

150th Anniversary of the American Civil War



Cape May County Civil War Round Table Newsletter April 2013

2013 Meeting Schedule

18 April: Presentation will be on the role of the Navies in the Civil War, delivered by Dr. Matthew Bruce, PhD.

Refreshments: Lisa and Wendy

16 May: Refreshments: Andy

20 June:

18 July:

15 August: Ed Bonekemper will be giving us a presentation on *The Myth of the Lost Cause: A Fantasy View of the Civil War*.

Refreshments: Mike & Barbara Golla

19 September:

17 October: Refreshments: John Burke

21 November:

?? December:

CMCCWRT Officers for 2013/2014

President: John Burke

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jim@jimocnj.com or James.Marshall@prufoxroach.com

REMINDER:

DUES FOR 2012 ARE DUE NOW!!!!
Send to Jim Marshall, address above

Members who have paid their dues:
Jim Cremer, Tom Dunleavy, Stan Elliot, Jim English, Rita & Anthony Fulginiti, Lisa Giangiacomo, Barbara Golla, Mark Golla, Kurt Haywood, Ernie Long, Jim Marshall, Pat Munson-Siter, Wendy Repici, Lou Bishop Jr. & Sr., George Brewer, John Burke, Beverly Linn, John McDonough

Minutes: CMCCWRT Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Burke. We saluted the flag and held a moment of silence for those who put their lives in harm's way to protect our country.

There were no minutes to be read as there was no meeting in January or February, and there was no business meeting in December 2012.

Treasurer Marshall gave the Treasurer's report. A hard copy is on file. Motion made and seconded to accept the report and file it for audit; passed.

There being no old news to address, we moved to new business.

John Burke will not be attending the April meeting due to health reasons.

There are a number of items for sale at meetings to help raise funds for historic preservation.

David Check asked about the possibilities of arranging a trip to Civil War related sites via with Travel by Dave, which we used for our last Round Table trip, which was to West Point. A suggestion was made that we open any trip we arrange to other historical-oriented groups in the area, like the Cape May County Historic Society, in order to make sure we obtain enough people to keep the costs of the trip reasonable. The group agreed that they would enjoy such a trip, and David volunteered to look into what arrangements would be needed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned so our presentation could begin.

Thanks to Mary Ann Donlin, who donated money for refreshments in the memory of Clark Donlin.

Respectfully
Patricia A. Munson-Siter
Secretary

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NEEDED:

I have been getting mailed newsletters back from the post office for both Jim English and Ralph Patrone, saying their addresses have changed and the forwarding order has expired. If you wish to continue to receive hard copies of the newsletter, please let me know your new addresses. == Pat

Civil War Timeline for April

1860

No Major Events

1861

6	Arkansas secedes
7	Tennessee negotiates alliance with Confederacy
20	North Carolina secedes
21	Confederate legislators vote to move capital to Richmond

- 23 Virginia secedes (after popular vote)
- 24 Union soldiers occupy Alexandria (VA)
- 6 Arkansas secedes

1862

- 4 Confederates evacuate Yorktown
- 5 Battle of Williamsburg (VA)
- 8 Battle of McDowell (VA)
- 15 Battle of Drewry's Bluff (VA)
- 23 Battle of Front Royal (VA)
- 25 Battle of Winchester (VA)
- 31 Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) (VA)

1863

- 1-4 Battle of Chancellorsville
- 10 Stonewall Jackson dies
- 16 Battle of Champion's Hill (MS)

1864

- 5-6 Battle of the Wilderness (VA)
- 6 Atlanta Campaign opens
- 7-19 Battle of Spotsylvania (VA)
- 11 Battle of Yellow Tavern (VA)
- 12-13 Second Battle of Drewry's Bluff (VA)
- 15 Battle of New Market (VA)
- 24 Battle of the North Anna River (VA)
- 25-27 Battle of New Hope (GA)

1865

- 10 Confederate president Davis captured in Georgia
- 26 Smith surrenders Trans-Mississippi Confederate army



Civil War Related Events

May 2013

- 1 **VA** ★ 150 Anniversary activities commemorating the Battle of Chancellorsville near Fredericksburg. Bus tour 9 am-noon (\$20); First Day walking tour 1:30 pm; "Final Bivouac: "The Cracker Box Meeting" 1 pm. nps.gov/frsp
- 1-5 **IL/MD** Tour, "The Antietam Campaign: South Mountain, Harpers Ferry, Sharpsburg, Shepherdstown." Tour organized in Chicago. Individuals arrange own transportation to Hagerstown where tour is based. More info: chicagocwrt.org/battletour.html

