



Cape May County Civil War Round Table Newsletter November 2015

19 November: George Franks will be presenting a lecture on *The Battle of Foaling Waters*. **Refreshments:**
?? December (date for Christmas dinner meeting to be determined)

LIST OF LOCAL EVENTS!!!

Members are encouraged to participate; if you have Civil War garb / uniforms, please feel free to wear it! We would also appreciate members attending helping by handing out flyers as well as telling folks about our group. MAC says we can have people at non-Civil War oriented events too, and some of them are listed herein.

12 & 19 Dec: Christmas Open House at the Cape May 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.

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Minutes of the Business Meeting 15 October 2015

President Runner brought the meeting to order. We saluted the flag and held a moment of silence for all those standing in harm's way to protect the rest of us.

He then informed us that John Burke, former President of this Round Table, was currently in the hospital and was in a bad way. He is currently in the Critical Care Unit at ADA Anderson at Cooper. He was supposed to be going in for chemo for lymphoma, but is now on dialysis and O2 for other medical problems and is considered too weak for the chemo he was supposed to be getting. Tim Keely will be going up to try and see him this coming week, and will try to get an address that the secretary can send a get well / we're thinking of you card to. Prayers and good thoughts for his recovery would be welcome.

There being no old business to discuss, new business was opened.

Donna, director of the museum, announced that there would be an open house on Friday 30 October, which will be a fund raiser for the museum. She needs volunteers to act as zombies, ghosts, etc and asked any members who were interested to support this effort. She also thanked the Round Table for the donation we gave to them, as their funding has been seriously cut by the county.

This weekend is Victorian Weekend in Cape May. Reminder that a copy of both past and present newsletters is available through the website.

George Franks will be making a presentation at the November meeting.

We need to start planning for the Christmas party. We went to the Joy Buffet last year, and most seemed to enjoy it. Do we want to go back there, or try another restaurant? Many are already booked up for end of the year parties by this point. Please contact Marty with suggestions and comments.

Jim Marshall gave the Treasurer's Report. Motion made to accept it and file for audit; seconded and approved.

Marty announced that we are considering ordering t-shirts with our logo or some other Civil War oriented artwork as a fund raiser. Marty will investigate pricing from various vendors. If you know of a business that produces such products, please contact Marty.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Munson-Siter

Secretary

Civil War Calendar for December

		1860
December	20	South Carolina secedes
		1861
No major events		
		1862
December	11	Union army crosses Rappahannock River into Fredericksburg
	13	Battle of Fredericksburg
	31-Jan 2	Battle of Stone's River (Murfreesboro) (TN)
		1863
No major events		
		1864
December	15-16	Battle of Nashville
	21	Savannah occupied by Union troops

