



THE LIGHT POST

MAY 2024

SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOPS COMING THIS SUMMER!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!** 1
- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: LEADERS: WHAT IS YOUR FOCUS?** 2
- WILLIAMSBURG COLLABORATIONS** 5
- A 'GLORIOUS BEGINNING** 6
- BALANCING THE BOOKS** 7
- CWI'S 15% DISCOUNT!** 8
- A SIDE SHOW TO THE BIG SHOW** 9
- OLD KING COAL** 10

By CWRT Congress

"How do I market the benefits of my Round Table and improve our ability to recruit new members?" "What partnerships should my Round Table have in our community and how do I go about initiating or nurturing them?"

Those are just a few of the many intriguing questions that will be addressed during our 2024 Summer Sustainability Workshops.

We designed the Summer Workshops around topics that continuously come up when we ask Round Tables where they need help: Recruitment

Marketing and Creating Partnerships. And it is interesting to note that a strong, positive community presence will result in increased membership and more inquiries about becoming a CWRT partner.

The first workshop is sponsored by the McCormack Civil War Institute at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA. It is scheduled for Saturday, July 27. The second is sponsored by the Indianapolis Civil War Roundtable at the Indiana War Memorial on Saturday, August 17. They will run from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM each day, with lunch included in the \$35 registration fee. Be sure to

arrive by 8:30 for check-in and orientation.

Both workshops will be highly interactive to maximize proven practice sharing, discussion, and brainstorming between the CWRT Congress team and participants. Each session is set up to provide a basic framework of the topics and a plan for when attendees return home.

Workshops are rapidly filling up so don't wait to register via our website:

www.cwrtcongress.org/2024-workshops.html

We look forward to seeing you this summer.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT! AN INTERVIEW WITH DREW GRUBER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL WAR TRAILS

Editor's Note: By Light Post standards, this is a long article. But we are confident you will enjoy it in its entirety.

By CWRT Congress and Drew Gruber

It was disappointing to many when the *Civil War Times* and *America's Civil War* magazines stopped hard-copy publication this past year. Chris Mackowski of *Emerging Civil War* wrote a recent article about it on February 24, 2024, found [HERE](#). *Emerging*

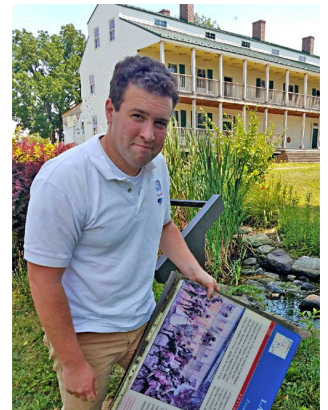
Civil War also hosted an online event broadcast via Facebook on February 29, 2024, which can be found [HERE](#). What came of the ECW broadcast was a lively discussion and an enlightening contribution by Drew Gruber, the Executive Director of Civil War Trails. Drew consented to the following interview to share in the distribution of his views to our Congress audience.

(Continued Page 3)

2024 Summer Sustainability Workshops

Shenandoah University
Winchester, VA
Host: McCormick Civil War Institute
Saturday, July 27
9:00 - 4:00 PM

Indiana War Memorial
Indianapolis, IN
Host: Indianapolis CWRT
Saturday, August 17
9:00 - 4:00 PM





LEADERS: WHAT IS YOUR FOCUS?

By Mike Movius, President

We are convinced that the focus of CWRT leaders has an oversized influence on the sustainability of their Round Table. What kind of meeting do your leaders conduct?

- Do your leaders keep members informed about the decisions of the board, or are they ever mentioned?
- Do leaders tell you what they have been working on, why it's important, and when they expect for it to come to fruition?
- Do your leaders regularly discuss the financial status of the organization, or are they a mystery until a crisis needs to be averted?
- Do leaders ask members their opinions about the quality of food served, the service level, the menu, or the noise level during the meeting?
- Do you get an opportunity to explain how to improve the check-in process?
- Are there avenues to discuss topics of interest and to have them considered when engaging speakers?
- Do book raffles take up more time than necessary?
- Are welcome gifts presented to new members? Do you celebrate new members, or are they ignored?
- When visitors do appear, is it important enough for your leaders to greet and discuss their interest in the Civil War and the CWRT in general?
- Are leaders conducting annual planning sessions with members to decide what activities or projects the CWRT should take on, how they should be measured, and/or who will lead them?
- Do your leaders know your name, or do their eyes travel to the name tag when addressing you? Do they address you?

