

Banner

of the **Blue and Gray**

Newsletter of the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable

Frederick, Maryland

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<http://frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org>



198th Meeting

November 2010

Vol. 37 Issue 3

*As we gather at our Thanksgiving tables this year,
pause for just a moment to thank
the two people who gave us this holiday:
Sara Josepha Hale for her dogged promotion of the
celebration, and Abraham Lincoln for declaring it
a national holiday.*



A Civil War Thanksgiving

By the Fall of 1863, the nation was war-weary and facing another long winter of conflict. On Oct. 3, 1863, six weeks before delivering the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln boosted the country's morale by designating the last Thursday in November as a national day of thanksgiving.

In his proclamation, Lincoln wrote of the "blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies" and the health of the nation despite being "in the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity." He concluded:

I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.

The idea was not Lincoln's alone. Sara Josepha Hale, editor of *Godey's Ladies Magazine* for 40 years, had vigorously campaigned for a Thanksgiving holiday in her writings and editorials for 17 years.

Years earlier, in her successful 1827 novel, *Northwood*, Hale described a Thanksgiving table laden with stuffed roast turkey, roast pork, mutton, beef, duckling, pumpkin pie, plum pudding and wine. In the September 1863 issue of *Godey's*, Hale pleaded for a

(Continued on Page 4, See **Thanksgiving**)

Happy Thanksgiving

November Meeting

Thursday, November 18, 2010

7:30 PM

at the

**National Museum
of Civil War Medicine**

**48 East Patrick Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701**

Speaker: Tom Clemens

**Subject: *Ezra A. Carman and
the Antietam Battlefield***

Our Speaker

History professor, author, editor, and Antietam expert Tom Clemens will present a program on the 1862 Maryland Campaign, the Antietam Battlefield, and Ezra Carman's historical account of the battle.



Long after a young Ezra Carman fought in the Civil War, first as a lieutenant colonel and then colonel with the 13th New Jersey at Antietam, he wrote an 1,800-page account of the Maryland Campaign. His manuscript, now considered the definitive work on the battle, was not published for more than 100 years.

After decades of dedicated research, Tom Clemens has edited and annotated Carman's work. Tom's recently published book, *The Maryland Campaign of 1862, Volume 1, South Mountain*, is the first of a two-part series edited by Tom and has earned high praise from Civil War historians and scholars alike.

Ezra Carman was 28 when he fought in the Cornfield at the Battle of Antietam. Following that bloodiest of bloody days, he noted in his diary that he planned to draw maps and write an account of the campaign. At War's end, Carman received a brevet promotion as brigadier general.



In 1877, he took the post of chief clerk for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and in 1894 was appointed the Historical Expert on the Antietam Battlefield Board. Carman and the other board members gathered firsthand accounts from battle veterans, along with maps and personal letters, and created the cast iron tablet tour markers that are on the battlefield to this day.

Thomas G. Clemens earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in history at Salisbury State University and a Doctorate of arts in history education at George Mason University, where he studied under noted historian Dr. Joseph L. Harsh. A member of the teaching faculty of Hagerstown Community College since 1978, Tom has been a professor of history at the college since 1986.

In addition to editing Carman's seminal account of the Maryland Campaign, Tom has published a wide variety of magazine articles and book reviews. A licensed Antietam National Battlefield tour guide and volunteer for more than 30 years, Tom has appeared in several documentary programs including the National Park Service film *Antietam, A Documentary Film*, shown daily in the Visitor Center. He also has appeared on Maryland and Washington, DC, Public Television programs as a historical commentator.



Tom is a longtime activist for battlefield preservation. He is founder and current president of the Save Historic Antietam

Foundation Inc. that has saved three structures as well as hundreds of acres of land around the Antietam Battlefield. Tom lives in Keedysville, MD, just minutes from the Antietam National Battlefield.



Next Month's Speaker

Cobey England will perform music of the Civil War on the hammered dulcimer at our annual Christmas party, Thurs., Dec. 16, at 7:30 PM.

The Prez Sez



I hope you all have accessed www.frederickcountycivilwar.org, our newly designed website. Our hard-working and determined Webmaster Jack Brennan, collaborated with Aynex Mercado of Web & Graphic

Design, via Volunteer Frederick, to give it a facelift — and a good-looking one at that!

We thank Jack for coordinating this project, and also thank Ms. Mercado for the time and talent she provided us.

