



Banner of the Blue and Gray

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

288th Meeting, 31th Season

Volume 44, Issue # 4

December 10, 2020, 7:00 PM

Facebook Live Hosted by NMCWM (Virtual only)

The link is: [facebook.com/civilwarmed/live](https://www.facebook.com/civilwarmed/live)



Speaker: Mike Fitzpatrick

Presentation Overview: presentation "1864: The Battle of Rockville"

Manual labor, constant drill, and endless chasing after unstoppable Confederate guerrillas was hardly what the tough Californians of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry had imagined in 1862 when they swallowed their frontier pride and enlisted in a regiment of citizen New Englanders. In fact, five of the twelve companies of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry were recruited in far-off San Francisco. These 500 men were the only organized group of Californians to serve in the east during the Civil War, and as such they felt a strong desire to uphold their western reputation and prove their worth.

The Californians, many of them tough outdoorsmen born to the saddle, felt with some justification that they could out-ride anyone in either army. But after two years of unsatisfactory duty as glorified security guards in the static defenses of Washington, DC, they felt hobbled by the centralized control that prevented them from breaking free to fight "Indian style" against the daring Confederate Partisan Rangers that infested northern Virginia. Rather, they were restricted to reacting to guerrilla raids after the fact and chasing an elusive foe who melted into the countryside with impunity.

The Californians had enlisted and come east to fight Rebels, not police some backwater theater. They longed for an opportunity to confront the full might of the Confederate Army. In July 1864, Lieutenant General Jubal Early led a large force of Confederates, consisting of his Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia on a flanking attack on Washington, DC. Early's raid, though unsuccessful in relieving pressure on Lee at Petersburg, highlighted the vulnerability of the Federal Capital. The 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry and a two ad-hoc companies of convalescents and detached troopers were the only mounted force available to pursue and monitor Early's retreat after his repulse at Fort Stevens.

Confederate Brigadier General Bradley T. Johnson, in charge of the Rebel rear guard noted, "The Second Massachusetts Cavalry hung upon our rear and made it very uncomfortable for us generally." Stung by repeated probes against their rear, and the loss of numerous stragglers to the Yankees chasing them, the Confederates finally launched a major rear-guard counter-attack at Rockville with the intention to overwhelm and turn back their pursuers. Here, at last, the Californians would get their wish to test their mettle against the full might of a regular Confederate army. At Rockville, on July 13, 1864, in one of the few truly urban street fights of the Civil War, outnumbered Federal cavalymen from California stood their ground and proved their worth to the Union cause.

BIO: Mr. Mike Fitzpatrick: Mike Fitzpatrick grew up in the Rockville area. He first became interested in the Civil War while collecting Civil War trading cards as a kid during the centennial in the 1960s. But his casual interest was heightened after genealogical research revealed that one of his relatives, a Californian in the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry, had actually fought in Rockville. Since that discovery, Mr. Fitzpatrick has continued to pursue his interest in Civil War history by conducting original research and writing several magazine articles on various topics, including an article about the July 1864 Rockville fight that was published as "Jubal Early and the Californians" in the May 1998 issue of Civil War Times Illustrated. Mr. Fitzpatrick is also the author of a Civil War novel entitled "The Letters from Fiddler's Green" that is based on the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry and includes the Rockville fight. He is currently writing a non-fiction history of Annapolis and Camp Parole during the Civil War. For the past 20 years Mr. Fitzpatrick has been a living history volunteer at various state and national parks as a member of Company E, 20th Maine Infantry. He now lives in Annapolis, Md.

In Case You Missed it



The November offering by the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable was held both virtually and in person. Mr. Bill Hallett was a marvelous presenter and drew, what turned out to be one of the largest crowds to date, between our virtual audience of 26 viewers and an in-person crowd of 8 attendees, 34 total. He told the story on Facebook live/ZOOM of a tenuous time in the City of Baltimore beginning at the inception of the Civil war

and throughout the conflict, becoming a de-facto occupied city still in a state that had not seceded from the Union. He began with the story of the Presidential party traversing the City of Baltimore prior to his Inauguration, the President, under threat, separating from Mary Todd and traveling thru under dark of night. He then told the tale of the 6th Massachusetts Militia, the first to leave the Bay State and answer their President's call to war. It was their journey to Washington that would place them in history as the route required passing through Baltimore, a place not welcoming to Union troops. Baltimore at the time was a divided city, both pro- and anti-Union, with gatherers at



the site of the deploying troops coming from both sides. To pass through the city, the men would have to traverse the gauntlet between Presidents Street Station on the east side of the harbor, and Camden Station on the west side, a distance of just over a mile. On April 19, 1861, that journey across town would produce the first blood in the four-year war. Blood not on a battlefield, but on Pratt Street in Baltimore left by dead and wounded on both sides of the melee.