It takes a lot to lead a Round Table. It's not an easy job. Most leaders cannot do it all. They may try, but without the time, skills, or inclination to do them, some important aspects will probably fall short. And that is why more members need to step forward to say, "I can help."

Whether or not they are welcomed is beyond the scope of this article. But, if they are engaged, they should be given the latitude their experience dictates. They should also be encouraged to continue and be recognized for their initiative. Leadership isn't for everyone. But everyone can be of help!

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

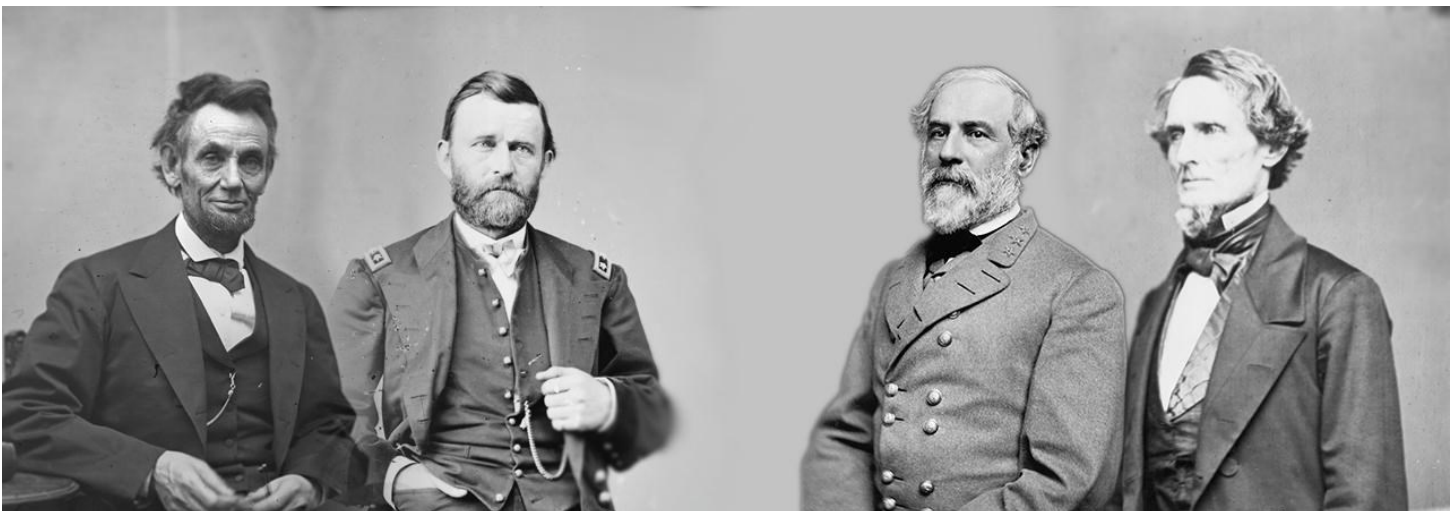


Photo reprinted courtesy of the American Battlefield Trust

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT! AN INTERVIEW WITH DREW GRUBER

(Continued from Page 1)

CWRT Congress: Tell us how you came to be the Executive Director of Civil War Trails.

Drew: Civil War Trails brought me on in 2015 at the end of the Sesquicentennial because they thought things would slow down enough to make it a good time to transition. That wasn't the case.

CWRT Congress: From your perspective, has interest in the Civil War declined?

