
The Ramrod

Volume 86

November, 2003

Final Club Hunt of the Year

The final club hunt is scheduled for Saturday, November 22nd. Details on the type of hunt (seeded or non-seeded) as well as the location will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please contact a club officer for details.



Club & Events Calendar:

Date	Event
Nov 8th	Banquet
Nov 19 th	Find of the Month Meeting
Dec 3rd	Business Meeting
Dec 17th	Find of the Month Meeting

Find-Of-The-Month Rules

There was some discussion at our October 1st meeting regarding the criteria of the Find of the Month award. It was suggested we reevaluate the club rules and possibly make some changes.

The current rules will be posted in the newsletter for three consecutive months to ensure each member has an opportunity to review them. These are the current rules, adopted on December 5, 1990:

Find of the Month: Find of the month winners for the SINGLE BEST RELIC CATEGORY and the SINGLE BEST COIN/JEWELRY CATEGORY will be selected by a secret vote. The winner is determined by the entry in each category that receives the MOST votes.

Find of the Month "Relic Group" Category:

1. Quantity will be limited to the largest riker mount. (12x16)
2. Relics must be at least one hundred (100) years old.
3. In the case of a cache which would not fit in a 12x16 riker mount, such as shells, bring one shell and a photograph of the entire cache.
4. "RELIC GROUP" will NOT be a category for find of the year.
5. The winner will be selected by a secret vote. The entry receiving the MOST votes is the winner.

Find of the Month "Coin/Jewelry Group" Category:

1. Quantity will be limited to the largest riker mount. (12x16)
2. Coins must be silver or gold. Nickels and pennies must be dated 1956 or before.
3. In case of a cache which would be too large to fit a 12x16 riker mount, such as too many objects or too bulky of an object, bring some portion of the find and a photograph of the entire cache. A cache of coins and/or jewelry will be an acceptable entry.
4. "COIN/JEWELRY GROUP" will NOT be a category for find of the year.
5. The winner will be selected by a secret vote. The entry receiving the most votes is the winner.

Revisions: This "CODE OF RULES" is NOT a part of the Constitution or By-Laws and may be revised, changed, or done away with by a majority vote of the members present at any regular scheduled club meeting. Notification of the membership is required

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at a prior meeting of the intent to change the “CODE OF RULES.”

Find-Of-The-Month

For the benefit of new members, at the second meeting of each month members bring to the meeting items recovered since the prior month’s award. Members then vote for the item they feel is the best find in the respective category.

A prize is given to those members who win. The find of the month in the single category then becomes eligible for the find of the year award.

Month	Person	Relic Item(s)
Aug Single	Steve Beaver	Conf. Script C button
Aug Multi	Bill Lee	Fired Bullets, Marine Button
Sept Single	Craig Nesmith	Enfield Hammer
Sept Multi	Jim Kwiatkowski	Carved Bullets, buckles
Oct Single	Doug Edwards	Carved Acorn Badge
Oct Multi	Doug Edwards	14k ring

Here are the results for the Single & Multiple Coins.

Month	Person	Relic Item(s)
Aug Single	Bill Lee	1841 Seated Dime
Aug Multi	Glenn Watkins	Honduras Dimes
Sept Single	Tony Williams	Ruby/Diamond Ring
Sept Multi	Craig Nesmith	Indian Head, Seated Dime, half dollars
Oct Single	Lottie Nations	14k ring

To our “old” members – think about bringing in all of your finds from the previous month. Besides showing new members what kind of things can be found, it may give the rest of us some hope.

Note: Pictures of recent club finds can be found on the Club Web Site.

Civil War Show

We owe a big thank you to all the club officers and members for being there during the show to help ensure everything went smoothly. Many members worked Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to get everything ready for the show.

Our diligent efforts paid off. The club managed to deposit \$7,157 into our bank account. Thank you to everyone for their hard work and commitment.



New Members

Please welcome the following new members to the club:

Bryan D. Weaver Jacksboro, TN
 Bill Curtis Hiram

Civil War Relic Hunters Running Out Of Relics – And Places To Look

by Chris Jenkins, Washington Post Staff Writer

April 24, 2002

With metal detectors, shovels, and packs of smokes in their hands and a vision of El Dorado in their heads, they were looking for a bullet, a button, a belt buckle – anything that would connect them with the confederate or Union Soldiers who camped on the open field near Manassas 140 years ago. But the developer who owned the swath wouldn’t let John Blue and his crew mine the land, forcing them to a smaller plot a half mile north. To make matters worse, there already were a handful of relic hunters on that plot before Blue arrived. After a few hours, the morning’s yield amounted to a melted bullet encrusted in mud.

“Ten, fifteen years ago you could go out to a site around here and find all kinds of stuff,” said Blue, 29, who has been hunting in the fields of Prince William and Fauquier counties and Manassas since he was a child. “You come out here now, and first you have to find a place, then you have to worry about whether there’s anything actually left, because so many people are hunting out there now.”

