



# Banner of the Blue and Gray

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

321<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 36<sup>th</sup> Season

Volume 48, Issue # 7

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



**Speaker: Betty Shideler**

**Topic: Death and Mourning in the Civil War**

The American Civil War brought a previously unimaginable level of carnage to the country. Modern scholarship puts the soldier death toll at 750,000 over the course of the four years of struggle. Such a butcher's bill among today's U.S. population would equate to 7.5 million Americans. And this figure does not even address the tens of thousands of civilians who were killed or died of disease, sometimes hastened to the grave by malnutrition.

The war not only created thousands of widows and orphans; a death far from home deprived the soldier and his family of the cherished 19<sup>th</sup> Century tradition of the "Good Death," that is, a passing in which one was surrounded by a loving family, with time to make one's peace with God and reaffirm—to family, friends, and oneself—a belief in the coming eternal salvation. Moreover, death on a battlefield often meant an anonymous grave, depriving loved ones of the solace provided by visiting and memorializing the departed's gravesite. The special importance of this last sacred rite in 19<sup>th</sup> Century society is expressed in the herculean efforts made by civilians, North and South, during the war and afterwards, to locate, identify, and return home for proper burial their husbands, sons, and brothers."

Local living historian Betty Shideler will bring these sad issues to life when she speaks on "Death and Mourning in the Civil War." Betty has been a student of the Civil War for more than ten years,

earning continuing education certificates from the American Battlefield Trust. She has travelled to many locations to perform living history. Her favorite persona is Frances Steptoe Burwell of Avenel Plantation in Bedford, Virginia. Betty is also a tour planner and has led group tours to many locations, including New Market, Sharpsburg (Antietam), Harper's Ferry, Saltville, Culpeper, and Fredericksburg, to name but a few. She has been a docent at the Jubal Early Homeplace in Hardy and has been a volunteer with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation.

## In Case You Missed It...



At the February 20 meeting, Bernie Siler's presentation made comparisons of his life in 1960's Washington DC to those of the same city 100 years prior.

## Prez Sez:

After last month's hopeful look at the changes in Washington DC from the 19th to the 20th century, this month we are taking on a much heavier topic.

Our speaker, Betty Shideler, will be looking at death and mourning practices during the Civil War and how these practices were uprooted and modified to work with the realities of the war. How did friends and family react to loss during those uncertain times?

The uncertainty of those times, and the fear that could accompany that uncertainty reminds me of our own winter of discontent. While many strong opinions exist about the direction of the government, there are few who take issue with our state and national parks. These important cultural and natural sites are operated by caring, dedicated staff and volunteers, many of whom are in the crosshairs of policies beyond their control. As the chill begins to subside after a long, cold winter, remember to visit your parks, be they local or regional, be it for a hike or a program. You will be glad you did.

Remember too, the National Museum of Civil War Medicine keeps the heat on for us, so we should be able to avoid the chill, and we look forward to seeing you at 7pm on March 20th!



Most Respectfully,  
Matt Borders,  
President, FCCWRT

## March Book Review

The Siege of Washington: The Untold Story of the Twelve Days That Shook the Union, by John Lockwood & Charles Lockwood, Oxford University Press, 296 pgs., pictures, maps, notes, \$30.99 (hardcover), ISBN 0199759898.

With many today familiar with the traces of Washington DC's fortified past from the variety of parks and metro stops that bear the names of some of those fortifications, it would be reasonable to assume that The Siege of Washington deals with those forts and the threat to the National Capital in 1864. In fact, it does not. Instead, this work looks at the twelve crucial days between the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the reinforcement of Washington by volunteer forces from the Northern states.

