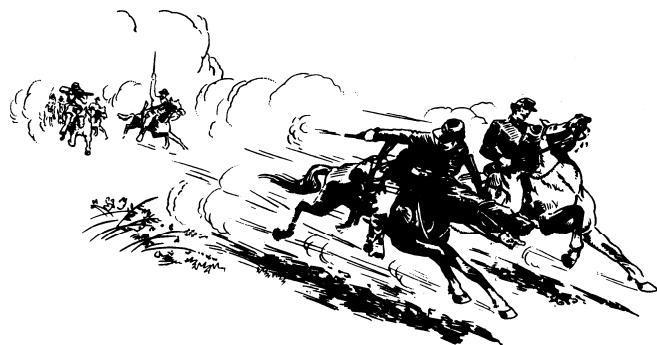


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



News Letter

September 2008
Volume 58, Number 1

The Perfect Steel Trap Harpers Ferry 1859

Bob O'Connor's presentation to the Round Table will be about **The Perfect Steel Trap Harpers Ferry 1859**, his first book. O'Connor not only tells the story of the John Brown raid, his capture and execution, which most books have already cover, but also the interesting trial of John Brown and his men, and the journey and fate of seven of John Brown's men who escaped.

"That part is something most people do not know about," O'Connor adds.

The book, published in 2006, was named finalist in the best book awards for 2006 by **USA Book News** in the historical fiction category.

The topic is timely as 2009 is the 150th anniversary of the raid. The area around Harpers Ferry already has put together almost 100 events for the commemoration. The Commonwealth of Virginia has designated the John Brown event as the start of the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War.

September 2008 Meeting

Date:	Tuesday, September 9, 2008	Place:	Officers' Club Fort Lesley J. McNair Washington, DC
Price:	Dinner \$29.00 per person Lecture only \$5.00		
Agenda:	6:00 pm Social Hour: 6.45 pm Dinner:	Cash Bar Prime rib Vegetable of the Day (Vegetarian meals are available upon request in advance.) Mashed Potatoes Apple Pie	
	8:00 pm Speaker: Topic:	Bob O'Connor The Perfect Steel Trap Harpers Ferry 1859	

Guests are always welcome to attend our meetings.

The deadline for reservations is Monday, September 8, 2008. Please send them to:

Mr. John Restall
3324 Glenmore Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22041-3317

Phone: 703-578-1942
Email: restall@joimail.com
If reserving a dinner by email, make such you receive a confirmation email.

As the Round Table must pay for all meals ordered, members and guests are obligated to pay for the meal in the event they do not attend.

PLEASE NOTE IMPORTANT SECURITY NOTICE ON PAGE 2

Officers and Board of Governors for 2008-2009

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Membership in the Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia is open to anyone interested in the study of the American Civil War or American history. Our program year runs from September through June of the following year. Dues are \$30.00 per year (\$15 if you join after January 31, 2009) and should be mailed with a membership application form (available on our web site or from the address below) to:

CWRT of DC Membership Committee
Kenneth R. Rice
4110 N. 17th Street
Arlington, VA 22207-3005

Checks should be made out to **The CWRT of DC**. Membership includes a subscription to the monthly newsletter which contains notice of dinner meeting dates, speakers, and topics; information on field trips, and various Civil War related articles. Dinner meetings are held from September through June on the second Tuesday of each month at the Fort Leslie J. McNair Officer's Club in Washington, DC. Guests are always welcome at our meetings.

For further information about the Round Table, to submit a newsletter article, or present a program to the Round Table, please contact the newsletter editor.

IMPORTANT SECURITY NOTICE

We have been entering and leaving through the P Street gate. Please be prepared for a short delay getting through the gate when you arrive. This is for both vehicles and pedestrians. They will ask for a picture ID, search bags, and cars without a current DOD sticker.

