



The Newsletter of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table — Vol. XXXI, Issue 1, JANUARY 2024

HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR HARRY SMELTZER SPEAKS ON “THE 69th NY MILITIA AT THE BATTLE OF 1st BULL RUN/MANASSAS” AT THE JAN. 11th MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Mark Trbovich

On July 21, 1861, at the First Battle of Manassas/Bull Run, the Irish 69th New York Infantry regiment fought under the green flag of Erin and the Stars and Stripes for the first time. The unit was part of a brigade commanded by Col. William Tecumseh Sherman, whose name is now one of the most well known of the war. One of the last regiments off the field, the 69th lost many brave men that day. It was a rough beginning, but the regiment had begun a storied history that soon earned them the sobriquet “Fighting 69th.” We are happy to have a great friend of the Manassas Battlefield visit us to tell the rest of the story at our January 2024 General Membership meeting.

Harry Smeltzer is the host of the web site *Bull Runnings*, dedicated to the digitization of primary documents associated with the First Battle of Bull Run. He lives outside Pittsburgh and was born and raised in southwestern PA. He earned an undergraduate degree at Pennsylvania State University and a graduate degree at the Katz School of the University of Pittsburgh.

He’s been published in the journal *Civil War History*, *The Civil War Monitor*, *Civil War Times*, and *America’s Civil War*. He was a contributing writer for *America’s Civil War* and is a Digital History Advisor for

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, January 11, 2024

6 P.M. Social Hour

**7 P.M. In-person at the
Centreville Regional Library &
Streamed on Zoom & Facebook
Live**

GUEST SPEAKER:

Harry Smeltzer

TOPIC:

**“The 69th NY Militia at the
Battle of 1st Bull Run/
Manassas”**

The Civil War Monitor. He sits on the board of the Historic Antietam Foundation, and has served as its vice president and newsletter editor. Harry has presented programs on Bull Run-related topics to organizations in six states and the District of Columbia. He organizes specialized tours through his web site of the First Bull Run battlefield. He has been hosting *Bull Runnings* since November 2006.

Come join us early at our January 11th, 2024 Membership Meeting to have an opportunity to chat with Harry and your colleagues before the meeting begins. Doors open at 6:00 pm; hope to see you there.

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The **Bull Run Civil War Round Table** publishes the **Stone Wall**.

Newsletter Team: Sandra Cox, Janet Green-tree, Melissa Winn, Debbie and Mark Whitenton.

For meeting dates and other information, please visit the Web site: <http://bullruncwrt.org>

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 11 Harry Smeltzer - "The 69th NY Militia at the Battle of 1st Bull Run/Manassas"

February 8 Kevin Pawlak - "The Emancipation Proclamation"

February 18 Special 13th Meeting - "The Healing: Civil War Nurses Conversation"

March 14 David Goetz - "Col. John Singleton Mosby & The Lincoln Conspiracy"

April 11 James Anderson - "Civil War Spy Elizabeth Van Lew and the Bureau of Military Information"

May 9 Chris Mackowski - "The Battle of the Wilderness, May 1864"

June 13 Brad Gottfried - "The Maps of the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, May 1864"

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The President's Column by Kim Brace

**Photos by Gwen Wytenbach &
Blake Myers**

While I may not be as knowledgeable of all things related to the Civil War as other members of our esteemed body, it is with great pleasure that I accept the vote of the body that elected me as President starting this year. One of my first actions was to ask each of the Executive Committee (ExCom) members to continue their commitment to the Round Table and their leadership of their respective committees. Luckily, they have all agreed.

I would also take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, former President Mark Whitenton for his excellent guiding of the Round Table during the last several years. As Vice President during his tenure, I got to work with him and see his great dedication and direction of our group. I'll try my best to duplicate his effort. I'm also very grateful that the other half of the Whitenton household (Debbie) will continue as the RT's Secretary, since there's just "me, myself, and I" in my household. And our Treasurer, Joe Young, returns for another year of managing our money in his usual efficient style.



As many members will recognize, I already run the Zoom, PowerPoint, and Facebook connections for our General Membership meetings each month. As a result,

my Thursday afternoons are consumed with setting things up at the Library and I am no longer able to participate in the pre-meeting dinner with the speaker at Carrabba's. I would invite members that are interested in some great discussion and food before our regular meetings to meet at Carrabba's at 5 PM. Mark has agreed to continue to lead the effort of taking our speakers to dinner before our monthly membership meetings.



Speaking of meetings, in December we were fortunate to be addressed by an old friend of ours, John Quarstein, on the topic of Federal Admiral Samuel Du Pont's attack on Charleston, South Carolina with a fleet of nine ironclad ships in April 1863. John gave us his usual informative and entertaining presentation. This was John's fourth talk to the BRCWRT!



This organization also has an immense source of history in its Preservation Committee and its head Blake Myers. Having worked with him through my own efforts with the Manassas Battlefield Trust and the PWC Historical Commission, he is a valuable resource for the Round Table. My goal would be that our

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BRCWRT continues to be recognized as a leader in the preservation community in the DC area. Extra help from members of the RT would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, we should remember that it takes a lot of effort by many of us to make this organization work. A good example is Sandra Cox, our former editor of the *Stone Wall* and more recently the manager of the member name tag collection (and server of cake on special occasions, as you can see). Sandra is passing the torch in order to focus on other priorities, but her long efforts to support the BRCWRT are most appreciated.



The Round Table can always use willing hands like Sandra's. We are especially looking for folks to help with Membership, Fundraising, and Education. Please contact me if you have expertise or are just interested in being involved.



