



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter

May 2015, Volume 12, Issue 5

Speaker: Pat Schroeder
Topic: "Myths about Lee's Surrender"
When: Monday, May 11, 2015
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm

Abstract on Pat Schroeder, our Scheduled Speaker for Monday May 11, 2015

By Jim Smithfield

Our scheduled speaker on May 11th, will be Patrick Schroeder. Pat was born at Fort Belvoir, VA, and attended High School in Augusta County, VA. Pat Schroeder is a Civil War Author and Historian. He graduated *Cum Laude* with a B.S. in *Historical Park Administration* from Shepherd Collage, West Virginia. Additionally, he has an M.A. in Civil War History from Virginia Tech. Pat has worked as a seasonal living history interpreter at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. His book, "*Thirty Myths About Lee's Surrender*" is currently in its twelfth printing. Pat was employed at Red Hill, the Patrick Henry National Memorial for five years. He is now the full-time Historian of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. On Monday May 11th Pat will speak about *Lee's Surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia* and he will present a program which he titles "*Myths About Lee's Surrender.*" One of the many myths is that Lee surrendered to Grant under an apple tree and that the apple tree disappeared at the hands of souvenir seekers. That particular story and various others will be discussed by Pat during his presentation on May 11th . . .

RVCWRT ANNUAL FUND RAISING DINNER MEETING WILL BE HELD ON JULY 13, 2015

Edwin Bearss' will be our special guest speaker on July 13th

"Re-assessing Stories of the Civil War"

The Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable is pleased to announce that our dinner meeting set for July 13th will be a fund raising event in support of the *Edwin Bearss' Internship Fund*. The *Internship Fund* annually supports one summer intern for the National Park Service in Fredericksburg, VA. The 2015 Intern receiving this award will be introduced during our July 13th, event.

Our dinner meeting for July 13th will feature an upgraded three entre buffet menu, including a carving station, the sales of and the personalization of books authored by Ed Bearss', also we will hold a silent auction that night. Prior to the meal, Brock's will serve complimentary appetizers to guests. The cost of the meal, with tax and gratuity will be \$40.00 for RVCWRT members and only \$45.00 for non-members attending. Reminder: There will not be accommodations for non-dinner attendees allowed to sit-in on this event . . .

Remember: Contact Bob Jones to order your Dinner in advance

To Confirm Your Reservations; Telephone 540-399-1702 or e-mail 3dognight@Bigplanet.Com

"Strike Them a Blow: Battle along the North Anna River"

Presented by Chris Mackowski

Review of the April Program by Greg Mertz

Confederate army commander Robert E. Lee had set a trap on the banks of the North Anna River and the Federal army had walked directly into it. "We must strike them a blow," Lee proclaimed, "we must never let them pass us again, we must strike them a blow." Yet the Confederates would not fight a major battle at the North Anna. Despite the highly favorable conditions the Confederate army faced, their commander was ill, and Lee had no capable subordinate to whom he could delegate the conduct of the battle. While Lee lay on his cot sick, the Confederates missed an opportunity. Chris Mackowski shared with us this often overlooked story during our April meeting.

The North Anna Campaign got underway in the aftermath of the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. At Spotsylvania, Lee had made a critical miscalculation that nearly cost him his army. On May 11, 1864, Lee thought that Grant was abandoning the Spotsylvania line and ordered his artillery to withdraw in preparation for a counter-move against the marching Federals. But Grant had not left Spotsylvania and had simply shifted his forces to assault Lee on May 12. The result was the desperate fighting around the Bloody Angle, and Mackowski concluded that another result was a tendency for Lee to become more cautious in his interpretation of the intelligence reports brought to him.

On the night of May 20th, Grant decided to detach Hancock's corps – one of four Federal corps in the army – from the Spotsylvania lines, sending it east to Bowling Green, under the expectation that Lee would go after Hancock and try to destroy this small, isolated portion of the army. However, Lee, perhaps fearful of making another miscalculation regarding a Federal movement, reacted to news by sending one of his three corps under Ewell -- not as far east as Hancock – but only far enough east to block the Telegraph Road – the most direct road to Richmond. The rest of the Confederate army remained in their Spotsylvania earthworks. Since Grant was unable to use Hancock to draw Lee into the open for battle, his plan for the initial phase of the campaign was foiled.