Drew: Not at all! As of today, we have 208 pending projects. We have more projects on deck now than Civil War Trails had during the Sesquicentennial. The vast majority of these pending projects are either coming from communities that are historically marginalized, or from people that you wouldn't necessarily think would have a stake or a say in what a Civil War story is.

Last year, calendar year 2023, we distributed 60,000 more paper map guides than we did the year before. We hit just shy of a quarter of a million paper map guides to the youngest audience, and arguably the most diverse audience the Civil War Trails has ever reached out to.

CWRT Congress: Still, as CWRT members age out, they don't feel that the younger generations are interested. What are your thoughts?

Drew: I am sick to death of hearing that young people don't like history anymore, that nobody likes history anymore, it's this agenda or that agenda. It also bugs me that young people don't like history in print, which is also insane.

Every single morning when I open my email box, I learn more about the Civil War. Receiving these applications for Trails signs is what brings these new stories to the forefront. And it blows my mind! The audience *is* getting younger. So, for those of you who know me, you know that I'm a data nerd and I'm also a planner, so for me looking at what's happening with travelers, and the days when I'm in the field and overall fixing the signs, our average age is about 41. That is about 20 or 22 points below what it was when the 2015 sesquicentennial started. Yes, young people like history. Stop it!

CWRT Congress: You call yourself a data nerd. How have you used that characteristic for benefit?

Drew: When I joined Trails in 2015, I went back into the Sesquicentennial visitor contact surveys from '09-'15. Tons of information. How old, where from, how much did they spend, what TYPE of event they liked, etc. So that was my baseline. Then every time one of our partnering states did a survey on visitors, I pulled down the info for everyone, printed it and I hung onto it. Additionally, when the Civil War Trust looked into "rebranding," I got their survey. When the National Trust did the 2017 survey on Millennials and their thoughts on historic preservation, I pulled that data. So, as to age, I pulled a median of all these survey respondents who like history / museums / associated

amenities, and since 2015 we've "dropped" 21 points. Could this also be explained by 50 & 60+ year olds not traveling as much? Sure, if the data didn't also show these same respondents asking about the best breweries, places to hike, B&Bs, etc. Coupled with the other details (not just age) this all points to younger visitors, those who are much more diverse than just old white men, and who love history and will spend what little extra money they have traveling to see historic sites and "packaging" the trip with other things like beer, hikes, B&Bs, etc.

CWRT Congress: What do you feel is the difference in appeal of the Civil War Trails vs. the appeal of attending CWRT meetings?

Drew: It's also equitable to the stories you tell. You can

"I am sick to death of hearing that young people don't like history anymore."

roll a battle story out there and have full battle rattle that begins with the 3rd Battalion A and B maneuvered in this echelon, but you've lost us. Not only have you lost the younger audiences, but you've lost the dedicated older, whiter

(continued on Page 4)

Drew Gruber at Fort Sanders, Knoxville.



THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT! – DREW GRUBER

(Continued from Page 3)

male Civil War audiences because they've already heard the story. Instead, they're going to stand there and hear that human interest and human emotion. That's what I find so incredible about *America's Civil War* and *Civil War Times* and what we've been able to do under the leadership of folks like Dana Shoaf with the *Civil War Times*. We're putting you in the footsteps of the individual!

CWRT Congress: What's different about this younger generation?

Drew: For us, it's very simple. For folks who are my age and younger, we are sick of our cell phones. Yes, they do YouTube videos, some do AR (augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality), that's fine. But being in a place and standing there and reading something that is a caption for the landscape – that fuels your mind.

When your phone is constantly vying for your attention, that's why flip phones are back. Why vinyl records are back. That's why people buy books. So it drives me nuts when I hear this, because I'm out there every single day, seeing this progressively younger generation who's standing there, reading the full sign and then looking up and you can see that fire is burning, "Oh man, I wonder what it was like to be here that day?"

They strongly dislike having to engage with technology on vacation or after work hours.

