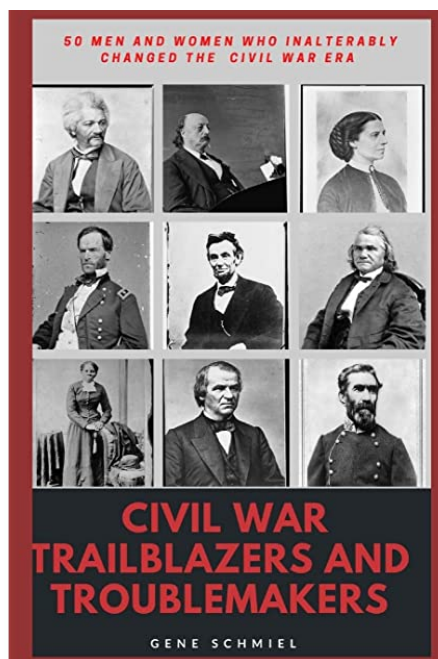




**CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
— OF FREDERICKSBURG —

**Hardtack**

March 2021 Newsletter



**Civil War Trailblazers  
and Troublemakers**

## *President's Notes*

I am indebted to our Program Committee for their ongoing pursuit of excellence. The CWRTF has been blessed with exceptional presentations on interesting subjects, given by well-informed speakers. My personal thanks go to Paul Scott, John Pavlansky, David Hamon, and Bob Lookabill. I can't wait to see next year's line-up.

Last month we learned about the extraordinary life of Matthew Fontaine Maury through the virtual presentation by our guest speaker, John Grady. I think everyone present would agree that John knows his subject. If you're interest in learning more, *Matthew Fontaine Maury, Father of Oceanography: A Biography, 1806-1873*, is a must read.

This month's meeting is Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, at 6 p.m. We will meet via Zoom to hear a presentation by guest speaker, Gene Schmiel. Gene is a student of the Civil War whose book, *Citizen-General: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era*, was deemed "best biography of the year" in 2014 by *Civil War Books and Authors*. He has lectured at many round tables around the country from Ohio to New Jersey to North Carolina. Gene holds a Ph. D. degree from The Ohio State University and was an assistant professor of History at St. Francis University (PA) before becoming a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State.

Early in 2020, Gene began work on a series of books entitled Civil War Personalities, 50 at a Time. Each of the six books highlights 50 people via short essays noting their impact on the Civil War era. Using period photographs and other information from the era, such as political cartoons, the books bring to life these interesting personalities. Each essay also includes a reading list for further information. His talk, "Civil War Trailblazers and Troublemakers," will discuss relevant characters from each of the books.

You should already have received the March meeting invite. No registration is required and attendance is free. All are welcome. You can use this link to join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85253894815?pwd=RlFRYjJza1hCdTNWZHRMQ2RtODYvQT09>. If you need assistance gaining access, call me directly at 719-650-8135. This presentation can be viewed live on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CivilWarRoundTableofFredericksburg/> and will be recorded for later posting.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UMW has cancelled all in person University and privately sponsored arts, cultural, and general special events and functions, including exhibitions, performances, and lectures through March 31, 2021. I should know more regarding Spring and Summer 2021 events by the end of this month. This is when the University will make decisions based on COVID-19 numbers and the State's restrictions. At this time the state's restrictions for gatherings are limited to a maximum of 25 attendees at an outdoor event. Until those restrictions change we won't be able meet at the Jepson Alumni Executive Center. I will let you know as soon as I have more information.

Today, the club's paid membership is 73. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so. Send the completed invoice, at the end of the newsletter, with your dues to: Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg, 504 Hawke Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.



Sixty gravestones, weighing approximately six tons, were delivered on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The stones are covered and safely stored away until they can be moved to Confederate Cemetery for placement. Weather permitting, it will take two days to get the 60 in the ground properly. The CWRTF has always answered the call when volunteers were needed for this task and I am confident we will do so again. Details will be provided when more information is available.

