



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
August 2020, Volume 17, Issue 8

Speaker: Col. Marc Thompson, USAF (ret)
Topic: The First Battle of Manassas and the Experience of War
When: Monday August 10, 2020
Location: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom
Times: 7:30
Our Website: www.rappvalleycivilwar.org
Our Facebook: www.facebook.com/rvcwrt

“Virtual August Meeting”

We will **not** be having an in-person dinner meeting in August. The safety and well-being of our members are primary concerns, especially during our current public health crisis. A majority of member respondents during a recent survey had concerns about current conditions/restrictions and advised they would not attend a meeting at this time.

What we will do is expand our horizons a bit with a virtual meeting on **Monday evening, August 10**. The meeting will be professionally monitored, moderated and run via ZOOM. This will allow you to view a speaker in real time via your computer. If you can't make the meeting, a video will be subsequently posted on our website/Facebook page. Details will be forthcoming via e-mail and on our social media. Colonel Marc Thompson, USAF, the former President of RVCWRT, will be presenting "The First Battle of Manassas and the Experience of War." Keep an eye out for more information!

What Robert E. Lee Thought About Monuments....In His Own Words

With controversy swirling around Confederate statues and monuments 155 years after the end of the Civil War, it is interesting to surmise what Robert E. Lee might have thought about all this. During his last years (he died in 1870), Lee embraced a conciliatory attitude toward the North. According to biographer Charles Bracelen Flood, "he counseled a calm, law-abiding acceptance of reality." When fellow Confederate Jubal Early wrote from self-imposed exile in Mexico City that he hated Yankees "this day worse than I have ever done," Lee recommended patience. He replied, "all controversy, I think, will only serve to prolong angry and bitter feelings, and postpone the period when reason and charity may resume their sway."

In a letter to General Thomas L. Rosser in December 1866, Lee takes his stance a bit further by offering this thought on a proposed Confederate memorial.

"As regards the erection of such a monument...my conviction is that, however grateful it would be to the feelings of the South, the attempt in the present condition of the Country, would have the effect of retarding, instead of accelerating its accomplishment & of continuing, if not adding to, the difficulties under which the Southern people labour."

Another insight into Lee's thinking comes from an anecdote in Charles Bracelen Flood's Lee: The Last Years. Lee was visiting a lady north of

Lexington, where she showed him an old battle-scarred tree in her yard. All its limbs were gone from Union artillery, and cannonballs had torn away part of the trunk. Flood describes the scene:

“The woman looked at him expectantly as she showed him the memento of what she and her property had endured. Here was a man who would sympathize. Lee finally spoke: ‘Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it.’”

Contrasting Views

Here are web links to two well-written contemporary magazine articles about the removal of Confederate symbols and monuments from public spaces. They come to very different conclusions, but both are marked by passionate prose and reasoned arguments.

“Another Confederate Soldier Falls” by Bruce Westrate, July 17, 2020. Writing for National Review at www.nationalreview.com. Westrate is a prep school teacher and historian in Texas. This is a very personal account of his lifelong attraction to battlefields and what they mean to him. He argues that statues of Confederate soldiers are not necessarily an endorsement of racism. This article was recommended by a RVCWRT member.

“Europe in 1989, America in 2020 and the Death of the Lost Cause,” by David W. Blight, July 1, 2020. Writing for the New Yorker at www.newyorker.com. Blight is a nationally known author/scholar and Professor at Yale University. He likens the current climate here to Europe in 1989, when communist governments toppled and edged toward democracy. Blight hopes that changes in Confederate commemoration and Lost Cause thinking will hasten the end of structural racism in America.

Regardless of the position you take, one thing we can all agree on. Questions about the Civil War and its effects still resonate, sometimes loudly and publicly, after 155 years.

Lots of Civil War Content on YouTube

Searching the following items on YouTube will lead you to many hours of informative and entertaining Civil War-related videos:

- (1) “emerging civil war” Lectures, battlefield tours and short takes on a variety of subjects from this innovative blog site

(2)“cwrt congress” An organization formed to help round tables nationwide, Civil War Round Table Congress has begun uploading lectures by prominent Civil War historians.

(3)“civil war battle series” Lectures on Civil War battles sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

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.rappvalleycivilwar.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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