In anticipating that Lee would go after Hancock right away, Grant had not intended for Hancock to stay out of communications and the assistance of the rest of the army for long, and began to feel that Hancock might be vulnerable. Accordingly Warren's corps was detached from the army and sent to Hancock's support. The two remaining Federal corps marched south, with Burnside assigned to take the Telegraph Road. Burnside was astonished to bump into Ewell, and received permission to follow the same route Warren was marching along instead. Burnside failed to perform a reconnaissance of Ewell's force astride the Telegraph Road and missed an opportunity to overwhelm the small rearguard of cavalry and engineers that actually confronted him. That same day Wright's Federal corps was in a great position to harass the Confederate march, but allowed both Ewell and Anderson to march down the Telegraph Road right past him, and yet another Federal opportunity was lost. Mackowski stressed that Lee would not normally be so careless as to allow his opponent so many openings, but he was growing weary and exhausted and was accordingly making mistakes. Adding to his weakened condition, Lee also became sick with dysentery.

Lee's army crossed over to the south bank of the North Anna River on May 22. Lee concluded that Grant was not going to fight him at North Anna and that the Federals were once again passing around his right flank. When cavalry fighting erupted on Lee's front on May 23, he perceived it as a mere demonstration. Actually it was the vanguard of the Federal army. When some of Grant's troops crossed the North Anna at Jericho Mill Ford west of Lee's army, the force was also interpreted as simply a small cavalry force and Confederate General Cadmus Wilcox of Hill's corps determined to destroy the force. He instead discovered that he was attacking Warren's entire corps. Though Wilcox did well at first, he was soon pinned down, then subjected to a cross-fire on his front and flank, and forced to withdraw from the field.

Lee soon realized that Federals were south of the river to his east and west, as well as in front of him north of the river. The Federals were effectively divided into three pieces, and for either the left or right wing to reinforce the other, it would have to cross the river behind them, march across the Confederate front, and cross the river again to link up with the other wing. As Lee met with his subordinates to determine the next Confederate move, engineer Martin L. Smith suggested that the Confederate center under Anderson, hold the high ground on the river at Ox Ford. Then the Confederate line would form an inverted V, with Hill and the left or west wing bent back from the river, anchoring the left flank on the Little River. Similarly Ewell and the right or east wing would bend back to a swamp. The further the Federals pushed away from the river, the more divided the army would become. Lee could hold the Federals on one side of him at bay while he could focus his efforts on crushing the portion of Grant's army on the other side.

Mackowski observed that with only a few adjustments to the Confederate position, Lee had gone from being in a disastrous position with the enemy threatening both flanks to arguably his strongest defensive position of the

war. However, Lee had no one to execute the assault plan. Lee had criticized Hill's roll in the recent Jericho Mill battle with a particularly stinging rebuke. Knowing that Hill had been disparaging of "Stonewall" Jackson's generalship, Lee scolded, "why did you not do as Jackson would have done – thrown your whole force upon these people and driven them back?" Ewell had also disappointed Lee as a corps commander. Plus the health of both generals was in question; Hill had recently returned to command from an illness and Ewell had just come down with dysentery and was soon to vacate corps command. Anderson was solid but not spectacular, plus his troops were in the center of the line and not positioned to assail whichever Federals seemed most exposed. Lee would have to direct any attack himself, and for the time being, he was too ill to make that happen. Lee declared in vain "We must strike them a blow."

As Lee lay prone and unable to act, Grant pushed his men into the trap, confused why Burnside had trouble getting across the river at Ox Ford in the face of Anderson's Confederates. Some of Burnside's men got across the river further west of Ox Ford and drunken division commander James Ledlie launched a disastrous attack against strong Confederate earthworks, and Confederates under William Mahone counterattacked. Grant then realized the precarious situation his troops were in, suspended the advance and dug in.

