



The Newsletter of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table — Vol. XXXIII, Issue 5, MAY 2026

HISTORIAN AND NPS RANGER RICH CONDON SPEAKS ON “EMANCIPATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH” AT THE MAY 14th, 2026 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Mark Trbovich

Emancipation in the Department of the South sheds light on a pivotal chapter in both the Civil War and our own history. During the waning months of 1861 a joint operation between the United States Army and Navy forced wealthy white planters and Confederate troops from the Sea Islands of South Carolina. The Battle of Port Royal Sound, better known as the day of the “Big Gun Shoot” by the local enslaved population, marked the beginning of a new era: the transition from a slave society to a free one. Within months the liberating army expanded their footprint in the Deep South, moving inland toward the port cities of Charleston and Savannah. Limited access to additional troops, however, necessitated the recruitment of bonds people from the region, thus setting the tone for the emancipated doing the emancipating throughout what would come to be known as the Department of the South.

Rich Condon is a public historian from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a graduate of Shepherd University. For over a decade, he has worked with a multitude of sites and organizations, including the Battle of Franklin Trust, Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum, Harper's Ferry

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, May 14, 2026

6 P.M. Social Hour

**7 P.M. In-person at the
Centreville Regional Library &
Streamed on Facebook Live**

GUEST SPEAKER:

Rich Condon

TOPIC:

“Emancipation in the Department of the South”

National Historical Park, the Flight 93 National Memorial and the National Park Service. Rich has written for *Civil War Times Magazine*, the *Civil War Monitor*, the American Battlefield Trust, as well as *Emerging Civil War*, and operates the Civil War Pittsburgh blog. He currently lives in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Rich is a contributing writer for the *Pennsylvania in the Civil War* blog, and Director of Civil War Pittsburgh - an organization focused on education and preservation regarding Western Pennsylvania's role in the American Civil War.

Come join us early at our May 14th, 2026 Membership Meeting to have an opportunity to chat with Rich and your colleagues before the meeting begins. Doors open at 6:00 PM; hope to see you there.

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The **Bull Run Civil War Round Table** publishes the **Stone Wall**.

Newsletter Team: Sandra Cox, Janet Green-tree, Melissa Winn, Debbie and Mark Whitenton.

For meeting dates and other information, please visit the Web site: <http://bullruncwrt.org>

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

For the **June 2026 issue**, e-mail articles by **June 1st** to the editor, Don Richardson, at: don.richardson@erols.com

ADVERTISEMENT SUBMISSION DEADLINE

For the **June 2026 issue**, advertisers please see "Instructions for Advertisers" at: <http://bullruncwrt.org> and e-mail ads by **June 1st** to Don Richardson at: don.richardson@erols.com

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- May 14** Rich Condon - "Emancipation in the Department of the South"
- June 18** Patrick Falci - "30th Anniversary of the Making of the Gettysburg Movie"
- July 9** Scott Mingus - "Human Interest Stories from the Gettysburg Campaign"
- August 13** Frank O'Reilly - "Last Days of Stonewall Jackson"
- September 10** Bill Backus - "Opening Manassas: The Iron Brigade, Stonewall Jackson, and the Battle of Brawner Farm, 28 August 1862"
- October 8** Bryan Cheeseboro - "Early Days of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, from Fort Sumter to 1st Bull Run"
- November 19** Lisa Samia - "Nameless & Faceless of Manassas & Gettysburg"
- December 10** Jonathan Jones - "Opium Slavery: Civil War Veterans And America's First Opioid Crisis"

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By **Melissa A. Winn**

Happy Spring! It's my favorite season and offers us a fitting moment to reflect on renewal — not only in the landscape around us, but in the continued vitality of Civil War study and preservation. This month's meeting is a perfect example of that energy, and I'm especially pleased to highlight a speaker who represents the future of our field.

We are honored to welcome Rich Condon, a young historian whose work exemplifies the depth, curiosity, and expanding perspectives that continue to shape Civil War scholarship. His presentation, "*Emancipation in the Department of the South*," will explore a critical and often underrepresented dimension of the war. By examining the complexities of emancipation policy and practice in this region, Rich brings forward a more complete and inclusive understanding of the conflict and its consequences. It is exactly this kind of thoughtful, diverse history that keeps our conversations meaningful and relevant. I hope you will join me in giving him a warm Bull Run Civil War Round Table welcome.

I would like to extend a tremendous thank you to two of our dedicated members, Jerry Watson and Dan Lundeen. Jerry and Dan have undertaken the meticulous, labor-intensive task of cataloging our book collection. Their work has been nothing short of extraordinary. With the recent addition of more than 560 volumes donated by John Scully (thank you, John!), this is no small effort, and their attention to detail ensures that these resources are rightly allocated and useful for the membership! We are deeply grateful for their commitment.

As a result of their efforts, you'll begin to see an exciting expansion of our book sales at upcoming membership meetings. Be sure to take a look — there will be many new titles available, offering something for every interest. We are also exploring opportunities to make these books more widely available. Every purchase supports the operations of the BRCWRT, helping us to bring in engaging speakers and sustain our programs, including for preservation and scholarship. It's a great way to grow your own library while supporting the organization.