- 2 **VA** ★ 150 Anniversary activities commemorating the Battle of Chancellorsville near Fredericksburg. Bus tour 9 am-noon; real-time walking tour "Rearguard Clash: Catherine Furnace to Wellford Farm" 2 pm; real-time walking tour "Jackson's Flank Attack" 5 pm; real-time program "Fateful Volley: Jackson's Wounding" 8 pm. See nps.gov/frsp for details.
- 2 **VA** ★ 150 Symposium, "Chancellorsville," at Stevenson Ridge, 6901 Meeting St, Spotsylvania (near Fredericksburg). 5:30-9 pm. \$20/\$25 at door. Details, registration. 540-582-6263.
- 2 **MD** Lecture and Dinner, "The Civil War in Maryland," at the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, 401 Museum Dr. in City Park, Hagerstown. 6-8 pm. \$25 with dinner, \$5 lecture only (7 pm). wcmfa.org
- 2-4 **MA** Symposium, "Freedom Rising: The 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and African American Military Service," at various locations in and near Boston. See the Boston African American National Historic Site for details: 617-742-5415 or nps.gov/boaf
- 3 **VA** ★ 150 Anniversary activities commemorating the Battle of Chancellorsville near Fredericksburg. Programs at Salem Church 10 am-5 pm; walking tour "Sunrise at Hazel Grove and Fairview" 6 am; walking tour "Victory at the Crossroads" 10 am; "Ordeal of the Chancellors: A Walking Tour" 11:30 am; walking tour "This Time the Yankees Win: Second Fredericksburg" 2 pm; special program "Place of Peace Amidst War: Salem Church" 4:30 pm. See nps.gov/frsp for details.
- 3 **VA** Lecture, "Enduring Legacy: Rhetoric and Ritual of the Lost Cause," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. 1 pm. Free with admission. moc.org
- 3-5 **VA** ★ 150 Reenactment, "Chancellorsville Campaign," near Spotsylvania Court House. Living history programs, camps and battles at 4 pm Saturday and 1:30 pm Sunday. \$10/adult at gate. spotsylvania.va.us/content/15098/15203
- 4 **DC** Symposium, "Lincoln, Lieber, and the Powers of War 1863 to 9/11," at the Prettyman District Courthouse, 333 Constitution Ave NW, Washington. 1-5 pm. lincolngroup.org
- 4 **VA** ★ 150 Anniversary activities commemorating the Battle of Chancellorsville near Fredericksburg. Living history programs all day at several locations. Salem Church open 10 am-5 pm; walking tour "The Red Badge of Courage at Chancellorsville" 9 am; program "Day of Death and Glory: Confederate Artillery at Hazel Grove" noon; walking tour "Darkness in the Dark Woods: Jackson's Flank Attack" (the whole route) 12:30 pm; program "Something Frightful: Union Artillery at Fairview" 2 pm; program "Ordeal of the Chancellors" 3:30 pm; concert "Footsteps and Reflections" 6 pm. See nps.gov/frsp for details.
- 4 **VA** "Visualizing Emancipation," a special program about a University of Richmond digital project, at the City Point unit (Hopewell) unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield. 11 am and 2 pm. Free. nps.gov/pete

