



Cape May County Civil War Round Table
Newsletter = December 2016

Meeting Dates for 2017

- 16 March
- 20 April
- 18 May
- 15 June
- 20 July
- 17 August
- 21 September
- 19 October
- 16 November
- ?? December

LIST OF LOCAL EVENTS!!!

If anyone knows of local Civil War related events for 2017, please contact the Secretary so the information can be added to future issues of the newsletter.

Cape May County Historical Society & Museum

The County Historical Society and Museum would like us to add that they are looking for volunteers to help with many aspects of their work – from helping in the library, working in the gardens, to acting as tour

guides/docents in the museum. They also have lost a huge amount of funding from the county; please support their fund raising efforts!! They are also always ready to welcome new members as well.

Round Table Officers

President Pro Tem: Andy Lolli

Vice President: Lou Bishop Jr.

21 Schoolhouse Ln, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
609-463-9277 or 741-5438
southwilriseagain@aol.com

Secretary: Pat Munson-Siter

42 Franklin Ave., Villas, NJ 08251-2407
609-287-5097
patms1766@outlook.com

Treasurer: Jim Marshall

202 Bartram Ln., Ocean City, NJ 08226
609-602-3243
jim@jimocnj.com

PLEASE NOTE: DUES ARE DUE!

Please mail your dues to our Treasurer, Jim Marshall. His address is above. Dues help pay for speakers for the group. Those who want hard copies of the newsletter pay more to help defray copy and postage costs. Dues are: \$30 for electronic newsletter and \$35 for snail mailed hard copy

NOTE: sorry, I know this newsletter is a bit late. My husband passed away 20 November and his funeral was 5 December. I have been very busy taking care of all the paperwork and red tape. I am now at the point where I've done what I can do, until the wheels of the bureaucracy start grinding out more paperwork for me to fill in and send back...
Pat M-S

**Minutes of the Business Meeting
17 November 2016**

Vice President Lou Bishop conducted our opening ceremonies as acting President Lolli had not yet arrived. Our scheduled speaker cancelled.

First order of business was the election of officers for 2017. Nominations were: Andy Lolli for

President, Lou Bishop for Vice President, John Herr for Treasurer, and Pat Munson-Siter for secretary. Lou opened the floor for other nominations, but there were none. Motion made and passed unanimously to accept the nominations.

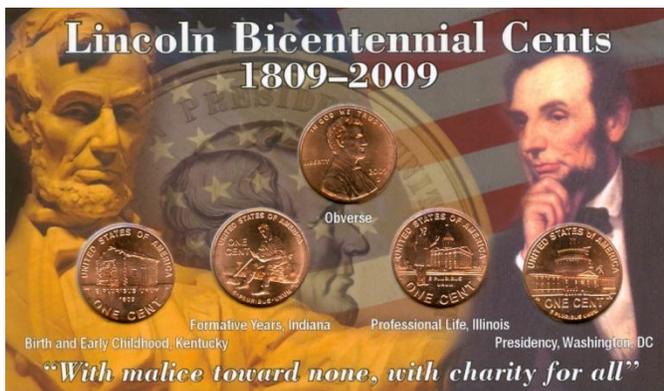
Lou read the Treasurer's report, motion made to accept it and file for audit, passed. Motion also made to keep the dues for 2017 the same as they were in 2016. Send your 2017 dues to Jim Marshall as John Herr will be out of the area until April 2017.

Discussion as to if we wanted to send any more money to preservation funds, including the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield group, but the decision was made to allow the preservation fund build up for a few months before we make any more donations.

Remembrance Day was 19 November. Many of our members going to Gettysburg for the celebration of the day there. The Round Table did donate candles for/in Marty Runner's memory during the event.