Our April meeting featured Dr. Curt Fields and Thomas Jessee portraying Generals Grant and Lee. We thank them for their most enlightening presentation!



General Robert E. Lee (Thomas Jessee) and General Ulysses S. Grant (Dr. Curt Fields), live from Appomattox!
(Photo: Janet Greentree)

On a personal note, I regret that I will miss this month's meeting. I will be traveling to Galena, IL, to take part in the town's 200th anniversary celebration during its annual history symposium. Galena holds a special place in Civil War history as the home of nine Union generals, including Ulysses S. Grant and my personal favorite, John A. Rawlins, about whom I will be presenting during the weekend's events. It promises to be a meaningful and inspiring weekend, and I look forward to sharing more about the experience with you all soon.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Thank you, as always, for your continued enthusiasm, support, and dedication to preserving and exploring Civil War history. I look forward to seeing many of you at future meetings—and hearing all about this month's program. Huzzah!



Hello everyone, and thank you for the kind welcome to the BRCWRT. I'm Beth Wheeler and I grew up in New Jersey, went to school at Lynchburg College in Virginia, and after graduation moved to Lackawanna County, PA. I have two children: Emily, 19, is finishing up her Freshman year at Wilson College; and Thomas (TJ), 14, who is finishing up 8th Grade at Gettysburg Middle School. We moved from Northeast PA to Gettysburg in June 2023 when I found a job with a law firm in York.

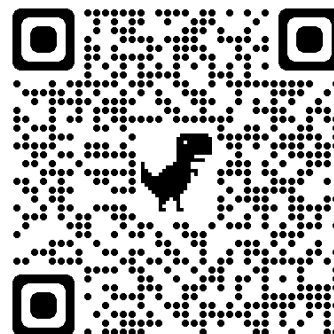
My love of history began in the 6th Grade when we spent the entire year on American History, with the end of year movie shown being *Glory!* As a reward for doing a good job, my parents purchased the VHS set of Ken Burns' Civil War Series. I grew up near several Revolutionary War Battlefields in NJ, and I have always enjoyed learning about that time in our history. I am the Vice-President of the Gettysburg Civil War Round Table, and a member of several other Civil War Round Tables. I am interested in James Longstreet - I learned we are distantly related! I also have an interest in the civilian and medical aspects of the war. I recently joined the Blue Gray Hospital Association, and I'm a background artist in the upcoming film "Gettysburg 1863"!

SUPPORT BRCWRT ACTIVITIES

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that relies on your donations to continue our excellent programs and initiatives throughout the year. There are many programs to donate to, including the BRCWRT Scholarship Fund, Preservation efforts, Civil War Trails sign preservation and maintenance, educational programs, and of course the General donation category (which the Round Table uses as a fund to offset various expenses, to help keep our membership dues at a reasonable rate). Please consider your Round Table for tax-deductible donations every year. (We also accept donated Civil War prints to auction for the benefit of the Scholarship Fund.) We appreciate our members very much.

There are a number of ways to make a donation. On the BRCWRT website, click the link labelled "Renew/Donate" and select the link at the bottom of that page. Alternatively, you can give a check to our Treasurer at a membership meeting, or mail it to: BRCWRT Treasurer, PO Box 2147, Centreville VA 20122. Make checks payable to BRCWRT, and be sure to note whether it is for the Scholarship Fund, Preservation Fund, or the General Fund.

Finally, you can scan this QR code with the camera on your smartphone to make a donation.



Bull Run Civil War Round Table



Upcoming 2026-2027 Program of Events

Date	Event
May 14, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Rich Condon - "Emancipation in the Department of The South"
June 13, 2026	Spring Tour 2: "Harpers Ferry: Bolivar Heights Battleground & Kennedy Farm" Tour leader Kevin Pawlak (rain date June 20th)
June 18, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Patrick Falci - "30th Anniversary of the Making of the Gettysburg Movie"
July 9, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Scott Mingus - "Human Interest Stories from the Gettysburg Campaign"
August 13, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Frank O'Reilly - "Last Days of Stonewall Jackson"
September 10, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Bill Backus - "Opening Manassas: The Iron Brigade, Stonewall Jackson, and the Battle of Brawner Farm, 28 August 1862"
October 8, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Bryan Cheeseboro - "The Early Days of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, from Fort Sumter to 1st Bull Run"
October 17, 2026	Fall Tour: "Civil War Alexandria (AM) / Fort Ward (PM)" Tour leaders Don Hakenson and Chuck Mauro (rain date October 24th)
November 19, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Lisa Samia - "Nameless and Faceless of Manassas And Gettysburg"
December 10, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jonathan Jones - "Opium Slavery: Civil War Veterans And America's First Opioid Crisis"
January 14, 2027	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jared Peatman - "Hell of a Regiment: The 20th Maine"
February 11, 2027	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Edward J. Hagerty - "Soldier of the South: Lieutenant General Richard H Anderson at War and Peace"
March 11, 2027	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Theodore Savas - "Handshakes, Gambling, & Gunpowder: How George W. Rains and Jefferson Davis Changed the Course of the Civil War"
April 8, 2027	Monthly Meeting Speaker: TBD
May 13, 2027	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Dean Calbreath - "The Sergeant: Nicholas Said, a Union Army Sergeant"
June 10, 2027	Monthly Meeting Speaker: TBD

Monthly Meetings in "Black" Tours/Field Trips & Special RT Events in "Red" County or outside sponsored events in "Green"

PRINT FOR SALE AT THE MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

At our May 14th Membership Meeting there will be another BRCWRT fundraiser for our Scholarship program by selling a quality Civil War print. We are offering "There Stands Jackson Like A Stone Wall. Rally Behind The Virginians" by the noted historical artist Dick Richardson. (This was supposed to happen at the March meeting, but the weather forced us to go fully virtual that evening.)