Because the armies departed the North Anna Battlefield without a major battle taking place, a legacy of the North Anna Campaign was the mistaken impression Grant formed of the Confederate army. Since the Confederate army had not tried to attack the isolated corps of Hancock early in the campaign, and had again not attacked when Grant walked into the North Anna trap, Grant concluded that the Confederate army had been so weakened by the hammer blows the Federals had delivered at Wilderness and Spotsylvania, that the Confederates army was a defeated army. The assaults ordered on June 3 at Cold Harbor were made largely because Grant believed that just one more thrust would dissolve the Confederate army. Grant thought that the army would melt away because of its passiveness at North Anna.

"RVCWRT MEMBERS" YOUR 2015 MEMBERSHIP IS PAST DUE **The RVCWRT Executive Committee**

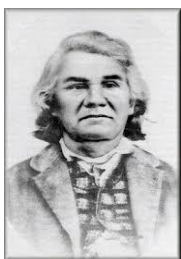
It's past that time, when we need all of those who have not renewed their yearly *RVCWRT Membership* to do so. This might be the last year that we are able to wait this long for renewals. Remember that while other area organizations continue to raise the cost of membership, RVCWRT has not yet been forced to do this. Our individual yearly membership is still \$30.00, family membership is \$45.00 and our student membership remains \$7.50 . . .

Ongoing Parking Issues at RVCWRT Dinner Meetings . . . **By Jim Smithfield**

The *Survey Sheets* which members are asked to complete at Dinner Meetings continue to reflect an ongoing concern from individuals about *Available Parking* in *Brocks Parking Lot*. Remember that if parking in Brocks lot or along the nearby street is unavailable, there are still other close-by parking options. The *Parking Lots* for train passengers is one answer (these lots are open for public parking after 6:00 p.m. daily). Of course, there is always the *Parking Garage* (it's just a short walk) also along Sofia Street there is usually on-street parking. Remember, Brocks is a public restaurant and we are still just customers.

RVCWRT History Alert Program **By Jim Smithfield**

RVCWRT member Alan Zirkle, provides a totally free service, which notifies subscribers about any/all upcoming local history events in the Fredericksburg general area. This is done via subscribers recorded e-mail address, it concerns upcoming history-related events. RVCWRT members receive Alan's important messages. If you do not now, but would like to receive Alan Zirkle's "*History Alerts*" please send your e-mail address to Alan noting this fact @ az@azirkle.com.



Confederate Brigadier General and Cherokee Chief Stand Watie **By Jim Smithfield**

Confederate Brigadier General Stand Watie was born December 12, 1806, in Oothcaloga, which was within the then home of the Cherokee Nation, near what is now Rome, GA. Watie was born to an influential Cherokee family and played a major role during the tribes difficulties with the

state of Georgia's anti-Indian laws. Prior to the tribe's removal to the West, Stand Watie had served as a clerk of the Cherokee Supreme Court and he became a Speaker at the Cherokee National Council. Watie wrote many articles for the Cherokee developed newspaper called the *Cherokee Phoenix*.

For years the Cherokee tribe had been under intense and constant pressure from their Anglo neighbors, who wanted the entire tribe to be moved away to a reservation in the then unsettled West. Previously, this had been successfully done with several of the other Eastern tribes. However, most of the Cherokee Nation were against any move to the West or to anywhere else.