Donna Matalucci announced the Historical Society was organizing a trip via bus to Winterthur for their Christmas showing. They will also be putting together an exhibit focusing on World War I for the spring; if anyone has items related to WWI (either military or civilian) please consider loaning them to the Society for the exhibit. She also said there had been enough \$\$ donated in Marty Runner's name for the military room for them to make some needed additions to the exhibit space. The Society's appeal of the state refusing to give them any grant money failed, they are now looking into if they have any legal recourse. Their annual dinner was on 1 Dec at the Tuckahoe Inn. They are always in need of volunteers, even if you can only come in an hour or two a month, they can use your help!

There being no further business, the business meeting was ended. Rich from the Old Baldy Round Table talked for a little while about their planned lectures and other events. Check out their website for more information.



Civil War Timeline for January

1861

- 9 USS Star of the West fired on in Charleston Harbor
- 9 Mississippi secedes
- 10 Florida secedes
- 11 Alabama secedes
- 19 Georgia secedes
- 29 Kansas admitted as 34th state

1862

- 19 Battle of Mill Springs (KY)

1863

- 1 Emancipation Proclamation takes effect

1865

- 15 Fort Fisher falls to Union forces



This stamp honoring the Grand Army of the Republic was issued August 29, 1949 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Civil War Related Events for January 2017

- 7 PA Lecture, "Longstreet's Counter-march," at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free. nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm
- 8 PA Lecture, "A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation," at the

Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free.
nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm

12 DC Book talk and signing, *City of Sedition: The History of New York City During the Civil War*, at the Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington. A Smithsonian event. 6:45 pm. \$30.
smithsonianassociates.org (Click Civil War). [Buy book]

14 PA Lecture, “Is Gettysburg American’s Epic Tale Central to Our National Identity?” at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free.
nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm

15 PA Lecture, “Mary Surratt: Guilty or Not Guilty,” at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free.
nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm

21 PA “If These Things Could Talk: New Acquisitions,” at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free. nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm

21 VA Book talk, *Stonewall Jackson’s Little Sorrel*, at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. 1 pm. Free with museum admission. www.acwm.org [Buy book]

21 VA Civil War Ball, with dancing and music at Trinity Episcopal Church in Staunton. Proceeds benefit the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. 6-10 pm. \$35. svbf.org

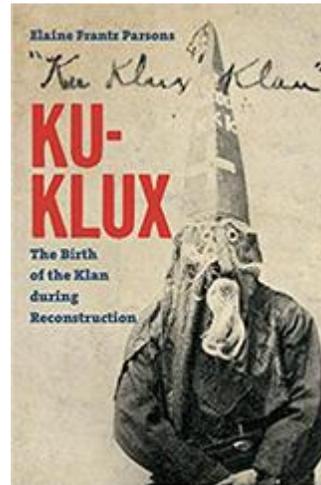
22 PA Lecture, “The Battle of Monocacy: The Fight that Saved Washington D.C.,” at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free.
nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm

26 VA Lecture, “My Dancing Days Are Over:’ The Story of Dorsey Pender,” at the Museum of the Confederacy in Appomattox. 6:30 pm reception, 7 pm lecture. \$10. www.acwm.org

28 PA Civil War Ball, winter event sponsored by the Civilians of Gettysburg at the Gettysburg Hotel, 1 Lincoln Square. Practice 10 am-noon, reception 5-6 pm, dinner/dancing 6-11 pm. \$75 for all. Details, sign up: civiliansofgettysburg.com

28 PA Lecture, “Debacle at Balls Bluff: The Battle that Changed the War,” at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free.
nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm

29 PA Lecture, “‘Vincit Qui Patitur’: The Life of an American Armsmaker –Colonel Samuel Colt,” at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 1 pm. Free.
nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm



Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction

by Parsons, Elaine Frantz
Publisher: University of North Carolina Press
Retail Price: \$34. 95
Issue: Fall 2016
ISBN: 9781469625423

Born in Violence, Remade in Terror: The KKK and the National Imagination

With *Ku-Klux*, Elaine Frantz Parsons has made a substantial contribution not only to our understanding of the Klan’s origins, but to the deeper meanings behind the national perceptions of this secret, terrorist organization as it circulated in the pages of northern newspapers during the era of Reconstruction. Though the author accepts the general chronology of the original Klan, established by Allen Trelease in *White Terror*, Parsons focuses on the discourse surrounding Klan violence rather than the group’s organizational features. She demonstrates that Ku-Klux violence was “embedded in a broader national culture,” rather than an organic creation born solely of the American South (20). At its core, this book is a product of the cultural turn and it uncovers the cultural ramifications of postwar white fury and how it manifested itself in, and was explained by, northern and southern newspapers.

