

THE STONEWALL

July 2000

This Month's Event

American Sevastopol: George McClellan and Federal Defeat at Yorktown

Where: Centreville Public Library

When: July 13th, 2000, 7:30 pm

In the fall of 1861, most of those who knew George McClellan considered him a genius, or at least a brilliant young man of great promise. A year later, many saw him for what he was -- an intelligent, charismatic, immature and emotionally unstable humbug.

Whatever merits McClellan had as an administrator were largely negated by his shortcomings as a strategist and field commander. His grand schemes for Federal victory were naively optimistic, and not surprisingly, he found himself unable to execute them. The failure of his Peninsula Campaign in the spring and summer of 1862 marked a turning point in the course of the war, and that defeat owed much to the Young Napoleon's confused and ineffectual performance at Yorktown in April 1862. Though he later claimed it as a victory and one of the greatest accomplishments of his career, Yorktown was patently a defeat, and a major setback for Federal fortunes. We will examine what happened at Yorktown and why. We will look at McClellan's options and his decisions, discuss his conduct of the siege and consider his explanations -- or excuses -- for the many delays that later proved so costly to the campaign, his career and the Union cause.

And we will see that when McClellan came to write his report two years later, he deftly manipulated facts and the statements of others to support his



George B. McClellan

(cont.) contentions, revealing himself as a 19th Century spin doctor and a dishonest man.

About Our Presenter:

William J. Miller is the founder of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and author or editor of six volumes on Civil War history, including the award-winning *Mapping for Stonewall: The Civil War Service of Jed Hotchkiss*. A former editor of Civil War Magazine and of the journal of The Peninsula Campaign: Yorktown to the Seven Days, he is active in historic preservation. He has published more than 90 articles on Civil War history and has spoken to the BRCWRT many times. He now lives in the Shenandoah Valley.

"Minie" Ballet News

- **Next Month's Meeting**
August 10th, 7:30 pm
Centreville Public Library
Alan Tischler, Civil War
Drawings of A. W. Wood
- **New ONLINE Article**
War in Northern Virginia
The Prince William County
(Co. A, 1st Va. Cavalry)

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"Hey, who put that ugly tower over there?
...Ooops, never mind."

After Action Report: Gettysburg Staff Ride

On Saturday, the 15th of April, while the rest of the country was rushing to file their income tax returns, 22 members of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table enjoyed a day at Gettysburg.

The tour was led by Kevin Anastas, and featured Bill Carritte and John McAnaw as additional guides. The itinerary included viewing where the action on the first day took place from McPherson's Ridge, Oak Hill, Culp's Hill, Spangler's Spring and Steven's Knoll. The group was also able to enjoy an outstanding lunch at the picturesque "Gettysbrew Pub," a former barn that served as a Confederate field hospital during the battle.

The tour provided excellent coverage of the first day's fighting at Gettysburg. It was apparent to all who participated that many of the events of the first day were just as hotly contested and the losses proportionately as great as any on the

cont. following two days that captured the public's fancy and are more familiar. Thanks to Bill, John and Kevin for a super tour!

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Bull Run Civil War Roundtablists are encouraged to become contributors to "The Stonewall."

Articles on preservation, military history, genealogy, and Northern Virginia history, and book reviews, are all welcomed.

Also appreciated are emails with links to:

- Events
- Hot issues in preservation
- New Books
- Reenactment Units/Campaigns
- Historical Society news
- Tours

Please contact Stonewall editor, Scott Cason @ (703) 726-8253 or scason@va.gwu.edu if you want to become part of the publishing arm of the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable.

**Coming Next Month in
The Stonewall:
Eggs Hunton: Virginia Soldier and
Statesman**



Visit the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable on the Web:
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