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THE RUNNER



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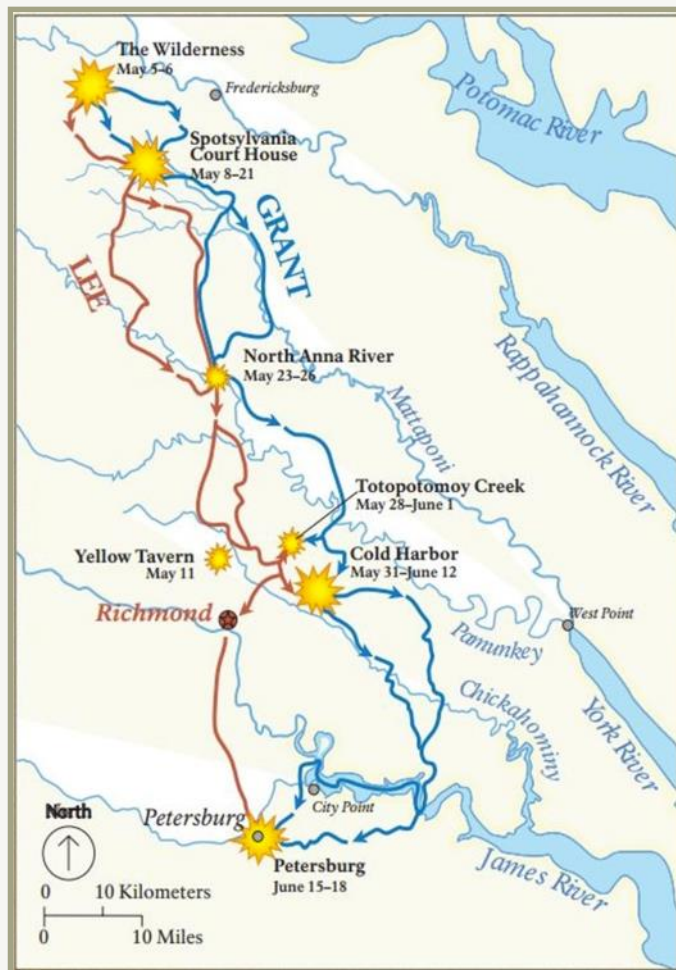
June Round Table Discussion - "Victory from the Jaws of Defeat"

As part of our expanded summer program, the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table will host a true "round table" discussion about the battle of Cedar Creek in October 1864.

The fall of 1864 was, of course, a pivotal time of political decision making. In the United States, the National Union Party of Abraham Lincoln ran against the Democratic Party standard bearer, former Union General George B. McClellan.

The summer of 1864 was a terrible time of trial for the North. Grant drove the Union armies of the east to Petersburg and Richmond, inflicting terrible losses on the Army of Northern Virginia but absorbing astronomical casualties himself.

Our April 9th meeting featuring Bill Brown on Governor Vance has been canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

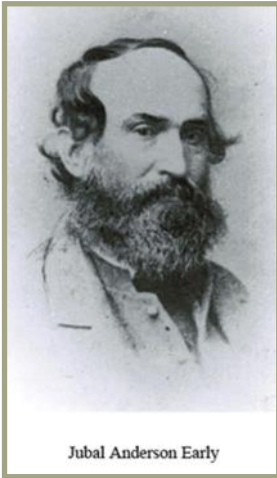


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June Round Table Discussion - "Victory from the Jaws of Defeat", cont.



Sherman drove the Confederate Army of Tennessee back onto the defenses of Atlanta but the pace of advance seemed glacial and a decisive victory still much in doubt.

Close to home for Lincoln and the political leaders of the north, a small but ferocious army under Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal Early arrived at the gates of the Federal City itself like some reincarnation of the "barbarians" assaulting Rome as the empire decayed.



