



# Banner of the Blue and Gray

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

257th Meeting

February 2017

Volume 43, Issue 6

## February 16, 2017, 7:00 PM National Museum of Civil War Medicine 48 E. Patrick St, Frederick, Maryland



**Speaker: Michael Ross**

**Topic: Reconstruction,  
continued.**

In his presentation, Professor Michael Ross of the University of Maryland will discuss the role President Andrew Johnson played in undermining efforts to bring a new social, political, and economic order to the South after Appomattox. Ross will argue that Johnson's wrongheaded and inflexible Reconstruction policies had an extraordinary impact on American History and the meaning of the Civil War. This is a continuation of Mr. Ross' presentation from 2015.

Michael Ross is a Professor of History at the University of Maryland at College Park where specializes in the Civil War Era and U.S. Legal History. He is the author of two prize-winning books: *Justice of Shattered Dreams: Samuel Freeman Miller and Supreme Court during the Civil War Era* (LSU Press 2003) and *The Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case: Race, Law, and Justice in the Reconstruction Era* (Oxford University Press, Fall 2014). The *Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case*, his most recent work, received favorable reviews in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and other periodicals, was a selection of the History Book Club, and won the 2014 Kemper Williams Prize and the 2014 New Orleans Public Library Foundation Choice Award for Non-Fiction. Professor Ross has also written numerous articles in academic journals, four of which have won "best article" prizes. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Supreme Court History* and has served as historical adviser to the United States Mint. He holds a law degree from Duke University and earned a Ph.D. in History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



## In Case You Missed It.....

Steven Stotelmyer spoke about McClellan's tarnished reputation as a fearful general who was slow to move and too timid to fight. Stotelmyer disputed this negative assessment based on his study of period accounts and soldiers' letters that speak of McClellan's bravery, his ability to move troops quickly, his intelligence, and his tenacity in the field. At Antietam, McClellan attacked Lee despite believing he was outnumbered, and he scored a much needed victory for the Union. He achieved his three primary objectives at Antietam: 1) Protect D.C. and Baltimore; 2)

Prevent the Confederates from entering PA; and 3) Force Lee back to VA.

When asked by his Secretary Hay why he didn't just remove McClellan, Lincoln is reported to have replied that we: "Use the tools we have and McClellan is too useful to sacrifice." Look for Steven's new book on McClellan, *Too Useful to Sacrifice* to be published soon.

***Provided by FCCWRT member, Lucy Tannozzini***



## FCCWRT SNOW POLICY

The winter storm season is upon us. Due to foul weather conditions, we may need to cancel our monthly meeting. If Frederick County Schools and/or the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (meeting location) announce closures for the afternoon/evening of the meeting our meeting will be cancelled. We will make every attempt to send an email and Facebook notification as soon as the cancellation decision is made. Please use your best judgment in making safety your top priority.

## Ramblings from the Raffle Table

February, the precursor of Spring, a month that can waft warm teasing breezes against your cheek and the next day slap you with sleet & snow. I usually have to burrow through snow to see if my snowdrops are blooming, But fair February is also the month of Love. Valentine's Day was probably invented to relieve the seasonal boredom. Since most of our members are of the male persuasion I thought I would insert a reminder that there are expectations by the fairer sex for at least a mushy greeting card. (Yes, there were Valentine's Day cards during the Civil War – I am not off topic.) I like chocolate myself but not roses (tulips are so lovely - hope my husband reads this!). It's personal taste so pay attention to her likes & dislikes before you pull out the 'plastic'. Just sayin' .....

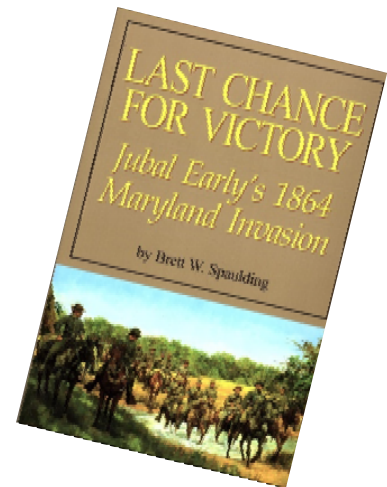


My February offerings (thanks to Matt's generosity) are **not** Civil War romance novels:



Remember Reno by William F. McConnell- General Jesse Reno lead the IX Corps into battle at Fox's Gap on Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. If he had not fallen that fateful day the newly restored bridge at Antietam Creek would now be called Reno Bridge and so the history of the battle of Antietam would be changed forever. Another "what if..." that we love to ponder. This book will fill you in on one of the Union Army's most capable but forgotten heroes.