This new traveler has been essentially tethered to a digital device for the majority of their adult lives and many do work in industries where all day long notifications, emails, texts, slack / g-chat messages, etc. are vying for their attention. This is also why (coupled with political BS) Facebook, and in fact most

social media outlets are losing the under 40 crowd. It's often referred to as digital fatigue. The only growth in digital platforms like QR codes, Facebook / Meta, etc. are with 60+ who are attracted to these platforms because by and large they serve confirmative content which offers a sense of comfort and camaraderie.

CWRT Congress: What can CWRTs do to attract the younger generation?

Drew: Well, you have to realize who the crowd is. Younger people don't just have one job. We have several. We either work multiple jobs and/or are raising a family, so taking time off work, yes even after 5pm when we go to our second or third jobs, is a big commitment.

First, check out [History on Tap](#) (HOT) on FB, Instagram (IG), etc. Although they have these platforms with a small "audience" there, every single time I go to a HOT presentation it's in a brewery, winery, restaurant, or outdoor venue, and it's packed. Why? First off, it's not because they posted about it on FB or IG. With younger people looking at these platforms less, there are diminishing returns for posts (event notifications are a different story). They are attending because a) they

Drew Gruber in Bridgewater in 2022.

like history and b) it is packaged with something else. Since younger people are forced to not only have one job but a few extra sources of income taking time off work, we work to make ends meet. My school loans, having been sold three times to various companies, now cost me more than my mortgage each month. So, taking time off from work is a major commitment and should enable us to a) get an extra perk, be it a beer or a meal or b) be a place where we can bring a partner, spouse, or child. In short, since Round Tables cannot fix the economy, if they want to attract younger members to attend their lectures it needs to be a topic, speaker, or venue which is extra special to warrant losing that added income, hiring a babysitter, or not having a few hours of down time.

I do find younger people will turn out for younger people. Younger historians who are trying to get their feet wet with their presentation will bring their fellow classmates. Younger "emerging" historians who are on the lecture circuit will, like HOT, tell their friends and thus create a marketing buzz which you don't need to pay for, and which will work better than FB posts. Younger historians presenting, or younger audiences, also tend to like (as per the surveys above) social history.

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT! – DREW GRUBER

(Continued from Page 4)

Information and deep dives about the individual soldiers, the harrowing stories of the underground railroad, etc., not the traditional lecture on whose battalion maneuvered which direction. This also means your membership must be welcoming to new ideas, topics, and thoughts on the era. The quickest way to turn off young people and/or more diverse members is to not be open to new scholarship, ideas, and research. Word of mouth, good or bad, travels the fastest and citing the time and fiscal constraints of the under-

40 crowd, if it's not a place that is welcoming, friendly, and fostering discussion, they will hear about it and won't come and will likely tell their friends the same.

Consider shifting your venue once or twice a year to a brewery, winery, etc., just to try it. Consider that these venues often have reduced natural patronage weeknights and might be vested (free to you?) in hosting. Maybe depending on the location, you select a sweet spot wherein someone commuting home could swing by, grab a pint or burger, listen for a bit before they get home. Maybe you pick a venue on a weekend, once or twice a year wherein a younger family could

come out, dad listens while the kids can play or explore, adjacent to a farmers' market or park event. Trying this will take time to see results and until someone tries, the collective CWRT world won't know.

CWRT Congress: Finally, what is your prognosis?

Drew: In my opinion, the future is bright. The future is young. The future does love print and they like analog. And they love to stand there and think about these things, and once you start thinking about them and you get that snack-biteable bit from a sign, you're hooked.

"The future does love print. And they love to stand there and think about these things."

THE WILLIAMSBURG COLLABORATIONS

By William Miller, President, Williamsburg CWRT

April 6 was the big battlefield cleanup day, here, there, and most likely everywhere.

And so it was in Williamsburg, where the Williamsburg Battlefield Association hosted a busy morning of clipping, snipping, chopping, and collecting trash from the "Smith Tract," a local preservation victory of the American Battlefield Trust.

We mobilized here on a Union position under a flowering dogwood tree for a group photograph of volunteers from the WBA, the Williamsburg CWRT, the Local Sons of Confederate Veterans, along with friends from the nearby Coast Guard Station, and nearby neighbors to continue the ongoing effort to clear the preserved property for future interpretation.