The brief detailed the events leading to the conflict in the streets and the immediate aftermath including the eventual instalment and later removal of Ben Butler's as Military Commander on a fort on Federal Hill overlooking the city, and the new battle between Lincoln and Chief Justice Roger B. Taney over the arrest of Maryland citizens.



Prez Sez

Happy holidays to you and yours from the board of the Frederick County Civil War Round Table! To make things a little easier on everyone this holiday season our December meeting will be on December 10th, the second Thursday in December as opposed to our usual third. In addition, with the rising COVID numbers our December meeting will be entirely online. So, tune into the National Museum of Civil War Medicine Facebook page at 7pm on December 10th for our Facebook Live presentation of Mr. Mike Fitzpatrick's program on the 1864 Battle of Rockville, Maryland! This will be another great regional history story after last month's Pratt Street Riot presentation from Mr. Hallett.

In other news, the Frederick Civil War Round Table had heard from Glen Hayes of the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association. As you may recall, last year, which seems like a lifetime ago, the round table board sent two letters to S&A Homes in support of the preservation of the site of Camp Letterman on the Gettysburg battlefield. S&A Homes is looking to develop the site of the camp into a modern housing development. However, a strong campaign led by Mr. Hayes and his organization has given the developer pause. It is due to the pressure from round tables and other like-minded organizations, such as our hosts the National Museum of

Civil War Medicine, that this preservation campaign is working. While the current pandemic has also slowed down development across the country, the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association continues to gain allies in this struggle. Mr. Hayes reached out to let us know that the conversations with the developer are continuing and that our efforts had recently got the support of the Nurses Historical Association and the Walter Reed Society! Two more big names to help apply pressure for the preservation of an important historic site.

With the year coming to a close, myself and your board members would once again like to wish you a happy and safe season. We are coming into winter with all the travel and weather difficulty that can bring, so stay safe and stay in touch. We will continue to keep you informed as to meeting changes or cancellations through our Facebook and emails. We look forward to seeing all of you either physically or digitally in the new year.

See you in 2021!

~ Matt Borders

December Book Report by Matt Borders

REVIEW:

John Michael Priest, Captain James Wren's Diary – From New Bern to Fredericksburg. 140 pp. Notes, Appendix, \$24.00 (hardcover) 5.98 (Paperback)
ISBN: 978-0942597202 **Reviewed** by Matthew A. D. Borders

The diary of Captain James Wren is a classic example of Civil War literature. The Wren diary lays out the day-to-day activities of an infantry officer in the American Civil War, in this case a captain in the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteers. While the diary begins amidst Brigadier General, shortly to be promoted to Major General, Ambrose Burnside's North Carolina Expedition in the winter and spring of 1862, Wren repeatedly alludes to earlier service as well. The editor of the diary, John Michael Priest, fleshes these hints out in the "About the Author" section at the end of the diary. As it turns out this book is likely only a portion of a larger diary. Wren had served in a militia artillery company at the beginning of the war and was one of the "First Defenders" that were rushed to the defense of Washington DC in April 1861. As more formal units began to enter the national capital, he took a Captaincy in the three month 25th Pennsylvania Infantry. After that unit was disbanded, he joined the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry as the Captain of Company B. He remained in this post for the majority of his wartime service.



This work, Captain James Wren's Diary – From New Bern to Fredericksburg, is quick to remind the reader why these diaries and war time journals are so important to the researcher and historian. Not only do they show us the daily drudgery of drills, picket duty and other camp chores that generally do not make it into the official reports, but they also touch on everything from weather, conversations of the men and how they interact with civilians near the army. Captain Wren for example, becomes impressed with the formally enslaved laborers being hired by the army and utilized for fortification building and intelligence gathering in North Carolina. While he does occasionally use an off colored term or what would be seen today as completely inappropriate language for some of these laborers, it does not appear to be malicious. He does speak highly of his own hired man later in the diaries well.

Speaking of language, Wren's diary is sprinkled with the rough-shod spelling of the writer. John Michael Priest describes in his forward how he purposely chose to leave the misspelling intact to give a better sense of Wren's speaking style. He also includes a glossary of the most commonly misspelled words and an estimation of how Wren may have pronounced the words based on his misspellings. To aid the reader, every time a new misspelled word is come across the proper spelling is included in parenthesis.

What particularly drew me to this work were the accounts of the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry during the Maryland Campaign in the fall of 1862. This regiment, like many in the 9th Corps, had suffered during the Northern Virginia Campaign and was heavily involved in the fighting at 2nd Bull Run. Their battle worn condition reflects the overall condition of the cobbled together Army of the Potomac at the beginning of September 1862. Wren makes note of the movement into western Maryland, passing over the Monocacy River on Jug Bridge and entering Frederick. The cavalry skirmishing in the Catocin pass can be heard and the 9th Corps pushed on to Middletown that night. The 48th Pennsylvania was involved in taking Fox's Gap, and Wren described the shelling and confusion going on during the battle.