- 4 **VA** Illustrated lecture, "The Civil War in 3D," at the Henrico Theater, 305 E Nine Mile Road, Henrico. 2 pm. Free. nps.gov/rich
- 4 **MD** "Cigar and Whisky Night" at the Pry House Field Hospital Museum, on the Antietam Battlefield near Keedysville. Benefits the National Museum of Civil War Medicine Foundation. 6:30-9:30 pm. \$75. Registration 301-695-1864 extension 25.
- 4 **MD** Bus tour, "John Wilkes Booth Escape Route," popular 12-hour tour explores the route of the assassin's escape. Leaves from the Surratt House Museum in Clinton at 7:30 am. \$85. Details, reservation info: surratt.org
- 4-5 **VA**  Special programs with living history, "Battle of Chancellorsville: Role of the Wilderness Area Hospitals at Ellwood Manor," at Ellwood, near the intersection of Routes 3 and 20 west of Fredericksburg. 11 am-4:30 pm. Free. fowb.org
- 4-5 **VA**  Living history, "Civil War Hospital at Kenmore," at Kenmore, 1201 Washington Ave, Fredericksburg. Free with site admission. kenmore.org
- 4-5 **PA** Living history, "First Call" camps and demonstrations at the Carroll County Farm Museum, 500 S Center St, Westminster. 10 am-5 pm Saturday, 10 am-4 pm Sunday. Free with site admission. carrollcountymuseum.org
- 4-5 **PA** Living history, infantry camps and demonstrations at the Pennsylvania Memorial, Gettysburg battlefield. Free. nps.gov/gett
- 4-5 **MD** Living history, music and more during "First Call Weekend" Civil War Expo and living history weekend at the Carroll County Farm Museum in Westminster. 10 am-4 pm each day. Fee charged. 410-386-3880.
- 5 **VA**  Anniversary activities commemorating the Battle of Chancellorsville near Fredericksburg. Living history at Ellwood; Salem Church open 10 am-5 pm; bus tour "Hidden Chancellorsville: The Ultimate Bus Tour" 9 am-5 pm (\$40); walking tour "First Clash at Chancellorsville" 9:30 am; program "Chancellorsville: Life of a House" noon; walking tour "Union Footsteps: Rice Bull of New York" 1:30 pm; walking tour "Confederate Footsteps" 3 pm. nps.gov/frsp
- 5 **VA** Guided horseback ride, "Mosby Ride" at the Ebenezer Church, 20421 Aimont Road, Bluemont. 10 am. Civil War stories in the Mosby Heritage Area. 10 am. \$50. mosbyheritagearea.org
- 5 **VA** Illustrated lecture, "The Civil War in 3D," at the Henrico Theatre, 305 Nine Mile Road, Highland Springs (near Richmond). 2 pm. Free. 804-652-3409.
- 5-15 **VA SC GA** Cruise, "A Civil War Tour: Echoes of the Past," includes Richmond, Charleston and Savannah. Details, reservations: smithsonianjourneys.org/tours/civil-war-cruise/
- 8 **VA** Lecture, "2nd Battle of Fredericksburg," at Baine's Books and Coffee, 205 Main St, Appomattox. 12:15 pm. Free. moc.org
- 9 **MD** Lecture, "Gettysburg: Day Three," at the Carroll Community College, 1601 Washington Road, Westminster. 6:30-9:30 pm. \$35. 410-386-8100.
- 9 **VA**  "Last Night: A Candlelight Tour at Jackson Shrine," at the Jackson Shrine at Guinea Station. 7:30 pm. Free. Details, directions: nps.gov/frsp
- 10 **VA**  "The Death of Stonewall Jackson," real-time program at the Jackson Shrine at Guinea Station. 3-5 pm. Free. Details, directions: nps.gov/frsp
- 10 **NY** Music, video, "DJ Spooky: Photography and the American Civil War," music with images from the Met's Civil War photography exhibit, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. 7 pm. \$30. metmuseum.org
- 10 **VA**  Talk, "The Death of Stonewall Jackson: The View from the Museum's Collection," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. Noon. Free with museum admission. moc.org
- 10 **VA** Living history talk, Gen. D.H. Hill eulogizes his brother-in-law, Stonewall Jackson, at Mt. Zion Historical Park in Aldie. 7 pm. \$2. nvrpa.org/park/mt_zion
- 11 **VA** Kayak tour, "Bull Run," 7-mile Civil War tour of the creek begins at the Stone Bridge on the Manassas battlefield. \$30 fee includes kayak, life vest and transportation. Depends on water level. 703-690-2121.
- 11 **MD** Special program, "Dig it!" medicinal and 19th-century garden at the Pry House Field Hospital Museum, on the Antietam Battlefield near Keedysville. 11 am-2 pm. Donation requested. civilwarmed.org
- 11 **MD** Talk, "Mending Broken Soldiers," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick. 2 pm. Free with museum admission. civilwarmed.org
- 11-12 **PA** Living history, infantry camps and demonstrations at the Pennsylvania Memorial, Gettysburg battlefield. Free. nps.gov/gett
- 11-12 **MD** Living history, "Tyndale's Brigade," camp and demonstrations at the Antietam National Battlefield. Free with park admission. nps.gov/anti
- 12 **VA** Illustrated talk, "Women's Fashions of the Civil War Era," at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim in Fairfax. 2 pm. Free. 703-591-0560.
- 14 **VA** Lecture, "Third Day at Gettysburg," at Historic Sully, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. 7 pm. \$5. Reservations: 703-437-1794.
- 16 **VA** Lecture, "In Her Own Words: Civil War Stories of Brethren & Mennonite Women in the Shenandoah Valley," at the Heritage Museum in Dayton. 7 pm. Free. 540-879-2616.
- 17-19 **VA** Seminar and tours, "Chancellorsville," based in Fredericksburg. Tours, talks and panel discussions.