The painted scene is right at the point where Jackson's brigade went into its first action against the oncoming Union army that was in pursuit of some of the retreating Confederates at the Battle of First Manassas.

This signed print is 22" x 17", is unframed and is like new. This 1986 print is not offered on eBay, but a copy is advertised on WorthPoint for \$100. However, the Round Table is asking just \$70 for this print, which has been donated by Blake Myers.



Harpers Ferry “Beyond the Raid”

(BRCWRT Caravan Tour)

Saturday, June 13, 2026

(Rain Date Saturday, June 20, 2026)



TOUR STOPS:

- September 1862 Battle of Harpers Ferry – Confederate positions at Bolivar Heights, Schoolhouse Ridge and Murphy House.
- Allstadt House – raided by John Brown (time permitting).
- Kennedy Farm and farmhouse – John Brown raid headquarters.
- Harpers Ferry Brewery.

TOUR GUIDE: Kevin Pawlak – Historic Site Manager, PWC Office of Historic Preservation. Member, Bull Run Civil War Round Table.

COST: Up to four passengers per vehicle free with NPS America the Beautiful pass, Harpers Ferry standard or annual vehicle pass, or \$20. No cash accepted.

MAXIMUM ATTENDEES: 25

MEET: 8:00 AM at Centreville Library or self transport. Arrive at Harpers Ferry 9:45. (See Marching Orders for location address.) Tour starts at 10:15 AM.

TRANSPORTATION: Caravan from Centreville or self transport to Harpers Ferry main gate parking.

DRESS: Appropriate dress for local weather conditions. Wear comfortable walking shoes, minimal walking required.

LUNCH: 2:15 PM Harpers Ferry Brewery - pizza and beer. Individual tabs. No outside food or beverage allowed.

TOUR DURATION: Approximately 8 hours including lunch and drive from and to Centreville. Arrive back to Centreville at approximately 4:30 PM.

SIGN UP ONLINE: See the top of the Round Table webpage, <https://brcwrt.org>

BRCWRT Contact: Gary Haskins – haskins_gary@yahoo.com, 703-850-2108



PRESERVATION CORNER

By Blake Myers

Photos by Blake Myers
unless otherwise noted



Greetings BRCWRT Members and Friends. The current update on the Prince William Digital Gateway (PWDG) is provided below.

Prince William Digital Gateway (PWDG)

As readers will recall, two lawsuits challenged the Prince William Board of County Supervisors' (PW BOCS) December 12-13, 2023 approval of three rezoning applications for the PWDG. The applications changed the zoning of land parcels of about 1,700 acres along Pageland Lane from Rural/Agricultural to Industrial/Technical, allowing up to 37 data centers along the Pageland Lane corridor and directly adjacent to Manassas National Battlefield Park and Conway Robinson State Forest.



Rendering of proposed PWDG Data Center Campus depicting data center site schematics in relation to adjacent historic sites

The lawsuits filed by the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) and the Coalition to Protect Prince William County, and by the Oak Valley Homeowners Association (HOA) assert that the process used by the PW BOCS to inform PWC residents of the scheduled public hearing and the substance of the rezoning applications was not compliant with the applicable Virginia law and PWC zoning ordinance. The requirement is for public hearings to be advertised twice over a two-week period and placed no fewer than six days apart and not less than five days before the public hearing.

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PRESERVATION CORNER

The ABT lawsuit was dismissed at a demurrer hearing, ruling that the advertisement of the Board's meeting was indeed defective, but that it complied with the "savings" provisions of applicable laws pertaining to the notice. ABT appealed that ruling. The Oak Valley HOA lawsuit's hearing denied a request to dismiss the case, ruling that the plaintiffs had "standing" to proceed, and ruled that the advertised notices provided by the County did not comply with the applicable Virginia Code or PWC Zoning Ordinance, that the plans, ordinances and amendments referenced by the advertised notices were not made available to the public, and that the Board of Supervisors approval of the Rezoning Applications was void. The Board of Supervisors and its co-defendants Compass and QTS appealed that ruling.

Prior to the appeal hearings the Virginia Court of Appeals ruled to stay the decision by the Prince William Circuit Court, which had voided the rezonings, allowing pre-construction work that included planning for Pageland Lane upgrades and a promised trail network, and coordination with utility (power, water, etc.) providers in planning for extending service to the Pageland Lane area. Currently no utility infrastructure (power, water, gas) needed to support any industrial development exists in the Pageland Lane area. The Court also agreed to expedite the appeals and to consolidate the appeals of the two lawsuits.

