

Banner

of the **Blue and Gray**

Newsletter of the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable
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<http://frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org>



202nd Meeting

March 2011

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Sesquicentennial Diary

Lincoln finally takes charge



Lincoln's first inauguration, March 4, 1861

March 1861 — March 4 dawned clear and sunny as Abraham Lincoln of Springfield, IL, prepared to take office as the 16th President of the United States.

In the 119 days between his election and inauguration, the President-elect had watched helplessly as the lame-duck Buchanan administration did little to preserve the Union, and the nation moved steadily toward war.

On Election Day, there was no Confederate government and no states had seceded from the Union. On Inauguration Day, four months later, the Confederacy was in place and seven states had seceded. As Lincoln took the oath of



office — under heavy guard and in the shadow of the partially built Capitol dome — the first Confederate flag was raised over the Confederate Capitol dome in Montgomery, AL.

Lincoln had time to carefully craft his speech, and the country lawyer eloquently made his case to the nation. Speaking directly to the South, he stated unequivocally that secession was illegal and he would not negotiate with the Confederacy, which he deemed an illegal entity. He affirmed his commitment to protect the property and places

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Happy St. Patrick's Day!

March Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 2011

7:30 PM

at the

National Museum of Civil War Medicine

48 East Patrick Street

Frederick, Maryland 21701

Speaker: Dr. Gary Miller

Subject: *Insects and Their Effect on the Civil War*

Our Speaker

Entomologist, author, and lifelong student of the Civil War, Gary L. Miller, Ph.D., combines his scientific knowledge with his love of Civil War history in examining the insects that were considered pests at the time but, in fact, were carriers of diseases that felled many more soldiers than bullets or cannon shot.

In an article published in the *American Entomologist*, Dr. Miller writes: "At the call to arms, communities throughout the North and South began assembling troops. It was evident that insects also were amassing with the soldiers."

Significantly, what was not evident at the time was recognition of the fact that insects carried germs that caused infections and life-threatening illnesses. Soldiers discovered early on that one of their major foes would be the hordes of flies, mosquitoes and lice that permeated the camps.



As the insect population multiplied in the unsanitary conditions of the camps, the scourge of flying and crawling pests became a frequent topic in letters home. One Confederate soldier wrote: “When we open our eyes in the morning we find the canvas roofs and walls of our tents black with them [flies] . . .” Mosquitoes and flies, which played a key role in transmitting killer diseases such as dysentery, cholera and typhoid, found a perfect breeding and feeding ground in the fetid trenches and mounds of refuse surrounding the camps. The insects thrived unabated throughout the War.



Clockwise from top left: An insect-breeding trench at Petersburg, VA; hospital beds in Washington, D.C., draped with mosquito netting; and, attempts to control lice by boiling clothes.

Lice, also, were a constant, common irritation for officers and enlisted men alike. According to Dr. Miller, the troops socialized as they went about the tedious task of delousing their clothing and bedding.

The overall statistics tell the tale. Dr. Miller writes, “Among the estimated 620,000 deaths, nearly twice as many soldiers died from disease as did in battle.”

Dr. Miller, whose interest in the Civil War pre-dates Kindergarten, grew up in Pennsylvania Dutch country. He earned his Ph.D. from Auburn University in 1991. Currently, he is a Research Entomologist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Systematic Entomology Laboratory in Beltsville, MD.

Along with publishing over 100 scientific articles and giving over 100 talks on all aspects of entomology, including insects in the Civil War, Dr. Miller is active in Scouting and received awards of merit from both the Boy Scouts of America and the American Red Cross for saving the life of a gunshot victim. He and his wife, Melissa, also an entomologist, live in Laurel, MD.

Dr. Miller is currently writing a book on the influence of insects on the Civil War.

The Prez Sez



Happy St. Patrick's Day to all of you! In our case, the "wearing o' the green" refers to our grandson Keith's Army Military Police uniform! His graduation in February was a treat for us to attend — and our pride runs deep.

Interesting fact: The official U.S. Army Military Police Corps Insignia features their shield topped by two crossed pistols. These pistols are Model 1806, .54 caliber, single-shot, smooth bore Harper's Ferry flintlock pistols, manufactured at the Harper's Ferry, VA (at the time) armory and the first pistol manufactured by a national armory.

Thanks again to my capable Board, especially Phil Dean and Jeff Arey, for filling in for Dottie and me in fine form at last month's meeting.