Stand Watie's Cherokee birth name was De-ga-ta-ga, and his baptized Christian name was Isaac Uwatie. His father (*Standhope Uwatie*) was a full-blooded Cherokee and his mother, Susanna Reese, was the daughter of a white father and a Cherokee mother. After Stand Watie's father converted to Christianity through the *Moravians*, his father took the name David Uwatie. Then, he and Susanna renamed De-ga-ta-ga to Isaac Uwatie. According to one biography that I've read, Watie's Cherokee name translated to English meant "standing firm". As was then a popular practice within the Cherokee Nation, Watie combined his Cherokee and English names into the name, *Stand Watie*, dropping the "U" from his surname. Watie's brothers were Gallagina, nicknamed "Buck" (who took the name Elias Boudinot, becoming the second person to bear the name of the Revolutionary War leader who signed America's Treaty with England, ending the Revolutionary War) and Watie's younger brother Thomas, also dropped the "U" from his surname. The three brothers were close to their paternal uncle, Chief Major Ridge, and his son John Ridge, both of whom became leaders within the Cherokee Nation. Stand Watie was twelve when he learned to read and write English at the *Moravian Mission School* in Spring Place, GA. Within the Cherokee Nation, his father, David Uwatie, had become a very wealthy planter, who held more than a good number of African-American slaves as laborers and servants. Members of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot faction were better educated than most Southern Anglo's of that day. Most of the overall Cherokee tribe had by and large been civilized by the 1830's, taking on the ways of their white/Anglo neighbors. Stand Watie courted and married a white woman from the nearby hills; she was the former Sarah Bell, who like Watie was well educated for their day . . .

As a member of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot faction, Stand Watie supported removal of the tribe to lands in the West, away from the local White's/Anglo's. Watie was one of the initial signers of the *United States Treaty of New Echota* in 1835. This was done in defiance of the then Principal Cherokee Chief John Ross and nearly 90% of the tribe. In 1837, Watie along with his family and members of their faction, along with their slaves moved West to land set aside for the Cherokee Nation, in what is now present-day Oklahoma. All members of the faction were educated well to do planters and each held slaves. Members of the faction settled near Honey Creek, along with their families. Two years after their move West, the remainder of the tribe was forced by *United States Troops* to move Westward. This move West by the Cherokee tribe is known to history as *The Trail of Tears* or as *Nunna daul Tsuny* by the Cherokee. In 1839, following the tribe's move West, Stand Watie's uncle Major Ridge, his cousin John Ridge, and his brother Elias Boudinot (AKA Buck Watie) were each murdered by a hand-picked Cherokee assassin squad. In 1842, Stand Watie killed one of his uncle's attackers, but Watie was acquitted in trial, as it was felt by all, that the killing was self-defense. Then, in 1845, Watie's younger brother Thomas Watie was murdered, also by members of the assassin squad. It was after this, that Stand Watie assumed the leadership of the remaining Ridge-Watie-Boudinot faction and became involved in a long-running blood feud with the followers of Chief John Ross. Watie became the recognized leader of the *Knights of the Golden Circle*, which bitterly opposed abolitionism for the Cherokee tribe.

The disastrous and forced *Trail of Tears* trek westward by the entire Cherokee tribe was the result of the *Treaty of New Echota*. As noted above, all the tribal leaders who had signed the *New Echota Treaty* were assassinated, i.e., except for Stand Watie. Watie escaped being murdered when the son of a good friend came to his store warning that the assassins were on their way to kill him. Watie escaped out the back door as the assassins came in the front. Stand Watie went into hiding for six years, i.e., until it was safe for him to come home. During his time in hiding Watie formed and trained a large troop of fighters for his personal protection.

At the outbreak of Civil War, being slave owners, Watie and his faction quickly joined the Southern cause. Then, Watie was commissioned a colonel on July 12, 1861, this occurred after he'd raised a regiment of Cherokees for the Confederate military service. When Cherokee Chief John Ross was forced to sign an alliance with the South, Watie's men were reorganized as the *Cherokee Regiment of Mounted Rifles*. In August 1862, Chief John Ross was forced to flee deep into *Indian Territory*, and Watie was quickly elected to be the principal chief of the Confederate Cherokees. Stand Watie went on to become brigadier general of what's been called the *Five Civilized Tribes*; these five tribes included Choctaws, Seminoles, Chickasaws, Muscogee Creeks and Cherokees. During the Civil War there were at times upwards of 10,000 or more Indian soldiers serving under Confederate Brigadier General Stand Watie.