On February 24, 2026 a Virginia Court of Appeals three-judge panel heard the appeals, and on March 31, 2026 unanimously ruled in favor of the Oak Valley HOA and the ABT. However, the impact of the Court of Appeals ruling and the PWDG's fate was not clear, as the Oak Valley ruling voided the Prince William County Board of Supervisors rezoning decision, while the ABT ruling dismissed the case. And it was not known whether Prince William County or the developer-defendants Compass and QTS would pursue an appeal to the Virginia Supreme Court, but the parties had thirty days from the Court of Appeals ruling to file an appeal.

On April 14, 2026 the Prince William County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution to withdraw from the Digital Gateway lawsuit, thereby not pursuing an appeal to the Virginia Supreme Court. On April 29, 2026 Compass Datacenters indicated it would not appeal the Virginia Court of Appeals' March 2026 ruling, while QTS announced it would appeal the ruling to the Virginia Supreme Court.

The QTS appeal will be heard by a panel of three Virginia Supreme Court justices, who will conduct a 20-minute session in late May or early June in which they will hear brief arguments from QTS for each of the two lawsuits/legal challenges. There is no set timeline as to how soon after the panel that the Supreme Court will make a decision. The plaintiffs in each case have until May 21, three weeks from the QTS decision to appeal, to file opposition to the QTS petition. So, the PWDG lawsuit remains an ongoing case - stay tuned for future developments. A huge thanks to those who have joined in actions to protect Manassas Battlefield and Conway Robinson State Forest from encroachment by the PWDG.

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, Civil War historic preservation in general and in BRCWRT's preservation projects, actions, and activities.

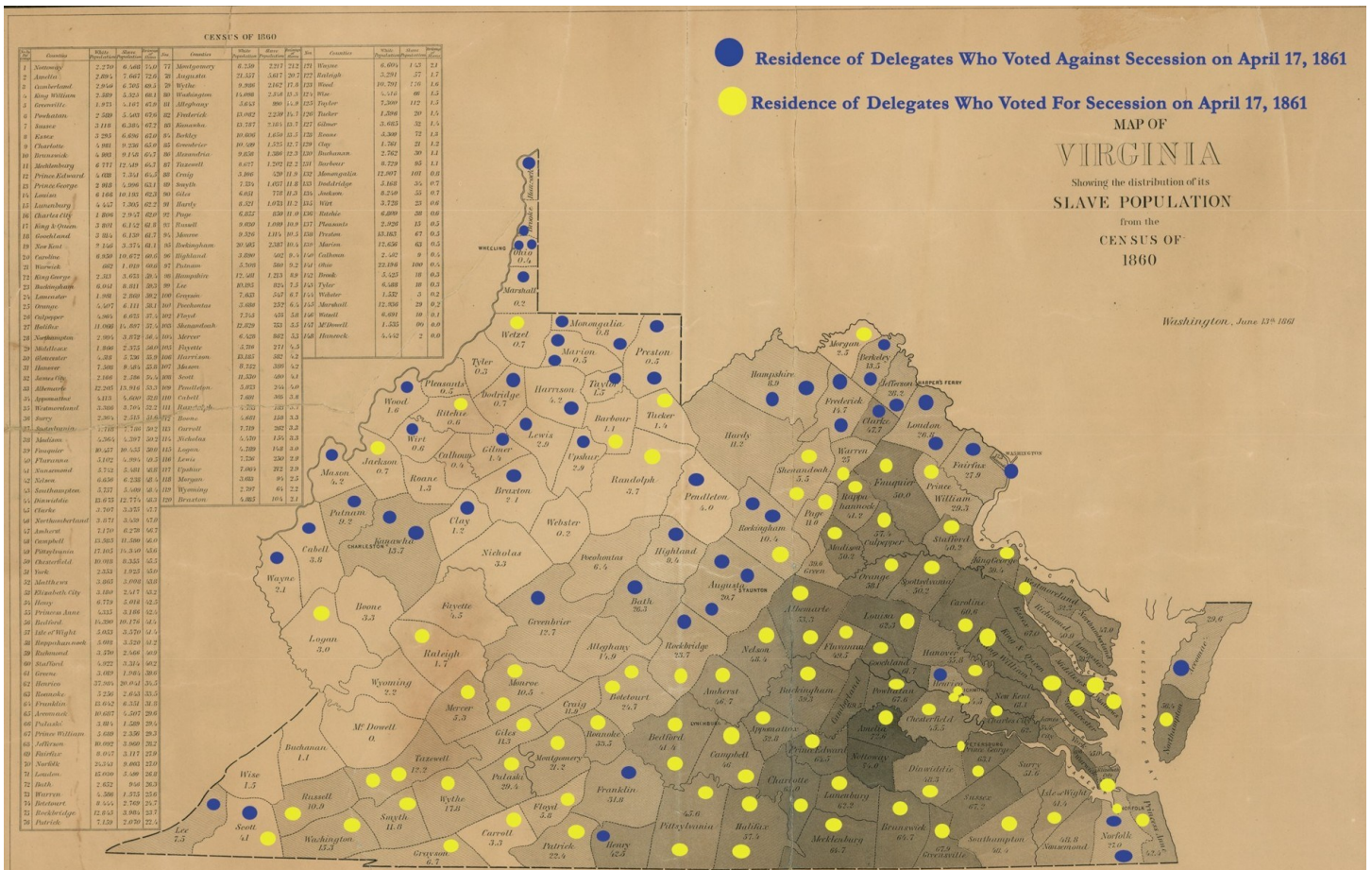
Blake Myers, BRCWRT Preservation Committee