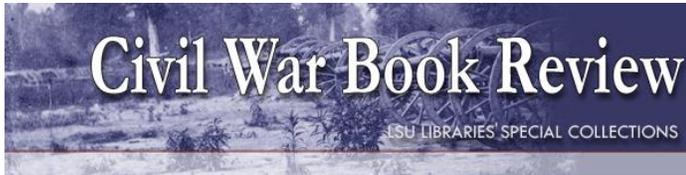


Civil War Related Events for December 2015

- 5 **MD** Talk, "General Jubal Anderson Early: Lee's Bad Old Man," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick. 2:30 pm. Free with admission. civilwarmed.org
- 5 **MD** Annual illumination at the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg. 23,000 luminaries represent casualties of the battle. Gates open 6 pm. Watch for early park road closings. Rain date Dec. 12. nps.gov/anti
- 5 **VA** Lecture, "History in Your Hands," hands-on examination of artifacts from the wreck of the USS *Monitor*, at the Mariners's Museum in Newport News. 2:30 pm. Free with admission. marinersmuseum.org
- 5 **VA** "Tea and Tidings," a Civil War Christmas with living history, 19th-century manners, music and more at Pamplin Historical Park, south of Petersburg. 10 am and 2 pm. Reservations required: pamplinpark.org
- 5 **VA** Lecture, "Union Aid Organizations during the Petersburg Campaign," at Grant's HQ at City Point, part of the Petersburg National Battlefield in Hopewell. 1 pm. Free. nps.gov/pete
- 5 **VA** "Holidays at Liberia," see the Manassas Civil War headquarters mansion dressed for the holidays. Tours 4-7 pm. \$15. manassasmuseum.org
- 6 **VA** Living history, "Christmas in Camp," camp and demonstrations at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Noon-4 pm. Free. 703-591-0560.
- 6 **VA** Civil War Christmas at Mt. Zion Historic Park, 40309 John Mosby Highway, Aldie. 4-6 pm. Free. 703-327-9777.
- 12 **MD** "Museums by Candlelight" in Frederick. Includes the National Museum of Civil War Medicine and other Civil War-related sites. Living history, free admission, more.
- 12 **NC** Living history, "Christmas in the Carolinas," at Bennett Place State Historic Site in Durham. 10 am-4 pm. Free. ncdcr.gov/events
- 12 **PA** "An Evening with the Painting," an "after-hours" experience with the Gettysburg Cyclorama at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 5 pm. \$20/adult. gettysburgfoundation.org/18
- 12-13 **VA** Living history, "Civil War St. Nicholas," at the Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park near Rice. Noon-4 pm Saturday, 2-4 pm Sunday. Free. dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/park-event-info.shtml?id=SC150022-00

15 **VA** “Handling History,” special opportunity to “touch” artifacts from the USS *Monitor*, undergoing conservation at the Mariners’ Museum in Newport News. 2 pm. marinersmuseum.org

31 **PA** “General Meade Birthday Celebration,” living history and memorial at his grave in Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Ave., in Philadelphia. Noon. thelaurelhillcemetery.org



Confederate Saboteurs: Building the Hunley and Other Secret Weapons of the Civil War. By Mark K. Ragan. Illustrated, photos, maps, notes, bibliography, index, 260 pp., 2015, Texas A&M, www.tamupress.com, \$35.

In July 1916 Americans had become increasingly concerned with German U-boat activity. As related in Mark Ragan’s outstanding new book, a newspaper reporter interviewed 91-year-old Edgar C. Singer, a veteran who had been involved with the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley.

Singer’s account of his group’s activities revealed a remarkable story that seems bizarre in today’s inflexible government, military and business organizations.

Singer and fellow members of a Masonic lodge in Port Lavaca, Texas, enlisted in a company of Texas light artillery early in 1861. The small town was shelled by Union vessels late in 1862, causing Singer to develop a highly successful underwater mine (then called torpedo) which became the Confederate authorities’ preferred mine.

The group within the artillery unit formed “E.C. Singer and Company” to build and sell mines; it was also known as “Singer’s Secret Service Corps” and “Singer’s Submarine Corps.” The members would disperse widely to undertake all manner of sabotage against the North.

The most noted project was the 40-foot submarine H.L. Hunley at Charleston, S.C. After two accidental sinkings — which claimed 13 lives, including that of Horace Hunley, a part owner — a replacement crew was somehow recruited. On the night of Feb. 17, 1864, the Hunley sank the Union sloop Housatonic.

A blue signal light was shown and a bonfire was lit to guide the Hunley back to shore, but nothing further was heard from the crew. The submarine was located in 1995 and raised in 2000.

During the course of the war, 39 Union vessels were sunk or damaged by mines; nine were sunk by the Singer group. Trains were blown up, steamboats were burned. Thousands of Northern personnel had to be deployed to guard rail lines, steamboat landings and other facilities.

Obviously secrecy was a prime concern in all of these operations and written communications were kept to a minimum. Secretary of State Judah Benjamin ordered all documents related to secret activities destroyed when Richmond was evacuated in April 1865.

Therefore, it is remarkable that Mark Ragan has been able to uncover so much information on the Confederate operations. Using orders for transportation and routine notices of individuals away from their parent units, he has been able to pinpoint various team members’ movements and locations.

