

# Banner

## of the **Blue and Gray**

Newsletter of the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable  
Frederick, Maryland  
Founded January 30, 1989



<http://frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org>

211th Meeting

March 2012

Vol. 38 Issue 7

### Sesquicentennial Diary

#### **THE BATTLE OF THE IRONCLADS**



By early March of 1862, a long, cold winter in camp had dispelled any hope that the War would end quickly and hardened the resolve of both sides. Lincoln was fast losing patience with General McClellan's reluctance to act, and the South was withering under the yearlong Union blockade.

On March 8, The CSS ironclad *Virginia*, usually referred to as the *Merrimack* because it was built from remnants of the abandoned Union ship, set out to break the stranglehold of the Union blockade of the upper James River that cut off Richmond and Norfolk, Va. During the afternoon, the *Merrimack* succeeded in destroying two of the Union wooden-hulled ships manning the blockade and was preparing to finish off the USS *Minnesota*, which had run aground, when darkness came. The Confederates suspended fire, with the intent of attacking again at first light.

During the overnight lull, the Union's ironclad *Monitor* steamed into position to defend. When the *Merrimack* arrived in the morning, it now faced a worthy opponent — one outfitted with a unique revolving turret that housed two large Dahlgren guns enabling the armored gunboat to fire in many directions without constant maneuvering to take aim. What ensued is considered by many to be the most important naval battle of the War.

(Continued on page 4, see **Ironclads**)



### **March Meeting**

**Thursday, March 15, 2012**

**7:30 PM**

*at the*

**National Museum**

**of Civil War Medicine**

**48 East Patrick Street**

**Frederick, Maryland 21701**

**Speaker: Dr. Dean Herrin**

**National Park Service Historian,**

**Catoctin Center for Regional Studies Coordinator**

**Subject: *The new "Crossroads of War"***  
*Civil War website*

### **Our Speaker**



National Park Service Historian and NPS Coordinator and Co-founder of the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies Dean Herrin will introduce us to the Center's new website, "Crossroads of War: Maryland and the Border in the Civil War," and preview its many special features. The website is part of a much larger initiative that includes the award-winning semi-annual magazine

*Catoctin History*, tours, conferences, educational programs, and a lecture series.

The "Crossroads of War" website tells the broad story of the Civil War Era in this region, from Gettysburg and Chambersburg down through mid-Maryland, and beyond the

the Potomac into Virginia and West Virginia. As Dr. Herrin points out, the Frederick area was a classic microcosm of the issues and conflicts that were at the heart of the Civil War.

“It’s an important and complex story,” he said, noting that slave holders, abolitionists, and Union and Confederate supporters and soldiers all lived side by side in this area. The website will explore the region’s complex interweaving of race, politics, sectional division, and conflict that characterized the Civil War era.

Included in the rich historical content on the new website are animated battle maps, an interactive map of historic sites, videos, historical essays, searchable databases of historic newspapers and Civil War soldiers, and a trove of digital images. The mission of the website is to provide an in-depth historical archive of the Civil War in our unique border region.



This new and exciting website is one of several projects spearheaded by the Catoclin Center for Regional Studies, a collaborative effort of the National Park Service and Frederick Community College, co-founded in 1998 by Dr. Herrin to promote the research and study of the history and culture of Central Maryland and adjacent region.

Dr. Herrin is also the author and editor of several books on American engineering and technology achievements, including *America Transformed: Engineering and Technology in the Nineteenth Century: Selections from the Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service*, a visual study of 19<sup>th</sup> Century innovation in engineering and technology that transformed an agrarian nation into the world's leading industrial nation. He is a graduate of Brown University, holds a Master’s degree in Early American Culture and a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Delaware.

The new “Crossroads of War” website will be freely accessible to the public.

### Next Month’s Speaker

At our next meeting, April 19, 2012, at 7:30 pm, Dennis E. Frye, Chief Historian, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, will discuss his newly published book, *Harpers Ferry Under Fire: A Border Town in the American Civil War*.

### The Prez Sez



Members, at February's meeting we had a very special visitor, Liz Shatto, Director of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage, Frederick County Tourism Council. Liz made the official presentation to us of the \$1,300 grant awarded to our Roundtable to help fund our project of the Civil War Trails Marker on US 40W. FCCWRT Treasurer Bob Kozak happily accepted the grant on our behalf. The Roundtable will match this grant from our own coffers.

Bob and his committee, Jack Sheriff, Jim Enright and Gail Stephens, are working hard to see that this project is accomplished. Your membership dues and participation in all of our fundraisers will make this and future projects possible, so do continue to be involved. FCCWRT projects are always a group effort, and we thank all our members and friends for your unfailing support.