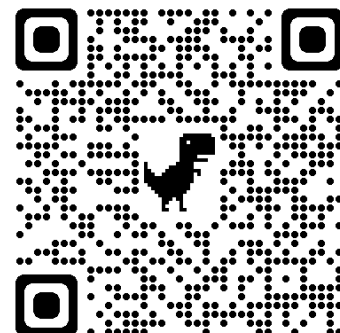
Built by members of the Texas Brigade, this battery along the Potomac was shelled by Union gunboats on January 3rd, 1862.

SUPPORT BRCWRT ACTIVITIES

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that relies on your donations to continue our excellent programs and initiatives throughout the year. There are many select programs to donate to, including: the BRCWRT Scholarship Fund, Preservation efforts, Civil War Trails sign preservation and maintenance, educational programs, insurance, and of course the General donation category (which the Round Table uses as a discretionary fund to offset various expenses, to help keep our membership dues at a reasonable rate). Please consider your Round Table for tax-deductible donations every year. We are a special organization and appreciate our members very much.

There are a number of ways to make a donation. On the BRCWRT website, click the link labelled "Renew/Donate" and select the link at the bottom of that page. Alternatively, you can give a check to our Treasurer at a membership meeting, or mail it to: BRCWRT Treasurer, PO Box 2147, Centreville VA 20122. Make checks payable to BRCWRT, and be sure to note whether it is for the Scholarship Fund, Preservation Fund, or the General Fund.

Finally, you can scan this QR code with the camera on your smartphone to make a donation.



Bull Run Civil War Round Table



Upcoming 2024 Program of Events

Date	Event
January 11	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Harry Smeltzer - "The 69th NY Militia at the Battle of 1st Bull Run/Manassas"
February 8	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Kevin Pawlak - "The Emancipation Proclamation"
February 18	BRCWRT Special 13th Meeting: "The Healing - A Conversation of Civil War Nurses" Brentsville Courthouse Historic Center, 12229 Bristow Road, starting at 1:00 PM
March 9	Spring Field Trip: "Centreville Military Railroad" - Tour leaders Blake Myers and Jim Lewis (rain date March 16th)
March 14	Monthly Meeting Speaker: David Goetz - "Colonel John Singleton Mosby and the Lincoln Conspiracy"
March 23	Prince William County Symposium will be held 8:00-4:30 at the Manassas Museum Membership Drive and Book Sales
April 11	Monthly Meeting Speaker: James Anderson - "Civil War Spy Elizabeth Van Lew and the Bureau of Military Information"
May 9	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Chris Mackowski - "The Battle of the Wilderness, May 1864" Anniversary Celebration - CAKE!
June 13	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Brad Gottfried - "The Maps of the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, May 1864"
June 22	Spring Tour: "Battle of Spotsylvania" - Tour Guide Greg Mertz (rain date is June 29th)
July 11	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jonathan Noyalas - "The Battle of Cool Springs, July 1864"
August 8	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Doug Crenshaw - "Fort Harrison and the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, 1864"
September 12	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Melissa Weeks - "Rendezvous With Destiny: Gen. J.E.B. Stuart at Spotsylvania Courthouse, 1864"
October 5	Fall Field Trip: "Battle of Cedar Creek" - Tour leaders Blake Myers and Jim Lewis (rain date October 26th)
October 10	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Sarah Bierle - "What If Rienzi Stumbled? A Different Look at the Battle of Cedar Creek, October 1864"
November 14	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Gene Schmiel - "The Battle of Nashville, Tennessee, November 1864"

Monthly Meetings in "Black" Tours/Field Trips & Special RT Events in "Red" County or outside sponsored events in "Green"

AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRCWRT'S BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

By Gary Haskins

Photos by Don Richardson

The Bristoe Campaign started where the Gettysburg Campaign left off: at the Rapidan River. The Union Army of the Potomac (AOP), under the command of Major General George Meade, faced off in a stalemate with the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia (ANV), under the command of General Robert E. Lee. The campaign was a retrograde movement of the AOP back to the safety of Centreville, VA, after the AOP detected the attempt of the ANV to march around its right (western) flank. The movement followed various paths through Prince William and Fauquier Counties. Orders for the AOP retreat were issued late in the evening of October 12, 1863 and by the morning of October 13 the movement was underway. The campaign culminated at the Battle of Bristoe Station on October 14, 1863, with a final action on October 19, 1863, known as the Buckland Races. The purpose of the tour was to visit local sites significant to these final days of Lee's last offensive campaign of the war.

The car caravan tour occurred on Saturday November 11, 2023, after having been rescheduled from September 23 due to tropical storm Ophelia. Our guide was Bill Backus, BRCWRT member and Preservationist with the Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation. Seven Round Table members attended: Mike Buckley, Alan Day,



Gary Haskins, Sam Laudenslager, Daniel Lundeen, Andrew Monahan, and Don Richardson. The sunny day started out a bit chilly but rose into the 50s as the day progressed. We assembled at the Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park and the tour began at 9:00 AM.

Bill explained he would not cover many battle details, since he expected everyone in attendance knew them. Instead, his emphasis would be placed on command structure, decision making, and personalities.

Post-Gettysburg, manpower in both armies had been depleted and needed to be replenished. To facilitate this, the Union started the first federal draft. Demonstrations against the draft occurred in the North and Meade sent portions of his army to quell those disturbances. The quality of Union troops diminished after Gettysburg with the flood of inexperienced draftees. As an example, the 14th Connecticut was at 75 men, one tenth full strength, after Gettysburg. By Bristoe Station their strength had risen to 700. They were essentially a brand new regiment.