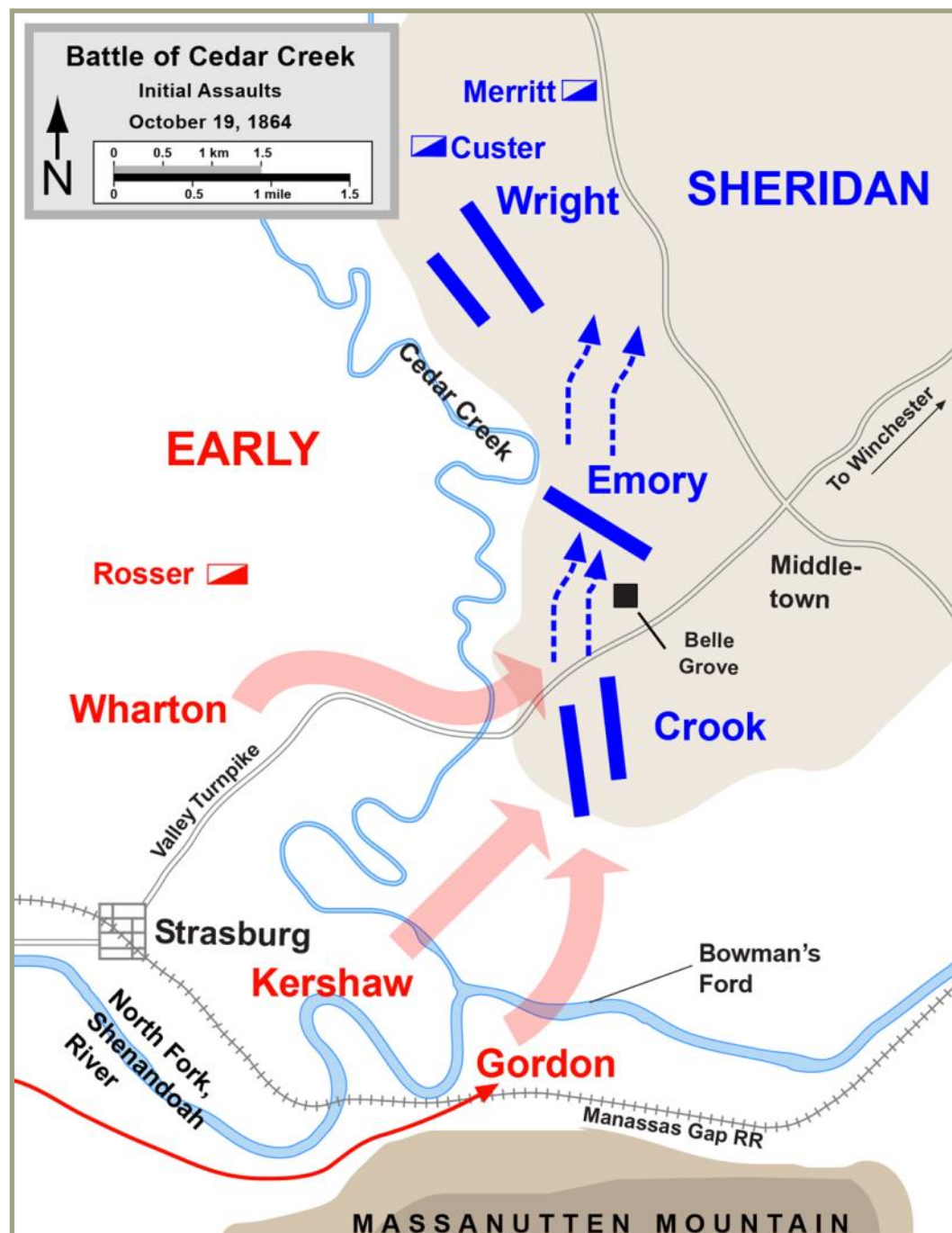
In August Lincoln received some political visitors to the White House to discuss the upcoming election and they ventured the opinion that the sitting president would lose the election. Lincoln responded, "You think I don't know I am going to be beaten, but I do and unless some great change takes place badly beaten."

Finally, the tide turned. Farragut damned the torpedoes and closed Mobile Bay, Sherman cut the Confederate supply line and drove the Army of Tennessee out of Atlanta, and Grant detailed Major General Philip Sheridan to the Shenandoah Valley to dispose of Early's Army of the Valley.

(Continued on page 3)

June Round Table Discussion - "Victory from the Jaws of Defeat", cont.

Sheridan won resounding victories at Winchester and Fisher's Hill and by October all seemed well. On October 16, Sheridan departed the valley heading for Washington City and a conference, leaving his army of about 31,000 men under the command of Maj. Gen. Horatio Wright, commander of the stalwart VI Corps. Camped on the north side of Cedar Creek, a tributary of the North Fork of the Shenandoah, the situation seemed secure.