IMAGE OF THE MONTH

By Don Richardson

Maps are a great way to present data in a manner that has a greater impact on the viewer's understanding. One such map illustrates the geographical distribution of the votes cast by delegates to Virginia's Secession Convention in April of 1861. The 152 members were elected from House of Delegates districts in early 1861 and spent several months debating their options. While all delegates firmly stood by the institution of slavery, only a minority were for immediate secession. Two other factions existed: Unconditional Unionists, who felt that secession was wrong and counterproductive under all conditions; and Conditional Unionists, who wanted to delay secession as long as President Lincoln did not take offensive action against the South.

On April 4th, 1861, an initial vote on secession failed by a tally of 45 to 90. On April 12th, Confederate forces in Charleston SC fired on Fort Sumter, forcing Lincoln to call for volunteers to suppress the rebellion. This in turn swung momentum in the Convention behind secession, with the final vote coming on April 17th. The 88-55 tally is neatly represented by the map below, showing the residences of the delegates in favor of succession (yellow) and opposed (blue).



Credit: Library of Virginia

2026 BRCWRT SCHOLARSHIP WINNER: KAIELY MORALES

By John Carter

The 2026 Bull Run Civil War Round Table College Scholarship winner is Kaiely Morales. Kaiely is a graduating senior at West Springfield High School and will be attending the University of Virginia this fall. She plans to major in Civil Engineering with a minor in Environmental Engineering. While not a history major, Kaiely describes how she combines engineering with her love of American history. "I find different historical sites with infrastructure interesting because it gets me thinking about the society and the civilization that lived on the ground before me, and the engineers who created these sites. I want to create locations where people can live, work, and thrive which combine functionality with lasting impact." This is reflected in her essay, *Fairfax Station: A Lifeline and Strategic Crossroads in the Civil War*. She combined a brief history of the newly-developed railroad industry with its economic and social impact on the Fairfax Station community in Fairfax County. She focused on its use during the Civil War as a part of the military supply line and its use for the evacuation of sick and wounded soldiers.

Kaiely maintains a 4.430 cumulative grade point average in a challenging academic curriculum, which includes nine AP courses and a dual-enrollment US & Virginia History class through Northern Virginia Community College. Her AP Senior Seminar paper included a presentation on "Architectural Historical Preservation." Her leadership roles include the vice president of the Rising Global Citizen, the president of the Equity Club, a National Honor Society officer, and a Virginia Spanish Honor Society officer. She also served as a Fairfax County Student Human Rights Commissioner. Kaiely was selected for the Virginia Residential Governor's School for STEM. In her church, she served as a bilingual translator, as well as a volunteer working with their homeless shelter outreach, and was a missionary volunteer at an orphanage.



Our 2026 Scholarship Winner, Kaiely Morales (L) with her mother, Kattia Morales

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SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

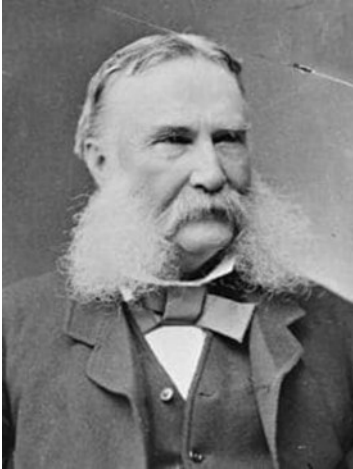
Kaiely has won numerous awards for her creative work in her technology projects, including first place in her school’s National History Day for creating an animated ten-minute documentary on how Walt Disney’s art served as a turning point in history. Her dual enrollment United States History teacher noted that “she regularly engaged with class material and discussions in ways that elevated the learning experience for everyone. Her ability to engage with diverse perspectives has made her a valued member of group assignments.” Her scholarship interview showed how she can also engage at a personal level in discussions with any audience. She answered questions in depth and even answered the next question the committee was planning to ask. Kaiely spoke in a stream of consciousness, where she gave the basic answer to the question then seamlessly connected it to her experiences and observations in related areas. In turn, she asked questions of the committee members and about the Round Table.

At the core of Kaiely’s academic experience is her commitment to personal service and leadership to both her community and to the wider circles of community across the state. Her technological skills, and later her engineering skills, will become the platform for her to effect change. Her earlier statement, “I want to create locations where people can live, work, and thrive which combines functionality with lasting impact,” best defines her direction for the future. Kaiely will be attending our June 18th Membership Meeting to receive her award, so be sure to come meet this talented young lady.

BRISTOE STATION BATTLEFIELD SPRUCED UP

If you haven’t been out to Bristoe Station recently, you should come on by! The recent Park Day activity included building rail fencing around the 10th Alabama cemetery and repairing the worm fencing along Bristow Road, clearing brush around another cemetery and along the 1862 battle trail, and putting a roof on the reproduction log cabin that has been a long-term project for the Park’s leadership. Tours will run on the 2nd and 4th weekends of the month, through October. See you there!





