



**THE DRUM & BUGLE**  
**Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table**  
**April 2022, Volume 19, Issue 4**

**Speaker:** Brian Briones  
**Topic:** Defenses of Washington during the Civil War  
**When:** Monday April 11, 2022  
**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](http://www.rappvalleycivilwar.org)  
**Our Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/rvcwrt](http://www.facebook.com/rvcwrt)

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**“Brian Briones: Defenses of Washington during the Civil War”**

Brian has an extensive career within the field of museum's collections. He has worked in several different military museums including, The National Museum of the Marine Corps. and The National Museum of the United States Navy. He has worked for 10 years at the City of Alexandria's Fort Ward Museum, and has for the last five years been the curator/assistant director of the museum.

It is through his expertise of museum artifacts that Brian will talk to the round table about the Defenses of Washington, their purpose, construction, use, and legacy by using artifacts from the Fort Ward Museum collection.

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**“Targeted Tracks: The Cumberland Valley Railroad in the Civil War”  
by Scott Mingus**

**A Review of the March 2022 Program by Greg Mertz**

After our second stint of reverting to virtual programs during the pandemic, we returned to Brock’s for an in-person dinner meeting about a railroad that is relatively unknown, yet characterized for many distinctions. Stretching from the National Road in Hagerstown, Maryland to the Pennsylvania state capitol of Harrisburg with stocks sold in 1835, the company bought three of the best steam engines available, boasting the ability to travel 15 miles per hour. The track ran down the middle of the main street of each town it passed through. Among its distinctions, the railroad carried the first train to transport 500 passengers – two engines pulling seven cars. It boasted same day delivery of fresh steaks to two of the finest hotels in Philadelphia. It provided the first ever dedicated sleeping car, as well as the first combination baggage and passenger car, at a time when lost luggage was a huge expense for the railroad. Its 4000-foot-long bridge across the Susquehanna River was one of the longest spans in the country.

The Cumberland Valley Railroad was part of the “underground railroad” with escaped enslaved being able to get free tickets to ride from Hagerstown. John Brown, using the alias of Dr. Isaac Smith, claimed he was an engineer who shipped “mining equipment” along the Cumberland Valley Railroad. The “equipment” was actually pikes and rifles for his upcoming raid. Before the raid, Brown also met with Frederick Douglas at a quarry outside of Chambersburg, after arriving via train.

When the Civil War broke out, cavalymen from southern states posted at Carlisle Barracks resigned from the United States Army and took the railroad as the first leg of their journey to their homes. Their ride was disconcerting as effigies of Confederate soldiers with signs of “death to traitors” were hanging from the telegraph wires paralleling the tracks.

The first major movement of an army in American history was on the Cumberland Valley Railroad as Union Gen. Robert Patterson moved some 14,000 soldiers of the Army of the Shenandoah early in the war. Patterson was to pin down Confederates under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, including his subordinate Gen. Thomas J. Jackson at Harpers Ferry, while Union Gen. Irvin McDowell moved on G.T. Beauregard's Confederates at Manassas. But Patterson failed in his mission, allowing Johnston to take the Manassas Gap Railroad boarding trains as far west as Strasburg to merge with the troops at Manassas and defeat the Union forces in the first major battle of the war.

Patterson's movement was duplicated in September, 1862 when Union Gen. John F. Reynolds moved 17,000 militiamen for service in the Antietam Campaign. Union Gen. George B. McClellan then used the railroad to deliver large caliber artillery ammunition from Washington, to Baltimore, to Harrisburg, to Hagerstown in 4 hours and 31 minutes, in order to resupply the army from the rounds expended during the battle of Antietam. On September 26, 1862 a train carrying troops was involved in a head-on collision, killing or maiming 30 soldiers.

