

Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable  
2019 Newsletters



*Williamsburg Civil War  
Roundtable*

Meeting Place  
**Williamsburg**

Volume XLIII Number 1

September 25, 2018

**John V. Quarstein**  
**“Wake-Up Call – The Battle of Big Bethel”**

Join us for the next meeting of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable at the Williamsburg Public Library Theatre at 7 PM on Tuesday, September 25, 2018.

On September 25, 2018 John Quarstein will present “Wake-Up Call – The Battle of Big Bethel”. Noted as the first land battle of the Civil War, Big Bethel was a mere skirmish soon overlooked by bloodier battles that would follow. Nevertheless, Big Bethel was a baptism of fire for a nation newly involved in civil war. The soldiers that served at Bethel would never forget the rude awakening of shells bursting among the smartly clad Federal Zouaves or how Henry Lawson Wyatt's body of the 1st North Carolina laid lifeless on the field. They all knew that the war would not just be filled with parades, and it would not be over by Christmas. Instead, the soldiers realized that it would be a bloody desperate affair. The Union defeat at Big Bethel would establish the battle lines in Hampton Roads for the next 10 months awaiting the grand events of Spring 1862.

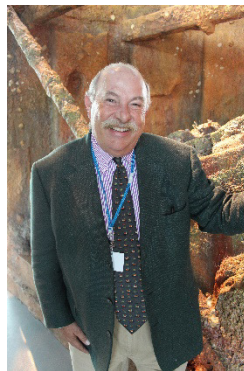
John V. Quarstein is an award-winning historian, preservationist, and author. He is director emeritus of the USS Monitor Center at The Mariners' Museum and Park in Newport News, Virginia. The author of

17 books, his titles include *HILTON VILLAGE: AMERICA'S FIRST PUBLIC PLANNED COMMUNITY*; *A HISTORY OF IRONCLADS: THE POWER OF IRON OVER WOOD*; *CSS VIRGINIA: SINK BEFORE SURRENDER*; and *THE MONITOR BOYS: THE CREW OF THE UNION'S FIRST IRONCLAD*, winner of the 2012 Henry Adams Prize for excellence in historical literature. Quarstein has also produced, narrated and written several PBS documentaries including the film series, *CIVIL WAR IN HAMPTON ROADS*, a Silver Telly Award winner.

Mr. Quarstein is the recipient of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's President's Award for Historic Preservation, the Civil War Society's Preservation Award, and the Daughters of the American Revolution Gold Historians Medal.

Mr. Quarstein lives in the National Register of Historic Places property known as the 1757 Herbert House. This outstanding example of brick Georgian architecture is located near Blackbeard's Point on the Hampton River in Hampton, Virginia.

John Quarstein in turret of USS Monitor



Courtesy of The Mariners' Museum and Park

### **Last Meeting**

On Tuesday, May 22, 2018, Dr. Bud Robertson presented "The Four-Legged Soldiers". The Civil War could not have occurred without horses. They were the primary means of transportation for soldiers as well as all the equipment needed to wage battle. More of these animals would die than did humans in the nation-making struggle. At the same time, thousands of troops found solace in a wide variety of animals who served as regimental mascots. They played a vital role in sustaining morale in a time of suffering and loneliness. Such "four-legged soldiers" have a little-known but valuable story to tell.

One of the most distinguished names in Civil War history, Dr. Robertson served as Executive Director of the U. S. Civil War Centennial Commission in the 1960's and worked with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. He then taught 44 years at Virginia Tech, where his upper division course on the Civil War era attracted 300 or more students per semester and made it the largest class of its kind in the nation. He received every teaching award given by Virginia Tech. At his retirement in 2011, the University named him Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History.

The Danville Virginia native is the author or editor of more than 40 books, including biographies of Generals Robert E. Lee and A. P. Hill, several works on the common soldiers, and three studies written for young readers. His massive biography of General "Stonewall" Jackson won eight national awards and was used as the basis for the Ted Turner/Warner Brothers mega-movie, *"Gods and Generals"*. Dr. Robertson was the chief historical consultant for the film.

The recipient of every major award given in Civil War history, and a lecturer of national acclaim, Dr. Robertson is probably more in demand as a speaker than anyone else in the Civil War field.