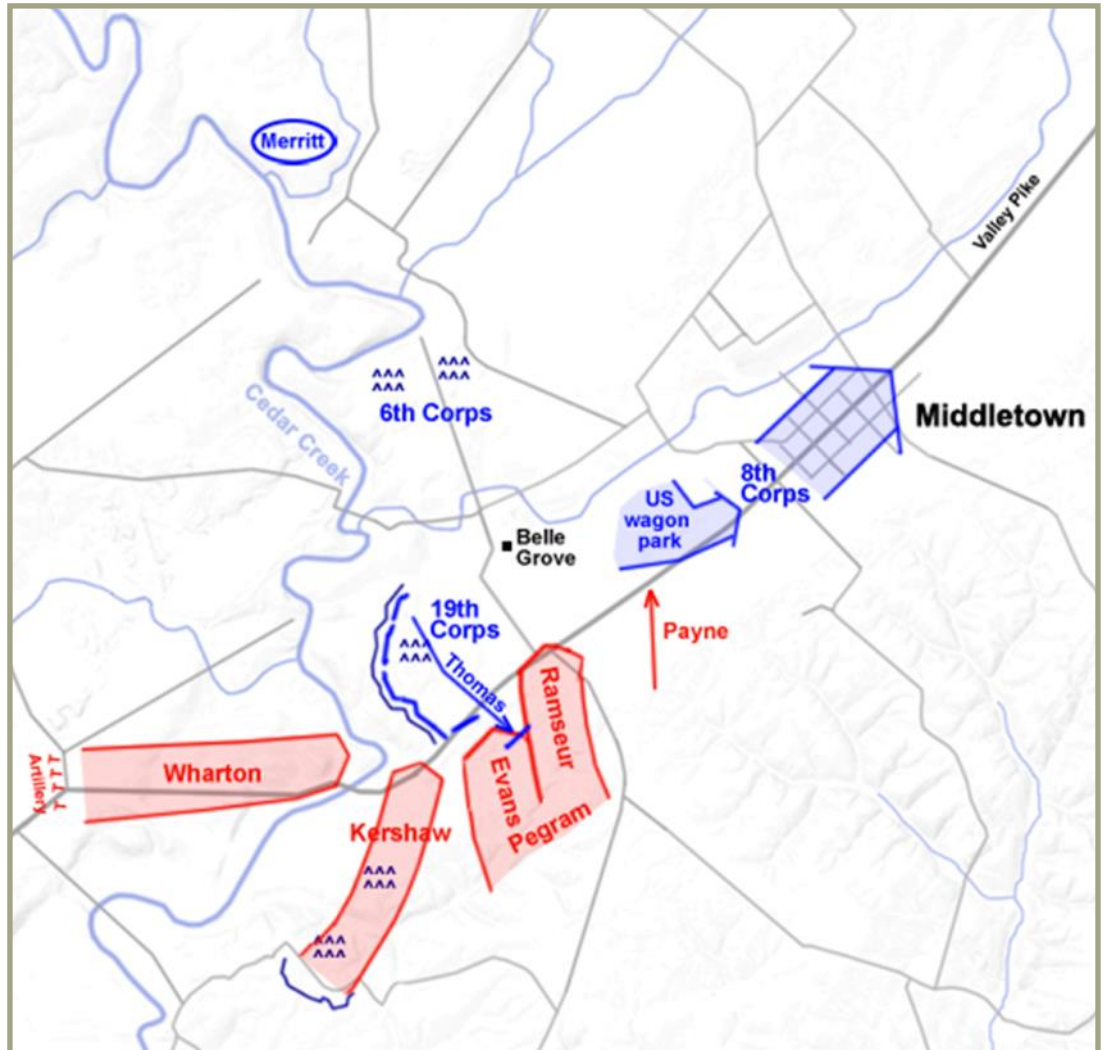


June Round Table Discussion - "Victory from the Jaws of Defeat", cont.

Gen. Early's army of about 21,000 was south of the creek but connected to Richmond by good roads and rail. The Union intercepted a Confederate message suggesting that Gen. Robert E. Lee was about to send reinforcements to Early. It was a planted message and very unlikely, but, even so, Sheridan cautioned Wright to look carefully to his defenses. Sheridan also ordered the very powerful Union Cavalry Corps back to Cedar Creek.

With a deep creek to their front and an even more forbidding river gorge to their left (east), the Union put their strongest forces on the right (west) and middle, blocking the Valley Pike running north to south.