Lee also had to replenish his army. Having already had conscription in place since 1862, his only choice was to move support staff into the infantry. For the Confederacy, North Carolina had suffered the largest number of casualties, and sentiment was turning against the Confederacy. For example, anti-war, anti-Confederate musings were being published by anti-secessionist William Woods Holden in Raleigh, NC.

Since before Gettysburg, there had been talk of sending Confederate troops to the western theater. In September 1863, the 1st Corps, under the command of General James Longstreet, was transferred to General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

in Georgia. An exception was Pickett's Division, which was sent to North Carolina. In response to Lee's move, Meade transferred two corps, the XI and XII, west to relieve the siege of Chattanooga.

After Gettysburg, with both armies back in Virginia, Meade wanted to make his movements to the east using the rivers, which were under Union control, for supply. He was forced by President Lincoln to make his movement along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad into central Virginia as Pope had done the year earlier. This led to Meade's resolve to campaign to "facts on the ground".

The Bristoe Campaign started with the armies facing each other on opposing banks of the Rapidan River. Lee's objective was to push the Union out of Virginia; he had no intentions beyond that.

Details of the campaign are sparse and gaps in the *Official Records* exist, since many of the commanders either filed no report or their reports have gone missing. Neither Meade, nor Major General William French (III Corps), nor Major General George Sykes (V Corps) filed reports. The key Union participant in the Bristoe Station battle, Major General Gouverneur Warren (II Corps) filed a very good, detailed report.

The first stop on the tour was Catlett's Station, a few miles south on VA Route 28. This is where the Union II Corps began following the railroad up the line to the next station, Bristoe. The II Corps was under the command of Major General Gouverneur Warren, who took over after Major General Winfield Scott Hancock's wounding at Gettysburg.



The Orange and Alexandria (O&A) railroad is today much like it was in 1863. The main difference is that today the line is double track, whereas it was single track in 1863. It is operated by the Norfolk Southern Railway.

The intelligence arm of the Army of the Potomac was the one set up by Major General Joseph Hooker, Meade's immediate predecessor. Intelligence estimated Lee's strength at 85,000. The reality was closer to 55,000.

Meade's retreat orders were in the form of a circular to his commanders. The circular defined the order of retreat to be: Major General John Newton (I Corps), Major

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

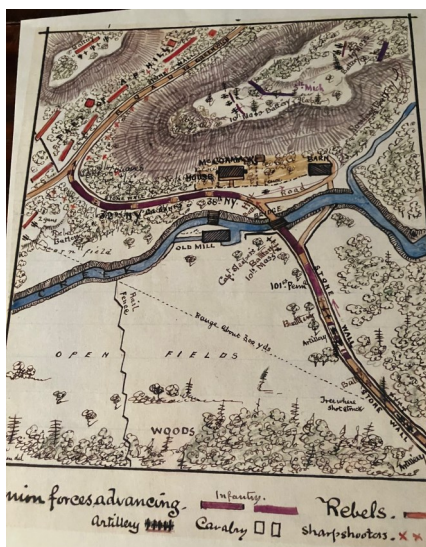
General John Sedgwick (VI Corps), French's III Corps, the Artillery Corps, Sykes' V Corps, and Warren's II Corps. This order bore no resemblance to the positions the units actually inhabited on the Rapidan and Rappahannock. The circular specified that all corps should post flankers along their line of march, picket all intersecting roads, and for adjacent corps to support each other. He warned his commanders of his belief that crossing Bull Run was the biggest threat to the column. Meade assigned no commander to be in charge of the rear of the retreating army, although he could have chosen French, Sykes, or Warren.

Meade traveled at the vanguard of the retreating force and had his headquarters at Catlett's Station on the morning of October 14, 1863. These were peculiar choices as the railroad was always subject to enemy attack and, due to his fear about trouble at Bull Run, positioning himself somewhere nearer the middle of the column might have made more sense.

The strength of the AOP was 92,000, of which 55,000 were infantry. Corps strengths were: I and VI Corps each at 13,000, III Corps at 14,000, V Corps at 10,600 and II Corps at 10,000. It is also peculiar that the II Corps should bring up the rear, being the smallest and having a new, possibly temporary, commander.

Perhaps the most important action taken by the AOP during the Bristoe Campaign was burning the railroad bridge over the Rappahannock as they retreated. This caused major logistical troubles for the ANV.

Our next stop was Auburn, to which we travelled along Old Dumfries Road (St. Stephens Church Road at the time) in the reverse direction taken by the II Corps in their movement from Auburn to Catlett's Station. The first Battle of Auburn occurred on the evening of October 13, 1863, as French's III Corps met resistance from Confederate cavalry under the command of Brigadier General Lunsford Lomax. The second battle of Auburn was fought the next morning, October 14, 1863, and involved the Union II Corps, General J.E.B. Stuart's Confederate cavalry, and Lieutenant General Richard Ewell's 2nd Corps of the ANV.



(Right) Auburn battlefield sketch by Robert K. Sneden, 40th NY Regiment, showing McCormack house and Old Auburn Mill. Sketched Oct. 16, 1863 (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond)



(Left) Sneden's After Action map of the Auburn engagement, prepared for MG French, III Corps (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond)

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

Stuart was under orders from Lee to conduct a reconnaissance of the retreating Union army. What Stuart actually conducted was a reconnaissance in force, using three brigades where one or two regiments would have sufficed. Stuart discovered the retreating Union wagon train at Catlett's Station.

Stuart resisted the urge to attack the train and instead attempted to make his way back to Lee through Auburn. At Auburn he encountered the entire Union II Corps blocking his way. Stuart was forced to take shelter for the night in a nearby hollow. He sent out scouts to inform Lee of his circumstances and request assistance.