A postwar view of James Longstreet (Library of Congress)

JAMES LONGSTREET'S UNFILTERED OPINIONS ABOUT BATTLES AND GENERALS IN 1862

By Kevin Pawlak

(Reprinted from *Emerging Civil War* by permission)

James Longstreet was a prolific chronicler of his experience in the American Civil War. He wrote on the topic extensively, from articles in *Century Magazine* to his own well-known memoir, *From Manassas to Appomattox*. Thus, many of Longstreet's postwar thoughts on the events he participated in and the soldiers he led and fought alongside are well-known.

During my research, I stumbled upon an article from the *Washington Post* in 1893. Newspaper correspondent Leslie J. Perry accompanied Longstreet and other Civil War veterans to the Antietam battlefield, where the old soldiers traveled "to definitely settle the positions of some of the general's troops during the battle of September 17, 1862." Perry claimed Longstreet's mind was still strong in his 73rd year, but his right arm hung limply and useless from the general's shoulder due to his wound at the Battle of the Wilderness and he had to use a "speaking tube" to hear the conversations around him.

Perry had the privilege to hear Longstreet talk "unreservedly" about many topics related to the war. Perry recognized the value of Longstreet's words and thankfully for posterity wrote them down. Fortunately, too, Longstreet did not mind them being printed. ("Gen. Longstreet as a Critic," *Washington Post*, June 11, 1893, page 10.)

The article is quite long, and Perry queried Longstreet's opinion on topics ranging from battles to leaders to the Confederate prosecution of the war. Since most of my interest is in 1862, I have edited out sections not relevant to that topic. Below are the excerpts of Perry's conversations with Longstreet related to Antietam, Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, Jefferson Davis, Second Manassas, "Stonewall" Jackson, and more.

THREE SHOTS AT ANTIETAM

In riding to and fro over the Antietam field Gen. Longstreet's memory was refreshed by the scene of the great battle. When the spot where the Union general, Israel B. Richardson, was mortally wounded was pointed out to him the Confederate veteran casually remarked: "There were for our side three lucky shots fired on this field. I mean the ones that eliminated Hooker, Mansfield, and Richardson. They were the aggressive fighting generals on the Federal side, who menaced us. After the last of the three fell there was practically an end of serious offensive operations for the day on that side."

(cont on page 14)

JAMES LONGSTREET UNFILTERED

LEE AND MCCLELLAN

I was aware that Gen. Longstreet had originally disagreed with Gen. Lee in the fall of 1862 as to the advisability of making the Harper's Ferry campaign, the preliminary movements of which he proceeded to explain and criticise somewhat. This led naturally to a discussion of the merits of the two commanders in the operations culminating in the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. One of our party put this question:

"Do you think, general, as has been alleged, that Gen. Lee's low estimate of the Federal commander was the reason for his extraordinary dispositions in the Harper's Ferry campaign?"

"Perhaps so. Lee's experience with McClellan on the peninsula certainly must have tended to give him confidence in any collision with that officer. Gen. Lee, as a rule, did not underestimate his opponents, or the fighting qualities of the Federal troops. But after Chancellorsville he came to have unlimited confidence in his own army, and undoubtedly exaggerated its capacity to overcome obstacles, to march, to fight, to bear up under deprivations and exhaustion. It was a dangerous confidence. I think every officer who served under him will unhesitatingly agree with me on this point."

To some further suggestions, Gen. Longstreet replied, "Gen. Lee had a certain respect for Gen. McClellan, who had been his subordinate in the old Engineers. But I judge that this feeling assumed somewhat the shape of patronage, like that of a father toward a son. He never feared any unexpected displays of strategy or aggressiveness on the part of McClellan, and in dealing with him always seemed confident that on the Federal's part there would be no departure from the rules of war as laid down in the books."

PLANNING FOR DEFEAT

"What estimate do you place upon Gen. McClellan, Gen. Longstreet? Was he considered on your side as a man of real capacity?" I asked.

"At first we were anxious about him and the great and well-disciplined army he was gathering. But with his first operations toward Manassas and on the Peninsula, his true character became manifest. We learned that McClellan was only dangerous by reason of his superior numbers. Like Gen. Lee, he was greatly learned in the theory and science of war; he knew how to fight a defensive battle fairly well. But in offensive tactics he was timid and vacillating and totally lacking in vigor. In these particulars he was diametrically the opposite of Lee. McClellan instinctively overestimated his enemy and underestimated his own resources to meet that enemy. He was always planning, it seems to me, of the necessities in case of defeat, not with a view to victory.

"McClellan commenced too high up, in fact. He should have begun as the colonel of a regiment. He was undoubtedly something of an organizer and a good drill master. He had a great opportunity here on this Sharpsburg field—no general could ask for a better. Commanding a greatly superior army, opposed to an enemy divided by the Potomac, the Shenandoah, and the Blue Ridge into four weak, isolated parts whose

(cont on page 15)

JAMES LONGSTREET UNFILTERED

location he absolutely knew from Gen. Lee's written dispositions, which had accidentally fallen into his hands, McClellan's failure to not only relieve Harper's Ferry, but to destroy at least one of the segments of Gen. Lee's army must be considered about the most disastrous failure of the war on either side.

