

Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable
2024 Newsletter
September 2023 to May 2024



Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable

Meeting Place

**Williamsburg Library Theatre
515 Scotland Street
Williamsburg, VA**

Volume LIV Number 1

September 26, 2023

**MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE
Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 6:30 PM**

**Hampton Newsome:
“Gettysburg’s Southern Front:
Opportunity and Failure at Richmond”**

Join us on Tuesday, September 26th for the meeting of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable, commencing at 6:30 PM in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre. The library is located at 515 Scotland Street in Williamsburg.

The program will also be presented online via a Zoom link for our members and friends near and far. The details for the Zoom link will be provided by a follow-up announcement several days prior to meeting date.

On September 26, 2023, Hampton Newsome's presentation will cover the little-known Federal offensive against Richmond during the Gettysburg Campaign – the subject of Mr. Newsome’s book *Gettysburg’s Southern Front*. Sometimes referred to as the Blackberry Raid, the operation was led by John Dix and provided a

significant opportunity by U.S. forces to threaten the Confederate capital and damage Lee's operation in Pennsylvania.

Hampton Newsome is author of several books on the Civil War including *Richmond Must Fall: The Richmond-Petersburg Campaign, October 1864*, published by Kent State University Press in 2012 and recognized as a best book of the year by the *Civil War Monitor* magazine; and *The Fight for the Old North State: The Civil War in North Carolina, January-May 1864*, which was published in 2019 by the University Press of Kansas and received the Emerging Civil War Book Award and the Richard Barksdale Harwell Award from the Atlanta Civil War Roundtable. His most recent title is *Gettysburg's Southern Front: Opportunity and Failure at Richmond*. Also published by University Press of Kansas, this new title has received the Edwin C. Bearss Book Award for Outstanding Scholarship from the Chicago Civil War Roundtable as well as the Emerging Civil War 2023 Book of the Year.

Last Meeting

On Tuesday May 23rd Dennis Frye presented: "Stonewall Jackson's Greatest Victory: Harper's Ferry."

General Lee had a problem - Harpers Ferry. He could not continue his proposed invasion into the United States with this strategic position in the hands of U.S. forces. Something must be done. Lee devised a complex plan, perhaps his most complex of the war. He summoned his most aggressive lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson, to lead the sensitive mission. But soon much went wrong. Despite seemingly insurmountable challenges, coupled with the enemy's discovery of Lee's orders, Jackson in his final independent command of the war brought Lee victory - Stonewall's *most brilliant* battlefield victory.

Dennis E. Frye recently retired after 20 years as the Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. For his more than 3 decades of service with the National Park Service, Dennis earned the "Distinguished Service Award" - the highest honor of the Department

of Interior. Dennis also received the American Battlefield Trust's highest honor, the "Shelby Foote Award," and was recognized with the "Nevins-Freeman Award" for his years of scholarship and his national leadership role in battlefield preservation. Dennis is a prominent Civil War historian as a writer, lecturer, preservationist and battlefield guide. Dennis has numerous appearances on PBS, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, C-SPAN, A&E, and Voice of America as a guest historian. He helped produce Emmy award-winning television features on the Battle of Antietam, abolitionist John Brown, and Maryland during the Civil War. Dennis is respected as a national Civil War battlefield preservationist. He is co-founder and first president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and he is co-founder and a former president of today's American Battlefield Trust. Dennis is a tour guide in demand, leading tours for the Smithsonian, National Geographic, The *New York Times*, and Civil War Round Tables and staff rides for US Army and Marine Corps leadership. Dennis also is a well-known author, with 107 articles and 11 books.

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Upcoming Meetings and Speakers

- **October 24, 2023** - Dr. Jonathan White (A presentation related to Dr. White's latest book publication)
- **November 28, 2023** – Frank O'Reilly - Fredericksburg: Barksdale's Brigade Delaying the Union River Crossing"
- **December 19, 2023** - Drew Gruber "John Bell Hood and the Battle at Eltham's Landing"

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Volume LIV Number 2

October 24, 2023

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**Dr. Jonathan White
“Lincoln Destroys the Slave Trade: The Extraordinary
Unknown Story of Appleton Oaksmith”**

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Jonathan W. White is associate professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University. He is the author or editor of thirteen books, including *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln* (2014), which was a finalist for both the Lincoln Prize and Jefferson Davis Prize, a “best book” in *Civil War Monitor*, and the winner of the Abraham Lincoln Institute’s 2015 book prize. He serves as vice chair of The Lincoln Forum, and on the boards of the Abraham Lincoln Association, the Abraham Lincoln Institute, and the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at the University of Virginia, as well as the Ford’s Theatre Advisory Council. His most recent books include *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams during the Civil War* (2017), which was selected as a “best book” by *Civil War Monitor*; and “*Our Little Monitor*”: *The Greatest Invention of the Civil War* (2018), which he co-authored with Anna Gibson Holloway. In October he published *To Address You As My Friend: African Americans’ Letters to Abraham Lincoln* with the University of North Carolina Press, and in November he will publish *My Work Among the Freedmen: The Civil War and Reconstruction Letters of Harriet M. Buss* with UVA Press. In 2022 he published *A House Built By Slaves: African American Visitors to the Lincoln White House*. Dr. White was named a joint recipient of the 2023 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize for his recently published book *A House Built By Slaves: African American Visitors to the Lincoln White House*.