This is truly a ground-breaking publication. It is well illustrated with photos of locations, individuals and vessels, as well as drawings of mines and the Hunley.

The text provides a great deal of little-known information about those times. It is definitely a must-buy book.

Patrick E. Purcell, a graduate of Northeastern University, is a retired railroad manager. He is a former president of the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table in Philadelphia and was on the Board of Governors of the Civil War Library and Museum in Philadelphia.

Hallowed Ground: A Walk at Gettysburg: The Illustrated Edition. By James M. McPherson. Illustrated, photos, 224 pp., 2015, Zenith, www.zenithpress.com, \$35.

In 2003 James M. McPherson published *Hallowed Ground*. Zenith Press has reissued a fully illustrated edition of that book. The new book enhances McPherson’s prose with 125 beautiful photographs. The resulting coffee-table type book is a welcome addition to the extensive literature on the battle of Gettysburg.

McPherson is one of the country’s pre-eminent Civil War historians. Indeed, his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Battle Cry of Freedom* is considered by most to be the definitive single-volume work on the American Civil War.

In *Hallowed Ground: A Walk at Gettysburg*, he takes readers on a tour of the battle of Gettysburg that is both informative and entertaining.

The book is divided into four sections. One is devoted to each of the battle’s three days. The fourth presents an overview of postbattle events, including Abraham Lincoln’s immortal Gettysburg Address.

Interspersed with McPherson’s text are postwar accounts from some of the battle’s soldiers. In particular, the book includes accounts by James Longstreet and Abner Doubleday. The author also includes several of the battle reports issued by major officers from both the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia.

McPherson has supplemented his earlier work with updated

information about the battlefield and the Gettysburg National Military Park. The copious use of outstanding photographs helps readers visualize the battlefield.

McPherson's assertion that, "The illustrations in this edition of *Hallowed Ground* will greatly enhance the reader's understanding and appreciation of the battle and its significance," is right on point. If you have any interest at all in the battle of Gettysburg, you will want to have this book.

Jay Jorgensen has written several books about Gettysburg, including Gettysburg's Bloody Wheatfield. He is a Superior Court Judge in New Jersey.

Lens of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs of the Civil War. Edited by J. Matthew Gallman and Gary W. Gallagher. Photos, notes, index, 256 pp., 2015, Georgia, www.ugapress.org, \$32.95.

There are a fairly hefty number of outstanding books on Civil War photography. They explore the techniques and subjects of wet-plate collodion photography (William Frassanito, Bob Zeller), the most outstanding members of the Civil War photographers' guild (Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, James Gibson, Timothy O'Sullivan), and even books concentrating on collecting all the known photographs of individual figures, especially Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee.

This book falls into none of those categories. It is instead a collection of 26 "iconic" Civil War-era photographs, half of them well-known Brady-Gardner images, that form the moment for each of 26 Civil War historians to offer a four- to six-page reflection on the image and their interactions with it.

And these reflections are very personal. There is little in the way of historical discovery, of the sort made famous by Frassanito.

"When I look at the studio portraits of these two men," "Nor until my senior year in college," or "I still don't know very much about those three Confederates" are fairly typical remarks. They concentrate on the personal relationship the writer has developed with the particular photograph.

These little articles are not, in other words, scholarly essays. But they do allow 26 historians who otherwise draw fairly strict lines of footnotes around their writing a chance to let down their hair and drop into the first-person-singular mode. (I should say that I have done likewise, when asked, in books or magazines featuring Lincoln photographs and it is, on the whole, a harmless indulgence.)

Lens of War, in the same spirit, is not a heavy-duty academic tome. "We hope readers will flip from picture to picture and

essay to essay as the mood strikes," write editors Matt Gallman and Gary Gallagher.

Nevertheless, all but two of the contributors *are* academics, and although the editors offer no rationale for why these particular individuals were selected, they have a fairly distinct shared profile.