- \$395. Details, registration: civilwarseminars.org
- 17-19 **VA** Living history, national live-fire competition with vintage and reproduction weapons at Fort Shenandoah near Winchester. Sponsored by the North-South Skirmish Association. Free to spectators. n-ssa.org
- 18 **VA** Concert, "Civil War 150th," at Fort Ward Park Amphitheater. 7 pm. Free. 703-746-4848.
- 18 **VA** Living history, "Civil War Hut Reconstruction," at Montpelier, home of James Madison, near Orange. Take the trail across from the old Montpelier train station on Route 20. 10 am-4 pm. More info: 540-672-2728 or montpelier.org
- 18 **VA** Car-caravan tour, "The Dimmock Line" the Confederate defenses at Petersburg, at the Petersburg National Battlefield. Two-hour tours begin at 10 am and 2 pm. Free with park admission. Register: 804-732-3531 extension 205.
- 18 **VA** Walking tour of Fort Huger, Confederate fort on the James River at 15080 Talcott Terrace near Smithfield. 10 am. Free. 757-357-0115.
- 18 **VA** Van tour, "Battle of Chancellorsville," leaves from Lee Hall in Newport News. 8 am-5 pm. \$50. More info: leehall.org. Reservations: 757-888-3371.
- 18 **PA** "An Evening with the Painting," special two-hour, after-hours view of and talks about the Gettysburg Cyclorama. 6 pm. \$20/adult. Tickets: gettysburgfoundation.org
- 18 **MD** Walking tour, "Civil War Annapolis," begins at the information booth at the City Dock. 10 am-noon. \$16/adult. annapolistours.com
- 18 **MD** Living history, "Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation," with James Getty at the Surratt House Museum in Clinton. 4 pm. Free. surratt.org
- 18-19 **VA** Living history, "Medical Encampment," at the Mt. Zion Church and cemetery in Aldie. 10 am-5 pm. Free, donations welcome. nvrpa.org/park/mt_zion
- 18-19 **VA** Reenactment, "Battle of Fort Pocahontas," on the James River between Richmond and Williamsburg, off Route 5. Living history camps and demonstrations 10 am-4 pm. Battles 1 pm both days. \$10/adult. fortpocahontas.org
- 18-19 **VA** Anniversary living history, talks and tours at Drewry's Bluff, part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park. 10 am-4 pm each day. Free. nps.gov/rich
- 18-19 **VA** Reenactment, "Second Battle of Winchester and New Market," at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War/New Market Battlefield in New Market. Camps open 10 am-5 pm each day. Battles both afternoons. \$10. vmi.edu/newmarket
- 18-19 **PA** Living history, infantry camps and demonstrations at Spangler Spring and Pitzer Woods, Gettysburg battlefield. Free. nps.gov/gett
- 18-19 **PA** Reenactment, "Lehigh Valley Civil War Days" at Whitehall Parkway in Whitehall. Camps and living history all weekend. Battles each day. Night firing and concert Saturday night. campgeiger.org
- 19 **VA** Boat tours, "Civil War on the James River," two-hour tours leave from Deep Bottom Park east of Richmond. 9 and 11:30 am. \$50. Reservations, details: 804-938-2350.
- 20 **MD** Walking tour, "Civil War Annapolis," begins at the information booth at the City Dock. 10 am-noon. \$16/adult. annapolistours.com
- 21 **NY** Discussion, "Documenting War," with reference to the Met's Civil War photography exhibit, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. 6 pm. \$27. metmuseum.org
- 23 **PA** Stamp ceremony, first day of issue of the Commemorative Gettysburg Stamp at the Gettysburg battlefield visitor center. Stamps on sale at 10 am. Ceremony at 11 am. nps.gov/gett
- 23 **VA** Lecture, "Confederate Generals — The Good, The Bad, The Ugly," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Appomattox. 6:30 pm. \$5. Reservations: moc.org or 855-649-1861 extension 203.
- 24 **VA** ★ 150 "A Dinner with Jefferson Davis," authentic meal and 1863 talks and living history at Walkerton Tavern, 2892 Mountain Road, Glen Allen (near Richmond). 6-8 pm. \$20. Registration: 804-652-3409.
- 25 **VA** ★ 150 Bus tour, "Confederate Cemeteries of Richmond," including Oakwood and Shockoe Hill. Leaves from the Dabbs House Museum, 3812 Nine Mile Road, near Richmond. 10 am-3 pm. \$20. Registration required: 804-652-3409.
- 25 **VA** Lecture, "CSI: Monitor," at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News. 1 pm. Free with museum admission. marinersmuseum.org
- 25 **VA** Living history, "General Grant and Mrs. Grant Return to City Point," at the City Point unit (Hopewell) of the Petersburg National Battlefield. 10 am-4 pm. Free. nps.gov/pete
- 25 **VA** Living history, "The Doctor Is In," 1860s medicine at Meadow Farm Museum, 3400 Mountain Road, Glen Allen (near Richmond). 12:30-3:30 pm. Free. 804-501-2130.
- 25 **DC** Bike tour, "Civil War Defenses of Washington," follows off-road trails to remains of the city's fortifications. Begins at Fort Dupont Park, Fort Dupont Drive SE in Washington. 10 am. Free. Sign up: 202-426-7723.
- 25 **MD** Memorial Day activities in Sharpsburg and the Antietam National Cemetery. Parade at 1:30 pm. Commemoration with music at the cemetery at 3 pm. Free. nps.gov/anti
- 25 **MD** Living history, "Confederate Surgeon and CSA Medical