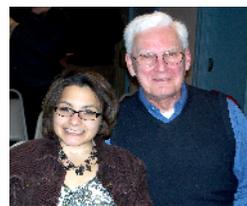
I'm sure you will enjoy this month's speaker, Gary Miller, who will discuss and inform us about an interesting and fairly unusual subject: Insects and their Effect on the Civil War. I'm looking forward to it. Invite a friend and join us!

Donnie

Next Month's Speaker

At our next meeting, Thurs., April 21, at 7:30 pm, at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Jim Dunbar will discuss the Civil War Prison Camp at Point Lookout.

At last month's meeting . . .



At February's meeting, we were delighted to welcome and recognize our web designer, Aynex Mercado. Working with FCCWRT Board Member and Webmaster Jack Brennan, Aynex has donated her artistic talents in developing, designing and launching our new website, www.frederickcountycivilwarrt.org.

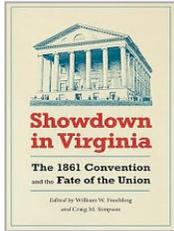
A native of Puerto Rico, Aynex is a freelance graphic and web designer living in Frederick, MD. Aynex works in various media including print, videos, web design and even quilts. To see samples of her work and learn more about Aynex, go to www.aynex.com/index.html. And, thank you, Aynex, for giving us such a great website!

Another special treat at our February meeting was Dr. Walter Powell's fascinating insider's view of the birth and development of a new historic museum — the David Wills House in Gettysburg.

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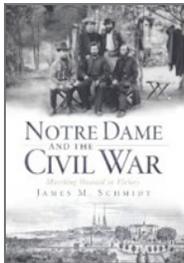
The Bookshelf

Showdown in Virginia: The 1861 Convention and the Fate of the Union, edited by William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson. Map, bibliography, chronology, headnotes, 210 pp., 2010, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA,



The road to secession in Virginia was long and arduous during early 1861. Unlike states of the Deep South that decided to secede within days, Virginia's convention was a tug-of-war between pro-Secessionists from the central and southern portion of the state and pro-Unionists from the northwest. The debate raged on for months, producing a prodigious volume of speeches. Editors William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson have compiled 14 of the major convention speeches — eight Unionist and six Secessionist — giving readers, historians and students an accurate view of the riveting drama in Richmond that spring. Virginia finally seceded on April 17, in the wake of Fort Sumter. But as late as April 4, a motion to secede was defeated by a vote of 88 to 45. This highly accessible volume is an enlightening contribution to the record of the Civil War.

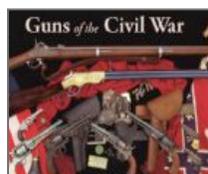
Notre Dame and the Civil War: Marching Onward to Victory, by James M. Schmidt. Illustrated, photographs, charts, notes, 144 pp., 2010, The History Press, Charleston, SC.



Notre Dame has distinguished itself in many areas other than its legendary football heroes. But little has been written about the university's involvement in the Civil War, beyond the legendary Father Corbin's blessing at Gettysburg. Author Jim Schmidt's new book fills that gap. From the outset, the Catholic institution fully supported the Union cause, volunteering priests to serve as chaplains and sisters to nurse the wounded. In 1864, Gen. William T. Sherman's wife, a pious Catholic, moved to South Bend, IN, far from the fighting, and enrolled her children in studies at Notre Dame. Sherman promised the school would always be dear to him and, in gratitude, spoke at the June 1865 commencement.

A chemist and research scientist, the author has been writing about the Civil War for 15 years. His medical column regularly appears in the *Civil War News*. This succinct book, the author's third on the Civil War, gives readers a well-documented and well-written account of Notre Dame's active role in the War.

Coming soon . . .



In honor of the Sesquicentennial, David Adler, award-winning author and leading authority on historic firearms, has created an exquisitely detailed history of the era's guns and gunmakers. This outstanding book is richly illustrated with more than 350 color photos. The book is available for pre-order on Amazon.com and is due in bookstores in April.

Calendar of Events

March 1-31, Exhibit, Frederick, MD, 8:30am-5pm

Exhibit exploring how the women of Frederick County were affected by the Civil War, particularly by the Battle of Monocacy, July 9, 1864. Monocacy National Battlefield Visitor Center. No fee. For information, www.nps.gov/mono/index.htm.

March 12, Lecture, Frederick, MD, 2-3pm

"Patriots in Petticoats" lecture at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (NMCWM). Betsy Estilow, NMCWM board president and co-founder of the Society of Women and the Civil War, will discuss Southern women's contribution to Civil War medicine. At the NMCWM, part of the Feb.-Sept. monthly lecture series. Free with Museum admission. For information: 301-695-1864, www.CivilWarMed.org.