Only two are what we might call "senior" scholars — Bud Robertson and Emory Thomas; most of the others earned Ph.D.s and began publishing Civil War history in a fairly narrow band between 1987 and 1997. And although Ken Burns garners only one quick reference in the entire book, it has to be wondered how much Burns's 1990 PBS series drew these historians to their subject.

The contributors also represent a major shift in the way the writing of Civil War history has changed. Only seven are straightforward military historians; almost all the rest are social historians, pursuing the trails of race, class and gender, rather than marching armies, in the Civil War era.

Curiously, none of them except the non-academic Harold Holzer has ever published anything previously on Civil War photography.

Less curiously, fully a third are present or former students and colleagues of Gary Gallagher. So we might say that *Lens of War* looks at the Civil War as much through what we might call the University of Virginia school of Civil War history as it does through a black-box camera.

The image reproductions are first-rate, and the overall layout large enough to be impressive without turning into a coffee-table book.

It is a chance to hear Civil war academicians speak, for a change, subjectively and for their readers to appreciate what a substantial impact Gary Gallagher has had on Civil War history over and above his many and profound writings.

Allen C. Guelzo is the Luce Professor of Civil War Studies at Gettysburg College and the author of the New York Times best-seller *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion*.

The Myth of the Lost Cause: Why The South Fought The Civil War and Why The North Won.

By Edward H. Bonekemper III. Notes, appendix, bibliography, index, 366 pages, 2015, Regnery History, www.regneryhistory.com, \$29.99

Love it or hate it. Agree or disagree. Nod one's head in enthusiastic agreement, or shake one's head violently from side to side. Readers of this book will likely do all of those, depending upon their emotional attachments to The South, The Confederacy and Robert E. Lee.

Writer Bonekemper has mined the works of scores of war-period and modern historians, plus primary resources, to address eight major questions in eight readable chapters.

He answers each question in detail to deconstruct what he calls “The Myth of The Lost Cause.” Of course, he is just the latest writer to tackle the subject, but his efforts backing up his assertions are compelling.

The questions are not new: Was slavery dying as an institution? Was the war over slavery? Could The South have won the war? Was Lee a great general? Did Longstreet lose Gettysburg? Was Grant a great general? Did the North win by waging total war? Bonekemper tackles each of those questions, ending each chapter with a summarizing conclusion.

I don’t know if Bonekemper breaks any new ground over similar books in answering these questions, but unless readers have read those previous efforts, his take will be new to them.

The research is impressive; 83 pages of notes and bibliography. Quotes and sources cited for those quotes come in handy when reading exactly what the men of the day said about why The South was leaving the Union, and what slaves thought about their lives.

What will make some people uncomfortable — or maybe livid — are Bankemper’s assessments of some Southern heroes. He characterizes Robert E. Lee as a general who may have lost the war due to his overaggressive nature in defending Virginia while paying scant attention to what was happening in the other 10 Confederate states.

Bonekemper chronicles what many historians have to say about the same subjects he is discussing, but he finds fault with Lee’s biographer, Douglas Southall Freeman, for being too adoring of Lee.

He also thinks Shelby Foote’s *The Civil War* was too pro-Southern. Sure to set some teeth grinding is his quoting of Alan Nolan, writer of *Lee Considered*, and Thomas Connelly, writer of *The Marble Man*, two earlier writers who had few good things to say about Lee.

This book is a keeper and a spreader, meaning readers should get it themselves, then spread the word for others to get it. Discuss it. Fight about what Bonekemper writes. Then everyone go get a beer and make up with each other.

Clint Johnson’s latest books are updates editions of *Touring The Carolinas’ Civil War Sites and Touring Virginia’s and West Virginia’s Civil War Sites*.

The Medal of Honor: A History of Service Above and Beyond. By the Editors of Boston Publishing Company. Illustrated, photos, appendix, bibliography, index, 304 pp., 2014, Zenith, www.zenithpress.com, \$40.

