



Banner of the Blue and Gray

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

320th Meeting, 36th Season

Volume 48, Issue # 6

February 20, 2025, 7:00 PM National Museum of Civil War Medicine 48 E. Patrick St, Frederick, Maryland



Speaker: Bernie Siler

Topic: Parallel Lives - Washington DC in the 19th & 20th Century

Bernie Siler is an attorney in Washington, D.C. whose other passion is the Civil War, particularly with regard to the role of African Americans. He has a BA in Anthropology from the University of Dayton, a law degree from the University of Cincinnati and a Masters of International Services from American University. He was recently admitted to the Bar of the International Criminal Court. He lectures regularly at colleges and universities as well as at civic associations on the subject. Specifically, he has been an honorary speaker at several colleges and universities as well as historical associations, including Montgomery College, Maryland where he is an adjunct professor of law. He has been the historian in charge of several

Smithsonian Associate tours involving various aspects of the civil war and other Nineteenth century Washington, D.C. history. His article on "Blacks in the Union Navy" was published in the Washington Times in April 1993. The Washington Post also published his "The Curiosities of the Garfield Assassination" in August 2003. Other publications include, "You Could go to Jail," a legal treatise and "Parallel Lives", a historical novel. As a final show of devotion to this subject, Bernie charged Fort Wagner with Denzel Washington and Mathew Broderick in "Glory", suffered through the horrific conditions as one of 70 plus African American troops among the 30,000 Union prisoners in TNT's "Andersonville" and greeted President Lincoln (Kris Kristofferson) under General Grant's command at City Point, Virginia in "Tad".

In Case You Missed It...

At our January meeting, Executive Director of Civil War Rail Trail, Inc., Drew Gruber, presented the Siege of Yorktown!



Prez Sez:



Our speaker this month, Bernie Siler, is an esteemed lawyer and writer. For this Black History Month, he invites us to join him as he compares Washington DC in the 19th Century to Washington DC in the 20th Century through the discussion of his book *Parallel Lives: A Tale of Two Centuries*. How the nation's capital has changed from one century to the next, physically, economically, and demographically, will be discussed by Mr. Siler.

As we are also well into the winter, and we had a close call last month, it is a good time to remind the membership that in the event of inclement weather the Frederick County Civil War Round Table follows the guidelines of the Frederick County Public Schools. If schools are closed, delayed, or closed early on the day of a round table meeting, that meeting is cancelled for

everyone's safety.

With any luck however that will not be an issue, and we look forward to seeing all of you at 7pm on February 20th at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine!

Most Respectfully,
Matt Borders,
President, FCCWRT

February Book Review

Somewhere Toward Freedom: Sherman's March And The Story Of America's Largest Emancipation, by Bennett Parten, Simon & Schuster, 272 pgs., pictures, maps, notes, \$29.99 (hardcover), ISBN 1668034689. Reviewed by: Matthew A. Borders

There are few events in the American Civil War that cause such a stark reaction as Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's "March to the Sea". Lauded in the North and condemned in the South, the March is seen as one of the many turning points of the war through the breaking of the Confederate home front. On November 15, 1864, just over 60,000 Federal troops began a 300-mile march from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia, cutting a sixty-mile-wide swath through the Confederate heartland. Nearly unopposed over the course of the March, by its end Sherman had proven Federal dominance of the region and taken the "Hostess City of the South" by December 21.

Though the March is the focus of the first half of *Somewhere Toward Freedom*, the campaign is a character in, not the focus of, Dr. Parten's work. Instead, he views the events of the March to the Sea through the experiences of the freedom seekers following in the wake of the Federal advance. We meet those who had attached themselves to the army during the Federal occupation of Atlanta and thousands of others who joined in the procession as the March pushed deeper and deeper into the Empire State of the South. These formerly enslaved were a tremendous boon to Federal forces, providing information on Confederate resistance, conditions along the line of march and providing escorts for Federal foraging parties. All while packing up their own families in any way possible to follow, in many cases literally walking away from the only homes they had ever known.

While the March itself was seen by freedom seekers as part of the "Day of Jubilee", and Sherman's forces were seen as liberators, Dr. Parten is careful to also make clear that this was never Sherman's intention. The Federal Army became the instrument with which the enslaved freed themselves, but army policy was to turn away all but those who could aid in the army's advance. This forced refugees to the back of the columns, where they were in danger of being separated or even attacked by Confederate cavalry that nipped at the edges of the army. Sherman's reluctance to protect the ever-growing flood of refugees was emphasized by the tragedy of Ebenezer Creek on December 9, when Federal General Jefferson C. Davis pulled up the bridge over the creek prior to the former enslaved crossing. This act led to hundreds being stranded and sadly recaptured by the Confederate cavalry. *Somewhere Towards Freedom* moves beyond the March the Sea after Sherman reached Savannah. By that point an estimated 20,000 freedom seekers had made the harrowing trek behind the army to the coast. What was to happen to this mass of humanity became just as harrowing as the March had been. They soon were shipped to Port Royal and attached to the growing freedman community there. This influx, however, had a destabilizing effect on the region that brought out both the best and the worst in those who had helped establish the so-called Port Royal Experiment in 1862. It was during this period that the famous "40 acres and a mule" was established by Sherman himself and developed by the early Freedman's Bureau. Glimmers of hope in incredibly trying times that only became harder as the war ended in the spring of 1865. How those who made the March survived, thrived and dealt with a system stacked against them makes for a fascinating read.

Remaining FCCWRT 24/25 Season Schedule

2025:

March 20 - Betty Shideler, *Death, and Mourning* in the Civil War

April 17 - Brian Baracz, *True Grit, General George S. Green at Antietam*

May 15 - Garry Adelman, *Civil War in the West Photo Extravaganza*

February Events

Saturday, February 22 at 3:00 PM at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, 48 East Patrick Street, Frederick, MD

Author Terry Reimer will give a brief presentation about the revised edition of her popular and important book, "One Vast Hospital: The Civil War Hospital Sites in Frederick, Maryland after Antietam." A book signing will follow. Books will be available for purchase in the Museum Store. Join us for this exclusive event. Refreshments will be served.

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.



FCCWRT Lectures Available

For those of you who may have missed any of the Virtual Presentations from the previous seasons of the FCCWRT, all presentations can be found on the National Museum of Civil War Medicine YouTube channel found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/nmcwm/videos>

Our NMCWM Partner links

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-Y7aEZsXEBhRhEKig?>

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. Board elections were held in November, but there is always room for those who will help with our mission. Members are encouraged to submit items for our newsletter. I'm always looking for events to add period themed events that may not be well advertised.

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

Book Raffle

Please arrive a little early for our meeting and participate in our book raffle! Please consider purchasing a book from our speaker at online sites, our previous and scheduled speakers as well!

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://www.facebook.com/fccwrt> Also visit our website at: <http://www.frederickcountycivilwarrt.org/>

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.

We're always seeking memberships. 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/>.

2024-2025 Board of Directors

Matt Borders, President /Webmaster

Bob Smart, Vice President

Bob Kozak, Treasurer

Roberta Legdon, Secretary

Gary Dyson, Facebook

Lucy Tannozzini, At Large

Joe Collins, At Large

Tom Dumm, At Large

For questions, comments or dues, contact:

FCCWRT

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