Also, let me remind you of two special events this month to which we are all invited:

On March 24, 10 am, the Civil War Medal of Honor Remembrance Ceremony at the Quinn Chapel of the A.M.E. Church; and, March 27, 7:30 pm, the FCCWRT special meeting at the BJORLEE Museum on the grounds of the Maryland School for the Deaf.

**Donnie**

### At last month’s meeting. . .



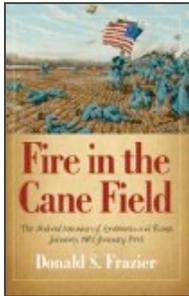
**Elizabeth Scott Shatto, Director of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area presents FCCWRT Treasurer Bob Kozak with a \$1,300 grant to fund installation of a Civil War Trails Marker commemorating the Battle of Frederick, July 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 1864.**



**One of our largest crowds enjoyed NPS Park Ranger and Historian John Reid’s fascinating program on the significance of the two Battles of Manassas.**

## The Bookshelf

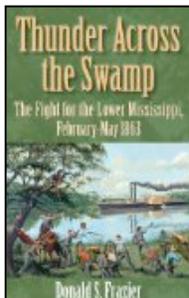
*Fire in the Cane Field: The Invasion of Louisiana and Texas, January 1861-January 1863*, and *Thunder Across the Swamp: The Fight for the Lower Mississippi, February 1863-May 1863*, by Donald S. Frazier. First two volumes in a series of four. Illustrated, maps, photos, bibliography, notes, index, State House Press, Buffalo Gap, TX.



The first of award-winning author Donald S. Frazier's planned Louisiana Quadrille series, *Fire in the Cane Field* is an excellent book that stands on its own merits and also serves as a riveting introduction to the series. A major portion of the book focuses on the Union attempt to end Confederate resistance in New Orleans leading to the city's fall in April 1862.

The author also describes in dramatic detail the critical Battle of Galveston, New Year's Day, 1863 in which the Confederates recapture the island — a battle he calls “one of the great turning points” in the Louisiana-Texas theater.

Nor does he neglect the human aspect of war. Drawing from diaries and other primary sources, he portrays the plight of homeless plantation owners and recounts how refugee slaves with dreams of freedom found themselves returned to their masters as hired hands.



In his widely acclaimed *Thunder Across the Swamp*, the second book in the series, Frazier continues his study of the War that raged West of the Mississippi. Picking up where the first book ends, he begins with the Union's loss of Galveston and focuses primarily on the little known months-long Bayou Teche campaign of 1863, which resulted in one of the most brutal

massive raids in Civil War history as thousands of Union soldiers plundered the rich resources of the bayou area.

The author's exceptional research and writing ability bring to life Gen. Nathaniel Banks' grueling campaign of gunboats, cavalry and infantry in this largely unheralded struggle for control of Louisiana west of the Mississippi.

In filling this gap in Civil War history, Frazier has uncovered previously unpublished primary sources and given historians and readers alike a gripping, definitive account of the rugged land and water campaign to control the Lower Mississippi.

The author's tremendous success here raises expectations for the next volumes in the series. Titles to follow include; *Blood on the Bayou: The Campaigns of Tom Green's Texans, June 1863-February 1864*; and, *Death at the Landing: The Contest for the Red River and the Collapse of Confederate Louisiana, March 1864-June 1865*.

## **SAVE THE DATE — TUESDAY, MARCH 27!**

### **Special Program at the new BJORLEE MUSEUM**

We're in for a treat! On Tues., March 27, at 7:30 pm, FCCWRT members and guests are invited to a program at the BJORLEE MUSEUM, located on the campus of the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD),



101 Clarke Place in downtown Frederick. Hosted by museum Director Chad Baker, the program will feature Linsay Darnell, a deaf Civil War reenactor, who will present “Deaf Soldiers in the Civil War.” His lecture will be interpreted for us by a sign language translator.

Following the presentation, Director Baker will give us a brief overview of the BJORLEE MUSEUM's displays related to the early history of Frederick, the role of the property during the Civil War, and the founding and growth of the MSD. Retired MSD Principal and a longtime educator of the deaf, he currently serves as director of the Hessian Barracks and BJORLEE museums and is writing the history of the Maryland School for the Deaf.

### Calendar of Events

#### **Mar. 10, Maryland Reenactor Workshop, 8:30 am-4 pm, Frederick, MD**

Living Historians/Reenactors Workshop, National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Skills & knowledge presenters. \$55. Information: 301-695-1864, [www.CivilWarMed.org](http://www.CivilWarMed.org).