Newsletter by Email

This newsletter is now available by email as an alternative to US mail. All recipients of this newsletter are requested to choose the email version of the newsletter. This will reduce newsletter expenses and allow the money to be used for things like battlefield preservation. To receive this newsletter by email, please indicate so on your membership form, or email the newsletter editor. The newsletter is published on our web site listed below. The newsletter editor's address is:

Kenneth R. Rice
4110 N. 17th Street
Arlington, VA 22207-3005
Email: kennrice@erols.com
Phone: 703-527-0077

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Visit our web site at: <http://users.erols.com/kennrice/cwrtdc.htm>

Reenactment of Sunday Service Prior to Battle of Antietam

Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in Sharpsburg, Maryland, their congregation and its church building played an important role in the Battle of Antietam, serving as the principal Confederate hospital after the fighting. The battle was a defining point in the life of their community, and its largest annual festival, Sharpsburg Heritage Days, marks the anniversary of the fighting with a parade, historical programs and various community events. This year, Heritage Days will be a two-day event, held on September 13 and 14.

To mark the 146th anniversary of the battle this year and as a part of Heritage Days, the church will be holding a special commemorative service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 14, at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, 209 West Main Street, Sharpsburg, Maryland.

The worship service will be a reenactment of a Civil War era Holy Communion, using the 1789 Book of Common Prayer and period costume, music and ceremonial. Our preacher for the service will be Rev. John Schildt, a retired Methodist pastor and long-time student of the Battle of Antietam, who has written several books about the battle and Washington County Civil War history. In his sermon, Rev. Schildt will reflect on the spiritual meaning of the battle for modern Christians. There will also be special prayers for the fallen. The service will be followed by period refreshments in the Parish Hall.

Everyone is welcome to come to their service, and if anyone regularly dresses in period costume, they would especially love to have them come and help the experience be as authentic as possible. The night before, they will also be hosting a pig roast and American religious music concert. Civil War relics will be on display at the church and a series of lectures will be taking place on both days of the festival.

Parking is available on street and in a lot off the alley behind the Church.

For further information, please contact: Mark A. Michael, Rector, Saint Paul's Church, 301-432-7098, stpaulssharpburg@gmail.org, www.stpaulssharpburg.org.

East Cavalry Battlefield Tour with Marc Thompson on October 4

A day trip on Saturday, October 4, in concert with the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, will explore part of J.E.B. Stuart's route to Gettysburg and culminate in the interpretation of the action on July 3, 1863, at the East Cavalry Battlefield. Marc Thompson will be our tour guide. Marc plans stops in Union Mills, Westminster and Hanover before reaching the East Cavalry Battlefield.

Marc Thompson has been a speaker for our group and led several of our day tours as well. He is an associate with Booz Allen Hamilton as a consultant to the office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. He is a retired USAF Colonel, with 28 years of service as an intelligence officer. Marc has worked as a volunteer tour guide and historian with the National Park Service at Chancellorsville Battlefield. Besides his work at Chancellorsville, Marc is currently the President of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and is a past President of the Omaha Civil War Round Table.

Although details are still being firmed up as to pick up locations in Fredericksburg and DC, the cost of the tour will be \$50 and includes bus, lunch, tour guide and handouts. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Susan Claffey (202-654-2907 or sclaffey@gsabc.com) or Jim Hurdle (703-525-3681 or hurdle.jim@verizon.net).

Bob O'Conner

Bob O'Connor, 63, lives in Charles Town, West Virginia, and works in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. He has published three books, all historical fiction, and all about people from the area where he lives and works.

He was born in Dixon, Illinois, the boyhood home of Ronald Reagan. His Mom still lives there. He is a graduate of Northern Illinois University.

O'Connor's other two books are **The Virginian Who Might Have Saved Lincoln** and **Catesby: Eyewitness to the Civil War**. The Lincoln book is the first ever written about Ward Hill Lamon, who was Lincoln's personal bodyguard, but was not at Ford's Theater. **The Virginian Who Might Have Saved Lincoln** is available as a 5 CD set audio book which was named first runner-up in the 2008 National Indie Excellence Awards for Audio Books - Fiction. **Catesby** was an African American blacksmith who was captured by John Brown. The book follows his difficult quest to find freedom from slavery, taking the reader on an adventure which includes **Catesby's** enlistment in the 54th Massachusetts and his incarceration in Andersonville Prison.

