



## **Brewington Book Prize Awarded to Donald Grady Shomette**

*His “Anaconda’s Tail: The Civil War on the Potomac Frontier, 1861-1865” tells the story of regional resistance, racism, and the brutal military occupation of Southern Maryland*

**BALTIMORE (June 24, 2020)** – After careful deliberation, the Maritime Committee of the Maryland Historical Society\* has awarded the 2020 Brewington Book Prize to Donald Grady Shomette for his self-published *Anaconda’s Tail: The Civil War on the Potomac Frontier, 1861–1865* (2019). Chosen from a competitive selection of book titles on the Chesapeake Bay and U.S. maritime history published in 2019, Shomette’s tome is the recounting of actions both on the waterway and land blend into a single history that enhances understanding and appreciation, as *Anaconda’s Tail* places Southern Maryland’s significant role in the context of both the major Northern and Southern Civil War efforts in stark relief.

The “tail” referenced in Shomette’s title is derived from the print featured on the cover of the book, which displays the blockade of the South in the form of a curled anaconda, the tail of which lies in the Chesapeake Tidewater.

“By using the framework of the transportation network, official army and navy accounts, and the uneven intelligence gathering of the military and judicial authorities, including the notorious Pinkerton, Donald Shomette . . . has woven a narrative of regional resistance, racism, and the brutal military occupation of Southern Maryland that is inevitably long and worthy of multi-volumes but extraordinarily absorbing reading,” said Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, retired Maryland State Archivist and Commissioner of Land Patents and member of the Maryland Historical Society’s publications committee. “His balance between what was happening locally and the momentum of the war on a national scale provides an exceptional perspective of the progress of the conflict from the standpoint of Southern Maryland as well as insight into the terrible consequences of a sharply divided state and nation. While the details are starkly different it has a decidedly familiar ring in today’s world.”

Donald Grady Shomette is a nationally known maritime historian and, for more than two decades, a staff member of the Library of Congress. Author of eighteen books, and contributor to many professional journals, encyclopedias and anthologies of history, archaeology and poetry, his writings have also appeared in such publications as *National Geographic*, *History and Technology*, and *Sea History*. He is a thrice winner of the prestigious John Lyman Book Award for Best American Maritime History, recipient of the Calvert Prize for historic preservation, and holds an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Baltimore.

Beginning in 2016, The Brewington Book Prize has been awarded annually by MdHS for the best book on maritime history related to the Chesapeake Bay or the nation. The prize comes with a \$500 honorarium and is named for Marion V. Brewington (1902–1974), a legendary maritime curator and historian from Salisbury, Maryland. During World War II, Brewington was the curator for the U.S. Navy. After the war, he was the maritime curator of MdHS, a trustee of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and later held curatorial and administrative positions at the Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts, and the Kendall Whaling Museum in Sharon, Massachusetts. His books include *Chesapeake Bay: A Pictorial Maritime History* and *Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes*.

Previous winners of the Brewington Book Prize include:

- 2019 Judge John C. North II, *Tradition, Speed, and Grace: Chesapeake Bay Log Sailing Canoes* (St. Michaels, MD: Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, 2018)
- 2018 William Fowler Jr., *Steam Titans: Cunard, Collins, and the Epic Battle for Commerce on the North Atlantic* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017)
- 2017 Donald Grady Shomette, *Privateers of the Revolution: War on the New Jersey Coast, 1775–1783* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2016)
- 2016 Katie Livie, *Chesapeake Oysters: The Bay's Foundation and Future* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2015).

\* Now the Maryland Center for History and Culture.

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**The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC)** collects, preserves, and interprets the history, art, and culture of Maryland. Originally founded as the Maryland Historical Society in 1844, MCHC offers a museum, library, and education programs to inspire critical thinking, creativity, and community. Learn more at [mdhistory.org](http://mdhistory.org).

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