Last Chance for Victory by Brett Spalding is all about 'our backyard' as Lee sent Jubal Early through our corner of the world in one last defiant campaign toward Washington, DC. The heroic effort reached right into the capitol's defences. Follow reading this book with a family visit to Monocacy Battlefield to inspire the next generation of Roundtable Members.



Wishing all of you a Happy Valentine's Day, *Kathi*



## NEARBY FEBRUARY EVENTS

### **February 4 at 2:30 PM- African American Surgeons of the Civil War Era**

An in-depth look at African American medical practitioners before and during the Civil War, including their medical education and their service in the Union Army.

National Museum of Civil War Medicine, 48 East Patrick Street, Frederick, MD 21701

### **February 12 at 1:00 PM- Middletown's Town Talks: A 250th Commemorative Event**

A roundtable discussion of Middletown's African American community.

Catoctin Construction, 100-104 West Main Street, Middletown, MD 21769

### **February 23 at 7:00 PM- Remembering Africa in Western Maryland, 1750 - 1865**

Learn how enslaved western Marylanders kept alive memories of Africa in this free Hood College Center for the Humanities program.

Whitaker Commons, Hood College, 401 Rosemont Avenue, Frederick, MD 2170

### **February 7, 14, 21- Mercy Street Viewing Parties, the Second Season**

Contact the National Museum of Civil War Medicine for details.

### **February 23- Carroll Community College, Programs on the Siege of Petersburg and Sherman's March to the Sea. (See college website for details and costs.)**

## **The following programs are scheduled for the Gettysburg Winter Lecture Series in February:**

### **Saturday, February 4- "...one of the most brilliant victories of the war turned into one of the most disgraceful defeats...." The Fatal Halt at Cedar Creek**

Following one of the riskiest and most audacious assaults of the entire American Civil War, Lt. Gen. Jubal Early and his Army of the Valley seemingly won an improbable victory at Cedar Creek. Yet by nightfall, the Confederate army had suffered a near complete defeat and was in full retreat. What caused this stunning reversal was the most controversial decision Early made during the entire 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign, if not his entire military career. Known simply as "The Fatal Halt," this decision instantly generated acrimonious debate that continued for decades. Eric Campbell, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP

### **Sunday, February 5- "The Dawn of Peace"- Grant, Lee and the Lore of Appomattox**

On April 9, 1865, a stoic General Robert E. Lee examined the terms written by General Ulysses S. Grant, leaned over the table and signed his name in agreement. It was the end of the Army of Northern Virginia and signpost of the last gasp of the Confederacy. What the two generals took away from their meeting in Wilmer McClean's parlor and the events that followed have been revered and retold, sometimes quite differently from the reality of the occasion. Legends are often more intriguing than reality and we'll examine a few of those legends, separating fact from fiction in the troubled peace that followed. John Heiser, GNMP

### **Saturday February 11- The Controversial Court Martial of Fitz John Porter**

After the Battle of Second Manassas, Porter garnered much of the blame for the defeat. He was subsequently court martialed and cashiered for his conduct during the battle. He spent the next 25 years trying to exonerate his name. Matt Atkinson, GNMP

**Sunday, February 12- "A Simple Hop, Skip, and Jump?" Burnside and His Bridge at Antietam: A Reexamination**

Major General Ambrose E. Burnside ranks among the most maligned generals of the American Civil War and much of the criticism leveled against him stems from his actions during the September 17, 1862, Battle of Antietam, and especially his efforts at storming the Burnside Bridge. But is this popular criticism of Burnside fair? Join John Hoptak for a new look at the role and actions of Ambrose Burnside and the soldiers of his 9th Corps during the war's Bloodiest Day. John Hoptak, GNMP

**Saturday, February 18- On the McClellan Go Round—George McClellan and the Antietam Campaign**

George Brinton McClellan—one of the Civil War's most controversial and disliked generals—has been the subject of scorn and derision for decades. Frequently near or at the top of "worst generals" lists, historians typically use words such as coward, traitor, or foolish to describe this former commander of the Army of the Potomac. But is the story we all seem to know so well correct? Does George McClellan deserve the reputation he has today? Join Ranger Dan Vermilya for a look at McClellan's actions in the pivotal Antietam Campaign, the most important of McClellan's military career, to see why when it comes to the "Young Napoleon" history tends to be ruled by perceptions and not realities. Daniel Vermilya, GNMP