I received an email this week from our 2019 Honorary Albert Z. Connor NMPS Intern, Austin Sundstrom. Austin recently accepted a job offer for a seasonal park guide position at Vicksburg National Military Park. He expects to be there mid-May through mid-September. Austin asked me to extend his thanks to the CWRTF, as without our support he wouldn't have been able to accept the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania NMPS internship. That experience was the determining factor for his selection to work at Vicksburg. We wish Austin all the best and hope he has a great summer.

A special thanks to John Grady, our February speaker, for his contribution to this month's issue of Hardtack. You will find his piece on Maury both interesting and thought provoking. Remember, Hardtack has room for your stories too. Put pen to paper, fingers to keyboard, and share yours with the club.

I look forward to seeing you on the 24th.

Your Obedient Servant,

Roger L. Leturno  
President  
Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg

## *Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg Program Schedule*

DATE	SPEAKER	PRESENTATION
MAR 24, 2021	GENE SCHMIEL	Civil War Troublemakers & Trailblazers
APR 28, 2021	CARLTON YOUNG	Voices from the Attic
MAY 26, 2021	DR. JENNIFER MURRAY	The Victor of Gettysburg: George Gordon Meade and the Civil War
JUN 16, 2021	GEOFF WHITE	Civil War Music
JUL 28, 2021	TBD	TBD
AUG 25, 2021	TBD	TBD
SEP 22, 2021	“DOC” NORTON	Marines at First Manassas
OCT 27, 2021	GREG CLEMMER	Old Alleghany: The Life and Wars of General Edward Johnson

## *Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table*

DATE	SPEAKER	PRESENTATION
MAR 8, 2021	ELAINE KESSINGER	Professionalism of Nurses
APR 12, 2021	JOSEPH GILLESPIE	The Battle of Ball's Bluff: Civilian Viewpoint
MAY 10, 2021	RYAN QUINT	The Battle of Dranesville
JUNE 14, 2021	DAVID WELKER	The Battle of Chantilly (or Ox Hill)
JULY 12, 2021	SARAH KAY BIERLE	The Battle of New Market
AUG 9, 2021	DARRELL COCHRAN	The U.S. Regulars
SEP 13, 2021	PETER CARMICHAEL	The War for the Common Soldier
OCT 11, 2021	BRIAN WITHROW	U.S. Grant (1 <sup>st</sup> Person)
NOV 8, 2021	DOUG CRENSHAW	Richmond: 7 Days
DEC 13, 2021	GARY CASTELLINO	The Battle of Chickasaw Bayou: An Interactive Program

**Check the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table website for updates/changes.**

# *Matthew Fontaine Maury, In the Ruins of War*

Contributed by John Grady



After more than 90 years, F. William Sievers' unique sculpture of Matthew Fontaine Maury was removed from its pedestal on Richmond's Monument Avenue. Unlike the statues commemorating J.E.B. Stuart, R.E. Lee, Thomas Jackson, and Jefferson Davis, Sievers' design at the direction of the fund-raising association for the work ignored his embrace of the Confederacy.

The facts are: Maury played a major role in the "War of the Rebellion." During the war, Maury advanced mine warfare on land and water and was a key figure in the Confederacy's attempt at diplomatic recognition in Great Britain and arms - and warship - buying there and in France. Nor does the monument recognize Maury's importance in the spread of slavery in the continental United States and his attempts to provide a haven for American slaveholders first in Brazil and later in Mexico, topics included in my presentation.

Seated with a globe on the monument, Maury is being publicly recognized for the "inestimable benefits" his work in oceanography, meteorology, and 19th century American science produced for society. For those accomplishments, many of them pre-war, he should indeed be remembered and recognized as a major scientific and public figure of his time. Yet, here is my rationale as to why it was right to remove his monument in Richmond. I must emphasize I am not saying remove Maury from American history and all public mentions of him. I spent more than a decade researching his life and turning that into the first biography written on him in half a century. I understood that this interesting public man needed a re-

evaluation. My preferred title was: *Matthew Fontaine Maury, In the Ruins of War*, most fitting for 2021.