Throughout the work Wren made note of the various officers, not only in his regiment, but throughout the army. He laments the mortal wounding of Major General Jesse Reno at Fox's Gap and keeps a tally on all the different officers he personally observes, including Major General's McClellan and Burnside. Wren's descriptions of the fighting around the infamous Burnside Bridge and through the rolling terrain beyond is dynamic and he is evidently proud of both his service and that of his men.

Just prior to the Loudoun Valley Campaign, Wren was promoted to Major of the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry. He writes how proud he was to be recommended for this promotion, without his knowledge, to the governor of Pennsylvania through a letter signed by all the other officers in the regiment. He accepted the promotion and describes the bitter-sweet feeling of turning his company over to its new captain.

Wren retained his position on the command staff of the 48th Pennsylvania throughout the Loudoun and Fredericksburg Campaigns, often describing the bitter weather endured by the troops. As a soldier in the 9th Corps, he did not seem to be particularly concerned with the removal of General McClellan from command of the army just prior to what became the Fredericksburg Campaign. This is probably due to his own commander, Burnside, being made the head of the army. Wren was able to observe the initial stages of the Battle of Fredericksburg and was not involved in the taking of the city itself. However, as the waves of attacks rolled forward on December 13th, the 48th

Pennsylvania was tossed into the inferno of Fredericksburg as well, primarily to recover the retreat of the army.

Throughout the work Captain Wren did a marvelous job keeping track of not only those he met, but those he lost. Often times writing down not only the names, but the manner in which men fell, be it from sickness or battle. This sort of information is invaluable to the modern researcher, historian or genealogist. Wren kept track of his men, keeping detailed reports on their locations and made note of when they returned from the hospitals or even from being captured. If you are looking for a quick, highly detailed and thought-provoking diary of a combat officer in the Civil War, look no further.

Upcoming Virtual Events

(For any event listed please remember to confirm it's happening before hitting the keyboard)

The upcoming Speaker Series sponsored by the Civil War Roundtable Congress (CWRT), to register for one of these events, follow the link at the bottom

- December 9 at 7pm - Robert May brings a Yuletide story to the program with [Slavery, Christmas and the Downfall of the Confederacy](#).
- December 11th at 7pm - Living historian Curt Fields talks about the Battles of Chattanooga. [Fridays With Grant | CWRT Congress \(list-manage.com\)](#)
- December 16th at 7pm - Cory Pfarr will analyze the historiography of General James Longstreet at Gettysburg. [Speaker Series | CWRT Congress \(list-manage.com\)](#)
- December 18th at 7pm - Living historian Curt Fields tells of his being promoted as Lieutenant General. [Fridays With Grant | CWRT Congress \(list-manage.com\)](#)
- December 30th at 7pm - Historian and Director Emeritus of the USS Monitor Center, John V. Quarstein will tell the tale of the final days of the USS Monitor as she floundered in a winter gale off Cape Hatteras. [Speaker Series | CWRT Congress \(list-manage.com\)](#)

You can subscribe to the Congress YouTube Channel at: [YouTube channel - CWRT Congress!](#)

To Register follow this link: <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/speaker.html>

Other Virtual Offerings for casual viewing

(tip of the cap to the CWRT Congress for providing many)

American Civil War Game Club Virtual Offerings

<http://www.wargame.ch/wc/acw/>

Woodman Museum in Dover, NH has a YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i85KAlvJbxM&t=500s>

History Channel's documentary on U. S. Grant

<https://meaww.com/history-leonardo-di-caprio-documentary-ron-chernow-grant>

Loudon County CWRT – The Battle of Island #10

<https://www.facebook.com/SoundOfTheGuns/posts/10157017701015913>

Gettysburg CWRT – The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War

<https://www.facebook.com/CivilWarRoundTableOfGettysburg/live/>

American Battlefield Trust's distance learning classroom

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn>

[Visit Gettysburg with War Photographer Louie Palu](#)

National Museum of Civil War Medicine Facebook Page, offering Facebook live opportunities

weekly: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/CivilWarMed/videos/>

National Museum of Civil War Medicine now offering its own YouTube Channel, tons of content

available: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdGkf5-Y7aEZsXEBhRhEKjg?>

SWCW member Lavonda Kay Broadnax, Digital Reference Specialist at the Library of Congress, has compiled a web guide to the historic full text of works, now available in digital format with free and open access, written by and about African American women who lived during the U.S. Civil War. Access the guide here: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/aacivilwarwomen/>

CWI Conference 2021 Registration is Now OPEN

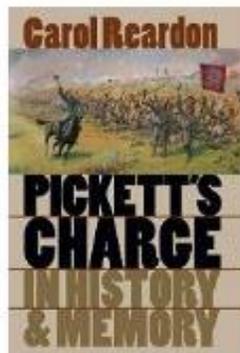


2021 Conference Registration is Now OPEN

Register for CWI 2021 Today!