March 12, Lecture, Point of Rocks, MD, 2pm

Civil War historian and FCCWRT Board Member and Archivist Jack Sheriff will discuss "Battle of South Mountain, Battle of Crampton's Gap, Sept. 14, 1862," at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Kick-off lecture of the 2011 Point of Rocks Community Historical Society's Civil War series. For information: 301-834-9907.

March 19, Cyclorama Program, Gettysburg, PA, 5-6:30pm

"An Evening with the Painting," Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center. History and conservation, and the artist's vision. Sponsored by the Gettysburg Foundation. For further information and tickets: 877-8742428, www.gettysburgfoundation.org.

April 2, Civil War Trust National Park Day, Frederick County, MD

Annual volunteer battlefield and historic sites clean-up day at participating locations:

- **Monocacy Battlefield**, Frederick, 9am, rain or shine.
- **Pry House Field Hospital Museum**, Keedysville, Antietam National Battlefield, 10am, light refreshments, no rain date.
- **South Mountain State Battlefield**, Middletown, 9:45am, lunch or dinner, rain or shine.

Volunteers are asked to bring work gloves and dress for outdoor work. For information and links to each location: www.civilwar.org/aboutus/events/park-day.

April 11, Holzer lecture, Washington, DC, 6:30pm

Renowned Lincoln and Civil War scholar Harold Holzer will discuss the Battle of Fort Sumter. At the National Press Club, Holeman Lounge. Admission: \$5 for non-members; free for NPC members. Reservations required. For information, 202-662-7523 or email opus@press.org.

Ramblings from the Raffle Table

Friends, the drawing for our Special Raffle book, *Matthew Brady* by Barry Pritzker, will be held at this meeting. You still have a chance to buy, so come visit our table before the meeting! Also, our 3/\$1 Raffle is always interesting — something new at every meeting! Come join in the fun!

We are so fortunate to have members and friends who continually donate new or gently used books and other articles pertaining to the American Civil War for our Raffle Table. Two of the most recent donors are Adele Air and Adrian Tudor. Many thanks to Adele and Adrian — and to all those generous souls who support our Raffles.

Many thanks also to my fellow Board Member, Jeff Arey, for taking care of our Raffle Table last month in my absence.

Dottie

Last month's meeting (continued from Page 2)



Dr. Powell described this process based on his involvement in the planning, restoration, and furnishing of the Wills House Museum — a joint venture between the Borough of Gettysburg and the National Park Service. Dr. Powell's illustrated presentation gave us a behind-the-scenes look into the challenging aspects of this project, including undertaking numerous architectural changes to the historic house.

Many Wills Family members were contacted in order to obtain the authentic furniture and fixtures that were in the house in November 1863 when President Lincoln spent the night there prior to delivering brief remarks at the dedication of the new National Cemetery at Gettysburg. Lincoln's 246-word speech, perhaps the best-known in U.S. history, was the "*Gettysburg Address*."

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belonging to the government (such as Fort Sumter), but vowed not to initiate aggression stating, "You can have no conflict, without yourselves being the aggressors." While firm in his convictions, Lincoln also struck a conciliatory tone. He tried to reassure the South, promising not to interfere with slavery in the states where the practice was in place, and to uphold each state's right to decide the issue.

In closing, he reached out to the rebel states in a fervent appeal to "the better angels of our nature," reminding them, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies."

For the most part, Lincoln's reassurances and impassioned plea to the South to avoid war were met with angry silence.



Shortly after the inauguration, when the Confederacy sent emissaries to Washington, Lincoln flatly refused a meeting.

As March wore on and the troops trapped at Fort Sumter inched toward starvation, Lincoln weighed his options: Sending reinforcements would be an act of aggression and break his inaugural promise; surrender was unthinkable, and doing nothing could seal the fate of 86 men. On March 31, with only two weeks' rations left at Fort Sumter, he issued an order to send provisions to the garrison. At the very least, it would force the hand of the Confederacy.

Six days later, a sizable fleet of supply ships embarked for Charleston Harbor.

MISSION

TO cultivate and preserve Frederick County's Civil War heritage and broaden the understanding of the Civil War Era and its impact on our nation.

TO explore the many facets of the Civil War from the battlefield to first-person narratives, including guest lectures by writers and historians.

TO support historical projects and activities aimed at increasing public interest and appreciation of our Civil War history, both locally and nationally.

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