O'Connor is a member of the Harpers Ferry Civil War Round Table. He was the originator of the Antietam Memorial Illumination which for twenty years has honored the 21,115 men who fell defending our freedoms at the Battle of Antietam Creek in Sharpsburg.

He works part-time for the Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Bureau in Harpers Ferry, providing tours, writing press releases, working with the media, and doing administrative duties. He also works part time for the City of Charles Town, writing grants and chairing their annual Heritage Days event.

For additional information, photos of the book covers and a photograph of the author, please go to www.boboconnorbooks.com.

Schedule of Speakers 2008-09

- Sep 9 Bob O'Connor: The Perfect Steel Trap
Harpers Ferry 1859
- Oct 4 East Cavalry Battlefield Tour with
Mark Thompson
- Oct 14 Eileen Patch: Living History/Portrayal
of NY Regt Sergeant
- Nov 12 (Note: Wednesday) TBA
- Dec 9 Marc Leepson: Monocacy
- Jan 13 Thad Adams: Confederate Patent
Office
- Feb 10 Jason Emerson: Madness of Mary
Todd Lincoln
- Mar 10 Dr. Lisa Budreau: Burials, Cemeteries
& National Commemoration
- Apr 14 Clint Johnson: The Chase & Capture
of President Jefferson Davis
- May 12 Elizabeth Pyror: Clara Barton
- Jun 9 Ed Bonekemper: Grant and Lee
- Jun 27-28 Annual Field Trip with Ed Bearss

A meeting with Ed Bearss at the National Archives is being planned.

25 Years Ago

Howard C. Westwood spoke to the Round table on September 13, 1983. His topic was "After Vicksburg, What of Mobile?" The tidbit "Well-Aged Bread" later in the newsletter is from the September 1983 newsletter.

Our Fourth Annual Ed Bearss Award for Preservation Presented to the Richmond Battlefields Association

Our Round Table can be proud of its efforts in support Civil War preservation. The past four years, we have made nearly \$5000 in donations to several worthy causes - Friends of Chickamauga, Bentonville Battlefield, Adams County Conservancy, and the Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg. In July, we once again made our annual award of \$1,000 to the preservation activity selected by our member, Ed Bearss.

This year's recipient was the Richmond Battlefields Association (RBA). The RBA was named by Civil War Preservation Trust as its "Preservation Organization of the Year" in 2007. It is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the preservation of historic Civil War sites surrounding Richmond, Virginia - the former capital of the Confederacy. It works with landowners to protect hallowed ground through donations of property, land purchases and preservation easements. Its most recent success was the purchase of land at Cold Harbor that saw heavy and historic fighting during June 1 - 3, 1864. This tract was the scene of at least three episodes of fighting during the Cold Harbor battle.

Thank you to all who donated those few extra coins and bills in your pocket for Bearss Bear, those who added a bit each month to their dinner registration form for the Bearss Award, and for those who supported our Round Tables' tours and activities. These are what make our charitable efforts possible. A little from each of us makes for a very nice donation and we hope to continue and to do more.

Introducing Our New Program Committee

The Round Table has established a program committee to work with the Vice-President to plan the annual speaker schedule,

annual Civil War weekend tour, and day trips for each program year. This is a welcome development that will take a large part of the burden off the shoulders of the Vice-President. Our past practice was to place the entire responsibility to identify, contact, and schedule speakers for the next program year on the Vice-President.

This group will consider speakers, topics and destinations, and share the work of contacting potential speakers to fill the program calendar. It is hoped that by making the planning for the program year a less daunting task that more Round Table members will consent to serve in the role of Vice-President and ultimately President.

This year's committee is made up of all volunteers and includes immediate Past-President Gordon Berg, Past-Presidents Jim Hurdle and Wendy Swanson, and our soon-to-be published author Gail Stephens. Susan Claffey as Vice-President rounds out the group. If you have ideas about topics, speakers or trip destinations be sure to share them with the Program Committee.

50 Years Ago

On September 9, 1958, Dr. J. Walter Coleman, Staff Historian, National Park Service, spoke to the Round Table about the Battle of Antietam. On September 20, the Round Table enjoyed a Battlefield tour of Antietam via Compton's Gap.