The Medal of Honor has enjoyed a resurgence in public interest during the past year as the U.S. Postal Service released a Medal of Honor commemorative stamp and President Barack Obama awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor to Alonzo Cushing for his heroic actions at Gettysburg.

The 1985 version of this book, *Above and Beyond*, mostly focused on the personal histories of the recipients. *The Medal of Honor* is the first book to explain the history of the Medal and synthesize that history with a chronological study of various American heroes who earned that medal.

The book is truly comprehensive as it covers American heroes from the Civil War through the modern conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. It even includes comparatively smaller military engagements such as America’s wars for expansion and the so-called Indian Wars.

The preface and introduction provide a valuable foundation. They present the authors’ intentions and the award’s history. As broad as this book is, it does not explain every single Medal of Honor recipient, rather it highlights the actions and devotion that typify award recipients.

For readers who are interested in learning more about specific recipients, it includes a register of every Medal of Honor recipient in an appendix. By using the appendix and the research information in the preface, readers can learn more about these decorated service members.

The book includes large maps that help illustrate military strategy as well as major troop movements.

Just as in the other chapters, the Civil War chapter features incredibly detailed pictures and photographs. These graphics help readers better understand the conditions the soldiers experienced.

The narrative text chronicling the Civil War is fast-paced and interspersed with direct quotations from troops of all ranks. Because this text is so engrossing, readers quickly learn the background to the war and information about specific battles.

The most interesting Civil War sections discuss specific individuals and units that were awarded the Medal of Honor. The section regarding how Dr. Mary Walker, a devoted nurse and possible spy, had her award taken away and then reinstated was particularly interesting.

The book describes and explains the nature of recipients’ actions. For example, before describing how 54th Massachusetts Sgt. William Carney fought to recover his unit’s American flag, a special section describes the importance of regimental flags to each military unit.

That explanation gives readers a far greater appreciation for Sergeant Carney and his heroic actions during the fight for Fort Wagner.

Civil War readers will be especially interested in this book since the Civil War inspired President Abraham Lincoln to create and standardize a major military decoration for uncommon valor. The book includes the Confederate equivalent of the Medal of Honor and features both naval and land military actions.

Educators will be attracted to it because the book highlights many personality traits valuable in character development programs. With potential for additional military action always on the horizon, any citizen will appreciate how this book emphasizes the qualities the military services recognize and encourage as they defend freedom and democracy.

Evan McLaughlin, valedictorian of his Muhlenberg College class, is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a social studies teacher at Mountain View Middle School in Mendham, N.J.

Alliance Forms in Support of State Park at Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain Battlefields

INITIATIVE AIMS TO CREATE A HERITAGE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION DESTINATION IN VIRGINIA'S PICTURESQUE PIEDMONT REGION



(Culpeper, Va.) – Preservation advocates and community leaders joined today to announce the creation of the Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park Alliance, a broad-based coalition of organizations in support of a state historical park in Virginia's picturesque Piedmont region. The proposed state park would transform nearly 1,200 acres of pristine battlefield land preserved by private nonprofit groups into a major heritage tourism and recreation destination, centered in Culpeper County.

“Preserving and interpreting the battlefields at Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain is essential to telling the story of the Civil War in Culpeper County,” remarked Joseph

McKinney, president of the Brandy Station Foundation, one of the founding groups of the new state park alliance. “A Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park would provide an enriching experience for Virginians and out-of-state visitors alike, honoring those who served and ensuring that the public is informed regarding the significant events that occurred here just over 150 years ago.”

Diane Logan, president of the Friends of Cedar Mountain Battlefield, another member group of the alliance, shares McKinney's enthusiasm for a cohesive state park integrating the properties preserved to date at Brandy Station and at Cedar Mountain — the latter host to the first major Civil War battle fought in Culpeper County.

“The Battle of Cedar Mountain was the bloodiest day in Culpeper's history,” said Logan. “The land here tells a powerful story, as at Brandy Station. Weaving these stories together within a unified state park would allow visitors an even better understanding of where each site fits within the larger context of the Civil War. Combined with the natural beauty and exciting recreational opportunities at these sites, both the county and downtown Culpeper would be sure to see a substantial increase in tourism as a direct result of the park's creation.”