**Sunday, February 19- Longstreet & Huger: The Battle of Seven Pines, May 31 - June 1, 1862**

The battle of Seven Pines cannot be considered a Confederate success. Who was to blame? Was it James Longstreet, Benjamin Huger, or someone else? This program will examine some of charges and counter-charges made at the time and in the years since the battle and will explore how historians have interpreted the event. Karlton Smith, GNMP

**Saturday, February 25- A Load of Buell? Another Look at The Cannoneer**

Many stories have been spun about the American Civil War; some of them better than others. In the modern marketplace, everything from AK-47 wielding Confederates to a vampire-slaying Lincoln permeates the battlefields in search of profit. With this as a backdrop, let us re-evaluate the scorned story of one soldier of the Union in "A Load of Buell?" - Another Look at The Cannoneer. Bert Barnett, GNMP

**Sunday, February 26- Thomas Francis Meagher**

From his exile to Van Diemen's Land to the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death, Thomas Francis Meagher's life was captivating and mystifying. Dedication to his men was unquestionable, but rumors of overindulgence darkened his reputation both on and off the battlefield. Join Angie Atkinson as she delves into Gen. Meagher's complicated history and examines some of the lingering questions regarding his leadership, actions, and untimely passing. Angie Atkinson, GNMP

**This list is by no means all inclusive. You can always use our Facebook page to connect with members taking their own tours during the month. The winter is a great time to explore local battlefields without the crowds of foliage that can block views. What better way to explore local battlefields and historic sites than to go with your fellow members!**

## **BOOK REVIEW by Matt Borders**

Dennis Fry, *Antietam Revealed: The Battle of Antietam and the Maryland Campaign As You Have Never Seen It Before*, 198 pp. photos, notes, bibliography, index, maps. \$12.00 (paper), ISBN: 0963774573

The Maryland Campaign, and the Battle of Antietam in particular, had been often overlooked by historians of American history and of the American Civil War in particular until the Centennial of the War, when *Gleam of Bayonets* by James Murfin was published in 1965. The next major work on the campaign had to wait until 1983 when Stephen Sears published his work *Landscape Turned Red*. There would be almost a 20 year lull at that point with new works on the Maryland Campaign not coming out until after 2000. One of those was *Antietam Revealed* in 2004, by Harper's Ferry National Historic Site historian Dennis Fry. Regardless of documentation on any subject, the subtitle for *Antietam Revealed* was a bold statement, *The Battle of Antietam and the Maryland Campaign as you have never seen it before*.

*Antietam Revealed* begins with several pages of introduction by the author explaining his background, his ties to the region and his deep love for the subject matter of the book. Mr. Fry explains that the vast majority of the information he is presenting comes from the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Vol. XIX, which contain the actual after action reports of the participants, both Union and Confederate alike. Mr. Fry has taken these often lengthy reports and percolated them down to their relevant information and compared these statements against one another to help determine, as close as possible, what actually happened on the battlefields of the Maryland Campaign. The book then covers each of the major engagements of the campaign, starting with Harper's Ferry, moving to South Mountain, Antietam and even touches on the retreat to Shepherdstown. These engagements often occurred as a result of an earlier action or even at the same time as another battle in the campaign and Mr. Fry does not fail to mention this either.

The statement that the book will reveal the campaign to the reader as never before comes from the authors own revelations as he poured over the official records. While this is very much the case and there is always more to learn on any subject, the real revelation to me was actually how the book was put together. It is not an actual paragraph and chapter book, but instead a list of 1865 bullet points about the Maryland Campaign, broken down into nine chapters. To be honest I would not have chosen this book as a study of the Maryland Campaign unless I was gearing up for a paper, test or presentation on the campaign, which I am. The structure is great for researchers and interpreters, folks who are looking for specific information to be given with a presentation, but the bullet point structure of the book, while making it a fast read, is not necessarily conducive to those who are looking for a good narrative study of the campaign.

*Antietam Revealed* is a great book for those who already have a grasp of the campaign and are looking to dive deeper into minutia. The relatively small size of the book makes it great for throwing into a pack and hiking the field, giving the reader a chance to delve into some of the specific details while on the battlefields of the Maryland Campaign without lugging around a copy of OR Vol. XIX.

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Gary Dyson is our “face” for Facebook.

Help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT!! We have 120 “likes” to date. This number fluctuates at times, sometimes for no apparent reason and sometimes when certain topics are mentioned.

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### **Our 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.

### **Looking Ahead**

While our speaker list for this season is set, please let us know of any topics or speakers that you’d like to hear about. We hope to see you at our next meeting, March 16th!

### **2016-2017 Board of Directors**

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