
Topic: "The Puzzling Portrait of Matthew Fontaine Maury"
When: Monday, January 13, 2020
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Scott Walker: "The Puzzling Portrait of Matthew Fontaine Maury"

Scott Walker is a long-time resident of Fredericksburg, who arrived here in 1969 as a junior high school history teacher following receipt of a Bachelor of Arts in American History from the University of Virginia. Realizing that this area is a rich, hands-on laboratory for teaching history, he instituted a series of experiential, field-trip-based, and interdisciplinary classes. His continuing personal education was a Masters of Arts and additional coursework (also from

U.VA) but other state and regional institutions, as well. After a variety of classroom and administrative positions, he retired from the Stafford County Public Schools in 2002 and, among other elements of community and business involvement, started a private tour business --- Hallowed Ground Tours --- to work with select clients referred by outside companies. That quickly became the region's premier, private tour guide service for general history, architecture, and outstanding Civil War battlefield tours. He regularly gives history-related talks to groups on the East Coast of the United States.

In 2008, in cooperation with other members of the Mary Washington Branch of Preservation Virginia (now, the Washington Heritage Museums), he developed research and contacts that led to a recognition dinner in Salem, MA of local, nineteenth century native, Matthew Fontaine Maury, known as the "Pathfinder of the Seas" and early developer of the science of oceanography. He continues to lecture on Maury to college, school, and community groups, as well as at the State Library of Virginia the Library of Congress. In 2014, he was voted to be an honorary member of the Marine Society of Salem (Mass), in recognition of his Maury work.

Scott is a member of both local Civil War Round Tables. He is a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg. Always involved in Fredericksburg-area community action endeavors, Walker is immediate Past President and currently serves as Vice President of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. He is a lifetime member of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust as well as a Sustaining / Founding member of the Este / Italian Sister City organization. He also volunteers for the National Park Service at its Chatham Manor site and holds membership in two national organizations, as well: The Civil War Preservation Trust and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He served on the steering committee of the area's Civil War Sesquicentennial Observances for the 2012 events in December of that year. He is an expert on all of the eras in local history: Colonial, Civil War, or 20th Century. He has been a member, appointed by the Governor of Virginia, of the Board of Regents of the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library in Fredericksburg.

SPECIAL NOTE: In 2011, while speaking about preservation to a local group he asked, upon finishing his remarks, the standard "Are there any questions?". At that point, the Virginia summer earthquake hit. Thus, the watchword in the local historic community is, "When Scott Walker speaks, the earth moves!"

"The Puzzling Portrait of Matthew Fontaine Maury" is a product of Scott's extensive research. Because of his nearby, marked and noted birth site, Maury seems somewhat familiar to area residents. But, there's more to this rather complex and intelligent scientist who developed and applied navigation theories, first, for the U.S. Navy and, then, the Confederate Navy. January's talk will explain the wide variety of accomplishments of this noted 19th Century man!

**"Defeated Victory: The Death of Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh" by
Greg Mertz**

A Review of the December 2019 program

The central figures of the Confederate monument on the Shiloh battlefield are called "Defeated Victory" -- an interesting pair of conflicting words. The interpretation of the battle offered by the monument concludes that Confederate army commander Gen. A.S. Johnston's death cost the Confederate army the victory at Shiloh that they had so nearly won. Among the sources of differing points of view on the generalship of Johnston are the writings in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* of Union army commander at Shiloh, Gen. U.S. Grant, and of Johnston's second in command, G.T. Beauregard.

Our speaker, Greg Mertz, was confronted with these conflicting views in his youth, when he first became interested in the Civil War. His program took a look at Johnston at Shiloh, offering an additional critique of his generalship using three criteria. The first was the manner in which Johnston utilized his subordinates, both experienced soldiers as well those new to command. The second measure was the degree to which Johnston offered decisive leadership at critical moments. The final standard was the degree to which Johnston was able to utilize inexperienced troops with an army that was almost entirely green.

Johnston's army was assembled near Corinth, Mississippi, about twenty miles from where U.S. Grant's army was in camp around Shiloh Church, Tennessee. Johnston primarily consulted with two of his subordinates. Beauregard had arguably the strongest Civil War resume of any soldier in the north or south in the spring of 1862, after bombarding Fort Sumter into submission and being the field commander of the Confederate victory at First Manassas. Johnston made him the second in command, and gave him

important assignments, including organizing the army and issuing the marching orders as the army advanced from Corinth to Shiloh. Johnston also consulted with Braxton Bragg, assigning him to command the army's largest corps, making him the chief of staff, and giving him responsibility for arming the troops.