As the war progressed, Union cavalry began to dominate Confederate cavalry. Federal cavalry had more official support, whereas Confederate cavalry was more private; soldiers provided their own horses. By this time, Stuart had 4 or 5 brigades totaling 6,000 – 7,000 men, just a division. Pleasonton's cavalry had 12,000 men.



Warren's II Corps approached Auburn from the south and crossed Cedar Run at this point



Both a sawmill and a gristmill were located along Cedar Run in Auburn

Stuart made his escape on the morning of October 14, with the arrival of Ewell's 2nd Corps, which had been sent by Lee to rescue Stuart. After opening artillery fire on Union soldiers making their breakfast on Coffee Hill, Stuart made his escape with the 1st NC Cavalry leading the way. The 1st NC suffered 20 casualties, the bulk of Stuart's losses. There is no mention of the number of horses lost. Warren's II Corps suffered 100 casualties.

The entanglement at Auburn delayed and changed the direction of Warren's march. His plan had been to follow French's retreat through Greenwich, but the encounter instead pushed Warren east toward Catlett's Station. Had Stuart not escaped, the delay to Warren's Corps could have been much worse.

We next made our way north to Greenwich, following the path taken by French's III Corps. The Union II Corps had been intended to follow French, but was diverted east by the entanglement with Stuart at Auburn. By the time they reached Bristoe Station, the II Corps would have traveled 36 miles in 24 hours.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

Lieutenant General A.P. Hill's 3rd Corps passed through Greenwich later in the morning of October 14, only a few hours after French passed by. Hill approached from the west, turning off today's Route 29 onto Greenwich Road (today's Vint Hill Road). Captured Union III Corps stragglers convinced Hill he was on the tail of the Union army, with the III Corps as rear guard. At this time Hill knew nothing about the Union II Corps. It is likely that Lee failed to communicate the II Corps action to Hill. Of Hill's three divisions, Wilcox's was sent to Buckland, while those of Heth and Anderson proceeded to Bristoe Station, with Heth in the lead.



Hill was having difficulty escaping from Stonewall Jackson's shadow. He believed aggression is better than caution. Hill surprised the Union II Corps at Bristoe because Sykes disregarded Meade's orders; he neither posted flankers nor picketed side roads.



Stony Lonesome Farm, childhood home of General Richard Ewell

Ewell's 2nd Corps had originally planned to pass through Gainesville but it diverted east due to Stuart's Auburn dilemma. Ewell, being familiar with the area due to having grown up nearby, was able to avoid conflict with Hill by using back roads. Greenwich was also familiar to the Union army, since the XI Corps, under the command of General Oliver O. Howard, was stationed in Fauquier County after Gettysburg.

After leaving Greenwich, we proceeded to Bristow using the same road used by Hill, today's Vint Hill Road. We stopped at Bristow Center for lunch. Despite a variety of restaurants, we all chose to eat at Tony's NY Pizza. Surprisingly it was a first time at Tony's for a few attendees.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

After lunch we stood at the edge of the Bristow Center parking lot looking toward Bristoe Station. Although modern development obscures the view, it was really no better for Hill due to tree growth. It is at this spot that Hill's 3rd Corps entered the scene. From here he could not see the O&A railroad approximately one mile to the south-east. He did see the Union army across Broad Run at Milford. Hill assumed this was the Union III Corps rear guard; it actually was Sykes' V Corps.



A.P. Hill's view to the southeast from the heights of modern Bristow, looking toward the Orange and Alexandria railroad. The tall tree rising behind the Panera restaurant marks the location of the Bristoe Station Battlefield park headquarters.

At least some soldiers in the V Corps believed they were the rear guard. Private Donaldson of the 118th Pennsylvania wrote in a letter that he was in the rear of the army. The V Corps had failed to follow Meade's orders in the circular. Rather than post pickets on side roads, they attempted to block the roads by felling trees. Rather than supporting the II Corps, they did not halt their march until they reached Manassas.

In the *Official Records*, a message from Major General Andrew Humphries (AOP Chief of Staff) reassured Warren that the V Corps would await contact with him before continuing forward and would support the II Corps. After arriving in Manassas, Sykes informed Warren that he was staying put. He also stated that if Warren were to encounter Lee's Army, two corps would be no better than one. After Bristoe Station, Warren accused Sykes of failure to support him as ordered.

Finally we traveled a half mile back to where we started the tour at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park.

Major General Henry Heth's Confederate division was the first to arrive on the field at Bristoe Station. Heth may have been the most overrated general in the ANV. He graduated from West Point in the 1847 near the bottom of his class; later, he authored a rifled musket training manual while in the US Army. Heth was ineffective at Gettysburg and stumbled into starting the battle. His division tended to get away from him. The story is told that Heth was the only general that Lee called by his first name.

A.P. Hill ordered Heth to attack the retreating Federal V Corps across Broad Run; Major General Richard Anderson's division would support Heth on his right. Lieutenant Colonel Will Poague's artillery battalion was placed on a knoll at today's intersection of Route 28 and Bristow Road.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

Heth's division included Brigadier General Henry Walker's brigade on the left, Brigadier General John Rogers Cooke's brigade in the center, and Brigadier General William Kirkland's brigade on the right. Kirkland had been given charge of Pettigrew's brigade after Gettysburg. Walker's brigade was composed of men from Tennessee and Virginia and were a combination of experienced and inexperienced men. Brigadier General Joseph Davis' brigade was in reserve.