- Practices," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick. 11 am-4 pm. Free with museum admission. civilwarmed.org
- 25-26 **PA** Living history, infantry camps and demonstrations at Meade's Headquarters, Pennsylvania Memorial and Spangler Spring, Gettysburg battlefield. Free. nps.gov/gett
- 25-26 **VA** Living history, "Civil War Weekend" at the Yorktown battlefield. Camps, demonstrations and more at this Colonial National Historical Park site. Free with park admission. nps.gov/colo
- 25-26 **VA** Ranger talks, "The History of America's National Cemeteries," at the Poplar Grove National Cemetery near Petersburg. 2 pm each day. Free. nps.gov/pete
- 25-27 **MD** Flag display, "Last Full Measure of Devotion." at the Monocacy National Battlefield near Frederick plus programs on the origin of Memorial Day. nps.gov/mono
- 26 **VA** Living history, "Eyewitness to War," tours of the Mt. Zion Church and cemetery in Aldie. 1-5 pm. Free, donations welcome. 703-327-9777 or nvrpa.org/park/mt_zion
- 26 **VA** Confederate Memorial Day, ceremony at the Old City Cemetery in Lynchburg. 3 pm. Free. gravegarden.org
- 31- June 2 **VA** Living history, "A Gathering of Civil War Eagles: The High Water Mark," at the Old Court House Civil War Museum in Winchester. 1863 events discussed and debated by Civil War "commanders." civilwarmuseum.org or 304-466-2030.



April 2013 = 150 Years Ago This Month

Union forces began to apply real pressure from the East Coast to the Mississippi River 150 years ago this month. Gen. U.S. Grant ramped up his campaign against Vicksburg (MS) and Gen. Joseph Hooker began moving against Robert E. Lee at Fredericksburg (VA).

Vicksburg

The Vicksburg Heritage Fair (April 5-7) highlights the Civil War anniversary in the downtown area with a focus on Confederate commander John C. Pemberton's headquarters and the Old Court House Museum. Living history, talks and more are scheduled. tinyurl.com/bv8u2zj

Tours of Pemberton's headquarters also are scheduled April 13, 20 and 27. tinyurl.com/bmhzu7e

Grierson's Raid

Grant launched what was to become a 600-mile cavalry raid (April 17-May 2) to distract attention from his run at Vicksburg. Cavalry Col. Benjamin Grierson led the way. A lecture at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson April 17 and a marker dedication in Starkville April 27 commemorate the event. civilwartraveler.com/events/04-13.html

• Virginia

The commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville kicks off with an April 3 lecture by NPS historian John Hennessey. More events, beginning in late April, are in the works. Check nps.gov/frsp for the latest.

Park Day set April 6

Here's your opportunity to help out your local Civil War site during the Civil War Trust's annual Park Day April 6. Projects range from raking leaves and hauling trash to minor maintenance. See a complete list of participating sites at civilwar.org/aboutus/events/park-day

Cedar Creek gets new visitor facility

A new visitor contact station for the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park opens April 13. The station, located at 7712 Main St in Middletown (VA), will be open 8:30 am-4:30 pm daily and includes orientation to the park, exhibits and ranger help. Guided car-caravan tours of the 1864 battlefield are scheduled at 2 pm Saturdays in April. nps.gov/cebe

Civil War at Mount Vernon

George Washington's home was a popular destination for troops from both sides during the war. Special weekend tours at this northern Virginia landmark are scheduled April-October highlighting "Mount Vernon and the Civil War." mountvernon.org/visit-his-estate/plan-your-visit/activities-tours

Tours of Franklin (TN) offered

Guided tours to at least seven critical areas of the Franklin battlefield are now available through the Battle of Franklin Trust. The 90-minute tours are \$25 per person. To set one up, call Megan Smith, 615-794-0903.