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Such experiences are becoming more and more common for many Civil War relic hunters, who spend their weekends searching for weapons and personal effects from Northern and Southern troops. Veteran hunters say suburban Virginia and Maryland, once considered a region of riches for anyone with a metal detector, are starting to yield fool's gold – or no gold at all – as development overtakes the sites where hundreds of thousands of troops left behind hundreds of thousands of mementos.

Many wonder about the future of the somewhat quirky pastime that has been part of the fabric of the region for generations. "It's basically the law of diminishing returns," said Jimmy Wilson, 62, who has been strapping on his metal detector for more than 35 years and owns a coin and relic shop in Manassas. He is fond of telling stories about how 25 years ago, Fairfax County was like the Emerald City, where a rare belt buckle or artillery shell were common finds. "It's over up here in Northern Virginia and anyplace like it," Wilson said. "Fairfax used to be a gold mine with all the places you could go. Look at it now. You'd have to go nearly another 30 miles to find anyplace good."

Many enthusiasts also are finding that developers are becoming more and more wary that hunters might find something significant and throw them off schedule. Several years ago, for instance, the construction of a McDonald's outside Manassas was delayed for months because hunters found nine Confederate graves that had to be studied by experts.

At the same time, hunters say they have become victims of their own success. Competition from rising numbers of amateurs makes it more difficult to find the dwindling crop of historical treats. And every once in a while, a loyal farmer who once let hunters onto private land will no longer let them, pestered one too many times by a renegade hunter who disturbed the farmer's property.

"What's kind of ironic is that the interest has grown in relic hunting, but the opportunities just aren't there like they used to be," said Preston "Toby" Law, 68 who for 34 years has mined the fields near Sharpsburg, MD looking for campsite leftovers from soldiers who fought at Antietam. He also has hunted much of Frederick County, where the Battle of Monacacy was waged in 1864. "I never would have imagined when I started that there would be so much interest in digging around looking for stuff from the past," he said.

Hunters have never been popular among archaeologists and federal authorities. Archaeologists often say that hunters disturb historic grounds that should properly be studied by experts. Federal law prohibits relic hunting in national parks, particularly those set aside to commemorate Civil War battles. In addition, Maryland and Virginia have laws against relic hunting on state owned sites.

Over the last decade, however, some relic hunters archaeologists and park officials have worked together on excavations on private property and federal lands. Some archaeologists say that may become one of the few ways hunters will be able to practice their craft as development encroaches and landowners become more skeptical. "They very well may be a doomed species", said Bob Sonderman, an archaeologist for the National Capital Region of the National Park Service, adding that stiffer rules for hunters on federal lands are likely to be instituted this year. "After a while there's no more places to go, and with the exception of working with the Park Service, that may be it."

In addition, several landowners say they have stopped letting hunters onto their property because they don't know whom to trust. Although they say most hunters follow the sacred rules of digging – giving advance notice, refilling holes when they are done and chatting amiably about what they found – every once in a while, they find garbage, torn up sod and people using their property to get on federal land.

In the meantime, hunters say that all they have left is their creativity – not only in finding relics but also in researching where land is still open. "It's always a search, no matter what...whether you're looking for relics or looking for land," Blue said. "Maybe that's why I still do it...and that's part of the fun."

Ten Commandments of Metal Detecting

Courtesy of Fisher Research Laboratory

With all of the "bad-talk" we seem to be getting lately about our hobby, I thought it might be a good time to remind everyone that sometimes, we are our own worst enemies. Therefore, here are some "commandments" that we have published in previous editions of the Ramrod that you should take a minute to read, and more importantly, remember while you are out there enjoying our hobby.

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These are the judgements and edicts which should be obeyed by all those who wield detectors of metal:

1. Thou shalt not leave behind unfilled excavations.
2. Thou shalt not trespass or defy in any way the lawful decrees of thy city, county, state or country.
3. Thou shalt not harm vegetation, the creatures of the field, natural resources or the personal property of others.
4. Thou shalt not covet the finds of thy companion. Nor shalt ye covet his metal detector, digging tool or the hallowed ground in which he diggeth.
5. Thou shalt not ignore nor neglect thy family whilst in the endless pursuit of thy hobby.
6. Thou shalt assist the distraught owners of lost goods, and the archeologists, and the enforcers of law, and all others who may need thy skill as a metal detectorist.
7. Thou shalt return found treasures to the proper owners whenever their true identity can be rightfully determined.
8. Thou shalt report to the proper authorities any finds relating to criminal activity or of archeological significance.
9. Thou shalt be considerate of others on the beach and in other public places whilst waving thy search coil and digging holes in the sand and the soil.
10. Thou shalt speak out against the unjust laws and stand firm against the philistines who would cast out all those who use detectors of metal.