He holds a Ph D degree from Emory University and honorary doctorates from Randolph Macon College and Shenandoah University.

Dr. Robertson is a charter member, by Senate appointment, of Virginia's Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, and was actively engaged in the Commonwealth's sesquicentennial observances.

He is the Father of the new traditional state song, *"Our Great Virginia"*, approved by the General Assembly in March 2015.

Dr. Robertson's recent publications include *"After The Civil War"*, published by the National Geographic Society, and his annotated edition of John B. Jones' *"A Rebel War Clerk's Diary"*.

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### **Upcoming Meetings and Speakers**

- **October 23, 2018** - Dr. Curt Fields, a/k/a General Ulysses S. Grant: “The Battle of Shiloh”
- **November 27, 2018** - Peggy Vogtsberger: “The Battle of Dam #1”
- **December 18, 2018** - Dr. Charles Ross: “Creative Science and Technology in the Civil War”
- **January 22, 2019** - TBA
- **February 26, 2019** - TBA
- **March 26, 2019** - Ryan Quint: “Determined to Stand and Fight – The Battle of Monocacy, July 9, 1864”
- **April 23, 2019** - Edward Alexander: “Breaking Through to the Other Side – Petersburg, April 2, 1865”
- **May 28, 2019** - Bert Dunkerly: “To the Bitter End: The Surrenders of the Confederacy”

### **Upcoming Outside Events**

- **September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018** - At Pamlin Park, Dr. Bud Robertson will present “How the Civil War Still Lives”. [details](#)
- September - **October, 2018** - Chambersburg civil war tours [details](#)

- **September 2018 - January 5, 2019** - American Revolution Museum at Yorktown presents 'Artillery in the War of Independence' [details](#)

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Volume XLIII Number 2

October 23, 2018

**Dr. E. C. (Curt) Fields  
As General Grant Presents “Shiloh”**

Join us for the next meeting of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable at the Williamsburg Public Library Theatre at 7 PM on Tuesday, October 23, 2018.

Grant had been released from house arrest (he lamented that they didn't even have a guard posted for him, so he must not be very important) at Fort Donelson and restored to command of the Army of the Tennessee on March 13th of '62. He arrived at the Cherry Mansion in Savannah, Tenn., on March 17th, to take command of the Army of the Tennessee from Charles Ferguson Smith (his commandant of cadets when he was a student at the USMA and whom he now outranked). Smith was laid up abed with a scraped injury to his leg that eventually killed him a few days after the battle.

Grant immediately set about to train his raw army of some 33,000 men at Pittsburg Landing, with another 5,000 soldiers with General Lew Wallace five miles north of Pittsburg Landing at Crump's Landing, as he waited for General Buell to arrive from Middle Tennessee, with 37,000 men in the army of the Ohio. Together they

would march on Corinth, Mississippi (some 20 miles to the south of the camp at Pittsburg landing, Tennessee) to capture the railroad crossroads in Corinth.

However, General Albert Sydney Johnston of the CSA had a different agenda regarding the Federal forces at Pittsburg Landing and their intent to march on Corinth and the crossroads of the Mobile and Ohio and the Memphis and Charleston railroads. Rather than wait for the combined force of more than 75,000 men to attack his entrenched position in Corinth at the crossroads, he determined to give Grant battle at Pittsburg Landing and push him into the Tennessee river.

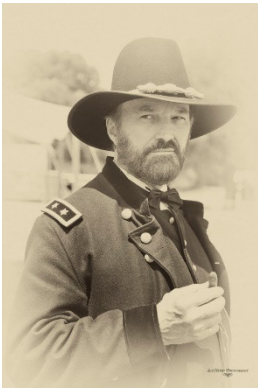
It has long and loudly been asserted that Grant (and Sherman) was surprised by the Confederate attack at Pittsburg Landing. He has been severely criticized about not having built breastworks or dug trenches. He was held responsible by the Northern press for the appalling loss of life at Pittsburg landing (23,746 killed/wounded), and his dismissal was demanded even unto the President in the Executive Mansion; the President being urged to sack Grant and save himself politically.