Founding member groups of the Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park Alliance include the Brandy Station Foundation, the Civil War Trust, the Culpeper Department of Tourism, the Friends of Cedar Mountain Battlefield, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, the Piedmont Environmental Council, Preservation Virginia and the Remington Community Partnership.

Currently, the Brandy Station Foundation and the Civil War Trust — a national, nonprofit battlefield preservation organization — own 1,020 acres at Brandy Station; the Trust holds an additional 164 acres at Cedar Mountain. In addition, the two organizations, along with the Piedmont Environmental Council, have secured conservation easements on 3,638 acres, making the two battlefields among the best preserved historic sites in private hands in Virginia.

Transferring the land to the Commonwealth would create a new state park in an area of Virginia which has long pursued one. With historic sites like James Madison's Montpelier nearby, as well as other open-air attractions such as Shenandoah National Park, adding Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park to the landscape would create a tourism hub for history lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

“We’re excited by the positive growth that this project promises to bring to Culpeper,” said Paige Read, director of economic development and tourism for Culpeper. “A new state park has the potential to bring in millions of added dollars in visitor spending for area businesses.”

Dale Duvall, president of the board of trustees for the Museum of Culpeper History, agrees.

“The benefits of a new state park in Culpeper would not stop at its borders,” said Duvall. “The spotlight such a park would shine on our battlefields would extend to other sites throughout Culpeper and this part of Virginia, motivating visitors to the region to stay longer and see and experience more of what we have to offer.”

Additionally, the park would benefit from its location at the center of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, a 180-mile long, 75-mile wide landscape stretching from Gettysburg, Pa., to Charlottesville, Va.

“A new state park along the Journey would be a welcome addition in showcasing the unparalleled history of this area,” said Bill Sellers, president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership. “Accordingly, we are proud to be a part of the growing Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park Alliance and look forward to assisting however possible in making this state park a reality.”

Together with historical significance, outdoor opportunities at the two sites abound, resulting in what could quickly become one of the most recreationally diverse parks in Virginia’s state park system. The proximity of Brandy Station to the Rappahannock River, for instance, could ultimately provide increased access to one of the most scenic waterways in the Commonwealth. Horseback riding, biking and primitive or interpretive camping consistent with ongoing historic preservation objectives could potentially draw a wider variety of visitors to the region as well.

“This initiative is every bit as exciting from a natural perspective as it is from a historical one,” said Chris Miller, president of the Piedmont Environmental Council. “Culpeper’s battlefields do not serve simply as a window into the past; they provide an enduring connection to this portion of the Virginia Piedmont and its strong agricultural tradition, a breadbasket for the nation now as it was during the Civil War. Preserving the rolling fields and pastures gives modern travelers a real connection to the landscape of the 1860s. The Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park represents an idea whose time has come.”

The Alliance is working in concert with the Civil War Trust on the preparation of a professional feasibility study — spearheaded by Stach PLLC and the Community Land Use + Economics Group, with an anticipated release date in October — which will further examine and expand upon themes central to the park’s creation. Many of the fundamental building blocks for a new park are already in place, including an active support network and battlefield friends groups; parking; and a series of interpretive trails with accompanying signage. Further improvements will be announced this fall.

“Thanks to the tremendous support of our partners on the Alliance, we are moving as one to create a permanent place of education, recreation and reflection,” said Trust President Jim Lighthizer. “I am confident that this movement will succeed in highlighting the immense opportunity available to the Commonwealth of Virginia at Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain. With the 80th anniversary of the Virginia state park system on the immediate horizon, this is the moment to act — and secure a legacy for the Old Dominion that will last for generations to come.”

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(To learn more about the Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park Alliance, visit us online at www.BSCMStatePark.com)





Gettysburg

Cape May County Civil War Round Table
c/o