A 'GLORIOUS BEGINNING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ERA ROUND TABLE

By Carol VanOrnum

A oft-neglected perspective of the American Civil War has been the experience of African American soldiers. This neglect became very clear to several members of the Inland Empire CWRT. It sought to correct that imbalance after IECWRT president, Mike Hoover, attended a local reenactment. Mike shared, "Our Round Table VP, Jeffery Blansett, was there in his booth of the 97th U.S. Colored Infantry. I was talking to him and commented that I don't believe there are any round tables dedicated to the USCT. I asked, 'Don't you think there should be?' He agreed that we should consider starting one."

They reached out to some of their USCT reenactors and shared their thoughts, which resulted in a lot of enthusiasm for the idea. The African American Civil War Era Round Table was born.

Bill Gwaltney, a co-founder and former 1st Sergeant of Company B of the 54th Volunteer Infantry, as well as a participant in the motion picture, *Glory*, shared his vision. "Our Civil War Round Table may be the very first to have a specific focus on the experience of African Americans before, during, and immediately after the War." Gwaltney and others gratefully received the enthusiastic support and mentoring of the IECWRT.

They developed a structure of working teams, which included governance, programming, and

Zoom pre- and post-production. According to their first speaker, Ed Gantt, they knew what they didn't want with respect to programs. "We don't want history by guesswork. We want good documentation. Let's do the legwork."

The "Era" in their name means that the period they're focusing on casts a wider net on the Civil War, from 1850 to 1877 as it relates to enslavement, enlistment, emancipation, and postbellum America. Beginning with the Missouri Compromise and the Fugitive Slave Act, the group's focus will include the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Bloody Kansas, the growing national concern relative to emancipation and abolition, the coming of the Civil War, the war itself, and the era of Reconstruction and the impact of the war as well as attempts to undo much of what the war accomplished politically.



Gwaltney on the set of the motion picture, *Glory*.



Arlington, Va. Band of 107th U.S. Colored Infantry at Fort Corcoran
Photo: Library of Congress

Gwaltney believes there is a lot of misinformation post-Civil War, and by the early 20th Century, many attitudes really hardened based on inaccurate interpretation. For that reason, Gwaltney considers that this new CWRT's focus augments that of the many Round Tables that already exist.

Much of the subject matter will highlight the experiences of the African Americans during that period. The inaugural presentation, given by Gantt, who himself is a retired Naval captain and a reenactor in Company B of the 54th Volunteer Infantry, highlighted the contributions of the African American soldiers in the U.S. Colored Troops, the sense of optimism they felt, and the chilling end to that optimism, even to present day. Future presentations will expand to include other players of the War, such as how General

Grant viewed and utilized the African American troops, but all with a focus on the African American involvement. Future programs can currently be found on the IECWRT's website found [HERE](#).

While the African American Civil War Era Round Table is still in its early stages, they've accomplished much of the structure necessary to ensure success. Bylaws and a Mission Statement have been created, officers are in place, and their venue will be strictly Zoom. Their website will soon be completed. And already making connections, they are an official Affiliate with the African American Civil War Museum in Washington, D.C.

BALANCING THE BOOKS

By Carol VanOrnum

During the pandemic, online presentations were a lifeline for numerous Civil War Round Tables. The CWRT Congress stepped forward in April 2020 to replace the shutdown of in-person meetings by offering hundreds of online presentations, as well as encouraging and offering the training for Round Tables to do their own. The added benefits were clear. A Civil War Round Table was able to reach a wider audience and even reach out to include international viewers. Additionally, online presentations enabled mobility-challenged senior members to stay informed and entertained. Today, many Round Tables have chosen to continue utilizing that venue.

But how do online programs affect the authors whose presentations reflect their latest literary accomplishments? Their labors of love might entail a year or more of research, and another year or so of writing and editing. These authors are the ones who must bear the burden of balancing between promoting their work to the public while trying not to lose the sales revenue.