"Properly Gen. McClellan should have merely threatened D. H. Hill at Turner's Pass, and poured his troops through Crampton's Gap upon McLaws' and Anderson's rear, with the Potomac River and the Harper's Ferry garrison in their front. There was no escape for them, and by this movement Harper's Ferry would have been wrested from our clutch. Instead McClellan elected to turn northward upon us and fight at Turner's Pass, where he lost eighteen hours, and then, after another delay of over thirty-six hours, to attack me in a chosen position behind the Antietam. Sharpsburg was the greatest single day's battle of the war, and involved the greatest losses on both sides.

DAVIS' FEAR IN 1862

"Strange to relate, President Davis held a high opinion of Gen. McClellan's military capacity, and trembled for the safety of Richmond in the spring of 1862. Personally I had not much regard for him in the field. At the very outset I predicted that he would be fully a month getting ready to beat Magruder's 7,000 men on the Peninsula, and proposed that meanwhile we make a flank movement against Washington by crossing the upper Potomac. The suggestion was not well received, and Mr. Davis even seemed to be offended at my cavalier opinion of McClellan."

THE SECOND MANASSAS FIGHT

A discussion of Antietam and Gen. McClellan without including Gen. Lee would be like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. In fact, during all this talk Gen. Lee was naturally a central object of interest. I finally propounded this question to the general:

"Gen. Longstreet, which do you consider Gen Lee's best battle?"

"Well," responded the general, reflectively, "perhaps the second battle of Manassas was, all things considered, the best tactical battle Gen. Lee ever fought. The grand strategy of the campaign also was fine, and seems to have completely deceived Gen. Pope. Indeed, Pope failed to comprehend Gen. Lee's purpose from start to finish, and, on August 30, when I was preparing to push him off the Warrenton pike, he still imagined us to be in retreat, and his most unfortunate movements were based on that false assumption. Had Pope comprehended the true situation as early as the afternoon of August 28, as I think he ought, it might have gone hard with Jackson before I arrived. Pope was outgeneraled and outclassed by Lee, and through improper dispositions his fine army was outfought. Still, it will not do to underrate Pope; he was an enterprising soldier, and a fighter. His movements in all the earlier stages of that campaign were excellent for his purpose to temporarily hold the lines first of the Rapidan and then the Rappahannock. In the secondary affair with Banks at Cedar Mountain we had gained quite a success, yet Pope promptly concentrated and forced Jackson back again over the river."

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JAMES LONGSTREET UNFILTERED

I said to the general that I thought the world generally would agree with him as to that campaign, and then asked him in which of the battles he thought Lee displayed his poorest generalship.

He promptly answered, "Although it is perhaps more supererogation to express my views, yet I will give them to you for what they are worth. I have always thought the preliminary dispositions to capture Harper's Ferry, involving as a corollary the battles of South Mountain and Antietam, were not only the worst ever made by Gen. Lee, but invited the destruction of the Confederate army. I was opposed to the movement because his plan and the topography of that vicinity made necessary the division of our army into four parts in the immediate presence of a superior enemy. But chiefly owing to the timidity if not incapacity of the Federal commander, and somewhat to the prestige we had gained on the Chickahominy and along Bull Run, we captured Harper's Ferry and escaped with a drawn battle. Tactically, as usual, Lee fought a good defensive battle at Sharpsburg with greatly inferior numbers and withdrew at his leisure across the Potomac without molestation.

LEE'S MILITARY ATTRIBUTES

"General Lee was a large-minded man, of great and profound learning in the science of war. In all strategical movements he handled a great army with comprehensive ability and signal success. His campaigns against McClellan and Pope fully illustrate his capacity. On the defensive, Gen. Lee was absolutely perfect. Reconciled to the single purpose of defense, he was invincible. This is demonstrated by his Fredericksburg battle, and again in the Wilderness, around Spotsylvania, at Cold Harbor, and before Petersburg.

"But of the art of war, more particularly that of giving offensive battle, I do not think Gen. Lee was a master. In science and military learning he was greatly the superior of Gen. Grant or any other commander on either side. But in the art of war I have no doubt that Grant and several other officers were his equals. In this field his characteristic fault was headlong combativeness; when a blow was struck, he wished to return it on the spot. He chafed at inaction; always desired to beat up the enemy at once and have it out. He was too pugnacious. His impatience to strike once in the presence of the enemy, whatever the disparity of forces or relative conditions, I consider the one weakness of Gen. Lee's military character.

"This trait of aggressiveness," continued Gen. Longstreet, after a pause, "led him to take too many chances—into dangerous situations. At Chancellorsville, against every military principle, he divided his army in the presence of an enemy numerically double his own. His operations around Harper's Ferry and Antietam were even worse. It was among the possibilities for a bold, a penetrating, fighting commander like Grant to close the war in the East after Antietam. Our previous losses had been heavy; the morale of the army was low, and it was reduced by that battle and straggling to less than 30,000 effectives, whereas McClellan had fully 80,000, quickly reinforced to over 100,000. About this time Gen. Lee officially informed the Richmond authorities of his great fear that the army was in danger of actual dissolution from straggling and desertion."