The book is arranged in seven chapters with an introduction and conclusion. Parsons focuses on four major northern newspapers in this study: the *Chicago Times* (Democratic), the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, the *New York Times*, and the *New York*

Tribune (all Republican, though with different degrees of support for the party's "radical" arm). To prove the interest of the northern press in the Ku-Klux Klan, Parsons identifies more than three thousand articles published in these northern papers before 1873. In addition to newspaper analysis, Parsons also presents the findings of federal investigations and the testimonies taken from the African American victims of Ku-Klux violence and their white allies. Beyond more traditional data such as this, Parsons employs multiple "visualization[s] of the connections" between criminals in Union, South Carolina (the location of study in the last two chapters) and men of property in order to demonstrate cross-class interests within the local white community. Each visualization utilizes network metrics via Gephi – a digital analysis tool which allows users to input data and arrange it into visualizations in order to reconstruct and clarify the configuration of a particular social group. Through this type of analysis Parsons shows just how connected white outlaws and elites could have been, and often times were, by locating prominent members of a subculture of violent criminals – whose names appeared most frequently in the Union County courthouse records – with men of higher social standing, such as a local hotel proprietor, for example. This book, then, represents a welcome way to combine multiple historical methods into a cogent narrative.

In the first chapter, Parsons revisits and challenges the truths historians have generally accepted regarding the origins of the first Ku-Klux, however indistinct, which was formed in Pulaski, Tennessee. Rather than formed by a group of ruffians, Parsons argues that men such as Frank McCord – local publisher of the *Pulaski Citizen* – were elite members of the community. Rather than well-organized and politically oriented, as historians have previously agreed, the Pulaski Klan was not only ineffective and mostly performative, but the progenitor's efforts at self-publicity failed to reach a larger audience. Only once rumblings of the Ku-Klux entered the national press did the organization gain general attention and thus a reputation for organization and violence.

In the second and third chapters, Parsons describes the concerted violence perpetrated by the Ku-Klux from 1868 to 1871, and how it attempted to redefine white and black manhood in the South as well as the nation at large. Of utmost importance, the author details how these men used "physical force to break down specific bodies that housed memories, sensations, words, and wills and that enabled them to feed and house themselves and their dependents" (72). The very mystery that the Ku-Klux evoked with masks and bizarre costumes – sometimes men even donned women's clothes – was meant not only to intimidate their victims, but also as a way to define themselves and to project that identity into the national imagination. When federal investigators ventured to southern towns to collect victim testimony of Ku-Klux violence, the depositions often reinforced the idea of racial inferiority as those testifying curtailed their words as a means to remain safe in the communities where they continued to live after investigators departed. Ku-Kluxism exhibited multiple cultural meanings, Parsons argues, including the broader message of recalcitrance and obstructionism for radical Republicans in Washington.

In the fourth and fifth chapters Parsons fleshes out the motivations and interpretations of printing Ku-Klux stories in northern newspapers, as well as how the idea of the Klan evolved over time. Democrats and Republicans interpreted instances of Ku-Klux violence in accordance with their own political goals. As Parsons writes, Democrats favored "an organization less robust and political and Republicans...one more robust and political" (153). Of utmost interest, Ku-Klux discourse became a lens through which to view – and criticize – the expanding nation-state. Federal investigations of Ku-Klux violence in the South only bolstered burgeoning ideas of the government's growth as well as its supposed overreach with the Enforcement Acts, for example. Parsons also powerfully asserts that skepticism and outright denial of the Klan "became a way for Americans to critique governmental information-gathering mechanisms and the postwar press as unreliable" (182). That national presses battled over the actions and messages of the Klan suggests that the organization had a national presence well

before the Second Klan of the 1920s, if only temporarily.