We asked several leaders in the Civil War community for their thoughts on this conundrum.

Chris Mackowski, co-founder of *Emerging Civil War* shared his opinion. "I've actually done quite a bit of internal polling on this within the ECW community (30+ contributors). There's

widespread consensus that online presentations have a lot of great benefits for Round Tables but very few for presenters. For a presenter just starting out, the exposure is great, but authors who are trying to network or sell books don't benefit much at all. Books sales for authors have dropped *significantly* because of online presentations. Round Table members might watch a Zoom program and say, 'Hey, I liked that. I'll go get that book,' but very few people actually follow through; even when they do, the royalty percentage an author gets is MUCH lower than if he/she sold the book directly.

"From a personal perspective, I suppose for someone reading a boring ol' PowerPoint presentation, the Zoom format is fine, but I don't like doing online presentations much at all because my presentation style—which involves interactivity and walking around a room—doesn't translate well to Zoom."

We're all familiar with **Scott Mingus**, prolific speaker and author on many Civil War topics. He also sees the pros and cons of online programming. "I do a fair amount of Zoom talks or Facebook Live talks. Our CWRT in York PA uses Zoom in the winter months so folks don't have to drive into downtown in bad weather after dark. I give four or five talks for other CWRTs via Zoom as well, including two with groups in England that otherwise I would not have

reached. So, the online discussions do broaden my outreach to those who could not afford to fly me to their locations.

"That said, I doubt if many people head out to Amazon or Savas Beatie after my Zooms to buy books, whereas they do purchase books in person. Given the MASSIVE difference in profits for me in selling books myself versus the pittance that I get from Amazon sales, I always prefer to talk in person if possible."

Drew Gruber, Executive Director of Civil War Trails, shared his opinion regarding younger

historians. "First, never, ever, post their lecture/audio/video for public consumption (meaning outside your membership). Since most younger speakers only have a topic or two under their belt when you post it for the world to see, you are not only reducing that speaker's chances of getting booked at another Round Table but you are also diminishing the chances that someone will want to attend the Round Table and pay the dues.

(Continued on Page 8)



Author, speaker, and President of the Chickamauga Chattanooga CWRT Col. Ed Lowe (Ret.) selling his latest book, *A Fine Opportunity Lost: Longstreet's East Tennessee Campaign November 1863–April 1864*.

BALANCING THE BOOKS, CONTINUED

(Continued from Page 7)

“Why attend or pay for something you can watch or listen to after the fact? Once my C-SPAN lecture on Williamsburg aired, I lost all but one of my booked lectures.

“It’s happened to others too. I see the exact same thing with Civil War Trails. If you post a photo of the entire sign content so someone can ‘consume’ it from the comfort of their Barcalounger, why should they go? If people don’t visit Trails sites, my site members won’t pay. If people can consume your content at home without paying, why go or pay?”

Ted Savas, co-founder and owner of the publisher Savas Beatie shared his view. “I think speakers doing online presentations is smart. But I

think that recording and posting for the general public consumption is a no-no. The reason is that people think, ‘I’m not going and can just catch it on YouTube.’ You’re not juggling your schedule to be there.

“I give a writing class and don’t record it. People ask if they can see a recording and I say, ‘No, you need to come and be a part of the writing course.’ Otherwise, it defeats it.

“I think the part that’s important is that when you pay dues, you want to feel a part of the team or organization. We are herd animals and want to be a part of the herd. There is an intrinsic value that we find in making the time, paying the dues, being a part of something. Otherwise, it dilutes the speaker’s efforts.”

Conclusions

There is a definite benefit in being able to screen a potential speaker by watching it online first. This can lead to more speaking engagements, and more book sales.

Some CWRTs have made the decision to solely provide online programming. How then can you help the authors sell their books? What incentive can you give your members to follow through to make the purchase? Will you take multiple orders and purchase directly through the author?

Catering to senior, less mobile, members can be a sand trap of diminishing numbers if you don’t also make efforts to recruit younger members. Find ways to grow your membership before it becomes too difficult to do so.