Balls Bluff tours begin

Weekend guided tours of the 1861 Ball's Bluff Battlefield near Leesburg (VA) begin April 6-7. The free tours continue through November. nvrpa.org/park/ball_s_bluff

Civil War tours in Washington (DC)

Follow Detective James McDevitt during a living history tour of the wartime US Capital. The two-hour tours focus on the Lincoln assassination. Details, registration: tinyurl.com/d3rw5qd

Appomattox app

Appomattox is the latest in the Civil War Trust's line of excellent smart phone apps. The apps feature maps, historian talks and other features. It's free: civilwar.org/battleapps

Play opens in Frederick (MD)

The play "Finally Heard: Feminine Heroes of an Uncivil War," opens April 4 at the Maryland Ensemble Theater in Frederick. The production follows the lives of six women during the Civil War including a slave, an immigrant and a Richmond socialite. The play continues through April 28. marylandensemble.org/finally-heard

NPS fee-free week

Entrance fees to all National Parks are waived during National Park Week, April 22-26. nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm

On the Web

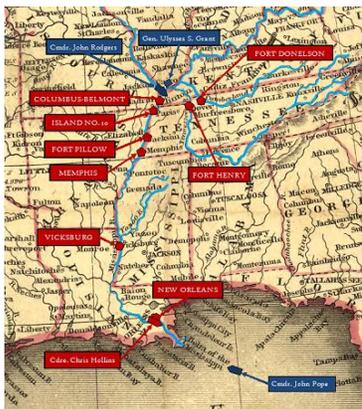
- Video: Gettysburg Cyclorama building comes down, tinyurl.com/cfratm4
- Video: "Lincoln's Forgotten Ally: Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt" (Library of Congress), tinyurl.com/c4dwuws
- Online Exhibit: "In War and Peace: The Supreme Court and the Civil War," tinyurl.com/bfyexjr

Exhibits

- "Philadelphia 1863: Turning the Tide," now open at the Heritage Center of the Union League of Philadelphia. ulheritagecenter.org

The River War = WINNING THE WEST = BY SAM SMITH

Achieved through a deadly combination of resource superiority and combined arms strategy, the Union's hard-won gains on the nation's rivers were instrumental to overall victory in the war.



The opening positions in the western river war: a small flotilla at Cairo, Illinois facing an array of Southern fortresses.

The geography faced by the western campaigners was quite different from that of their counterparts in the east. Roads were poorer, railroads were fewer, and much of the countryside

was untamed. To add to these hazards, the western theater dwarfed the east in terms of square mileage—the west comprised some 385,000 square miles of potential battleground compared to around 95,000 miles in the east.

The importance of rivers in this landscape can hardly be overstated. These swift-running highways afforded the controlling army huge strategic advantages. Soldiers could be swiftly transported to any land point that bordered a controlled waterway. Supply lines were no longer bound to the meager road network. An army that advanced overland with an enemy-controlled river on its flank was in perpetual, crippling danger of surprise attack from the rear.

The rivers were also vital arteries for the Confederate economy, although lines of trade and communication were easily severed by patrolling enemy gunboats. This issue became especially apparent as the Union navy took control of longer and longer swathes of the Mississippi River.

The Civil War began with both sides scrambling to put their navies on a war footing. Although the Federal navy outnumbered its Southern foe, neither side had enough combat-capable warships at the outset of the struggle. The key difference, as in so many other aspects of the war, was Northern development. Once in gear, Northern industry had the capacity to produce a steady flow of vessels, but the Southern shipyards were inferior and vulnerable to attack. To compensate, Confederate resource allocators focused instead on building a formidable series of fortifications along the western rivers. In the summer of 1861, Commander John Rodgers was sent west to lead the Union river flotilla, which at that point contained most of its firepower in three converted paddle-wheel steamers. While awaiting the completion of new ironclad, "City Class" gunboats, Rodgers put his lean force to work. Choosing Cairo, Illinois, at the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, as a base of operations, he launched water-borne reconnaissance missions to the north and east, following the borders of Kentucky and Missouri. According to citizen accounts, this projection of power played a substantial role in keeping the two neutral states from throwing in their lot with the Confederacy.



John Rodgers went on to serve with distinction in the east, commanding the flotilla that included the USS Monitor. (Library of Congress)

A trio of Confederate forts kept Rodgers and his “Mississippi Squadron” from pushing further south that summer—the wooden gunboats were an impressive sight but could not be expected to go toe-to-toe with Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, Fort Henry on the Tennessee, or Columbus on the Mississippi. The potential for offensive operations had to wait for the new year, when the City Classers would be ready. In the meantime, the Confederates continued to entrench and reinforce. At the end of August, Rodgers was redeployed to the east in favor of Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote, a stern old salt under instructions to bring coax obstinate infantry commander John Fremont into forward movement.