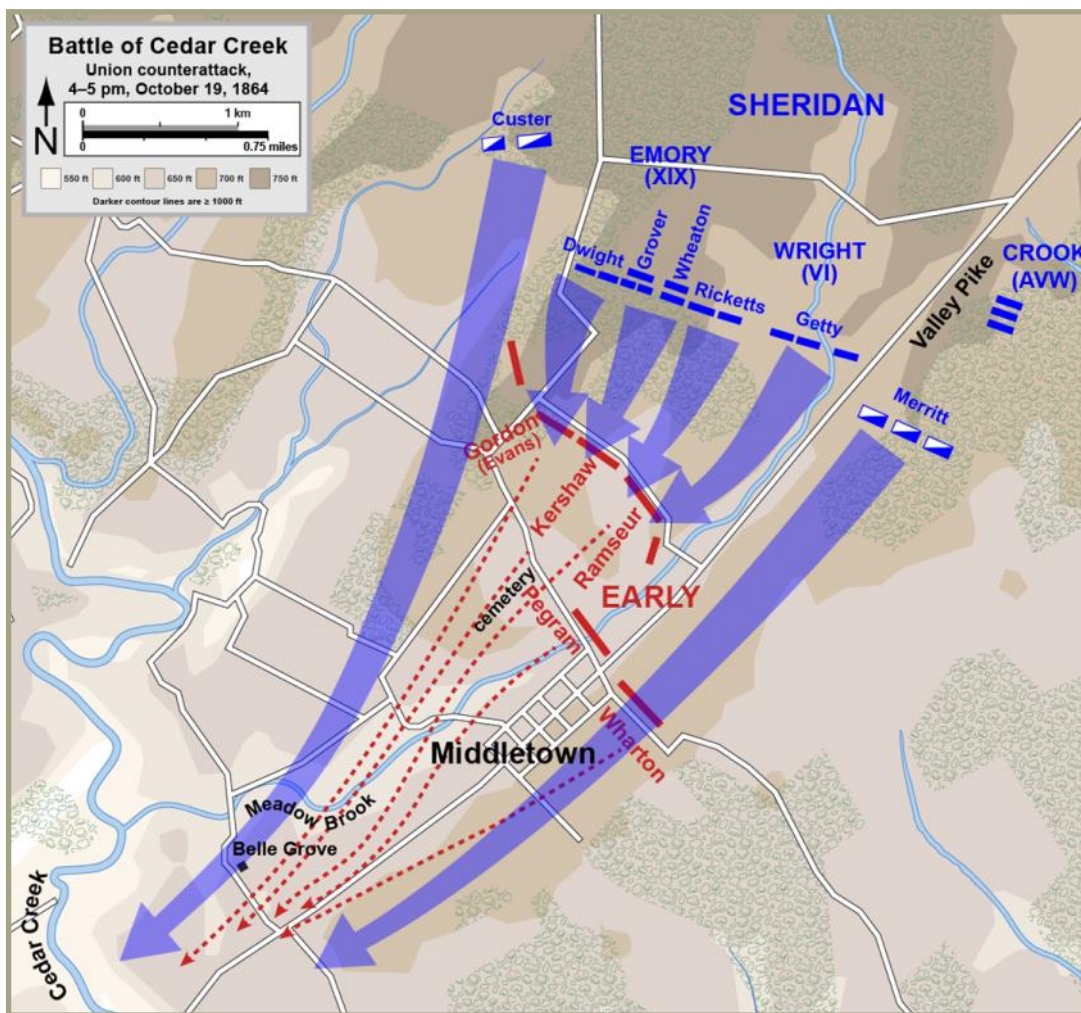
The relative weakness of the Union left, gave Early an opportunity to mount a risky surprise attack. At dawn on October 19, 1864, Kershaw's Confederate division crossed the creek at a ford to attack the Union left. Another division crossed the Valley Pike bridge and added its weight to the surprise attack and then, Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon's division, after crossing the Shenandoah at a ford, attacked the left flank and rear of the Union forces.



June Round Table Discussion - "Victory from the Jaws of Defeat", cont.

The initial assaults were spectacularly successful for the Confederates and although Union troops fought doggedly in spots, the army gave ground for miles, fighting at Belle Grove Plantation, around the village of Middletown and by afternoon, the Confederate attack ran out of steam.

In a famous ride on his famous horse, Rienzi, Sheridan turned back from Winchester and hurried to the battlefield. He helped rally the Union forces and then planned a counterattack that proved crushingly successful.



The discussion will focus on the Confederate pause in the afternoon. Gen. Gordon urged Early to continue the assault against the stalwart Union VI Corps, but Early seemed confident they would retire. Writing later, Early seemed to say that Confederate troops, stopping to pillage Union camps, led to disorganization and weakness that prevented further attacks.