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Upcoming Outside Events

- **October 28, 2023** - American Civil War Museum presents "Fall Festival at Appomattox" [details](#)
- **November 4, 2023** - Petersburg Battlefields Foundation presents ‘The Battle of Peebles Farm’ (9:00 am to 1:00 pm) [details](#)

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Volume LIV Number 3

November 28, 2023

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Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 6:30 PM**

**Frank A. O'Reilly
"William Barksdale and the Changing Face of War
at Fredericksburg"**

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American soldiers. Barksdale's Mississippians staged an unprecedented defense of the town's riverfront, fighting as individuals to slow Federal engineers attempting to bridge the Rappahannock River. Their stand provoked a massive bombardment of a large populous area, the first American riverine assault under fire, the first beach head established under fire in American military history, and the first urban combat in North America. According to Confederate leaders, Barksdale won the Battle of Fredericksburg—and everything that followed December 11 was a foregone conclusion. We will look at the innovations used at Fredericksburg and see how they changed the course of American military history.

Mr. O'Reilly's latest book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock*, received a 2003 nomination for the Pulitzer Prize in Letters. Released by LSU Press in December, 2002, it has won the 2002 Capital District (Albany, NY) Book Award; the 2003 James I. Robertson, Jr. Book Award; the 2004 Daniel Laney Book Award; and the 2004 Richard Barksdale Harwell Book Award.

Mr. O'Reilly received both his BA and MA in American History with a concentration in Early American Military History and Civil War Studies. Mr. O'Reilly did his undergraduate work at Washington & Lee University before joining the National Park Service at the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park. Mr. O'Reilly worked briefly at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and then returned to Fredericksburg as an historian in 1990. Mr. O'Reilly has been an historian for the battlefields for 35 of my 36 years of service.

Mr. O'Reilly has written numerous articles on the Civil War and Mexican War for national and international journals; and introductions to quite a few books. Mr. O'Reilly released his first book on the Fredericksburg Campaign titled, *Stonewall Jackson at Fredericksburg*, in 1993. Mr. O'Reilly have appeared in quite a few documentaries, on CSPAN, and have lectured extensively on military history to audiences around the world, from the Pentagon to numerous conferences with the American Civil War Round Table of the United Kingdom.

Mr. O'Reilly is currently writing a book on the 1862 Battle of Malvern Hill and the Seven Days' Battles around Richmond.

Last Month

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Volume LIV Number 4

December 19, 2023

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**Drew Gruber
“John Bell Hood and the Battle of Eltham’s Landing”**

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On December 19th, Drew Gruber will present, "John Bell Hood and the Battle of Eltham's Landing." It is often an overlooked battle during the Peninsula Campaign which was fought on May 7th, 1862 in what is today New Kent County, Virginia. From an amphibious operation, boat howitzers, to John Bell Hood, Drew will provide a fresh look while helping to also correct some

misconceptions about the engagement. It is a battle right in our backyards that needs additional preservation and interpretation and he hopes the lecture will encourage you to get involved.

Drew is the Executive Director of Civil War Trails, the world's largest "open air museum" offering over 1,500 sites across six states. He holds his BA in Historic Preservation from Mary Washington College, a MS from Virginia Commonwealth University, and previously served as member of the Commonwealth's Board of Historic Resources. In 2013 he was the recipient of the Lawrence T. Jones III Research Fellowship in Texas Civil War History. When he's not working in Civil War land he loves brown spiritus liquors, tinkering with his old car, and is curious about fly fishing.

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- **April 7, 2024** - NAU Center special conference "Second Manassas, Campaign, Battle, and Aftermath" details
- **June 7-12, 2024** - Gettysburg summer civil war conference details

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January 23, 2024

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**Bruce Littell
“The Hurley Project”**

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On January 23, Bruce Littell will present “The Hunley Project.” This presentation provides an overview of the history, significance and the recovery and preservation of the world’s first successful combat submarine from the spring of 1861 to the present day. The principal locations include New Orleans, Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama and Charleston, South Carolina. Bruce will provide a synthesis of the

“tribal lore” regarding the main characters, the likely impetus behind the creation of a submersible as an asset to combat the growing effectiveness of the “Anaconda” blockade of southern ports, the events resulting in the sinking of the USS Hunsatonic the evening of 17 February 1864, the discovery of the H.L. Hunley during the spring of 1995, her recovery on 8 August 2000; concluding with an overview of what has been derived from the research, preservation, and conservation efforts since her arrival at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center on 8 August 2000 to the present day.