While liaising with the infantry, Foote formed a relationship with one of Fremont’s subordinates: General Ulysses S. Grant. On November 6, 1861, Foote committed several of his transport ferries as well as two of his three gunboats to supporting Grant’s 3,000-man attack on Belmont, Missouri, just across the river from the fortress at Columbus. Grant won acclaim from the press for the ensuing battle, though he was driven back by Confederate reinforcements, and the Mississippi Squadron won respect from Grant, who escaped capture or death when the transport *Belle Memphis* turned back and ran out a plank to evacuate him under fire. This experience was surely a visceral demonstration of the capabilities of combined arms tactics—the military concept of harmonizing disparate weapons and equipment to multiply their effect on the battlefield. At the Battle of Belmont, the movement ability and heavy firepower of the riverboats was used to multiply the ground-taking capability of the infantry. In February of 1862, the Mississippi Squadron now reinforced by the completed City Classers, Foote and Grant were moved to attempt their previous operation on a larger scale.

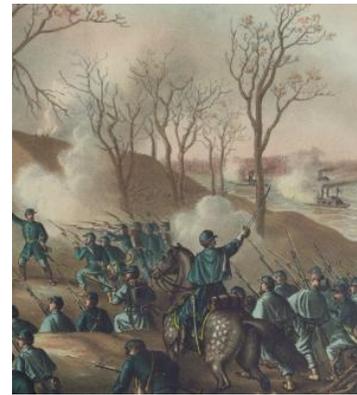
The target they chose was Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. On February 6, Foote’s transports disembarked Grant and his 15,000 infantrymen five miles away from the fort. They set out overland while Foote’s gunboats—seven in all, four ironclads and the original three timberclads—set out towards the Confederate stronghold.

This time, combined operations broke down. Grant’s men foundered in deep mud and Foote was forced to attack alone. His seven ships moved down the river in two lines, exchanging a severe fire with the fort’s batteries. One ironclad, the USS *Essex*, took a shell to her boiler and was engulfed in scalding steam—32 were killed or wounded. Nevertheless, Foote pressed his attack home and, after seventy-five minutes of combat, secured the fort’s surrender.

The fall of Fort Henry opened up almost the whole of the Tennessee River to the Mississippi Squadron. Foote immediately sent his timberclads on a raid as far as Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where the shallows prevented further progress. In four days the timberclads captured three warships, seized tons of war material, and forced the destruction of six transport vessels. This sort of action clearly demonstrates the pattern of river warfare—when a bottleneck fort falls, there is little that can be done to protect the rest of the bottle. Meanwhile, Foote devoted his energy to repairing his ironclads, all in various stages of disrepair following the bruising battle on the Tennessee River. The *Essex* would be out of action until the summer. Nevertheless, on February 11, only five days after the

battle, Grant and Foote pivoted to attack Fort Donelson on the Cumberland.

Marching from Fort Henry, Grant’s infantry had surrounded Fort Donelson by February 14, but several small-scale attacks resulted in nothing but loss for the freezing Union soldiers. On the afternoon of the 14th, Foote moved downriver with seven gunboats, repeating the charging double-line tactic that had subdued Fort Henry. But Fort Donelson was a much stronger position, with its batteries on much higher ground. When the Union vessels closed to within four hundred yards the Confederates let loose, their shot ripping through the weak top armor of the ironclad front line. Each ironclad was hit at least twenty times and Foote himself was wounded, his flagship *St. Louis* having been holed almost sixty times. By the evening, three of the four ironclads were out of action and Foote ordered a withdrawal.



Combined arms tactics at work at Fort Donelson. (Library of Congress)

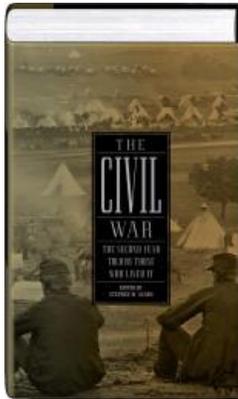
It was the infantry’s turn to come to the navy’s rescue. In hard fighting on February 15, Grant’s men repulsed a breakout attempt and counterattacked to seize a foothold in the earthworks surrounding the fort. Grant earned the nickname “Unconditional Surrender” the next morning. With the Cumberland open, Nashville, a critical manufacturing and supply hub, fell by the end of February. The outflanked garrison at Columbus quickly withdrew, removing the first obstacle to retaking the Mississippi River.

This opening campaign illustrates the factors through which Union forces eventually achieved dominance of the western rivers. Northern ship production far outstripped the South, a problem exacerbated by David G. Farragut’s capture of New Orleans in April of 1862. This forced the Confederates to rely too heavily on their chain of fortifications. However, the Union’s naval strategy for taking a fort was virtually unstoppable: find the best position for each ship to dish out and receive fire, then pound away until the defending garrison reached the limits of its endurance. If the fort was too tough or the ships were too weak, simply wait until stronger guns and thicker armor was provided. Made possible by the fact that ships could move and fortresses could not, this strategy produced inevitable success.

One by one, each fortress-cork was popped by the pressure of combined land and riverine assault. The South’s lack of waterborne firepower precluded effective counterattacks.