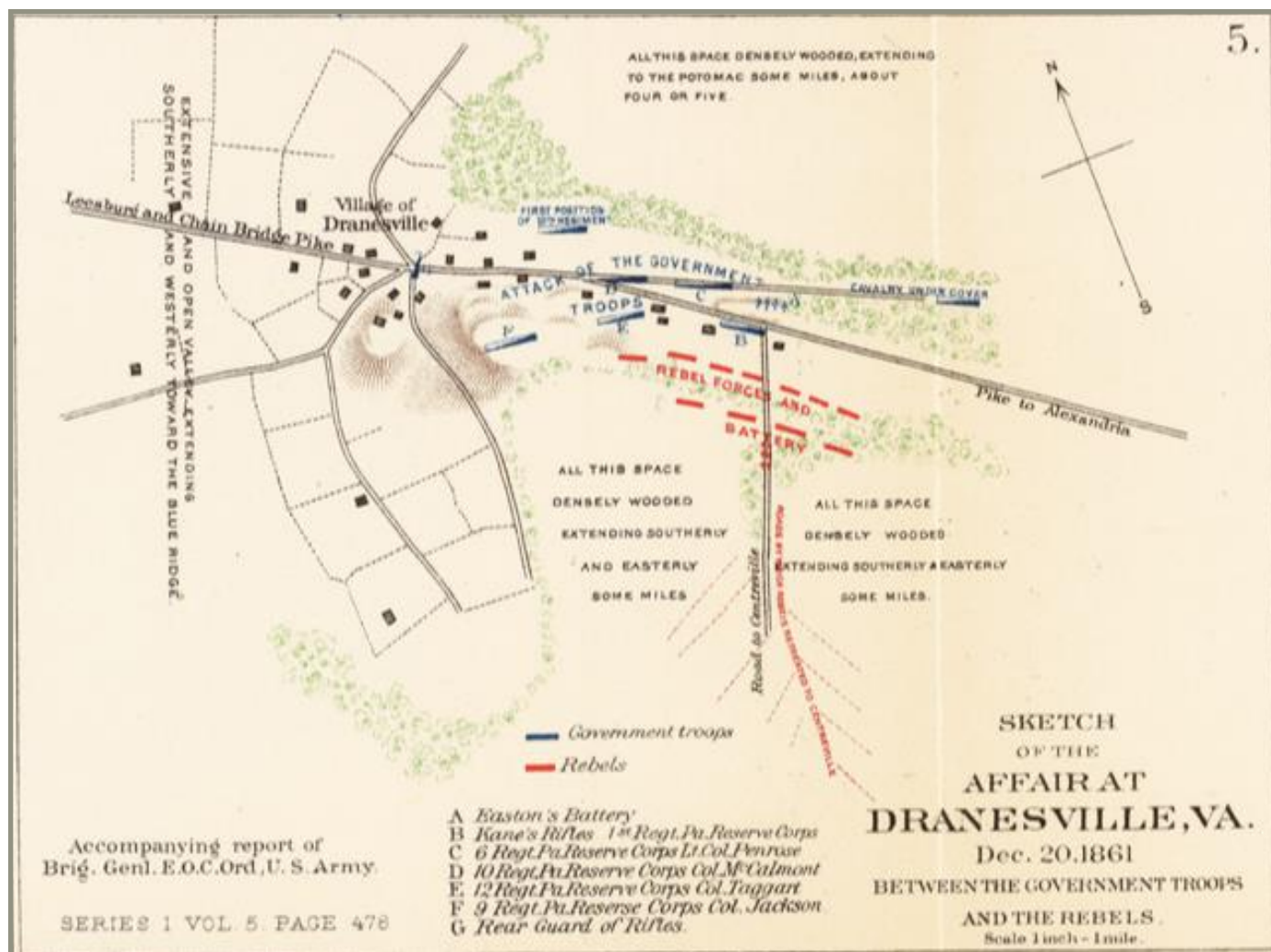
More will be forthcoming, but there is plenty of time to read about the battle and form your opinions so you can participate in the discussion on June 14.

Dranesville Battlefield Treasure Hunt

Treasure Hunter Makes Rare Finds on “Cleaned-Out” Field

Dave Mork, a loyal former member of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table moved back to Northern Virginia some time ago but has continued his efforts as a “treasure hunter,” or Civil War relic hunter.

On December 20, 1861, Brigadier General E.O.C. Ord led a mixed brigade of Pennsylvania infantry, cavalry and artillery west along the Leesburg Pike (modern-day Virginia Route 7) to probe Confederate positions and to forage for supplies. At Dranesville, where Georgetown Pike met the Leesburg Pike in western Fairfax County, Ord encountered a similar Confederate force commanded by then Brigadier General J.E.B. Stuart. The engagement resulted in 71 Union casualties and 230 Confederate, with the Confederates withdrawing in the afternoon. After the Union disasters at nearby Balls Bluff and Manassas, this relatively small engagement served as a morale boost to U.S. forces.



Map of Dranesville Battle that accompanied General Ord's report

(Continued on page 7)

Dranesville Battlefield Treasure Hunt, cont.

As Dave reports, "The Original Dranesville Battlefield is the entire area from Dranesville Road to the south side of Route 7, to where Reston Parkway is today. Most of the engagement was on the south side of Route 7 around the intersection of routes 193 and 7. Most of the area has been developed with housing on the actual encampment area. You used to be able to see the earthworks that were there but most had been filled in with trash over the past 100+ years. Along with four other 'treasure hunters', I spent nearly every Saturday for five or six years searching that area and the finds were everywhere! ... At the time I belonged



Toe Plates
(to protect boots
or shoes)

to the Loudoun County Historical Preservation Society, but they disbanded about four years ago. Our late President Tom advised us to go on the north side of Route 7 as that is where the encampment and earthworks were and he had given the area a good going over back in the 1970s. He informed us that we would not find a lot as they had given the area a good 'clean-out'! Well all I can say is that I would love to find a few more 'cleaned out' areas like that one! Most of the bullets that we found were .54 cal Sharps, both manufactured and field cast varieties...other bullets that were recovered at the Dranesville site included .58 cal round ball, .58 cal 3 groove, .577 cal three groove, .36 and .44 cal Remington pistol bullets, .36 and .44 cal Colt bullets, as well as a few .69 cal Musketoons. The .58 cal round balls were found primarily on the south side of the road where the Confederate line was."



