

# Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg, Inc.

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(To be named)

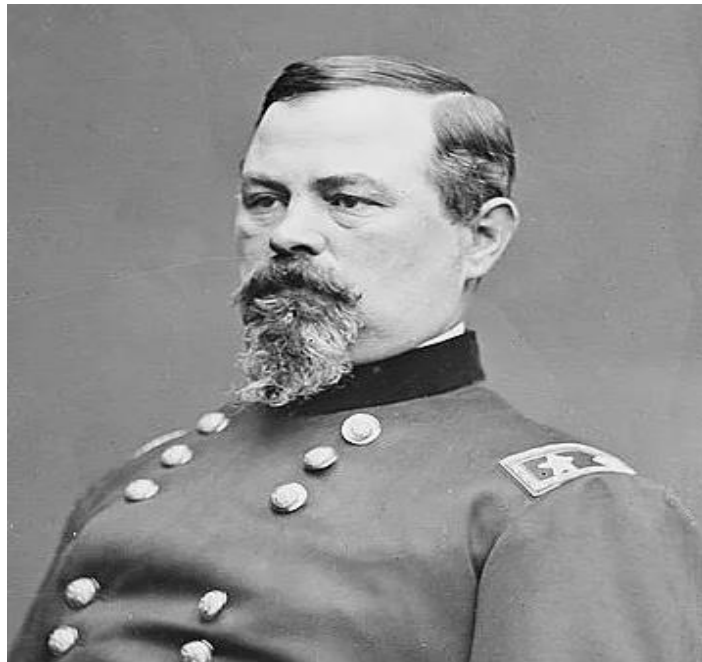
Email: [info@cwrtf.org](mailto:info@cwrtf.org)  
Website: [www.cwrtf.org](http://www.cwrtf.org)

*Next Meeting: 9/25/2024  
UMW Jepson Alumni Ctr  
1119 Hanover Street*

*Social: 5:45pm  
Dinner: 6:15pm  
Program: 7:30 pm*

## HARDTACK

### SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



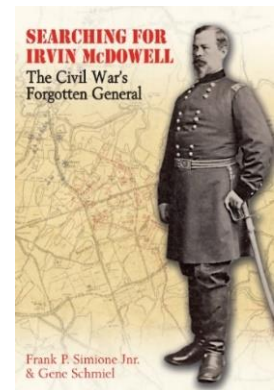
**SPEAKER: GENE SCHMIEL  
PROGRAM: SEARCHING FOR IRVIN MCDOWELL  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

## Searching For Irvin McDowell

Irvin McDowell graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1838, and taught tactics at the academy from 1841 to 1845 to many of the generals he would eventually face on the battlefield. He served as an aide-de-camp to General J. E. Wool during the Mexican-American War, and received a brevet promotion to Captain for his service at the Battle of Buena Vista.

McDowell was a prominent figure during the early months of the Civil War. With so much at stake, he was called upon to lead the Union's largest Eastern Theater army. Pressed by the media and President Abraham Lincoln to move into Virginia and defeat the Confederates gathering there, McDowell led his neophyte army out to the plains of Manassas and was soundly defeated. McDowell went on to hold an independent command in northern Virginia during the Peninsula Campaign and serve in the Army of Virginia under Maj. Gen. John Pope during the disastrous Second Bull Run Campaign. Despite his significant contributions, a lack of personal papers left him in obscurity.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, on May 14, 1861, Irvin McDowell was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General as a result of political connections to the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase. Although he had never before commanded troops in combat, McDowell, facing political pressure, attacked Confederate forces at the First Battle of Manassas where he was consequently defeated. After the defeat, General George B. McClellan was made commander of the newly formed Army of the Potomac, and McDowell was detached from the army to protect Washington, DC. McDowell would later command a corps at the Second Battle of Manassas, which resulted in another defeat. On July 1, 1864, McDowell was put in command of the Department of the Pacific and was relatively inactive for the remainder of the war.



### Gene Schmiel

Gene Schmiel is a retired U.S. Department of State Foreign Service Officer who was an Assistant Professor of History at St. Francis University (PA) before joining the foreign service. He holds the Ph.D. degree from The Ohio State University.

In 2020, 2021, and 2022, Schmiel published eleven books in his series, "Civil War Personalities, 50 At a Time," including "Civil War Trailblazers and Troublemakers," "Civil War Rogues, Rascals, and Rascalions," and "Civil War Women: Underestimated and Indispensable." These books include short bios of "characters" who made the Civil War era colorful and fascinating. Each bio is accompanied by period photographs or drawings or political cartoons, and sometimes by maps by the great Hal Jespersen, [www.cwmaps.com](http://www.cwmaps.com).