I still believe this working title better captures Maury as a person and his times. Here was a man who came from a background of deep financial stress, but propelled himself into a career where he established himself as a towering personality. Yet when the greatest crisis of the nation's history reached the flashpoint of war and with almost 35 years of uniformed service, he sided with the Confederacy.

The crushing of the rebellion allowed the "victors" to savage his pre-war contributions to naval reform and science and they went at it with vengeance. And then came the counter-revolution. His nephew, Lt. Gen. Dabney Maury helped lead the way in that regard through the Southern Historical Society's insistence on recording its interpretation of events leading up to the war, the war itself, and military occupation / Reconstruction. His daughters, particularly Mary Maury Werth, were passionate about that history and memorializing it.

When Sievers completed the work in 1929, Maury's statue was the last Confederate monument to be placed on the Avenue. The removal at the order of the city of Richmond was done July 2. Sievers, who designed the Virginia monument on the Gettysburg Battlefield years before he moved to Richmond, also produced the Jackson work for Monument Avenue. Ironically, Jackson's was the first removed from the street in the designated historic district. As of this writing, only the Lee statue remains on Monument Avenue. [[On Monument Avenue | A Confederate for the World | American Civil War Museum \(acwm.org\)](#)]

So how did I discover Maury? A friend working for the Times-Dispatch laughingly asked me at a Virginia Press Association meeting in Richmond if I had ever seen "the pantheon of the Confederacy." Although I had lived in Virginia for more than three years then and been to Richmond numerous times on business, I, Chicago-raised and a University of Illinois graduate -- twice over, asked what he was referring to. I said obviously "no" when he explained the "pantheon" was Monument Avenue.

So, with time on my hands before the reception and dinner, I followed his directions out of downtown, past the Virginia Commonwealth Campus, into the "Fan," and up the avenue. My first impression was amazement, but I did not stop the car and walk closer to the statues. Instead, I continued to Boulevard, now Arthur Ashe Boulevard, and thought about making a U-turn around the Jackson monument, but traffic was too heavy, so I went up one more street and came upon the Maury work.

I admit that I stopped when I saw the Maury figure -- because it was so different -- and got out and inspected it, close-up on the traffic island. I also have to admit that although I was a member of the Mariner's Museum and my minor was colonial American and early republic history, I did not immediately make the connection to "the pathfinder of the sea" to Thomas Jefferson's teacher, M.F. Maury's grandfather. I did after re-reading Dumas Malone's volumes of Jefferson biography.

Skipping ahead to 2017, when the controversy over the future of the monuments in Richmond, again reached fever pitch. The state law remained in place barring localities -- cities, towns, and counties -- from removal of certain statues, memorials, et al.

To say to many white and white residents the monuments celebrated rebellion against the United States, determination to preserve slavery at all costs, and racial oppression locked into concrete with Virginia's 1902 re-writing of its constitution ignores reality.

"Separate but equal" applied just as much to passenger trains passing through the commonwealth as it applied to its public schools. And, I never could ignore "Massive Resistance" after moving here and supervising the news department of a large Virginia daily. No other state closed elementary and high schools rather than comply with 1954 Supreme Court decision. Federal school desegregation cases in Hampton Roads were continuing into the late 1970s, more than a quarter of a century after the initial ruling. [[Jim Crow to Civil Rights in Virginia | Virginia Museum of History & Culture \(virginiahistory.org\)](#)]

How does this apply to the Maury monument? At a Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation event in 2018, I talked with Christy Coleman, then president of the American Civil War Museum and now chief executive officer of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. She had co-chaired the Richmond mayor's commission on the future of the monuments on Monument Avenue. [[Confederate Monument Controversies | C-SPAN.org \(c-span.org\)](#)]

The key recommendation, since the law barring removal was in place, was to install markers giving context to the figures, the times the monuments were erected, and present realities. The problem with that, we both agreed, is the markers work for pedestrian traffic, but most tourists, Richmonders, and suburbanites "drive" past the monuments.