Here again, if you have any requests or suggestions about what you feel would improve our Roundtable, please contact any of our Board Members. Our phone numbers are listed on the back page of the Banner, and we always welcome your comments.

There is no doubt that the success of our Roundtable is the result of the combined efforts of all of us.

Donnie



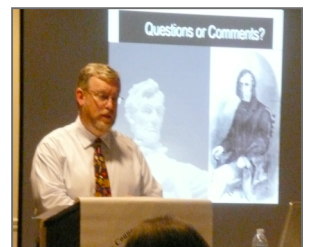
Pictured at left are our newly elected FCCWRT Board Members for the 2010-2011 season. Clockwise from left: Bob Kozak, Treasurer; Jim Enright, Secretary; Phil Dean, Vice President; Dottie Toms, Director; Jack Sheriff, Archivist; Donnie Toms, President; and, Jack Brennan, Webmaster. Board Member and Director Jeff Arey was unable to attend the photo session.

At last month's meeting . . .

Civil War historian and author George Deutsch presented a fascinating program about the long-term constitutional rivalry between Abraham Lincoln and Chief Justice Roger B. Taney who lived and practiced law in

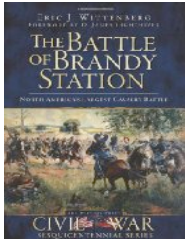
Frederick. George also gave us a new appreciation for the pivotal role Maryland played in the outcome of the War.

We had a wonderful turnout and a lively Q&A following George's talk that lasted until closing time.



The Bookshelf

The Battle of Brandy Station: North America's Largest Cavalry Battle, by Eric S. Wittenberg. Illustrated, photos, maps, bibliography, appendices, 271 pp., 2010. The History Press, Charleston, SC.

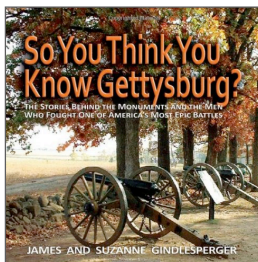


The opening salvo in the Gettysburg Campaign occurred not in Gettysburg but a month earlier and 125 miles to the south in Brandy Station, VA. Prolific author Eric Wittenberg, who specializes in the horse soldier, captures the essence of that battle, the largest cavalry battle ever fought in North America, in his new book, part of The History Press Civil War Sesquicentennial Series.

In the pre-dawn of June 9, 1863, Union cavalry shrouded in thick fog ambushed Confederate troops bivouacked near the Rappahannock River. Fierce fighting raged for 10 hours; at day's end, the Union cavalry withdrew. While not a Union victory, the battle marked the beginning of the decline of Confederate cavalry dominance. Wittenberg's exceptional powers of description and use of first-person accounts bring the story to life in a gripping and concise narrative.

Complete with a foreword by Civil War Preservation Trust President James Lighthizer and maps by master cartographer Steven Stanley, this is a riveting study of the battle. The book also includes a walking/driving tour of the battlefield with GPS coordinates.

So You Think You Know Gettysburg? The Stories Behind the Monuments and the Men Who Fought One of America's Most Epic Battles, by James and Suzanne Gindlesperger. Soft cover, photographs, maps, 188 pp, 2010. John Blair, Publisher, Winston-Salem, NC.



This well-executed book appeals to the inquiring mind that seeks more than typical guide book fare. The authors have combined exquisite photographs with fascinating little-known facts about the Gettysburg Battlefield monuments and the soldiers they honor.

With descriptions of nearly 200 battlefield sites, and more than 270 photographs with related color-coded maps, the authors do a thorough job of covering the most popular monuments. The book is the culmination of the authors' many trips from their hometown in Johnstown, PA, to Gettysburg over the past 20 years.

The Gindlespergers have unearthed some of the more interesting secrets of the battlefield and given us a worthy guidebook that appeals to Gettysburg enthusiasts as well as tourists and armchair travelers.

Calendar of Events

Through April 17, National Archives Civil War Exhibit, Washington, DC

"Discovering the Civil War, Part II, Consequences" at the Archives' Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery. Extensive display of Archives letters, maps, diaries, photos and more. Film & lectures. For information: www.archives.gov.

Nov. 16-18, Lincoln Forum, Gettysburg, PA

"Enter Lincoln, Exit the South," 15th Annual Lincoln Forum Symposium at the Wyndham Hotel. Keynote speaker Mark E. Neely, Jr. Speakers include Edna Greene Medford, Gary Ecelbarger, William W. Freehling, Harold Holzer and others. Battlefield tour, panel discussions and book signing. For registration/information: www.thelincolnforum.org.