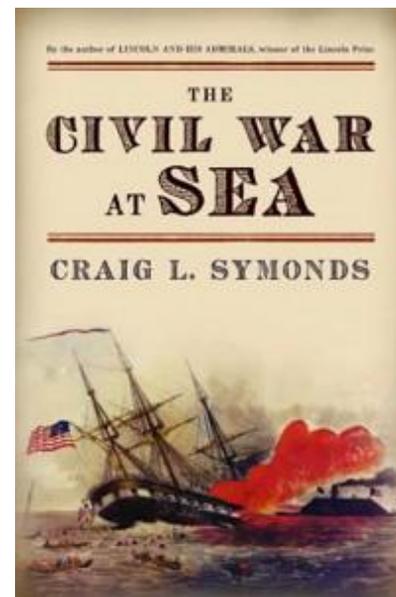
The final two chapters return from the arena of publicly constructed identity to the actuality of Ku-Klux violence in Union County, South Carolina. Parsons describes how the advent of able African American leadership challenged the power of whites within the South Carolina Upcountry. It was in response to this perceived threat to white authority that, Parsons argues, forced Union County elites to acquiesce to the interests of the white criminal underclass. Through African American participation in the Republican Party, including Union Leagues and black militias, whites became fearful of black-on-white violence and took forceful measures to disperse black organization in general. Prominent African American Republicans served as state representatives and local judges, and informal associations of African American men who provided protection for their leaders displayed the power of effective black associations. Replete with picnic raids, jail raids, and alleged ambushes, the violent clashes in Union County's history serve as an appropriate laboratory within which to test how national discourse affected local circumstance. Ku-Klux response to the actions of African Americans and the portrayal of this violence in the press attracted federal attention. State officials and federal authorities imprisoned a healthy number of Ku-Klux culprits under the Enforcement Acts, yet white Democrats ultimately attained their goal of removing African Americans from power.

This unfortunate paradox captures what is at the center of *Ku-Klux*: the emergence of the Klan and its portrayal in the national press “marked the inevitability of white dominance and the tragicomic nature of black aspiration” (304). Though common violence would remain, the Klan reached its peak and receded in the early 1870s, and white Americans who thought themselves the proper inheritors of power returned to fight over the spoils of supremacy as the pillars of Reconstruction crumbled.

Ku-Klux grapples with complex webs of identity produced on multiple levels, both local and

national. For this reason, this book would be a welcome addition to any reading list for a graduate seminar, especially one focusing on cultural history. Also, any scholars interested in the relationship between the nineteenth century press and the public sphere may find this book indispensable. Readers today may relate this episode in Reconstruction with modern culture wars, as Americans continue to debate the origins, meanings, and consequences of violent reactions to racial friction in the United States.

Joshua S. Hodge is a PhD candidate at the University of Tennessee and is writing a dissertation on public lands, homesteaders, and lumber companies in post-Civil War Alabama. He can be reached by email (jhodge24@vols.utk.edu).



BOOK REVIEW – *The Civil War at Sea*

By Craig L. Symonds. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. (2012) Reviewed by William Whyte

Renowned historian Craig Symonds, Professor of History Emeritus at the U.S. Naval Academy, has penned a compact, topical overview of the naval effects on the U.S. Civil War. Symonds has written a number of works on the Civil War, most notably *Lincoln and His Admirals* and a biography of Confederate Admiral Franklin Buchanan. This publication is in essence six stand-alone essays that serve to synthesize the many facets of naval operations during the conflict. The introductory chapter offers an overview of the resources

for each side, combined with the state of naval technology during this transformative era.