Confederate Script
"I" Button
(infantry)

One of Dave's treasure hunting partners, Wayne, is the descendant of a Union Soldier who served in the Pennsylvania Bucktails', a regiment that was at the Dranesville battle. Dave continues: "We were searching the Dranesville Battlefield, and my buddy Wayne was lucky enough to find a dropped .69 cal Musketoons bullet. The Bucktails were using .69 cal rifles so we are guessing that this was a bullet from one of the Bucktails soldiers. We do not think it was one of Wayne's GGGGrandfather's bullets but it most likely was from one of his fellow soldiers. My total take on this site was well over 600 bullets, lots of Union buttons; including General Service, General Staff Officer, and several marked with 'A', 'C', 'D', and 'I', as everyone shared this encampment. Confederate buttons were also recovered at this site as the Confederate troops oftentimes controlled the site. One of my favorites is a Confederate script "I" (for infantry) button. I found a group of three South Carolina Palmetto cuff buttons with a piece of uniform still attached. We all dug our share of coins as well. I found my first Three Cent coin here and it was an 1854. Indian Head Cents were also found but interestingly we also found Flying Eagle Cents from 1857 and 1858. We were able to locate where the Blacksmith did his work as the horseshoes were all in a large group along with cut off ends from the metal stock used to make the shoes. We also found a folding knife, spoon, and fork which was the precursor of the Swiss Army Knife! I can't even begin to tell you of all the finds that we made in this area. The sad thing is the property was developed and now has a bunch of McMansions on the site. It was good while it lasted!"

Dave also found the remnants of a water filter on the site. Dave notes: "It was dug out of the Dranesville Encampment site (now a housing development). "We dug a lot of great items out of that site before it was all dozed and built into a bunch of Mc Mansions! So much history has been lost due to development."

(Continued on page 8)

Dranesville Battlefield Treasure Hunt, cont.

Civil War water filters are little known but this very informative account is from Henry Steele Commager's *The Blue and the Gray*. On page 286, Commager quotes from *Hardtack and Coffee* by John D. Billings. Billings writes: "I still have in my possession the remnants of a water filter in which I invested after enlistment. There was a metallic mouth-piece at one end of a small gutta-percha tube, which latter was about 15 inches long. At the other end of the tube was a suction-chamber, an inch long by a half-inch in diameter, with the end perforated, and containing a piece of bocking as a filterer. Midway of the tubing was an air-chamber. The tubing long since dried and crumbled away from the metal. It is possible that I used this instrument half a dozen times, though I do not recall a single instance, and on breaking camp just before the Gettysburg Campaign, I sent it with some other effects, northward.

**Water Filterer**

"I remember another filterer, somewhat simpler. It consisted of the same kind of mouth-piece with rubber tubing attached to a small conical piece of pumice stone, through which the water was filtered. Neither of these was ever of any practical value."

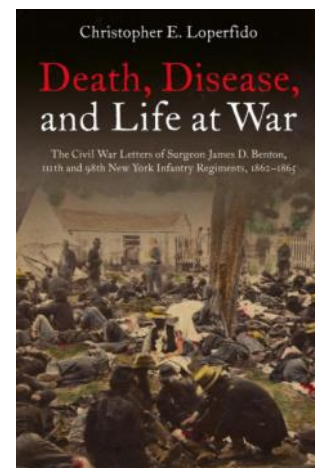
Lots still to learn about the Civil War before all the remaining sites are bulldozed flat!

*Civil War Letters of Surgeon James D. Benton***Death, Disease, and Life at War: The Civil War Letters of Surgeon James D. Benton, 111th and 98th New York Infantry Regiments, 1862-1865**

Union surgeon James Dana Benton witnessed firsthand the suffering and death brought about by the ghastly wounds, infections, and diseases that wreaked havoc to both the Union and Confederate armies. A native of New York, Dr. Benton penned a series of letters throughout the war to his family relating his experiences with the 111th New York Infantry as an assistant surgeon, and later with the 98th New York as surgeon. His unique correspondence, together with insights from author Chris Loperfido, coalesce to produce *Death, Disease, and Life at War: The Civil War Letters of Surgeon James D. Benton, 111th and 98th New York Infantry Regiments, 1862-1865*.

Dr. Benton was present for some of the war's most gruesome and important battles, including Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, and the siege of Petersburg. He was also present at Harpers Ferry, Second Battle of Auburn, Battle of Morton's Ford, and Abraham Lincoln's second Inaugural address. His pen offers an insightful and honest look into what everyday life was like for the surgeons who tirelessly worked to save the men who risked their lives for the preservation of the nation.