When Beauregard wrote that he proposed to Johnston that the timing was right to attack Grant when information that a second army under Gen. D.C. Buell was nearing a juncture with Grant, he indicated that Johnston went to consult with Bragg before deciding. Beauregard insinuates that Johnston did so because he was indecisive. However, Johnston consistently sought the opinions of these two subordinates before making final decisions. Beauregard also complained that Johnston had to be convinced to do the right thing, and would question him severely about his ideas. Nevertheless, Johnston had a background of proposing aggressive action in the past, and the intense discussion is more likely an effort to make sure that all aspects of the proposal have been thought out before a decision was made. It was actually a positive element of the way in which Johnston utilized his experienced subordinates.

When on the eve of battle, after the Confederates took an excessive amount of time getting into position, Beauregard felt that the Union army must know of the presence of the Confederate army and must be prepared with entrenchments. Beauregard proposed calling off the attack, and Bragg was of like mind. At the first of several critical moments, Johnston was decisive in declaring that the troops would attack at daylight the next day. Beauregard complained in his account of the battle that Johnston did not ask the opinions of the corps commanders present at this meeting. But Johnston had already heard from the two officers that he always consulted, and he was actually consistent with his past decision-making practices. Johnston did not hesitate when making critical decisions.

Johnston announced that his post during the battle would be at the front. Beauregard was assigned to stay in the rear and direct reinforcements to the front. Critics of Johnston say that he relinquished command of the army to Beauregard in doing so. But given that his two key subordinates had both advocated against the battle, Johnston evidently felt that someone with faith in the battle plan must be at the decisive point on the battlefield. In Johnston's plan, to strike the Union left flank and drive the enemy up against the swollen Owl Creek to the north of the battlefield, the critical point was on the right flank of the Confederate army. Johnston was on the Confederate right for the last

eight hours or so of his life, making several critical decisions, including examples of when those around him could not recognize what was happening or were unable to do what was necessary. Johnston was at the crucial points of the battlefield, making significant decisions that could not have been made from the rear.

Johnston understood the importance of the morale of his troops and with an army full of green troops, he found that they would break, would loot the Union camps they captured and would be hesitant to attack. During all of those occasions, Johnston's words as actions provided encouragement. He rallied some troops from Arkansas, noting their prowess with the Bowie knife, and telling them they were employing a nobler weapon – the bayonet – encouraging them to employ it well. When troops plundered the camps, he grabbed a tin cup from on top of a table, telling the men that it would be his only piece of the spoils of the day, and got his men back into line of battle to resume the attacks.

In the last dire situation of the battle for Johnston, he demonstrated skill in all three of the criteria. The Union left flank of the famous Hornet's Nest position had to be driven in if Johnston's plan was to succeed. The army's reserves under the politician Gen. John C. Breckinridge were brought forward, but the general reported to Johnston that his men refused to attack. It was a decisive moment. It was an instance where Johnston had to deal with a struggling subordinate. It was a moment calling for Johnston's understanding of what he could do with green troops. Johnston instantly declared that together he and Breckinridge could get the troops to attack. Johnston rode in front of the troops, declared that he wanted them to show generals Beauregard and Bragg what they could do with their bayonets and bowie knives. He then took the tin cup he had taken when rallying the men looting the camps, and rode along the line, tapping the bayonets of his men with the cup.

The subsequent attack was successful. Johnston also fell from a bullet striking the back of his right leg during the attack. While the opinion that Johnston fell too early in the war to know whether he would live up to his reputation as the Confederacy's best general, his conduct during nine hours of the battle of Shiloh demonstrate skill in the three criteria examined. Counting both sides as Americans, more Americans fell in the battle of Shiloh than fell in all of America's wars prior to the Civil War combined! No more severe test was faced by any American soldier, and Johnston performed exceedingly well.

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:

Jan. 22, 2020	Ryan Longfellow	"Grant and the Battle of the Wilderness"
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 linking something that happened somewhere else that you may not have realized connects to the Fredericksburg area.

Did you know that General Edwin Vose Sumner is connected to a famous outlaw of the west?

One of the most famous and mythologized characters of the old west went by many names. Henry McCarthy, William Antrum, William Bonney, and most famously, Billy the Kid. Before being taken in by rancher John Tunstall, Billy was working at Fort Sumner, New Mexico. It is also here that Billy the Kid was cornered by Sheriff Pat Garret and killed. Billy is buried on the grounds of Fort Sumner. Fort Sumner is named for General Edwin Vose Sumner, commander of the right grand division at the Battle of Fredericksburg.

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:

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