Symonds not only emphasizes technological innovations during the war but prior to it as well. He purports that "...the U.S. Navy was far better prepared for war in 1861 than it had been for any previous American war (8)," thanks, in part, to a naval modernization effort began five years earlier. Another aspect of this technological transformation was the Union monitor program, which marked a conspicuous moment towards a modern industrial system. It was a novel procedure at the time to have parts manufactured in different locations and then assembled at various shipyards. Here the author draws upon Kurt Hackemer's *The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military Industrial Complex*, as well as, William H. Roberts' *Civil War Ironclads*. Perhaps the most insightful section covers the U.S. Navy's largest contribution to the war effort: the coastal blockade.

The blockade of the Southern coast was something unique to the annals of naval warfare. This was an economic blockade, meant to stop commerce from entering or leaving the Confederacy. Traditional blockades were economic as well, but executed in a way to keep an enemy's navy confined to its homeports, requiring much less resources. Symonds addresses the long standing debate as to whether the blockade was effective or not; he cautions against drawing on pure statistics. This approach reveals that a comparative amount of ships both successfully ran the blockade as got captured. Other factors must be taken into consideration, such as the disruption of Southern inter-coastal trade, which forced the Confederacy to rely on a weak railroad infrastructure. Lucrative profits earned from blockade running is another perspective not to be overlooked. This had the dual consequences of discouraging a privateer fleet and promoting an illicit trade of luxury items rather than much needed war supplies. In summation, Symonds concludes that the blockade was well worth the navy's efforts, but what about the brown water navy? Here, he shares the views of many contemporary historians that the Union enjoyed its most success while completing Scott's anaconda along the Mississippi River.

Speed and inter-service cooperation between the U.S. Army and Navy spelled doom for the Confederacy along the western rivers. The quick formation of an ironclad river fleet thwarted the South's attempts to create a flotilla of their own. The early Union offensive compelled the Confederacy to destroy three out of four

early ironclad projects, and forced them into defensive positions along the rivers. These redoubts would have been sufficient against the river flotilla alone, but once combined with formidable land forces there was little the defenders could do. Case in point was the campaign for Island No. 10. U.S. land and naval forces outnumbered the small Confederate garrison by four to one. Yet, either acting alone could not take it. The island fell swiftly once a river passage was secured for the troops. While cooperation characterized the river war, the opposite was true for numerous coastal operations, especially in the long venture to take Charleston.

Inter-service rivalry exasperated by both Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles and his assistant Gustavus Fox undermined the many attempts to capture the cradle of secession. Symonds dedicates an entire chapter to the siege, and takes the reader through a few intriguing sidebars detailing the fate of the CSS Hunley, along with other impressive Confederate endeavors to break the blockade. Ultimately, it was the insistence of Welles and Fox for an all-navy conquest, and their stubborn faith that monitors alone could breach the harbor which led to the many Union disappointments.

Craig Symonds concludes that the Union would still have won the war without naval superiority, but naval forces affected its "trajectory" and hastened its end. He employs a nice balance of primary and secondary sources, and while there are no groundbreaking arguments presented, his insight enhances and synthesizes the naval efforts on both sides. Civil War naval aficionados need look no further than the bibliographic essay for a complete overview of the historiography of the genre. Instructors may want to consider this work as a supplement to their course curricula; little is excluded from this general history.

William Whyte is a graduate student at Lehigh University and was Assistant Editor of The Civil War Naval Encyclopedia.

Author braids together three major themes

Now for the Contest, by William Roberts, is the story of the naval war at sea during the Civil War. Roberts's narrative, however, does not take the usual shot and shell or great leaders approach to the naval war. Instead, he scrutinizes the conflict by identifying and examining three major aspects of

the conflict. These campaigns, as he establishes them, are the blockade of the Southern coast, commerce raiding, and the projection of power ashore. With this orientation, his work is therefore, a book more about the Union navy rather than the Confederate navy. The author discusses these campaigns by taking an overall chronological approach, which allows him to view the three campaigns from the perspective of other events, battles and challenges faced by both navies. Throughout the book, Roberts discusses strategy, logistics, technology, personalities, and politics to embellish the narrative and to place the war in a perspective that is both clear and insightful.