During this time, because my biography had been published, I was contacted by a number of people interested in preserving the Maury monument and the media over what to do about all the Confederate statues in Richmond. I told one and all if they were removed there was no one museum that could house or display them and who would pay for their removal and preservation. Private organizations, like Sons of Confederate Veterans, had recently paid for restoration work on Stuart statue for example. Would they continue that support if they were moved, another consideration?

I added if the state law remained in place I wondered if it really applied to Davis' statue on Monument Avenue. After all, his only connection to Virginia was his time as president of the Confederacy; and by 1862, many Virginians, Maury included, would have been happy to have seen him gone. Not being a lawyer, I didn't have an answer to my question. I also wasn't joking. After the state law was changed, my attitude shifted to: "if one goes, they all should go." Where to? I still have no answer. These five monuments were never the "cookie cutter" statues that rolled out of a New England factory to be erected in Northern and Southern courthouses to remember local Civil War events or service members.

Again, check the C-SPAN program link to hear Caroline Janney, born in the Valley and now director of Civil War studies at the University of Virginia, on the statues' origins. Also included in the program are John Coski, historian at the American Civil War Museum and the late "Bud" Robertson, one of the nation's premier Civil War historians.

In 2020, 71 symbols of the Confederacy in Virginia were removed. [[Over 160 Confederate Symbols Were Removed in 2020, Group Says - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/27/us/politics/confederate-symbols-removed-2020.html)]. Even before the most recent National Defense Authorization Act cleared Congress requiring a review of the "Confederate legacy," the services were examining everything from library memorials, to building names, to ships [a Navy oceanographic vessel carries Maury's name] to installation names with the idea of possibly changing them.

How then do we weigh Maury's legacy today? Yes, Maury was dead wrong on slavery and "taking up arms" against the United States. For siding with the Confederacy, Maury paid a heavy price in his own lifetime. One son forever missing at Vicksburg, another severely wounded. Maury's career as a naval officer ended when he turned over the keys to the observatory. Whatever fame he had as a scientist was now tar brushed with cries of "traitor." The American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia used a late-night meeting to vote him out of inclusion in that select group.

During the Civil War and immediately after, Maury's enemies in Navy uniform made a concerted effort to write off his many contributions to the "wind and sea charts," maritime meteorology, navigation, the scientific study of the oceans that became oceanography, exploration, and being the architect of international cooperation in studying the seas. Likewise, and using only one example, Cyrus Field, who leaned heavily Maury for oceanographic assistance in the original laying of the transatlantic cable, didn't mention his name when the service was restored after the war. The Gramercy Park entrepreneur acted as if he had never offered the naval officer a stake in the venture, at no cost to the commander, a proposition Maury rejected to keep his hands free to lobby Congress on behalf of the idea. Maury worked diligently on keeping support alive and funds flowing to the "Great Enterprise," as it was dubbed. Post-war, Field ignored that.

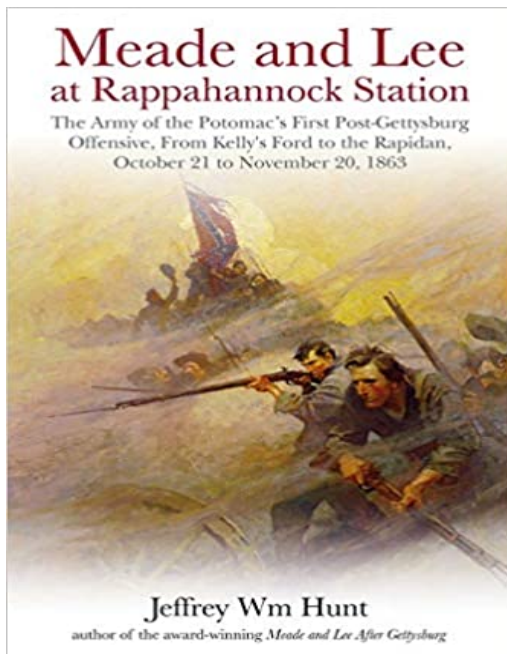
But nowhere was Maury's efforts to benefit American society more thwarted after the war than in establishing a national weather service. Remember his mottoes -- cur non, why not, and cui bono, to who's good.