Washington at the beginning of the American Civil War was not the fortress city it became by 1865. In fact, besides the Marine detachment at the Naval Yard and Fort Washington, down the Potomac River from the Capital, there really was no military presence in the city, nor defenses for it. Situated 60 miles south of the Mason-Dixon Line, the vulnerability of the Capital was quickly realized by the Lincoln Administration and its allies once the shooting started. With pressure building south of the Potomac River in Virginia and Maryland secessionists making noise in Baltimore, north of Washington, Lincoln concluded on April 14 that Washington was "put into the condition of a siege". How this threat was dealt with, and the operations by Confederate elements against Washington, are examined in detail.

The defense of Washington and the eventual lifting of the "Siege" during this period was as grassroots a campaign as Lincoln's run for the presidency had been. Volunteers were called out from the various departments of the government; the District of Columbia Militia was mustered and secessionist elements weeded out. Those who had flocked to the National Capital looking for patronage jobs were soon thrust into the ranks to defend the city. All the while Willie and Tad Lincoln built a small fort on the roof of the White House and proudly told a Sunday school friend to "let them come."

This was no unfounded panic either. The Siege of Washington does an excellent job looking at the very real efforts made in Virginia to blockade the Potomac River south of Washington, as well as efforts to disrupt troop movements through Maryland. How the administration reacted to those efforts makes for an exciting, informative read that leaves readers wondering at the heady days of 1861 and how close the capital came to capture.

## FCCWRT 24/25 Season Schedule

**2025:**

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

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

## March Events at the NMCWM

### **Saturday, March 1 at 3:00 PM- “Too Brave a Man to Live”: The Life and Death of Eliakim Sherrill, Colonel of the 126th New York**

Join the National Museum of Civil War Medicine for their Saturday Speaker Series! Preservationist, collector, and past Interim President and CEO of the Gettysburg Foundation David Malgee will share some of his special artifacts and tell the story of Colonel Eliakim Sherrill. A Confederate bullet struck down and mortally wounded Sherrill while he was defending against Pickett’s Charge on July 3, 1863, during the Battle of Gettysburg.

### **Saturday, March 15 at 3:00 PM, St. Elizabeths Asylum- Civil War Care at the Government Hospital for the Insane**

Founded in 1852, St. Elizabeths Hospital was the nation’s first federally-funded psychiatric facility. The “Government Hospital for the Insane” in Washington, D.C., quickly transformed into a trauma center for wounded and convalescing soldiers when the Civil War broke-out a decade later. Join historian Madeline Feierstein as she analyzes the hospital's reception of Union, Confederate, and African American troops, as well as their conditions upon admission. As the only Federal mental health complex during the Civil War, St. Elizabeths helped define treatment options for those afflicted with the modern diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Feierstein will explore medical treatments in wartime Washington, D.C., and, through an inclusion of primary sources and personal narratives, the impact on psychiatric care and veterans in the postbellum years.

## Other Events

### **Wednesday, March 12 at 2:00 PM- Carroll 250 Community Forum, Carroll County Public Library, 6400 West Hemlock Drive, Eldersburg**

Please join the Carroll 250 Advisory Committee for their next open session at the Carroll County Public Library – Eldersburg Branch (large meeting room). Meet the task force members, hear updates on progress, and offer input on 250 activities and initiatives.

This free event is in Eldersburg, but the discussions will be about events in all of Carroll County regarding the United States 250th birthday. Registration is not required, but requested: <https://ccpl.librarymarket.com/event/carroll-250-community-forum-229052>

NOTE: Frederick and Washington Counties will also hold similar meetings (and have already) as we approach our nation’s 250th birthday. With interest, our Roundtable could be a part of it!



# 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-Y7aEZsXEBhRhEKjg?>

## 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](mailto: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.

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

Members are encouraged to submit items for our newsletter. I'm always looking for events to add period themed events that may not be part of a battlefield schedule.

# 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> Gary Dyson is our “face” for Facebook, help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT!! 2.7K likes and 2.8K follows !

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**

**As President Borders stated, our membership drive for the year is ongoing! Please consider supporting the Round Table during the 24-25 season, by 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/>.

## **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](http://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](http://www.frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org)**