The title of Mingus's book comes from his contention that the Cumberland Valley Railroad tracks and buildings were more frequent targets for destruction by Confederates than any other railroad. During Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's October 1862 raid, his troops destroyed every railroad building and railroad infrastructure in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Stuart was also to destroy the railroad bridge at Scotland, until he fell for a piece of disinformation that the bridge was made out of iron rather than wood and it would be folly to attempt to demolish it.

In the aftermath of Stuart's raid, railroad officials decided to rebuild, reasoning that Confederates would be unlikely to return to Pennsylvania again. But eight months later, Confederates returned during the Gettysburg Campaign. Confederate Gen. Albert G. Jenkins took pride in being able to do what Stuart could not – burn the bridge at Scotland – which was in ashes in less than an hour. The troops of Gen. George E. Pickett were not at Gettysburg on July 1 because they were burning the new railroad buildings in Chambersburg.

Union Gen. Herman Haupt and the Bureau of United States Military Railroads used pre-fabricated trestles to help rebuild the Cumberland Valley Railroad and three other railroads damaged by the Confederates during the Gettysburg Campaign. The task, including construction of 39 bridges, was accomplished in just 17 days.

Indeed, another Confederate raid reached Chambersburg on July 30, 1864. Under the command of Gen. "Tiger" John McCausland with 3,000 men, a ransom of \$100,000 in gold was demanded, otherwise the town would be burned. McCausland's superior, Gen. Jubal Early knew that the town could not possibly have that much gold on hand. Since on the two previous Confederate excursions the railroad amenities were the only structures burned, the town authorities did not believe that the other buildings in town would be threatened. They also warned Union Gen. William W. Averell with 2,500 men only ten miles away and were confident that he would rescue the town from any intimidation by the Confederates. But Averell was drunk, asleep or both and did not come to the aid of Chambersburg's citizens. All of the downtown buildings except one church and the Masonic lodge were burned. This time the railroad went undisturbed.

When Lincoln was assassinated and his body was transported by train back to Springfield, Illinois for burial, it was planned that the casket would be available for viewing at the Harrisburg railroad station – the third largest station in the world. The Cumberland Valley Railroad offered free transportation to Harrisburg for the occasion, but a massive thunderstorm prevented the people from seeing the president's remains.

The railroad company had several innovations and boasted some of the most impressive achievements and facilities of any railroad in the country. This short railroad certainly has a greater stature than its size suggests.

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### **Wanting to get a fix for a western theater battlefield?**

April is one of the costliest months of the Civil War. It started in April, Lee surrendered in April, Lincoln was shot and died in April, and General McClellan lost the crucial month of April in 1862 at Yorktown. Another major event that occurred in April was the Battle of Shiloh. Below you will find a link to the Emerging Civil War website. This will lead you to a video of a two hour

tour of the Shiloh Battlefield with Park Ranger Stacy Allen. We hope you enjoy.

<https://emergingcivilwar.com/2020/05/29/ecw-weekender-touring-shiloh-battlefield-virtually/>

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## **8th Annual Emerging Civil War Symposium at Stevenson Ride - August 5-7, 2022**

Theme: **Great "What Ifs?" of the Civil War**

Keynote Speaker: Gary Adelman: "Speculation Run Amok: Fun with Gettysburg's What If's."

**Early Bird Tickets – \$200.00**

Visit <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2022-symposium> to learn more

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## **CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF FREDERICKSBURG (CWRTF)**

CWRTF meets 9 times a year on designated Wednesdays at Mary Washington Jepson Alumni Executive Center, 1119 Hanover Street. They offer a buffet dinner followed by a Civil War-themed presentation. Reservations are required. Speaker/topic schedule can be found on their website at [www.cwrft.org](http://www.cwrft.org). As with our round table, things are subject to change due to the ups and downs of Covid.

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## **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](http://www.rappvalleycivilwar.org). Yearly membership dues are \$40 for individuals and \$50 for families. Students are free. Membership is open to anyone interested in the military, political and social history of the American Civil War.

**Newsletter Editor and Webmaster:** John Roos

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