Bruce is a U.S. Navy submarine force veteran and supported the U.S and U.K. Strategic Weapons System as a contractor, retiring as the Configuration Manager for the U.S. Navy Trident SWS. Since his retirement from civil service during March 2019, Bruce serves as a Docent at the Lasch Center providing our guests with education and interpretation on all aspects of the history, preservation and conservation of a unique artifact of our nation’s history with the objective to help our guests appreciate the importance of history, in general and the submarine H.L. Hunley in particular.

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Volume LIV Number 6

February 27, 2024

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“Confederate Calamity: JEB Stuart’s Cavalry Ride
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Many people erroneously believe that Jeb Stuart was on a glory ride around the Army of the Potomac while the battle of Gettysburg raged, deliberately depriving Robert E. Lee of "the eyes and ears of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable Newsletter

army." Author Scott Mingus, making extensive use of post-war civilian border claims and old maps, discusses Stuart's route north, the obstacles that caused him to miss his planned connection with Lee's army near the Susquehanna River, and the wearisome, exhausting ride up and down the hills of York County, PA. on June 30 to July 2, 1863, concurrent with the first two days of the battle of Gettysburg.

Multiple award-winning author Scott Mingus is a retired scientist and executive in the global specialty paper industry. The Ohio native graduated from Miami University. He was part of the research team that developed the first commercially successful self-adhesive U.S. postage stamps, and he was a pioneer in the early development of bar code labels. He has written more than 30 Civil War and Underground Railroad books and numerous articles for *Gettysburg Magazine* and other historical journals. He has appeared on C-SPAN, C-SPAN3, PBS, PCN, and several other TV networks. Mingus writes a blog on the Civil War history of York County, PA, where he and his wife Debi live. He also has written six scenario books for miniature wargaming. He received lifetime achievement awards from the York County History Center and the Camp Curtin Historical Society for his many contributions to local Civil War history. The Gettysburg Civil War Round Table recently presented Mingus and co-author Eric Wittenberg with the 2023 Bachelder-Coddington Award for the best new book on the Gettysburg Campaign, *If We Are Striking for Pennsylvania*.

Last Month

On January 23, Bruce Littell presented "The Hunley Project." This presentation provides an overview of the history, significance and the recovery and preservation of the world's first successful combat submarine from the spring of 1861 to the present day. The principal locations include New Orleans, Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama and Charleston, South Carolina. Bruce will provide a synthesis of the "tribal lore" regarding the main characters, the likely impetus behind the creation of a submersible as an asset to combat the growing effectiveness of the "Anaconda" blockade of southern ports, the events resulting in the sinking of the USS *Husatonic* the evening of

17 February 1864, the discovery of the H.L. Hunley during the spring of 1995, her recovery on 8 August 2000; concluding with an overview of what has been derived from the research, preservation, and conservation efforts since her arrival at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center on 8 August 2000 to the present day.

Bruce is a U.S. Navy submarine force veteran and supported the U.S and U.K. Strategic Weapons System as a contractor, retiring as the Configuration Manager for the U.S. Navy Trident SWS. Since his retirement from civil service during March 2019, Bruce serves as a Docent at the Lasch Center providing our guests with education and interpretation on all aspects of the history, preservation and conservation of a unique artifact of our nation's history with the objective to help our guests appreciate the importance of history, in general and the submarine H.L. Hunley in particular.

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Treasurer:

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Upcoming Meetings and Speakers

- **March 26, 2024** - Jonathan Jones "Opium Slavery: Drug Dependency Among Civil War Veterans"
- **April 23, 2024** - Rob Orrison: "Twice Baptized: Misconceptions & Unique Stories from the Manassas Battlefields"
- **May 28, 2024** - Patrick Schroeder: "Forgotten Friday: The April 7, 1865, Actions in Cumberland County, VA"

Upcoming Outside Events

- **March 2, 2024** - Jeff Toalson book signing at Williamsburg Regional Library from 11AM to 1PM [details](#)
- **April 7, 2024** - NAU Center special conference "Second Manassas, Campaign, Battle, and Aftermath" [details](#)
- **April 20, 2024** - Petersburg Project "Hidden in Plain Sight" caravan driving tour [details](#)
- **May 4, 2024** - Army Historical Foundation, and CVBT, Presents the 2024 Spring Battle Ride [details](#)
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*Williamsburg Civil War
Roundtable*

Meeting Place

**Williamsburg Library Theatre
515 Scotland Street
Williamsburg, VA**

Volume LIV Number 7

March 26, 2024

**MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE
Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 6:30 PM**

**Dr. Jonathan S. Jones
“Opium Slavery: Drug Dependency Among Civil War
Veterans”**

Join us on Tuesday, March 26th, for the meeting of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable, commencing at 6:30 PM in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre. The library is located at 515 Scotland Street in Williamsburg.