And if thou dost not abide by these Commandments, may you be plagued with the mineral-bearing rocks, hard-cracked soil, pestilence, serpents, locusts, poisonous vegetation and great multitudes of pull-tabs, bottle-caps and rusty nails. May you spend the remaining years of your wretched life digging signals of false origin. For thy iniquities shall surely bring the overzealous wrath of the ignorant, heathen bureaucrats down upon those of us who are innocent. For we are the righteous and the just, and ye who disobey the Ten Commandments of Metal Detecting are bad.

This Month in the Civil War

November 1, 1861 – President Lincoln appoints McClellan as general-in-chief of all Union forces after the resignation of the aged Winfield Scott. Lincoln tells McClellan, "...the supreme command of the Army will

entail a vast labor upon you." McClellan responds, "I can do it all."

November 8, 1861 - The beginning of an international diplomatic crisis for President Lincoln as two Confederate officials sailing toward England are seized by the U.S. Navy. England, the leading world power, demands their release, threatening war. Lincoln eventually gives in and orders their release in December. "One war at a time," Lincoln remarks.

November 7, 1862 – The president replaces McClellan with Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside as the new Commander of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln had grown impatient with McClellan's slowness to follow up on the success at Antietam, even telling him, "If you don't want to use the army, I should like to borrow it for a while."

November 19, 1863 – President Lincoln delivers a two minute Gettysburg Address at a ceremony dedicating the Battlefield as a National Cemetery.

November 23-25, 1863 – The Rebel siege of Chattanooga ends as Union forces under Grant defeat the siege army of Gen. Braxton Bragg. During the battle, one of the most dramatic moments of the war occurs. Yelling "Chickamauga! Chickamauga!" Union troops avenge their previous defeat at Chickamauga by storming up the face of Missionary Ridge without orders and sweep the Rebels from what had been thought to be an impregnable position. "My God, come and see 'em run!" a Union soldier cries.

November 8, 1864 – Abraham Lincoln is re-elected President, defeating Democrat George B. McClellan. Lincoln carries all but three states with 55 percent of the popular vote and 212 of 233 electoral votes. "I earnestly believe that the consequences of this day's work will be to the lasting advantage, if not the very salvation, of the country," Lincoln tells supporters.

November 15, 1864 – After destroying Atlanta's warehouses and railroad facilities, Sherman, with 62,000 men begins a March to the Sea. President Lincoln on advice from Grant approved the idea. "I can make Georgia howl!" Sherman boasts.

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Relic Trivia...Test Your Knowledge

1. What primary Confederate General was killed at the Battle of Shiloh?
2. What Northern general was accused by northern press as being insane?
3. What Southern General was mortally wounded at the battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia?
4. Which physician-inventor devised a weapon for the Union Army, which used only twelve of them, that was the prototype of the machine gun?
5. What raiders, captured by Confederates, were treated as civilian spies because they were out of uniform?

Answers will appear in the next *Ramrod* issue.

Answers to previous issue's questions:

1. What personal tragedy struck President Jefferson Davis and his wife Varina on April 30, 1864? **Their 5 year old son Joe Davis was killed in a fall from the high veranda at the Confederate White House in Richmond, Virginia.**
2. How old would Abraham Lincoln have been this Feb 12th? **Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809 and would have been 195 years old this February 12th.**
3. Which General had the longest last name? **U.S. Brig. General Alexander Schimmelfennig had the longest name of 14 letters.**
4. We all know Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson's nickname was "Stonewall", but his cousin, Major Gen. William L. Jackson also had a nickname... what was it? **"Mudwall."**
5. Companies within Regiments were given letters. Ten letters were used beginning with "A". Which letter did they skip? **They skipped the letter "J" because when written, it looked too much like an "S" or an "I."**

A Friendly Reminder

Each member should have their own name tag. Please wear these at each club meeting so our new members can get to know each person. See Todd Lee to pick up your name tag or let him know if you need a new one.

Club Officer Nominations for 2004

As hard as it may seem to believe, it is time for selecting officers for the upcoming year. Get involved with the club. Let us hear from you. Also, let us know if you are interested in becoming a club officer.

As per our club constitution, a nominating committee will present a proposed slate of officers for the coming year at the first meeting in December. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Election of officers will be held at that meeting. A majority vote of the members present at the meeting is necessary for election. Only dues-paying members will be eligible to vote. The newly elected officers will take office effective the first of January and will serve the entire calendar year.

Wanted Newsletter Articles

If you have any Civil War articles, or any other club related items that you would like to have published in The Ramrod, please let me or the other Club Officers know. You can also email articles to me by sending them to ToddCLee@cs.com

Club Web Site

The club web site continues to be updated on a regular basis. Take a minute and view the site and let us know what you think of it, and if there is anything else you would like to see done with the site

The club web site can be viewed at the following address:

WWW.NGRHA.COM

**That's all for this issue.
See you at the next club meeting.**

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