People place higher value on something for which they’ve paid.

If your Round Table provides free lectures – without dues or fees – it will get taken for granted. That’s just human nature.

Consider a hybrid speaking engagement. Bring in a speaker, someone like Chris Mackowski, who wanders the room, waves his arms, and thoroughly entertains the crowd. As he so well stated, “I would also add, as a personal observation, that Zoom presentations undermine the experience of belonging to a community of like-minded folks who get together to share and discuss a common interest. There’s SO much digital content available since COVID. But that’s a totally different thing than getting together and sharing camaraderie and *talking*.”

* * *

CWI OFFERS A 15% DISCOUNT TO CWRT MEMBERS WHO ATTEND THEIR SUMMER CONFERENCE

Attention CWRT members! The Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College would like to offer CWRT members a **15% discount** to attend the 2024 CWI Summer Conference on June 7-12, 2024. They are making this special offer to recognize the efforts of your organization in promoting the study of Civil War history.

You can explore further details about the conference on their [website](#), as well as check out the [schedule](#) for this year’s event.

Here are some highlights:

- A fresh lineup of speakers including Ronald White, Harold Holzer, Jonathan White, Jennifer Murray, D. Scott Hartwig, Elizabeth Leonard, Aaron Sheehan-Dean, and more.
- A plethora of ways to learn, including lectures, battlefield tours, small group conversations, and round table conversations about the Civil War era.



A SIDE SHOW OF THE BIG SHOW MY THOUGHTS ON THE CIVIL WAR TRAILS' EFFORTS

By William Miller

As I read Drew's interview, my attention is riveted to certain phrases scattered throughout his narrative. He speaks of our fellow Civil War travelers as "being in a place and ... reading something that is a caption for the landscape ... that fuels [the] mind."

He's not necessarily talking about a Trails sign on a battlefield. He speaks of the current 1500+ Trails signs that are scattered throughout the six states where the Civil War Trails organization currently maintains a presence. These Trails signs are sponsored by organizations,

municipalities, and others that have a desire to capture the unique local histories that are party to and complement the most significant event in the history of our nation. To borrow the subtitle of Sam Watkins' memoir entitled "Co Aytch," the Civil War Trails is serving to chronicle modern day vignettes of "The Side Show of the Big Show."

Drew continues "because I'm out there every ... day, seeing this progressively younger generation ... standing there, reading the full sign and then looking up, ... you can see that fire is burning. 'Oh man, I

wonder what it was like to be here that day.'"

Compare Drew's comment to an abbreviated version of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain's evocative "Reflection on the Battlefields of his Youth."

In great deeds, something abides; on great fields, something stays; ... generations that know us not ... shall come to this field, to ponder and dream ... and the power of the vision shall pass into their souls.

I'll posit that the Civil War Trails is serving to fulfill the vision that Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

espoused 136 years ago.

Make no mistake, the Civil War Trails organization serves as a silent recruitment partner to our local Round Table organizations by providing the seed narratives within their signage to inspire folks of all ages and persuasions to learn more of "[the] great things [that] were suffered and done for them."

William Miller is President of the Williamsburg CWRT.



Pictured above is the Civil War Trails sign at Fort Magruder in Williamsburg. The Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable established a partnership with the Civil War Trails organization to provide financial sponsorship for the continued maintenance of this sign. The collaboration with the Civil War Trails organization represents an excellent opportunity for Round Tables to enhance their outreach for philanthropic activities and networking.

It's a WIN - WIN opportunity for Round Tables and the Civil War Trails.