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JAMES LONGSTREET UNFILTERED

PUGNACITY AGAINST STRATEGY

In the immediate presence of the enemy Gen. Lee's mind, at all other times calm and clear, became excited. The same may be said of McClellan, Gustavus Smith, and most other highly educated, theoretical soldiers. Now, while I was popularly called a fighting general, it was entirely different with me. When the enemy was in sight I was content to wait for the most favorable moment to strike—to estimate the chances, and even decline battle if I thought them against me."

CONTROVERSIES OVER GETTYSBURG

"What were your relations with Gen. Lee subsequent to Gettysburg, general, were they as cordial and confidential as before?" I asked.

"Every bit," the general answered quickly and unhesitatingly. "They continued to be of the closest and most affectionate character. I was unaware of the slightest diminution of confidence in my military judgment. These friendly relations continued until long after the close of the war. My disagreement with him about some of the details of the Gettysburg campaign had no more effect to estrange us than my descent from the Sharpsburg tactics of the previous year.

RAPIDITY OF JACKSON

"General, what about Stonewall Jackson? Was he as great a man as the people of the South thought?"

"Jackson was undoubtedly a man of military ability. He was one of the most effective generals on our side. Possibly he had not the requirements in a commander-in-chief, but no man in either army could accomplish more with 30,000 or 40,000 men in an independent command. But in joint movements he was not so reliable. He was very self-reliant, and needed to be alone to bring out his greatest qualities. He was very lucky in the success of his critical movements both in the second Manassas campaign and at Chancellorsville."

Subsequently in the conversation Gen. Longstreet said: "I suggested to Gen. Lee that Stonewall Jackson be sent to the Trans-Mississippi instead of Kirby Smith, as the best fitted among all the Confederate generals to make headway against the Federals in that region. The suggestion met with Gen. Lee's approbation, but Lee wanted Jackson himself."

HILL AS A CURLED DARLING

"Did Gens. Early, Ewell, or A. P. Hill size up anywhere near Jackson as leaders in independent command?"

"Not by any means," replied Gen. Longstreet. "Hill was a gallant, good soldier. There was a good deal of 'curled darling' and dress-parade about Hill: he was uncertain at times, falling below expectations, while at others he performed prodigies. A division was about Hill's capacity."

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JAMES LONGSTREET UNFILTERED THE MENACE OF JOHNSTON

“I had a high regard for them all. Gen. Johnston was one of the ablest generals the war produced. He could handle a large army with ease. But his usefulness to the South was greatly impaired by the personal opposition of the President. He dared take no risks on account of this ‘fire in the rear,’ fearing that he would not be sustained, perhaps discredited before the world. A menace like that will paralyze the best efforts of any commander in the field. Gen. Johnston never had a fair trial.”

HISTORIC BLENHEIM CIVIL WAR INTERPRETIVE CENTER REOPENS

By Don Richardson

Looking for something local to fill a few hours? The Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim has reopened! The Center, including the gallery and replica attic that features Union soldier graffiti, is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 AM to 3 PM. Visitors are also welcome to enjoy the Historic Blenheim grounds and interpretive signage. A free guided tour of the Historic Blenheim house’s first floor and historic landscape will be offered on Saturdays at 1 PM. Tour is limited to 15 people, so groups of 4 or more should call 703-591-0560 to schedule.

Blenheim was built around 1859 and was the home of the Willcoxon family. Learn about their lives, the experience of the soldiers who left their marks on the walls, and the struggles of the enslaved laborers owned by the family.

Historic Blenheim is located at 3610 Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax, VA.





2026 PRINCE WILLIAM HISTORY LECTURE SERIES

January 22

Desegregation in Northern Virginia Libraries

Chris Barbuschak and Suzanne S. LaPierre
Old Manassas Courthouse, 9248 Lee Ave, Manassas

March 26

**Shipwreck on the Potomac: Disaster in Pursuit
of Lincoln's Killer**

Karen E. Stone
Old Manassas Courthouse, 9248 Lee Ave, Manassas

May 28

**'Better Known than Acknowledged':
The Lees of Stratford and the Cause of Liberty**

Dr. Gordon Blaine Steffey
Williams Ordinary, 17674 Main St, Dumfries

July 23

**Opening Manassas: The Iron Brigade, Stonewall
Jackson, and the Battle on Brawner's Farm,
August 28, 1862**

Bill Backus
Pat White Center at Ben Lomond
10501 Copeland Dr, Manassas

September 24

Cold War Virginia

Francis Gary Powers Jr. and Christopher Sturdevant
Old Manassas Courthouse, 9248 Lee Ave, Manassas

November 19

True Crime Prince William County in the 1950s

Zachary G. Ford
Occoquan Town Hall, 314 Mill St, Occoquan
703-792-1731

Each program is free and will begin at 7 pm

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You may use PayPal by going to http://brcwrt.org/?page_id=962 and then emailing this form to BRCWRTtreasurer@gmail.com. Note that \$1 is added to cover the PayPal fee.

-OR-

You may pay by check, made payable to: BRCWRT (Bull Run Civil War Round Table) and give the form and check to the President or Treasurer at a General Membership meeting.

-OR-

You may mail this form and the check to:

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Are there any BRCWRT activities you would like to help with (tours, selling used books, member recruitment, newsletter articles, annual picnic)?

Do you have any suggestions for additional BRCWRT activities? _____