Once taken, there was no swath of any western river that the South managed to regain.

The fall of Vicksburg in the summer of 1863 brought the Mississippi entirely under Union control and split the Confederacy in half. Union forces used their increasing control of the waterways to concentrate more and more strength at decisive points while Southern armies could barely risk an advance with exposed waterways in their rear. Ultimately, the South's static defense on the rivers could not contend with the irresistible mobile offense executed with such skill by officers such as Foote, Grant, and Farragut. In a military and economic sense, the loss of the inland arteries all but dismembered the Confederacy.



Capt May County Civil War Round Table
c/o

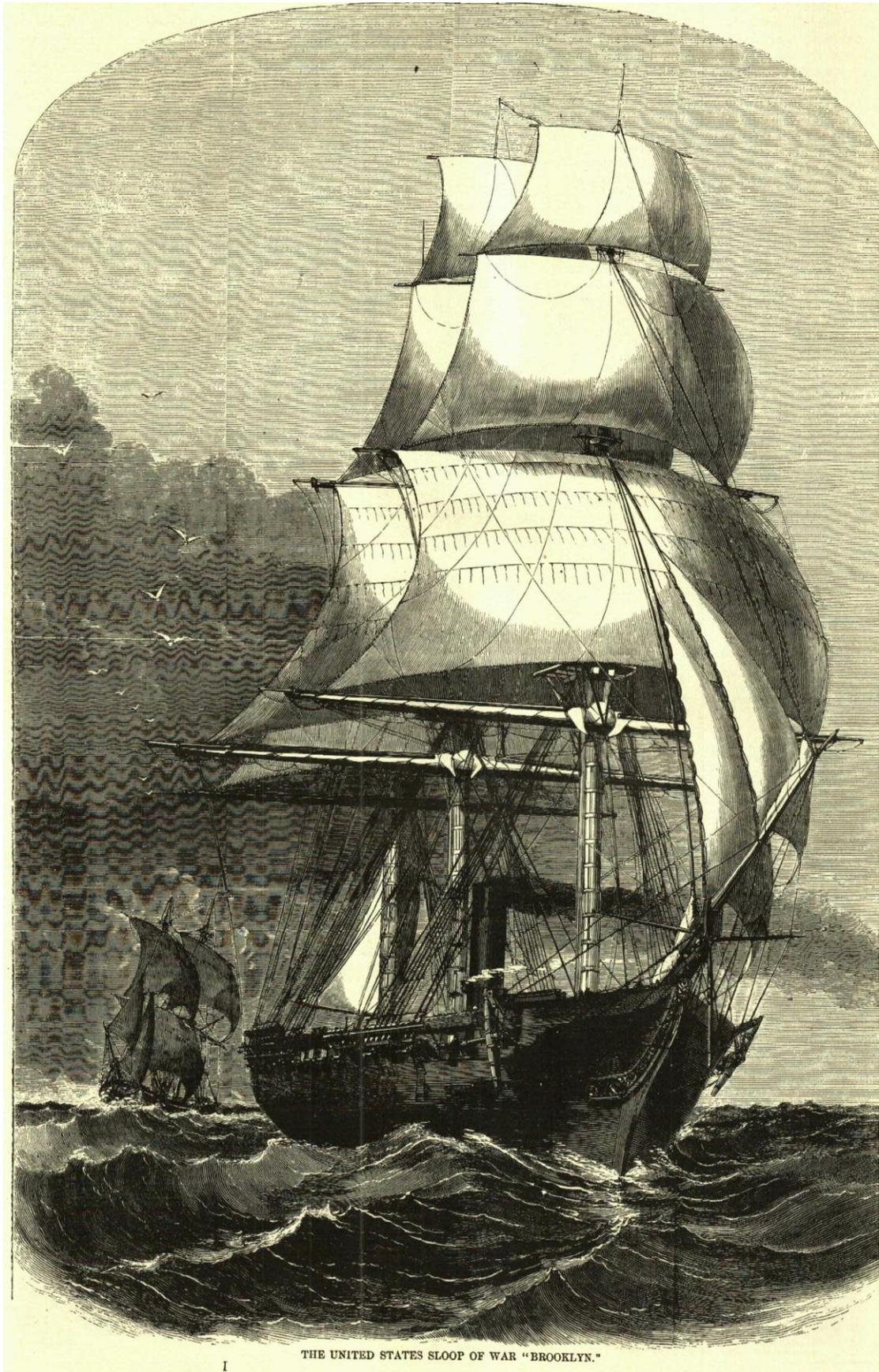
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Here is a unique and indelible evocation of a watershed year.





THE UNITED STATES SLOOP OF WAR "BROOKLYN."

I