Loperfido's *Death, Disease, and Life at War* should be read by every student of the Civil War to better understand and come to grips with what awaited the wounded and the medical teams once the generals were finished with their work.



Wilmington Yellow Fever Outbreak - 1862

Throughout the Civil War, the North Carolina Piedmont served as a haven for Confederate refugees, as thousands fled war zones to the relative safety of the Southern interior. Many came from Virginia or from northeastern North Carolina, which had been occupied by Union forces under General Ambrose Burnside in early 1862. By the summer of 1862, the influx of refugees had caused rampant overcrowding. Even Varina Davis, wife of Confederate president Jefferson Davis, had difficulty finding housing when she fled Richmond for Raleigh during the Peninsula Campaign.

In August 1862, a yellow fever outbreak in Wilmington compounded the refugee crisis in central North Carolina, as its residents fled the city for the interior. Although Wilmington's most prominent and wealthy residents had already left during Burnside's invasion, at least nine thousand residents remained when yellow fever arrived aboard the blockade runner *Kate*, carrying "bacon and other supplies" from Nassau. According to the *Wilmington Journal*, more than half of the city's population left for the North Carolina interior during the epidemic. Of the 4,000 who remained, 650 died of the disease. In his diary, Wilmington resident Nicholas Schenck described "a panic to get away – citizens and family – going in all directions ... Everybody – who could get away – left town." Another Wilmington resident noted in September 1862 that "The fever is much worse here and getting worse every hour. ... Everyone that can get off are leaving." When Schenck briefly visited at the height of the epidemic, he was shocked "to find almost a deserted town....every house on Front Street – closed and shut-up – did not meet or see a soul." William Calder, a Confederate soldier from Wilmington stationed in his hometown, wrote to his mother that "The physicians advise families to leave town, and all who can are doing so."

Many inland communities worried that refugees would bring yellow fever with them. How yellow fever spread remained a mystery, and medical authorities debated whether it could be contracted from infected patients. When Nicolas Schenck fled the city for Warsaw, NC, some sixty miles to the north, he found "every hotel quarantined against us – coming from Wilmington."

In a September 1862 meeting, Fayetteville's mayor and city council declared that "yellow fever exists in the town of Wilmington in a most malignant form, and a general apprehension having seized upon the inhabitants of this town that the disease may be communicated by continued intercourse between the two places." To prevent its spread, they ordered that "all intercourse between the town of Wilmington and Fayetteville be and is hereby suspended," requiring that refugees from Wilmington remain outside of the city limits and imposing a forty-eight-hour quarantine and medical inspection for all vessels that had passed through Wilmington. Recently elected North Carolina governor Zebulon Vance also worried that refugees would bring yellow fever to the interior. In a letter to his wife, Vance warned her that "The yellow fever is raging so at Wilmington that some fears are entertained it may spread. The fugitives have already carried it to Fayetteville & there is one case reported here [Raleigh], though it is supposed it will hardly be communicated in that way." Vance warned his wife, then in far western Buncombe County, not to come to Raleigh until later in the year, when winter cold would lessen the risk.

News of the deaths in Wilmington reached refugees who had fled the city. Along with many others fleeing, the Cronley family settled in Laurinburg, more than one hundred miles to the west. Safe from both the direct effects of the war and the disease, they nonetheless experienced the epidemic vicariously, as "Every day the train brought the small-sized bulletin con-

(Continued on page 10)

Wilmington Yellow Fever Outbreak - 1862, cont.

taining little but the list of the sick and the dead, and always among the latter the name of some familiar face that should never be seen among us again." Eliza Hill, a refugee from Wilmington who had fled during Burnside's invasion, contrasted her new home in Chapel Hill with the news she received daily from the coast, writing in her diary that "Everything looks so bright & cheerful today that I can scarcely realize the melancholy truth, that hundreds are down in my native town with yellow fever...[By] last accounts, Wilmington was said to be one vast Hospital."

The Wilmington yellow fever epidemic proved to be only one of many ways in which disease shaped the contours of refugee life during the Civil War.

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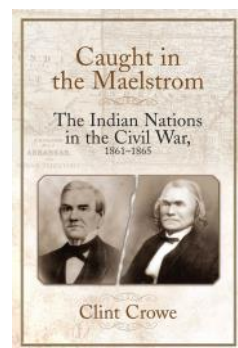
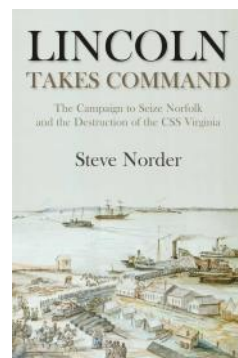
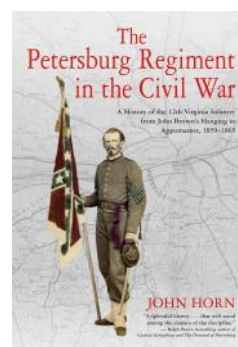
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Member News

CFCWRT Upcoming Events

- May 14, 2020** ***Douglas Waller*** (Author) - Lincoln's Spies (Note: Hopefully the Coronavirus rules will allow this event to take place.)
- June 11, 2020** ***Battle of Cedar Creek, VA*** Bill Jayne, Moderator

What is your favorite Civil War treasure?