As the battle began, flankers deployed on the Confederate right encountered flankers on the Union left who were marching up the railroad. A ten minute pause occurred while Hill decided how to respond. Hill then ordered a wheel movement where the entire Confederate line would rotate 90 degrees from facing Broad Run to facing the railroad. The wheel movement was disorganized. Kirkland's rightmost elements disrupted Cooke's movement by crossing in front of his leftmost units. Walker's brigade never received the order and moved away from the battle, continuing toward Broad Run. On A.P. Hill's orders, Major David McIntosh's Confederate artillery battery was placed on the knoll now occupied by the Battlefield Park headquarters; this was too close to the railroad for McIntosh's liking, and was not supported by infantry. Five of McIntosh's guns were later captured by Federal troops.

In the meantime, Warren ordered his troops to occupy a defensive position behind the railroad embankment. As the ANV commenced a disorderly charge against the railroad, the entire Union II Corps was not yet completely in place. During the charge of the North Carolina regiments, they continued to fill in defensive positions from multiple lines of the Union advance. Union artillery batteries of Brown, Ricketts, and Arnold took position across Broad Run, on a slope on the near side of the Run, and on a hill farther to the Union left behind the railroad.



McIntosh's Battery, looking toward the railroad embankment



Final yards of Confederate charge on the railroad

Sheltered behind the railroad embankment, the Union troops and their supporting artillery took a terrible toll on the charging North Carolina regiments. Though Confederates from Kirkland's brigade did manage to get across the railroad (at the point where Bristow Road crossed the line), they were quickly thrown back. As they retreated up the slope, the Confederates took more casualties and were unable to prevent Union units from seizing five of McIntosh's guns and hauling them away.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT - BRISTOE CAMPAIGN TOUR

Colonel Thomas Smyth's Union brigade had been ordered by his division commander, Brigadier General Alexander Hayes, to attack the enemy if they were encountered. Late in the battle, Smyth's troops advanced across the railroad, but this effort was repulsed by the newly arrived brigades of Brigadier General Carnot Posey and Brigadier General Edward Perry of General Richard Anderson's division.

Warren's II Corps was saved by darkness, during which they continued their march toward Centreville. Had they remained, Warren's 10,000 men would have faced the entire ANV, 40,000 to 50,000 strong, the following day.

Hill was blamed for being too aggressive by failing to reconnoiter the field prior to ordering the attack. His aggressiveness was likely due to Lee's expressed desire to form the battle before the enemy does. The battle was essentially a race to the railroad. Hill accepted the responsibility for the failure, and Lee decided not to renew the fight the next day. This marked the end of Lee's last offensive campaign of the war.

The following questions were posed for discussion at the end of the tour.

Why was Warren assigned to be the Union rear guard? He was a new, temporary commander with the smallest corps. Would a more experienced commander have been appropriate? Warren performed well and was the only commander who followed Meade's orders to deploy flankers and picket side roads.

What if Ewell and Hill had played different roles: Ewell executing the flank maneuver and Hill being given the task of saving Stuart at Auburn? Ewell's familiarity with the area, having been raised close by, and his experience as the rear guard in August 1862 on the same ground, could have prevented the Confederates being surprised by the Union II Corps on the railroad.

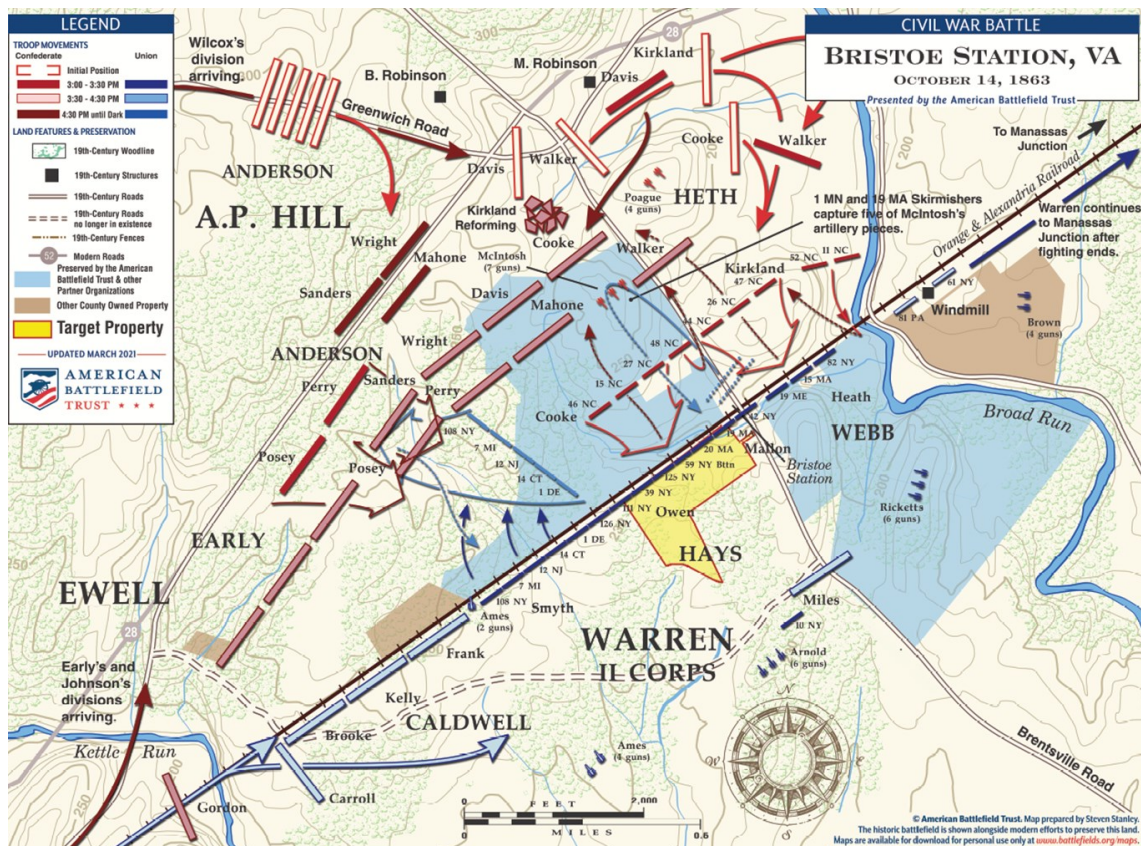
What if Cooke and Kirkland had not been wounded? The brigade of John Rogers Cooke, son of Union Brigadier General Philip St. George Cooke, was composed of North Carolina troops and suffered the greatest losses. The 27th NC was the choice regiment for the elite. The 48th NC had poor leaders. The 46th NC had a variety of leaders, with Edward Dudley Hall in command at Bristoe Station. Hall took command of the brigade after Cooke was put out of action by receiving his third (of five) wounds in the war. Cooke survived the war and died in 1891. Part of the reason for the disorderly Confederate charge was Hall's regiment; apparently they overheard Hall's discussion of a charge order and acted on it too quickly.