Even though the Cherokee had suffered at the hands of white Southerners, Watie and his faction always maintained that the Federal government was the real culprit. When the South began to secede from the Union in 1860, Watie and other Cherokees supported the new Confederacy. When Watie was named colonel he had raised

an initial regiment of 300 mixed-blood Cherokees. Watie's first action came against Unionist Creek Indians near the Kansas border in 1861. Then in 1862, at the *Battle of Pea Ridge* in Arkansas Watie's mounted regiment captured a Union battery in the midst of the Confederate defeat. However, Watie's Indian infantry turned and ran when they found themselves facing cannon fire.

A major portion of Watie's command saw action at the *Battle of Oak Hills (August 10, 1861)* a battle that assured the South's hold on *Indian Territory* and this made Stand Watie a Confederate military hero. Afterward, Watie helped drive over 4,000 pro-Northern Indians out of *Indian Territory*. Following the *Battle of Chustenahlah (December 26, 1861)* Watie commanded the pursuit of fleeing Federal Indians, led by *Chief Opothleyahola*, driving them into exile in Kansas. Although, initially Watie's men were promised that they would be exempt from service outside of *Indian Territory*, Watie led his Indian troops into Arkansas, in the spring of 1861. This was intended to stem the ongoing Federal invasion of that region. Watie had been directed to make this move by Major General Earl Van Dorn and to also take part in the *Battle of Elkhorn Tavern, AKA Pea Ridge (March 5th and 6th, 1861)*. As noted above, on the first day of fighting, the Confederate Cherokee Cavalry, which were on the left flank of the Confederate line, captured a battery of Union artillery before being forced to abandon it. Following the Federal victory, Watie's command screened the complete Confederate withdrawal from the battlefield.

Watie and the troops under his command, participated in eighteen battles and many major skirmishes against Federal troops during the Civil War, including the *Battle of Cowskin Prairie (April 1862)*, *Old Fort Wayne (October 1862)*, *Webber's Falls (April 1863)*, *Fort Gibson (May 1863)*, *Cabin Creek (July 1863)*, and *Gunter's Prairie (August 1864)*. In addition, his men were engaged in a multitude of smaller skirmishes and engagements in *Indian Territory* and within the neighboring states. Because of his wide-ranging raids behind Union lines, Watie's troops tied down thousands of Federal troops that were critically needed in the Eastern Theater of the war.

Stand Watie felt that his two greatest victories were the capture of the Federal steam boat *J.R. Williams* (June 15, 1864) and the seizure of \$1.5 million worth of supplies from a Federal wagon supply train during the *Second Battle of Cabin Creek* (September 19, 1864). Watie was promoted to brigadier general on May 6, 1864, and given command of the First Indian Brigade. He was the only Native American minority to achieve the rank of general in the Civil War. Brigadier General Stand Watie did not surrender until June 23, 1865; he was the very last Confederate general officer to lay down his arms and to surrender his troops.

After the Civil War, Watie served as a representative of the Southern Cherokee delegation, leading them to Washington, DC and in negotiating the *Cherokee Reconstruction Treaty* of 1866. Watie then abandoned politics and any public life, retiring to his home along Honey Creek, where he lived out his days as a planter and businessman along with his wife until his death on September 9, 1871 . . .

Did you know . . .

by Jim Smithfield

- . . . that one significant result from the *Civil War's Reconstruction Period* was that all former slaves of the Confederate aligned tribes were admitted as full tribal members and given equal status within their various tribes?
- . . . that at the least, one out of every four Cherokees, old and young died during the forced westward trek of the so called *Trail of Tears*?
- . . . that Stand Watie was the first and last member of a minority to be promoted to general officer until the middle of the Twentieth century?
- . . . that at his surrender, Brigadier General Stand Watie surrendered only the Confederate First Indian Cavalry, consisting of Cherokee, Creek, Seminole and Osage troops?



Confederate Indian Cavalryman

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 still just \$30.00 for individuals, \$40.00 for families, and it's still 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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Rappahannock **V**alley **C**ivil **W**ar **R**ound **T**able
Post Office Box 7632
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404