Maury's decades-long push for a National Weather Service was constantly frustrated by his longtime nemesis, Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian. The superintendent derided Maury as a "popularizer," not a "pure scientist" and led the opposition to a weather service not established under his guidance. Yet within a few years after Maury's death, the national weather service idea gained traction particularly with the Army Signal Corps and the wartime-created federal commissioner of agriculture.

Why? No Maury. Here, Maury's enemies all were wrong; and in this time, it would be wrong not to preserve Maury's name and acknowledge his contributions in all these efforts. He was a complicated man, who left behind a mixed legacy of great service and troubled actions.



## *Book of the Month*



Contrary to popular belief, the Eastern Theater during the late summer and fall of 1863 was anything but inconsequential. Generals George Meade and Robert E. Lee continued where they had left off, boldly maneuvering the chess pieces of war to gain a decisive strategic and tactical advantage. Cavalry actions and pitched battles made it clear to anyone paying attention that the war in Virginia was a long way from having been decided at Gettysburg. This period of the war was the first and only time Meade exercised control of the Army of the Potomac on his own terms, but historians and students alike have all but ignored it. Jeffrey Wm Hunt brilliantly rectifies this oversight in *Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station: The Army of the Potomac's First Post-Gettysburg Offensive, from Kelly's Ford to the Rapidan, October 21 to November 20, 1863*.

It was a fascinating time in north-central Virginia. After recovering from the carnage of Gettysburg, the Richmond War Department sent James Longstreet and two divisions from Lee's army to reinforce Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee, where they helped win the Battle of Chickamauga. Washington followed suit soon thereafter by sending two of Meade's corps (the XI and XII) to reinforce William Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland. Despite his weakened state, Lee took advantage of the opportunity and launched a daring offensive that drove Meade back on Washington but ended in a bloody defeat at Bristoe Station on October 14.

What happened next is the subject of *Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station*, a fast-paced and dynamic account of Lee's bold strategy to hold the Rappahannock River line as the Army of the Potomac retraced its steps south. Pressured by Washington to fight but denied strategic flexibility, Meade launched a risky offensive to carry Lee's Rappahannock defenses and bring on a decisive battle. The dramatic fighting included a stunning Federal triumph at Rappahannock Station—which destroyed two entire Confederate brigades—that gave Meade the upper hand and the initiative in his deadly duel with Lee, who retreated south to a new position behind the Rapidan River. It seemed as though Lee's vaunted Army of Northern Virginia had lost its magic after its defeat in Pennsylvania.

Hunt's third installment in his award-winning Meade and Lee series is grounded upon official reports, regimental histories, letters, newspapers, and other archival sources. Together, they provide a day-by-day, and sometimes minute-by-minute, account of the Union army's first post-Gettysburg offensive action and Lee's efforts to repel it. In addition to politics, strategy, and tactics, Hunt's pen ably examines the intricate command relationships, Lee's questionable decision-making, and the courageous spirit of the fighting men. Complete with original maps and outstanding photographs, *Meade and Lee at Rappahannock Station* is a significant contribution to Civil War literature.

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1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA



**4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month** (except Dec, Jul & Aug)

Social 6:00 p.m. - Dinner 6:45 p.m. - Program 7:30 – Conclusion by 9:00 p.m.

\$45 Annual Dues (individual) \$80 Annual Dues (family)

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# Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg

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Membership enables the CWRTF to help with battlefield preservation, sponsor NPS Interns, and attract the best Civil War experts as keynote speakers at our meetings! Please complete this form and return it with your check payable to Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg. Mail to this address:

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\*Hardtack, the CWRTF newsletter, is published monthly and will be emailed to you. Current and past publications are also available on our website.

**www.cwrtof.org**

**Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg**

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***Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg  
P.O. Box 491  
Fredericksburg, VA 22404***



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Student/Intern:	Free (Meals \$10.00)

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