There has been controversy over McIntosh's lost guns. The North Carolina infantry was blamed, but they denied responsibility, claiming they were not ordered to be artillery support.

In summary, the outcome of the battle was the result of many poor decisions made quickly, in addition to poor leadership on both sides, especially Sykes for the AOP and Heth for the ANV.

Bill gave us the option to continue on to Buckland, but we declined since it was late and a couple of the attendees were ready to call it a day. The action of October 19, 1863, the Buckland Races, will wait for another day.

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Bristoe Station Battle Map (American Battlefield Trust)



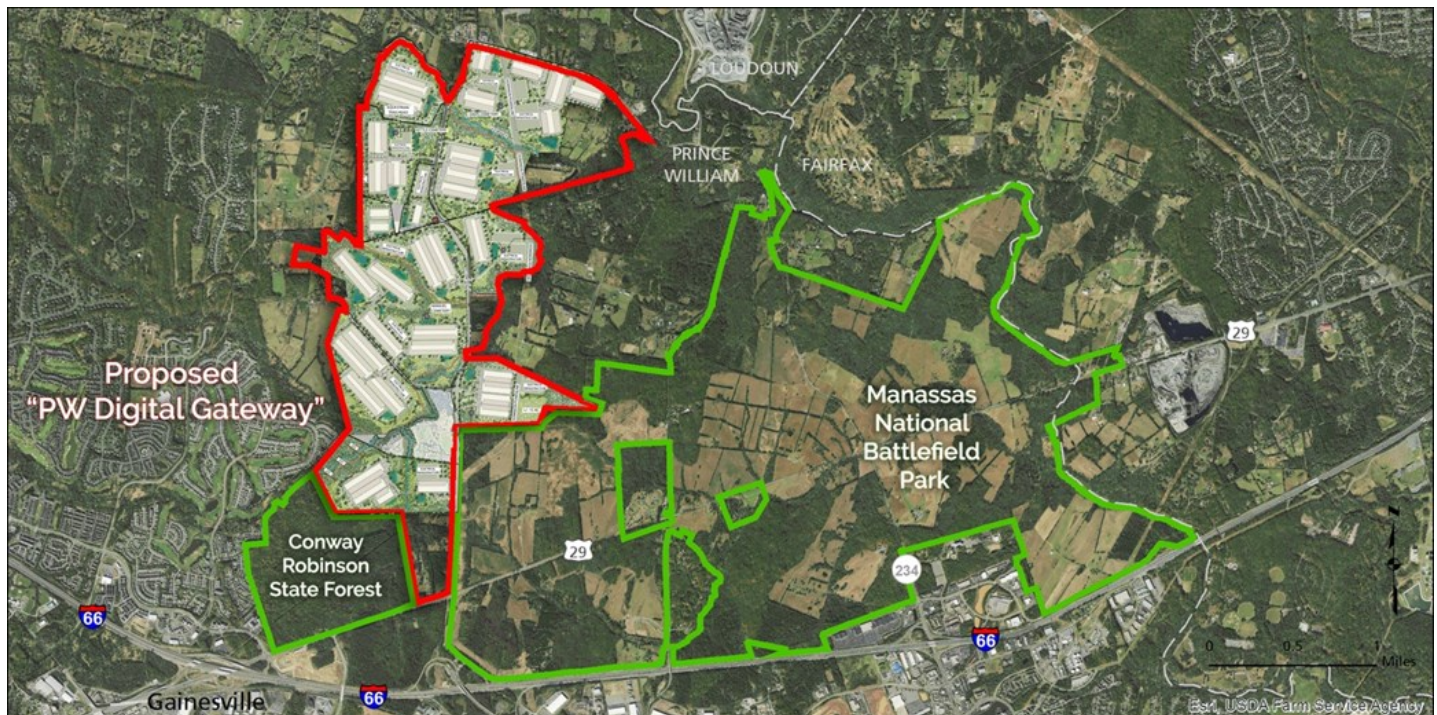
PRESERVATION CORNER by Blake Myers



Greetings BRCWRT Members and Friends - this edition of *Preservation Corner* provides an update on the Prince William Digital Gateway (PWDG).