Focusing primarily on the Gettysburg Campaign, [the 2021 conference](#) will feature lectures and battlefield tours exploring the battle from a variety of angles, including military leadership, civilian experiences, Lincoln's visit to Gettysburg, the commemorative landscape, and battlefield artifacts. The conference will also include special sessions on political disputes within the Army of the Potomac, drug addiction in the Civil War, race and Civil War memory in the literature of William Faulkner, the future of interpreting Confederate monuments, slave kidnappings, and more.

Speakers will include Gary W. Gallagher and Kent Masterson Brown, with battlefield tours led by Garry Adelman, Jennifer Murray, and an impressive lineup of expert National Park Service rangers and Licensed Battlefield Guides! This year's tours will take a new direction and follow individual regiments from battlefield to field hospital, with special visits to some of the lesser-known historic farms in Gettysburg which housed scores of wounded soldiers in the wake of the battle and which still stand today.



We are excited to feature Carol Reardon's classic [Pickett's Charge in History and Memory](#) as this year's book of the conference! All registered attendees will receive a 40% discount from UNC Press on copies of Dr. Reardon's book in preparation for a panel discussion of her work with several distinguished historians, including Dr. Reardon herself. If you're interested in purchasing the book from UNC Press, please contact the CWI for the discount code.

Due to the pandemic, some scheduling specifics and conference details, including availability of full on-campus amenities, are still in flux. We will continue to update [the website](#) as soon as we can confirm further details, so please check back frequently! All deposits and payments will be fully refundable.

We appreciate your understanding and patience as we move through the conference planning process and continue to navigate the uncertain waters of the global health crisis.

Questions? Check out our [FAQ page](#). Still have questions? Please contact the CWI office.



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Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteerism and the ability to volunteer has been interrupted by the COVID-19 circumstances we find ourselves in. We will keep members and friends informed about future volunteer opportunities.

Interested in volunteering to keep the FCCWRT running and growing? Let us know at a meeting or send an email to our President Matt Borders (mattborders@comcast.net). Areas of need are listed below. We will have board elections at the end of the season for members interested in leadership positions.

Areas in which to assist the Round Table:

Programs (help with acquiring possible speakers, field trips, etc.)

Website (maintain and update group's website)

Outreach, Marketing, Newsletter, Others

Who We Are, Where to Find Us



We are on Facebook! Please check out our page for timely updates, local events, or comments. Please read and share our posts!

<https://m.facebook.com/fccwrt>. Gary Dyson is our “face” for Facebook, help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT!! 547 followers and 512 “likes”!

Gary Dyson has done an amazing job with keeping up posting interesting Civil War facts and discussions. Help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT.

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.

Our membership drive is active now for the 20-21 season. Please consider renewing your membership as well inviting friends to join. Your membership provides the space for our meetings, attracting well known speakers, and website and P.O. Box maintenance.

For those who remembered to renew your FCCWRT membership, thank you! Your dues make it possible for us to continue to fulfill our mission. We can't continue without your support! If we had more members, we could do more to promote our Civil War history!

As a member of our group, you'll enjoy these benefits:

- receive the current newsletter
- receive email updates of local events related to Civil War history
- always have a place to be on the third Thursday of the month

Our yearly dues are:

- \$30.00 for an individual (\$25.00 for current dues paying members.)
- \$50.00 for a family up to four
- \$5.00 for out of state members and members under 16 years of age

You can renew your membership at our meeting or by mail. The membership form is attached and may also be downloaded from our website at <http://www.frederickcountycivilwarrt.org/>.

2019-2020 Board of Directors

Matt Borders, President /Webmaster, mborders@comcast.net

Gary Dyson, Vice President, garyldyson@gmail.com

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Bob Smart, At Large, cwfan@monocacy.com

For questions, comments or dues, contact:
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P.O. Box 3232, Frederick MD 21705-3232
www.frederickcountycivilwarrt.org

NEW *or* RENEW ANNUAL FCCWRT MEMBERSHIP



NAME (If family membership, please list all names and email addresses)

STREET ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS/ADDRESSES

BEST PHONE NUMBER TO REACH ME

NOTE: *We will protect your privacy. None of the above information will be shared.*

ANNUAL DUES: Individual - \$30; Family - \$50 (Please make check payable to FCCWRT)

AMOUNT PAID \$ _____ **DATE** _____

- I would like to volunteer to assist with registration and other tasks at our monthly meetings
- I am interested in helping with outreach activities

MAIL TO:
FCCWRT
Box 3232
Frederick, MD 21701

**For additional information about the FCCWRT and to see meeting dates and times
and our roster of speakers for the season, check our website:**

www.frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org