#### **Mar. 22, Lecture, 7 pm, Manassas, VA**

“Return to Return to Bull Run — An Author's Reflections on the Battle and Book after 20 Years,” John Hennessy. Free. For information: 703-792-4754.

#### **Mar. 24, Civil War conference, 9-3, Westminister, MD**

15<sup>th</sup> annual Maryland and the Civil War: A Regional Perspective conference, Carroll Community College. Keynote address, sessions & exhibits. Fee includes lunch. For information: 410-848-6494, [www.hscc.carr.org](http://www.hscc.carr.org).

#### **Mar. 24, Remembrance Service, 10 am, Frederick, MD**

Civil War Medal of Honor Remembrance Service honoring Sgt. Decatur Dorsey, Company B, 39<sup>th</sup> USCT, who served at Petersburg, VA. Quinn Chapel, A.M.E. Church.

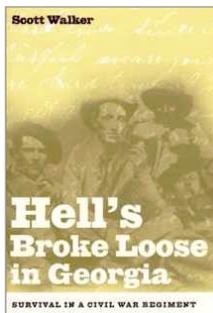
#### **Mar. 29, Civil War Class, 6:30-9:30 pm, Westminister, MD**

“Shiloh Bloody Shiloh” class, Carroll Community College. \$35; David Booz instructor. For information: 410-386-8100, [www.carrollcc.edu/instantenrollment](http://www.carrollcc.edu/instantenrollment).

(Continued on page 4, see **Calendar**)

## Ramblings from the Raffle Table

Friends, at February's meeting we held the drawings for three of our FCCWRT caps. Winners were: Bill Cunningham, Bill Gallagher, and Phil Wingert. Congratulations to all of you, and what a deal you got!



We have no Special Raffle this month, but as always we will have our expanded and much-fun 50-Cent Raffle with items such as Scott Walker's outstanding history of the 57<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry. Check out the Raffle Table and buy your tickets before our program begins — and the Luck O' the Irish to you!

Please note also that our Raffle Table will not be in operation at our special March 27th meeting at the Bjorlee Museum. However, if you are bringing a donation for our raffle, find me or any Board member and we will gladly accept it, with many thanks.

Hope to see you there!

**Dottie**

## Ironclads (Continued from Page 1)

Throughout the afternoon of March 9, the two warships exchanged fire at close range, but most shots simply bounced off each other's iron hulls. The *Monitor*'s revolving turret remained in tact as it continually spun and fired at the *Merrimack*.



Deck of the USS *Monitor*, 1862

Late in the day, the *Monitor*'s captain, Lt. John Worden, was struck and temporarily blinded by a shell that exploded in the pilot house, and the ship briefly retired to assess internal damage. When the *Monitor* was ready to re-engage, the officers saw the *Merrimack* in retreat, leaking badly and steaming toward the Elizabeth River.

The great Battle of the Ironclads had ended in a draw.

Neither ironclad survived the year. Two months after the battle, the *Merrimack* was set ablaze by its crew in advance of the Union take-over of Confederate shipyards at Norfolk. The following December, the *Monitor* sank during a powerful gale off Cape Hatteras, NC. The wreck of the *Monitor* was discovered in 1973 and its engine and turret are on display at the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Va.

Although not a clear victory for either side, the battle forever changed the nature of naval warfare and sounded the death knell for wooden ships as war-fighters. The production of ironclads immediately accelerated and by the end of 1862, a squadron of ironclad "monitors" was on duty enforcing the Union blockade.

## 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.

## 2011-2012 Board of Directors

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<b>Jeff Arey</b> , Director <a href="mailto:jeff.arey@comcast.net">jeff.arey@comcast.net</a>	301-874-2609

Communications, dues, questions or comments for the Roundtable should be directed to:

**FCCWRT**

**P.O. Box 3232, Frederick MD 21705-3232**

[www.frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org](http://www.frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org)

## Calendar (Continued from Page 3)

### Mar. 31, Medical Program, 11-4, Frederick, MD

Exhibit & talk on medical accoutrements by Union surgeon Mark Quattro, National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Free. For further information: 301-695-1864, Ext 14, [www.CivilWarMed.org](http://www.CivilWarMed.org).

### Mar. 31, One-Day Seminar, 8:30-4, Hagerstown, MD

Four lectures by noted area historians, lunch & panel discussion, Hagerstown Community College. \$61 includes materials, lunch, registration; \$56, Seniors. To register: 240-500-2236; [www.hagerstowncc.edu/coned](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/coned).

### Mar. 31, Annual National Civil War Trust Park Day

Volunteer to help clean up and restore our parks. Contact [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org) or your local National Park.