The program will also be presented online via a Zoom link for our members and friends near and far. The details for the Zoom link will be provided by a follow-up announcement several days prior to the meeting date.

On Tuesday, March 26, 2024, Jonathan Jones will present “Opium Slavery: Drug Dependency Among Civil War Veterans”.

In the wake of the Civil War, many veterans struggled with lingering pain and disabling illnesses. To cope, former soldiers often turned to

opioids. Tens of thousands became addicted to the drugs. Jonathan Jones, Assistant Professor of History at James Madison University, will discuss how the opioid addiction crisis sparked by the Civil War affected veterans' lives and what this crisis can teach us about the Civil War's traumatic aftershocks in the postwar decades.

Jonathan S. Jones is an assistant professor of history at James Madison University. His first book, *Opium Slavery: The Civil War, Veterans, and America's First Opioid Crisis*, is forthcoming from UNC Press. Jones's research has also appeared in *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, the *Washington Post*, *Vice*, *NPR*, and other outlets. Jones received his PhD from Binghamton University in 2020. In 2020-21, he was a Postdoctoral Scholar at Penn State's George and Ann Richards Civil War Era Center and from 2021-23 he was an assistant professor of history at Virginia Military Institute."

Last Month

On February 27th, Scott Mingus presented "Confederate Calamity: JEB Stuart's Cavalry Ride Through York County PA".

Many people erroneously believe that Jeb Stuart was on a glory ride around the Army of the Potomac while the battle of Gettysburg raged, deliberately depriving Robert E. Lee of "the eyes and ears of the army." Author Scott Mingus, making extensive use of post-war civilian border claims and old maps, discusses Stuart's route north, the obstacles that caused him to miss his planned connection with Lee's army near the Susquehanna River, and the wearisome, exhausting ride up and down the hills of York County, PA. on June 30 to July 2, 1863, concurrent with the first two days of the battle of Gettysburg.

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Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable

Meeting Place

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Volume LIV Number 8

April 23, 2024

**MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE
Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 6:30 PM**

Rob Orrison

**“Twice Baptized: Misconceptions and Unique Stories
from the Manassas Battlefields”**

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On Tuesday, April 23, Rob Orrison will present “Twice Baptized: Misconceptions and Unique Stories from the Manassas Battlefields.

The plains of Manassas saw two major battles of the American Civil War. As soon as the smoke cleared, many misconceptions and myths

began to take form about both battles. Hollywood only added to these myths. This talk will highlight some unique points of view on both battles and address some of the misconceptions of the battles (DON'T bring your picnic baskets!).

Rob received his bachelor's degree in Historic Preservation at Longwood College and received his Master's Degree in Public History from George Mason University. Currently Rob serves as the Division Manager for the Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation. Outside of work Rob serves on the Board of Directors of Virginia Civil War Trails; Virginia Association of Museums and the Frontier Culture Museum. His published works include: *A Want of Vigilance: The Bristoe Station Campaign*; *The Last Road North: A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign 1863*; *In A Single Blow: The Battles of Lexington and Concord and the Beginning of the American Revolution, April 19, 1775*; *To Hazard All: Guide to the 1862 Maryland Campaign* and most recently *All That Can be Expected: The Battle of Camden, August 16, 1780*. He currently lives in Dumfries, Virginia with his wife Jamie and sons Carter and Grayson.

Last Month

On Tuesday, March 26, 2024, Jeff Toalson presented and discuss his newest book "Ma, We Got Nuthin Here But Mud and Muskeeters

Mud and Muskeeters uses first person stories from 65 Confederate and Union participants in events on the peninsula from June of 1861 to June of 1862. This is the war in our own backyard. These stories are taken from the diaries, letters and journals of farmers, nurses, sailors, soldiers, river-boatmen, signalmen, surgeons, naval constructors and cavalymen.

Jeff is a Resident of Williamsburg. A 35 year career in the automotive industry selling wheel weights and author of 5 books on the great American conflict. Jeff has spoken with the WCWRT several times in the past telling 'first person stories' from the war. His best selling titles are *No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery and Desertion* and his collection of the 300+ letters of Richard and Mary Watkins in *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls*. Jeff is presently serving Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable Newsletter

as the Commander of the James City Cavalry SCV Camp and is proud to claim both Union and Confederate ancestors from the war.

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