Please share your favorite Civil War treasure with us by sending a picture of your treasure or display along with a small paragraph about it. You can submit your info to the editor - [Sherry Hewitt](#).

New Member - Welcome!

Leland (Lee) Bujalski

Wanted: Interviewers

Would you be interested in interviewing an author for The Runner? The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table is looking for members who would be interested in interviewing a Civil War author for an article for The Runner. Please contact the editor - [Sherry Hewitt](#).

Trivia Questions

1. What southern slave stole a Confederate military ship?
2. Who was know as the Calico Colonel?
3. What future Union general discovered a Confederate deception during the Battle of Gaines' Mill?

Answers on page 12

The Draft Act of 1863

In the North the Draft Act of 1863 resulted in four different enrollments: July, 1863; March, 1864; July, 1864; and December 1864. These drafts resulted in a total of 249,259 men being held to service. Of this total some 87,724 paid commutation to be relieved of service, which brought in \$26,366,316.78. There were actually 162,535 men raised by the draft. Of this total only 46,347 men were held to service, 116,118 furnished substitutes. Thus the draft provided only about 6 percent of the total Federal enlistments in the Army. Nevertheless the draft's main effect seems to have been to stimulate enlistments of volunteers who made up the great bulk of the manpower.

Upcoming Events

Most upcoming events have been cancelled, postponed, or rescheduled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

June 12-17, 2020

Civil War Institute 2020 Summer Conference

The Civil War Institute is hosting a premiere annual summer conference bringing leading historians and diverse public audiences together for lectures, battlefield tours, small group discussions, and roundtable conversations about the Civil War era.

For 2020, we are excited to feature leading Civil War scholars, Harold Holzer, Catherine Clinton, Brian Wills, Jeffry Wert, Carol Reardon, and Scott Hartwig within our lineup of more than 40 distinguished speakers and tour guides. The conference will feature a wide range of topics, including POW prison escapes, soldier impressment, the Civil War in the West, the guerrilla experience, and more. The 2020 program will also debut debates between leading scholars about Civil War generalship. This year's topics include George B. McClellan at Antietam, James Longstreet, and Nathan Bedford Forrest.

From the Civil War Institute:

We are currently monitoring the current **Coronavirus** outbreak closely. As of this time, Gettysburg College's Camps & Conferences office and the Civil War Institute plan on holding the June 2020 CWI conference as scheduled. Should local or national conditions change dramatically, we will re-evaluate and will be in touch with all registered attendees immediately. In the event that conditions warrant a cancellation of the conference, we will be sure to update this website accordingly ([link above](#)), and all registered attendees will be granted a full refund of their registration fees.

Trivia Answers

1. **Robert Smalls** freed himself, his crew, and their families from slavery on May 13, 1862, by commandeering a Confederate transport ship, the CSS Planter, in Charleston harbor, and sailing it from Confederate-controlled waters to the U.S. blockade.
2. **Mary Ann Bickerdyke**, also known as General Grant's "Calico Colonel", was a hospital administrator for Union soldiers during the Civil War and a lifelong advocate for veterans. She was responsible for establishing 300 field hospitals during the war.
3. During the run-up to the Battle of Gaines' Mill, **Samuel Zook** got behind enemy lines and found that Confederate Maj. Gen. John B. Magruder was conducting an elaborate deception, making it appear that he had significantly more troops than he actually had.

Online Civil War Games

Looking for something to do while self-isolating during the pandemic? Check out these online Civil War games.

[John Tiller Software's wargame series Civil War Battles](#) contains 14 different campaigns. These are just a few:

[Campaign Chickamauga](#)

[Campaign Atlanta](#)

[Campaign Gettysburg](#)

[Campaign Petersburg](#)

[Campaign Vicksburg](#)

Each battle is a separate game available for purchase.

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PO Box 15750

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THE RUNNER is the official monthly newsletter of the CFCWRT.

If you have member news or news about Civil War events that you think would be of interest to the CFCWRT membership, send an email with the details to the editor, [Sherry Hewitt](#). Thank you.

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table is a non-profit organization made up of men and women who have a common interest in the history of the Civil War. The meetings include a speaker each month covering some aspect of the Civil War. This serves our purpose of encouraging education and research into that historical conflict.

Click here for membership information: [Membership Application](#)