Nov. 19, Dedication Day, Gettysburg, PA, 10:30AM

147th Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, Soldiers National Cemetery. Wreath-laying starts at 10:15. Guest speaker veteran newsman Sam Donaldson. Followed by U.S. Colored Troops Graveside Salute. For information: 717-334-1124, www.nps.gov/gett.

Nov. 20, Civil War Symposium, National Archives, Washington, DC, 9AM-5:30PM

Keynote speaker Dr. Edward Ayers on "Making the Civil War New." Panel discussions. Registration required. For information: 202-357-5000, www.archives.gov/nae.

Nov. 20, Civil War Ball, Gettysburg, PA. 9PM

Annual National Civil War Ball, Eisenhower Conference Center, to benefit Gettysburg National Military Park. Victorian Dance Ensemble & dance master, period music, prices, refreshments. Period dress or evening attire required. Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. For tickets: send check to "National Civil War Ball" to Col. Bud Atkinson, 1016 Gorman St., Philadelphia, PA 19116-3719 before Nov. 10. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Additional information, elmer-atkinson@comcast.net, 215-673-1688.

Dec. 4, Antietam Battlefield Illumination, Sharpsburg, MD, starts at 6 PM

Annual Antietam National Battlefield Illumination with 23,000 candles honoring each soldier who was killed, wounded or missing in action during the battle. Dec. 10 rain date. For information: www.nps.gov/anti.

Dec. 4, Antietam Living History, Sharpsburg, MD

Pry House Field Hospital Museum living history and exhibits prior to the Antietam Memorial Illumination. For information: National Museum of Civil War Medicine. 301-416-2395, www.civilwarmed.org

Ramblings from the Raffle Table

Friends, last month's winner of our Special Raffle was Matt Borders. Congratulations, Matt — just further proof that "you have to play to win!"

Our next Special Raffle is indeed special! Our Board Secretary, Jim Enright, has most generously allowed three of our FCCWRT caps (valued at \$15.00 each) to be used for our table. Special Raffle tickets are a mere \$3.00 (for one cap, so there will be three winners)! WHAT A DEAL! Now is the time to buy. Three drawings for the caps will be held at December's meeting. Come and see us. If you win a cap, be sure to thank Jim!

As always, our 3/\$1.00 Raffle will include an assortment of interesting books and other items. These are always fun, so join in!

NMCWM opens new exhibit



In September, The National Museum of Civil War Medicine unveiled their new exhibit that honors the Army's Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care (MC4) program. "Civil War Medicine: It's Not What You Think" shows the link between modern medical record-keeping and recordkeeping during the Civil War. The display juxtaposes Civil War military surgeons' journals and letters with modern technological devices.

Thanksgiving (continued from Page 1)

presidential proclamation declaring a day for offering gratitude for "the blessings of the year." Sensing the mood of the nation, Lincoln was swayed.

Although not officially celebrated in the military until 1864, Thanksgiving was honored in many of the camps throughout the War. Soldiers wrote home describing their Thanksgiving meals that sometimes included turkey. But in most cases the soldiers dined on modest fare such as salt pork, fish, chicken and mince pies, fruit, nuts and, if they were lucky, cakes from home.

In 1864, the Union League of New York City launched an appeal to provide Thanksgiving dinner for all of the Union forces. Other organizations and newspaper editors supported the effort and donations of food and dollars rolled in. The Union forces, including the wounded in hospitals, ate heartily and gratefully on Thanksgiving Day.

Sara Hale was overjoyed. Her dream had come true — at least for the North. The South always viewed Thanksgiving as a celebration for New Englanders, and the Confederacy, of course, did not recognize Lincoln's authority. It was not until the Union was restored after the War that the South honored Lincoln's proclamation and gradually adopted the Thanksgiving tradition.

Last month

In October, Board Member and Archivist Jack Sheriff led a three-hour walking and driving tour retracing John Brown's Raid at Harpers Ferry in October 1859. The tour concluded with a dinner at the Bavarian Inn, followed by special appearances by John Brown's direct descendant, Earl J. Brown, portraying the infamous Brown and Dick Crosier portraying Gen. Robert E. Lee.



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

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www.frederickcountycivilwarrrt.org

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.

Banner of the Blue and Gray Editor: Nancy Enright