Was Grant surprised? Was it a failure of Leadership not to build or dig breastworks/trenches? Was he responsible for the staggering loss of life?

Grant stated: "The battle of Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, has been perhaps less understood, or, to state the case more accurately, more persistently misunderstood, than any other engagement between National and Confederate troops during the entire rebellion. Shiloh was the severest battle fought at the West during the war, and but few in the East equaled it for hard, determined fighting." (excerpt from "The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant")

Come to the Williamsburg CWRT and hear General Grant himself address these issues (accusations?) to learn for yourself about Shiloh.





Dr. E. C. (Curt) Fields, Jr., has been an avid and lifelong student of the American Civil War. His interest in portraying General Ulysses S. Grant was driven by that study and his deep respect and admiration for General Grant.

Dr. Fields is the same height and body style as General Grant and, therefore, presents a convincing, true-to-life image of the man as he really looked. He researches and reads extensively about General Grant in order to deliver an accurate persona of the General. His presentations are in first person, quoting from General Grant's Memoirs; articles and letters the General wrote, statements he made in interviews or wrote himself, and first-person accounts of people who knew the General or were with him and witnessed him during events.

Dr. Fields holds a Bachelor and Master's degrees in Education from the University of Memphis. He later earned a Master's degree in Secondary Education and Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Curriculum from Michigan State University. He is a career educator having taught for eight years at the Junior and Senior high school levels; then served for 25 years as a high school administrator. He teaches as an adjunct Sociology Professor at the University of Memphis and in Education for Belhaven University, Memphis campus.

Dr. Fields maintains a website entitled [generalgrantbyhimself.com](http://generalgrantbyhimself.com) which provides more complete biographical information.)

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November 27, 2018

**Mr. J. Michael Moore**  
**“The Civil War Comes to the Lower Peninsula”**

Join us for the next meeting of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable at the Williamsburg Public Library Theatre at 7 PM on Tuesday, November 27, 2018.

On November 27, 2018, Mr. J. Michael Moore will present “The Civil War Comes to the Lower Peninsula”.

The Virginia Peninsula, situated between the James and York rivers, was recognized as strategically important by the Confederate and Union leaders in the first few months of the Civil War. Located on the tip of the Peninsula at Old Point Comfort, Fort Monroe was the only Federal installation remaining in the Upper South and provided a base for riverine and amphibious operations. Moreover, the Confederate capital at Richmond was only eighty miles up the Virginia Peninsula. Richmond was a strategic target not just for political reasons, but was the Confederacy’s industrial center with the South’s largest iron manufacturing firms, two shipyards, and five railroads. Blocking any Union advance up the Peninsula, Confederate Major General John Bankhead Magruder commanded

over 10,000 troops behind three lines of defenses with water batteries on the James and York rivers. In April 1862, Union Major General George B. McClellan launched the Peninsula Campaign from Fort Monroe and Newport News Point with the ultimate goal of capturing Richmond and ending Civil War. Join Historian J. Michael Moore for a lively discussion of the Young Napoleon and the ever-colorful “Prince John” Magruder. This lecture also covers the Civil War’s effects on the common soldiers and the free and enslaved residents of the Peninsula. Moreover, the April 5 – May 3, 1862 Siege of the Warwick-Yorktown Line played out on a landscape that held memories of the American Revolution.

J. Michael Moore is employed by the City of Newport News as the curator for Lee Hall Mansion and Endview Plantation. Mr. Moore received a bachelor of arts in history from Christopher Newport University and a master of arts in history from Old Dominion University. During his tenure with the City, Moore has curated exhibits at several local historic sites and led battlefield tours in Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Moreover, he is a popular lecturer for CNU’s LifeLong Learning Society. Moore has also co-authored two books – *The Peninsula Campaign of 1862: A Military Analysis* in 2005 and *Yorktown’s Civil War Siege: Drums Along the Warwick* in 2012. In addition, Michael has served as the editor and photographic editor for twelve books and written articles for *Virginia Cavalcade*, *North & South*, *Military Collector & Historian*, and *Mulberry Island Notes*. In recognition of his work in public history, the Governor of Kentucky commissioned Moore a Kentucky Colonel in 2014. He is a Newport News native and resides in Historic Yorktown.

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