The September 1958 newsletter had the following notice: "The first woman subscriber to the Newsletter, under the \$3-a-year arrangement is Miss Margaret J. O'Connell of Pennington, N. J. She attended the recent CW Seminar at Gettysburg College. Member Bell I. Wiley was the chief lecturer; Col. J. Gay Seabourne, our president attended the sessions." Women would not be able to join the Round Table until November, 1983.

Well-Aged Bread

The durability of "hardtack", the staple bread issued to Union Troops during the Civil War, is legendary. In both the United States and Britain the same naval item was known as "sea biscuit" or "ship's biscuit". During World War II a British officer told your editor that his brother, an admiral in the Royal Navy's supply service, saw ship's biscuit taken from storage in about 1940 which had been baked for the Crimean War, fought in 1853-56.

Taming the Wilderness Colonial Era of Ellwood to be examined

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) will be hosting craftsmen as they demonstrate many of the skills required to survive during the settling of The Wilderness in Spotsylvania and Orange Counties in the late 18th century. Artisans and specialists will demonstrate a number of period trades and crafts.

The event will take place on the grounds of Ellwood, a late 18th century manor house located on the Wilderness Battlefield one-third of a mile south of the Wilderness Intersection on Route #20. On September 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the public, adults and children alike, are invited to attend and learn how Ellwood was built and became a thriving plantation. Taming the Wilderness is free to the public, with donations gratefully accepted.

Constructed circa 1790, Ellwood Manor has an impressive history spanning the early Federal period, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the 20th Century. Today, as part of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, much emphasis is rightfully placed on the stately manor's Civil War heritage. From the wounding of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville to the terrible fighting in the Wilderness, many important Civil War events occurred in and around the home.

The September 28 event will, however, focus on an earlier period, the "taming" of The Wilderness, some of the wildest land in Virginia in the last quarter of the 18th century. Demonstrations occurring throughout the day are interactive and will include:

- Traditional masonry styles and techniques, by John Friedrichs of New Dimensions Building, Rockingham County.
- The tools and techniques used to work logs into shape for use in building construction, by Craig Jacobs of Salvagewrights in Orange.
- Blacksmithing and traditional ironworking by Ross and Melissa Sullivan of Cherry Hill Forge, in King George.
- The practice of hand-splitting wooden shingles using traditional methods, by Steve Lohr of Madison.
- Spinning and weaving, by Linda George of Fredericksburg.
- Frontier arms and tools by the Westmoreland Longhunters.
- Joinery and various other structural techniques and interior features of architecture of the period by Langley Freeauf.
- Food preparation and open-hearth cooking by Susan Titus.
- The making of split-oak baskets by Mary Lynn Rowland.

There will be children's games from the late 18th century. Guided tours of the newly restored portions of the house will be available throughout the day. This is a rain or shine event, with water, juice and snacks available on the grounds. For more information regarding this event, please email fowb@fowb.org.

Get Serious about Preservation!

This past June, the DC Round Table awarded its annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award to the Friends of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. The award, totaling \$1000, was given to the group at the request of the man himself – Ed Bearss. As all of you know, this is something the Round Table does every year to honor Ed and to repay him, in some small way, for speaking to us and leading our field trip for free – yes, without compensation.

We're not alone. Ed donates his time to many groups in order to spark interest in the Civil War and to build momentum to preserve the Civil War landscape. This is an important time, because more of that landscape is disappearing every year. Therefore, now is the time to save it.

Your dinner reservation form has a spot to make a contribution. In addition, the Bearss' Bear, to collect money for the same purpose, is on the table at every meeting. Think what five or ten dollars from each of you every month would add up to at the end of the year. Added to the monies that we manage to set aside from book raffles, etc., we could contribute more than \$1000 to battlefield preservation.

There are many deserving Civil War preservation efforts out there, some large like the Civil War Preservation Trust, and some small like the Friends of Chickamauga and Chattanooga. Ed manages every year to choose those who are most deserving, so let's help him out and help out a good cause. Literally, we are the people who can help save history.