Prince William Digital Gateway (PWDG) Data Centers Rezoning Applications, REZ2022-00032 [PWDG North], REZ2022-00033 [PWDG South, and REZ2022-00036 [PWC Campus 1] (Manassas National Battlefield Park and Manassas Battlefield Historic District)

Following the Prince William County Planning Commission's November 8-9, 2023, 23-hour public hearing, the Commission voted to recommend denial of all three rezoning applications for the proposed Prince William Digital Gateway data centers. The 6-2 vote on each rezoning application came after three attempts by Commissioner Richard Berry (Gainesville) to defer a planning commission vote until after the county's planning office had sufficient time to review the 5th Submissions of the PWDG rezoning applications submitted by QTS Data Centers and Compass Datacenters on November 1, 2023.



Proposed PW Digital Gateway

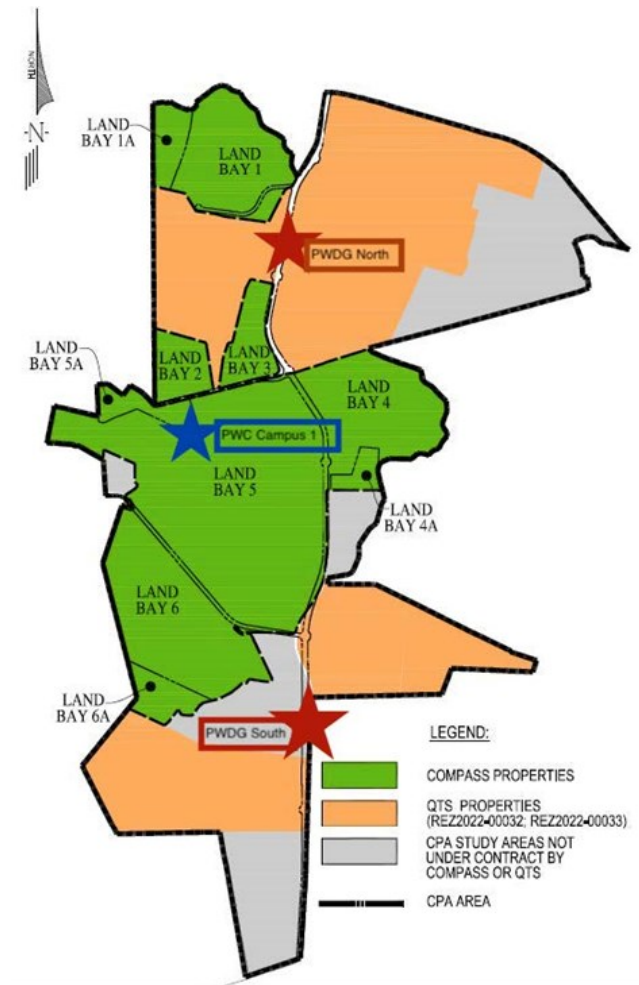
(cont on page 16)

PRESERVATION CORNER

The three applications, the County Planning Staff's recommendation for denial, and the Planning Commission's recommendation for denial then went to the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) for a PWDG public hearing scheduled by the BOCS for December 12, 2023.

On December 11, 2023, a nine-page letter written by the National Parks Conservation Association and the American Battlefield Trust, and signed by 33 local, regional, and national nonprofit organizations dedicated to preserving and protecting environmental, historic and cultural resources, and human health, was sent to the PWC BOCS. The letter highlighted, in significant depth, the negative impacts that the PWDG poses for Prince William County, Virginia, and beyond, and urged the BOCS to vote to deny the PWDG data center applications. The cited negative impacts and shortcomings of the applications include:

- Direct and negative impacts to Manassas National Battlefield Park and Conway Robinson State Forest;
- Inconsistency with the PWDG Comprehensive Plan Amendment with respect to county parks, trails, open space, and wildlife corridors;
- The lack of information with respect to sustainability, energy requirements and infrastructure, and direct and negative impacts on climate;
- Direct and negative impacts of air pollution, carbon emissions, local water pollution and decreased water supply, utility rate increases, and public park land degradation;
- Unknown, but potentially direct and negative, impacts on clean water and the Occoquan Watershed Reservoir;
- Failure of the applicants to provide sufficient information or commitments to ensure the proposed development would come to fruition as described – an alarming shortfall for a project of this scale requiring massive infrastructure upgrades.



Land Parcels Proposed for PWDG Data Centers

On December 12-13, 2023, at the conclusion of a 27-hour session that included a 7-hour meeting of the BOCS with the Data Center Rezoning Applicants (QTS Realty & Compass Datacenters) and PWC Planning Office representatives, and a 20-hour public hearing with nearly 400 individual and organizational speakers, the BOCS voted 4-3, with one abstention, to approve each of the rezoning applications. Among the organizational speakers were MNBPA, the Prince William Conservation Alliance, the Coalition to Protect Prince William County, BRCWRT, the National Parks Conservation Alliance, and the American Battlefield Trust.

(cont on page 17)

The BOCS's approval of the PWDG rezoning applications came despite recommendations from both the PWC Planning Office and PWC Planning Commission to deny each of the applications. Additionally given the substantive changes to the applications and several proffers made since the Planning Commission's public hearing and vote on November 8, 2023, and during the December 12, 2023, BOCS meeting and public hearing, several speakers and Gainesville District Supervisor Bob Weir recommended the applications be sent back to the Planning Commission for reconsideration. That recommendation garnered no support from the Democratic members of the BOCS, thus continuing BOCS Chair Anne Wheeler's strategy and rush to ensure the applications were acted on by the current BOCS before its term ended on December 31, 2023 – a strategy driven by the consensus that the majority of the Supervisors on the incoming (January 1, 2024) BOCS do not support the PWDG and that the new BOCS would likely not approve the rezoning applications.