In 2019 he published two books: "Ohio Heroes of the Battle of Franklin," and "Lincoln, Antietam and a Northern Lost Cause," a speculative history of the Civil War, are now available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). His first book on the Civil War, "Citizen-General: Jacob Dolson

Cox and the Civil War Era," was a History Book Club selection and was chosen as "biography of the year" in 2014 by the Civil War Books and Authors website.

Schmiel's most recent book, with Frank Simione, is "Searching for Irvin McDowell: Forgotten Civil War General." It is the very first biography of this critical actor in the first stages of the Civil War.

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### **A Thank You Note From our 2024 Heritage Award Recipient**

Heritage Award - Thank You

I am so honored to receive the CWRTF's 2024 Heritage Award. A special thanks to Paul T. Scott for nominating me. It is so very nice to be recognized for doing what I love – history, research and preservation. Thank you so much for your support and recognition.

Beth Daly



### **Speakers for the Remainder of the 2024-2025 Program Year**

<b>October 23, 2024</b>	<b>Confederate Guerillas and Union Reprisals</b> <i>Speaker: Clay Mountcastle</i>
<b>November 20, 2024</b>	<b>Ambrose Burnside's Military Career</b> <i>Speaker: Frank O'Reilly</i>
<b>January 22, 2025</b>	<b>Witness to History: The Sentry Box House</b> <i>Speaker: Charlie McDaniel</i>
<b>February 26, 2025</b>	<b>A Republic in the Ranks: Loyalty and Dissent in the Army of the Republic</b> <i>Speaker: Zachery Fry</i>
<b>March 26, 2025</b>	<b>Hunter Davidson, CSN</b> <i>Speaker: John Coski</i>
<b>April 23, 2025</b>	<b>The Battle for Bristoe Station</b> <i>Speaker: Kevin Pawlak</i>
<b>May 28, 2025</b>	<b>The Grand Old Man of the Army: General Winfield Scott's Unionism and the Secession Crisis</b> <i>Speaker: Barton Myers</i>
<b>June 18, 2025</b>	<b>Forgotten Friday: The April 7, 1865 Actions in Cumberland County, VA</b> <i>Speaker: Patrick Schroeder</i>

## **Sponsorship Program**

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to sponsor a presentation for this program year. Listed below are those who are sponsoring. Additional sponsorship opportunities will be announced as Program year 2025-26 is scheduled.

<b><u>Month</u></b>	<b><u>Sponsor</u></b>	<b><u>Program</u></b>
Sept 2024	Jerre Wilson	Gene Schmiel - <i>Irvin McDowell</i>
Oct 2024	Steve & Terry Fox	Clay Mountcastle - <i>Confederate Guerillas</i>
Nov 2024	Jim Davis	Frank O'Reilly - <i>Ambrose Burnside's Military Career</i>
Jan 2025	Jack Farrington	Charlie McDaniel – <i>Witness to History</i>
Feb 2025	Beth Daly	Zachery Fry – <i>A Republic in the Ranks</i>
Mar 2025	Kent/Teri Cueman	John Coski – <i>Hunter Davidson (CSN)</i>
Apr 2025	Harry Farley	Kevin Pawlak – <i>Bristoe Station</i>
May 2025	Chip Willis	Barton Myers – <i>General Winfield Scott</i>
Jun 2025	Bob Lookabill	Patrick Schroeder - <i>Forgotten Friday: April 7, 1865</i>

## **CIVIL WAR FRIDAYS**

Almost every Friday at 7 pm, the Civil War Round Table Congress presents a series of informative, free, on-line lectures featuring leading historians and authors. Shown below is the forthcoming schedule. Registration and additional information can be found on the CWRTC website: <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/events.html>. These events are also included on the calendar section of our website: <http://www.cwrtaf.org/view-calendar>.

Oct 4, 2024	Donald Pfanz	A History of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, 1866-1933
Oct 11, 2024	Curt Fields	Grant's Reflection of Benjamin Butler
Oct 18, 2024	William Griffing	Spared & Shared: Letters From the Civil War
Oct 25, 2024	Ed Lowe	Command, Control, & Disruption in the Army of Tennessee
Nov1, 2024	Ronald S. White	Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain
Nov 8, 2024	Curt Fields	Grant's Reflection of William S. Rosecrans
Nov 15, 2024	Elizabeth Leonard	Benjamin Butler: A Noisy, Fearless Life
Nov 22, 2024	Sean Chick	General PGT Beauregard in the Civil War
Dec 6, 2024	Robert S. Levine	Frederick Douglass, Andrew Johnson, and the Work of Reconstruction
Dec 13, 2024	Curt Fields	Grant's Reflection of John A. Rawlins
Jan 10, 2025	Curt Fields	Grant's Reflection of James Longstreet
Jan 17, 2025	Ethan S. Rafuse	George McClellan: General-In-Chief
Jan 24, 2025	Jonathan Noyalas	The 1864 Valley Campaign of Cool Springs
Jan 31, 2025	Curt Fields	Grant's Reflections of Robert E. Lee
Feb 7, 2025	Ronald Kirkwood	Soldier Stories from Gettysburg's Spangler Farm