OLD KING COAL AND THE CAUSES OF THE CONFEDERATE DEFEAT

By Jared Peatman

After eleven successful runs, the North Carolina-owned blockade runner *A.D. Vance* was captured by the Union Navy on September 11, 1864. The former British steamer had made eleven successful runs before that fateful day. In his official report of the capture, Captain O.S. Glisson of the *U.S.S. Santiago de Cuba* reported that the crew of the *A.D. Vance* “say she was only caught in consequence of bad coal on board.” In 1875, former North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance further explained the circumstances surrounding the ship's capture: “This good vessel, the *Ad-Vance*, was finally captured on her twelfth trip, going out, by reason of unfit coal. She usually brought in enough Welsh coal, which being anthracite, made no smoke, to run her out again, but on this occasion she was compelled to give her supply to the cruiser *Alabama*, which was then in port [in Wilmington], and to run out with North Carolina bituminous coal, which choked her flues, diminished her steam, and left a black column of smoke in her wake, by which she was easily followed and finally overtaken.” The capture of the *A.D. Vance* offers a fascinating window into the coal shortage in the Confederacy and the crippling

effect the absence of that resource had on hopes for Southern independence.

In 1860, the United States mined over 20 million tons of coal but only 300,000 tons in areas the Confederacy would control. New Orleans alone consumed over half that amount annually. As the Civil War continued, this production discrepancy grew wider: in 1865, the Union produced 24.3 million tons of coal and the Confederacy just 112,730, a ratio of 215:1. Additionally, the coal mined in the Confederacy was all of the bituminous variety, while a quarter of that mined in the Union was anthracite, a purer form that gave a higher output of energy with lower waste and was essential in the manufacture of certain goods. In the late summer of 1860, a Southerner traveling in Pennsylvania wrote to the *Macon Telegraph*, “Cotton may be king with you, but here, old king Coal reigns in all his black and shining majesty, with none to dispute his authority or divide his iron rule.” The editors of the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* agreed with that evaluation, noting, “We overestimate the importance and value of cotton when we give it superiority over iron and coal.”

As the war stretched out over four long years, the inability of factories such as Tredegar Ironworks to obtain sufficient

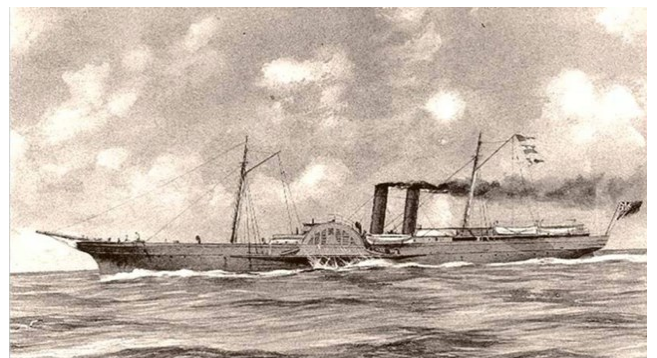
amounts of coal limited their ability to produce small arms and artillery for the Confederacy. Tredegar's manager, Joseph Anderson, tried to overcome these shortages by opening new mines but ran into roadblocks. In August 1864, Anderson wrote to General Robert E. Lee asking him for the services of six coal miners enrolled in his ranks, even offering to replace them with six men then working at the mines, but Lee shockingly refused, saying he could not afford the replacement of veterans with untrained men. Anderson's struggle to mine coal continued, leading to a growing resource gap with the North.

Questions and theories around the factors that led to the Confederacy's defeat have abounded since the conflict ended, if not before. One of those factors was certainly the Confederacy's lack of coal, a shortage in part brought about by civilian and military leaders who underestimated the power of King Coal.

“Cotton may be king with you, but here, old king Coal reigns...”

***Macon Telegraph,*
1860**

Jared Peatman, Ph.D., is nearing completion of a book on the 20th Maine that he began as a pre-teen. In his day job Jared is the founder of Four Score Consulting, a small company that provides history-themed leadership development events. He is a Board Director of the CWRT Congress.



A.D. Vance, en.wikipedia.org

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ATTENTION CWRT LEADERS!

The CWRT Congress has an initiative of periodic interviews with CWRT leaders like yourself. The purpose is to share your successes and challenges with the CWRT community while offering ideas and perspectives which will help others grow. These recordings will be published on our website and YouTube channel.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting initiative, please contact carol@cwrtingress.org



Fall's Fencing, Gettysburg

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mike@cwrtingress.org

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