A former Navy commander, Roberts weaves economic and technological threads into his account of the naval war. Picking up from his two previous books on ironclads, the author maintains that the war efforts of both the North and the South focused on technology as the means to an end for each to fight their adversary. Of course, economics greatly influenced the technological aspects of the war. Roberts relates how the economic and the industrial resources of both regions shaped the conflict as much as did strategy and politics. The North with its superior industry and technology eventually was able to defeat the industrially poor South. Simply, the South was too handicapped to implement many of the far-reaching and ambitious programs to build and acquire a navy. In addition, the Union leadership made specific and focused efforts to stop specific activities such as overseas acquisitions. The South attempted to use innovative technology such as ironclads, torpedoes, and submarines to overcome the industrial disparity it faced. The use of innovative technology, however, failed to change the war's direction for the Confederacy because it was never able to surmount the overwhelming superior strength and capacity of Northern industry. The Confederates, however, did realize some successes with submarines and mines.

One of the author's reoccurring themes is ironclads. Both navies utilized much of their efforts and budgets building and deploying these warships. This, of course, influenced the strategy on either side. Roberts appraises the rapid technological changes in steam power, ordnance, and armor. The

contrast between the highly technical Union monitors compared with the less technical and singular designed Confederate ironclads required different deployment strategies and tactical considerations. Fully discussed within the text is the ability of the Union and Confederate navies to utilize their specifically designed ironclads. Also throughout the narrative, the author compares both Union and Confederate strengths and weaknesses. He looks at their respective leadership, the bureaus and organizations, their conduct of the war, their political organization, and the success of their mobilization efforts. Overall, Roberts gives the Union leadership higher marks in their efforts to defeat the Confederacy.

Roberts maintains that the three major coastal and oceanic campaigns of the American Civil War were operationally much like the American Revolution and the War of 1812. He claims that like these previous wars, the dominant naval power was largely unhampered by the other and enjoyed relative freedom of operations, and he also concludes that the blockade stood out as the major effort that characterized the naval war. The blockade succeeded in destroying the economy of the South and this had a wide impact on the war effort. Roberts judges that Confederate commerce raiding, aimed to disrupt the Union blockade, was not relatively successful. He argues that while this effort diverted ships from the blockade as well as other military actions and combined operations, it never diverted enough ships to alter the Union Navy Department's strategy. Nor did commerce raiding keep merchant ships from reaching American ports in large enough numbers to harm the war effort. Roberts though, contends that the Union navy's efforts of projecting power ashore succeeded. The amphibious landings and combined operations served to keep the Confederate military leaders off balance. While Robert E. Lee's defense in depth slowed the Union's advance into the interior, the Confederate field commanders still had to keep troops nearby to negate the advantages of mobility and fire support that the Union navy provided. The defense in depth also tempered Confederate strategy by forcing the Confederate Secretary of the Navy Mallory to utilize his naval force differently. Roberts determines that the use of

ironclads by the Confederates had mixed results. He contends that they never successfully challenged the Union navy's aims to project power ashore nor did they succeed in contesting the Union navy's control of the coast.

Had Roberts included riverine operations, **Now for the Contest** would have been an important one-volume history of the naval war. This topic might have sufficed as the author's fourth general campaign. Roberts though, specifically elected to focus his study on oceanic operations. While brown water operations were outside the scope of the book, they consumed much of the budgets, resources and manpower of both navies, and significantly altered and affected the overall naval war depicted in the narrative. Operations on the Western rivers had a huge impact on strategic considerations and greatly altered the conduct of the war. This aside, Roberts has provided his readers with a thought-provoking and even-handed overview of the coastal and oceanic operations of the American Civil War. **Now for the Contest** is highly recommended for those looking for a book that is much more than a commonplace survey of naval operations during the Civil War.

Cape May County Civil War Round Table
www.cmccwrt.com



Robert M. Browning Jr. is the Chief Historian of the U.S. Coast Guard. He is the author of three books on the Civil War including: From Cape Charles to Cape Fear: The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War and Success is All that Was Expected: The South Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War. He is currently working on a book on the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