Feb 21, 2025 Paul Breuske

The Civil War Siege of Spanish Fort & the Mobile Campaign, 1865

Feb 28, 2025 James S. Pula

Union General Daniel Butterfield

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK  
SEPTEMBER 2024**

Good day to all of our members of the Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg, I hope this brief letter finds everyone in the very best of health and spirits as we enter the 2024/2025 year of the Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg.

First, I want to present news that is of significant importance to the members of the Round Table. It saddens me to report to you that our Treasurer, Mr. Jim Davis, is now faced with several critical health issues. Jim has done a fantastic job as our Treasurer for many years, but his current medical circumstances will not allow for him to perform the duties as our treasurer any longer.

We will need for someone to “Step In,” and assume these important duties as our treasurer. If there is any member of the CWRT of Fredericksburg who would enjoy assuming the duties as our treasurer, please contact either myself, (843-819-5149), or our Vice President, Mr. Chip Willis, (540-226-5219), and let us know. Jim has all the paperwork in good order, but we need a dedicated treasurer to take the helm. In the meantime, I’m asking all of you to please keep Jim Davis in your thoughts and prayers, asking for a rapid and full recovery from his current illness.

Secondly, our newest Board Member, Ms. Jane Conner, has recently taken a fall, and is now recovering from her injuries. Hopefully, Jane will be “up and running” in the weeks ahead, and we hope that she, too, will enjoy a rapid and complete recovery. We look forward to seeing her smiling face at our future meetings.

Thirdly, but by no means last, Mr. Paul Scott, an original member of the CWRT of Fredericksburg, (1957), and a past president of our Round Table, is recovering from recent surgery. We ask that you please remember him in your thoughts and prayers as Paul maintains steady progress on his road to a full recovery.

On a happier note, our “Guest Speaker Sponsorship” efforts have been very effective, and I am pleased to say that all of the sponsorship presentations for the 2024/2025 year have been covered (financially) by our members. This sponsorship covers the speaker’s dinner, honorarium, and hotel accommodations.

The first meeting of the Round Table may be a “little slow” getting started as many members will use this opportunity to pay for their dinners and their annual dues. Please be patient as we will try to keep the line moving as quickly as possible on that Wednesday

evening. Anyone who is interested in assisting Beth Daly at the door to the Jepson Center on that Wednesday evening would be gratefully appreciated.

**Please remember to make your dinner reservations “early” and contact Elizabeth Daly, at 540-729-0260, not later than Monday, 23 September 2024, by 12:00, so that she may give the correct numbers to the UMW catering service.**

I look forward to seeing all of our members and, hopefully, our new members, at the Jepson Executive Alumni Center on Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, at 5:45PM.

**Please stay healthy, ladies and gentlemen, as I do not enjoy writing these letters to inform our membership of CWRT members who are recovering from illness and/or surgery.**

My best regards,

Bruce H. “Doc” Norton – President, Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg  
[Recondoc123@gmail.com](mailto:Recondoc123@gmail.com)  
843-818-5149

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### MEMBERSHIP MINUTE

Welcome back! As we begin our 2024-2025 program year, the Board is certain you will have a wonderful experience! As usual, we want to hear from you! Please write to me on any topics related to our Roundtable at [historyCWRTF@gmail.com](mailto:historyCWRTF@gmail.com).

Rack cards are available at the entranceway to the dining room. Please feel free to pick some up and pass to friends, neighbors, colleagues and others who may be interested in Civil War history.

In July, fellow CWRT Board Director Jerre Wilson and I attended a Civil War Roundtable Sustainability Workshop hosted by Shenandoah University and organized by Civil War Roundtable Congress (CWRTC). I had been asked to facilitate one of the break-out groups where fellow CWRT members from across the East Coast responded to the workshop agenda—the health and vitality of Civil War Roundtables. Plenary and breakout sessions gave rise to in-depth discussions on marketing, new member experiences, relationships, and partnership opportunities.

It may come as a surprise to many of you that some RT’s do not meet in person for programs and do not host a monthly dinner. As a facilitator, I imparted our CWRTF formula for successful meetings: a social hour, buffet-style dinner, in-person presentations with ample opportunity to engage the speakers, and book sales/signing. Of particular interest to the

attendees (and I might add a phenomenal success) was my discussion on members who sponsor monthly meetings.

Jerre and I came away with fresh perspectives and many ideas for fostering a bright future for our beloved CWRTF.

One hates to compare experiences with other RTs but it was evident CWRTF is blessed with a truly historic location, a lovely venue yielding good food, access to many local public historians and academics, interesting and varied programs, financial stability, and supportive and engaged members. However, we do share a few problems in common with all RT's: sustainability, an aging membership, paucity of strategic partnerships, engagement with new members, lack of metrics, among others.

The CWRTC briefed the group on a Sustainability Challenge. The Challenge is in fact a major project designed to improve all aspects of RT's health and viability: from membership recruitment, education, and retention to enriching membership experience. From philanthropic efforts to public image and reputation, including measurements of effectiveness. Finally, leadership and management.

Interestingly, the discussion at the workshop turned to the subject of additional activities RT's undertake to enrich both the full measure of membership experience and education (beyond monthly meetings). These ranged from sponsoring various youth-group philanthropy and education efforts related to history and historical preservation, to book clubs, battlefield and museum tours, and "sister RT's" exchanges/visits.

As we begin our program year, your Officers and Board of Directors will be meeting this month to take stock of our organization and discuss initiatives and improvements. More to come! Watch these spaces!

So, in closing, I am reminded of the history of the Republican Convention of 1860. With gathering storm clouds portending a conflict and a deeply divided country, Abraham Lincoln was nominated as the nascent Republican Party's candidate.

"Lincoln supporters, after talking to some of his relatives, located a fence Lincoln had helped build 30 years earlier. Two rails from the fence were painted with pro-Lincoln slogans and were dramatically carried into the Republican state convention. Lincoln, who was already known by the nickname 'Honest Abe,' was now called the 'rail candidate.' Lincoln grudgingly accepted the new nickname of "The Rail Splitter." He actually did not like being reminded of the manual labor he had performed in his youth, but at the state convention he managed to joke about splitting fence rails."

Until next month, *may love of country lead you.*

**David Hamon, Membership Chair**  
[historyCWRTF@gmail.com](mailto:historyCWRTF@gmail.com)

<https://www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org/event/cocktails-cannonballs-2024/>

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**CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF FREDERICKSBURG CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP**

Individual	\$60
Individual (dual Round Table Member):	\$50
Family (all persons of the same household):	\$110
Family (dual Round Table Member):	\$100
Sponsoring Member:	\$120
Student/NMPS Intern:	No Charge

Consider a Donation to be the Sponsor of a Guest Speaker for \$250

**New Members**

Kerry Devine, the Mayor of Fredericksburg, has been given an honorary membership through June, 2025.

This brings our present membership for the current season to 112 and 5 for the 2024-2025 season.

Additionally, Jerre Wilson has renewed his membership at the sponsorship level (\$120). This now brings the 2024-2025 membership to 6 in various categories.

**Raffle and Bulletins**

Please buy raffle tickets for the 50/50 raffle in order to support the projects of our club at the table just inside the Jepson Center Grand Ballroom. That table is also available for such bulletins as members may wish to place as well as for donated books.

**Reservations**

Please make your reservations for our September meeting by calling (540) 729-0260 or (540) 361-2105, emailing [elizabethdaly@juno.com](mailto:elizabethdaly@juno.com) or responding to this newsletter by email no later than noon on Monday, September 23, 2024. However, by making reservations during the week prior will save the last-minute rush. As our caterer prepares our meals based on our expected attendance, it is important that reservations be made on or before the deadline. If you, subsequently, find that you cannot attend, please be sure to cancel your reservation in a timely manner.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CivilWarRoundTableofFredericksburg](https://www.facebook.com/CivilWarRoundTableofFredericksburg)



I look forward to seeing you all at the September 25 meeting.

Bruce "Doc" Norton  
President

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**Our Sister Round Table: Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table**

Meets the second Monday of each month at Brock's Riverside Grill -- Social Time Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm

September 9, 2024 T.J. Bradley:  
"Second Manassas"

October 14, 2024 Chris Mackowski:  
"Moments of Contingency and the Rise of Grant"

November 11, 2024 Paige Gibbons Backus:  
"Women in the Civil War"

December 9, 2024 Rob Orrison:  
"Potomac Blockade"