Meanwhile there are on-going and potentially new legal actions that challenge the BOCS's actions regarding the PWDG. Approximately one year ago, the Oak Valley HOA and ten individual plaintiffs sued to reverse the BOCS's approval of Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) 2021-00004 PW Digital Gateway, that paved the way for the PWDG rezoning applications. That lawsuit is currently winding its way through the court system.



Other legal challenges under consideration include a potential legal filing by the Coalition to Protect PWC to negate the BOCS December 12th public hearing due to non-compliance with the county ordinance and state law governing public hearing announcements, and a potential legal filing by the HOA Roundtable.

(cont on page 18)

PRESERVATION CORNER

for the December 12th public hearing. PWC Ordinance Sec. 32-700.60(1) states that “Notice of a zoning map amendment or Special Use Permit shall be published once a week for two successive weeks (with not less than six days elapsing between the first and second publication) in a newspaper having general circulation in the County. Notice for both the planning commission and Board of County Supervisors may be published concurrently. No-
tice shall specify the time and place of the public hearing, which shall be held not less than five days nor more than 21 days after the second advertisement shall have appeared.”

Virginia State Code §15.2-2204(A) states that the governing body may not “adopt any plan, ordinance or amendment thereof until notice of intention to do so has been published “once a week for two consecutive weeks,” with “two successive weeks” being defined as “not less than six days elapsing before the first and second publication.” (underlining added for emphasis)

In a related initiative, nonprofit organizations, homeowners’ groups, and residents from across Virginia have joined forces to form a coalition calling for industry-wide data center reform. The *Virginia Data Center Reform Coalition* consists of more than 20 environmental, conservation, historic preservation, and climate advocacy groups, as well as representatives of communities and neighborhoods across the state. Together, they are urging the state to study the cumulative effects of data center development on the state’s electrical grid, water resources, air quality, and land conservation efforts, and to institute several common-sense regulatory and rate-making reforms for this industry.



The Coalition’s inaugural December 1, 2023, press conference highlighted several ways the data center industry in Virginia has failed to prioritize community concerns. Among them: proposing megacampuses in inappropriate locations, such as near historic battlefields and cultural resources, schools, and residential communities; consuming excessive amounts of water with little oversight; installing thousands of large diesel generators, whose use threatens local and regional air quality; and compelling massive energy infrastructure upgrades that are paid for by ratepayers. The Coalition is seeking Virginia state government intervention — to require more transparency around land use decisions affecting the lives of Virginians and around energy and water usage that carries significant implications for both local communities and the Commonwealth. The coalition is asking the state to require data center developers to mitigate the negative environmental impacts of this industry and to place the cost of new transmission lines and power generation infrastructure required for data centers on the industry itself, rather than on Virginia’s individual ratepayers.

The way forward for the PW Digital Gateway promises to be a long and winding road; stay tuned for future developments.

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, Civil War historic preservation in general and BRCWRT’s preservation projects, actions, and activities.

Blake Myers, BRCWRT Preservation Chair

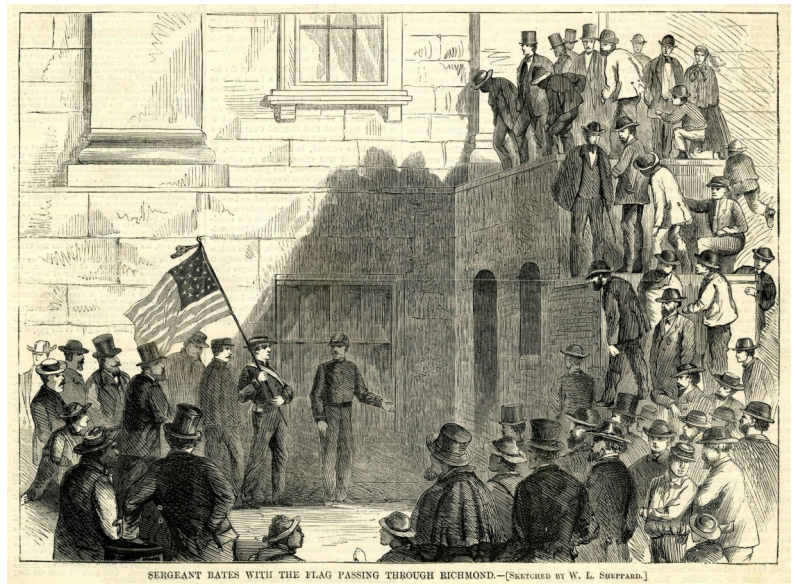
IMAGE OF THE MONTH

By Melissa A. Winn

Gilbert Bates served as a sergeant in the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery Regiment during the Civil War but gained his notoriety after the conflict. In late 1867, the Wisconsin farmer had a conversation about the South with a neighbor, who said, "Sergeant, the Southerners are rebels yet. They are worse now than they were during the war. They hate the Union flag. No man dare show that flag anywhere in the South...." Bates disagreed and, intending to prove that he could be treated cordially in the supposedly hostile region, he bet his neighbor that he could carry the flag "from the Mississippi all over the rebel States, alone and unarmed, too." In January 1868, he began a three-month march in Vicksburg, Miss., where he was welcomed by the mayor. He walked 1,400 miles across Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, ending up in Washington, D.C., on April 14. He carried an unfurled American flag with him and was greeted with hospitality, including lodging, dinners, parties, and parades, the whole way. He recorded his journey in a pamphlet published in June 1868 titled "The Triumphal March of Sergeant Bates from Vicksburg to Washington." Bates had this photo taken and printed to sell for 25 cents apiece along his route. He used the proceeds to create a fund to aid widows and orphans of soldiers who fought in the Civil War, "irrespective of flag or politics."



Photo: McLean County Museum of History



This illustration of Bates marching through Richmond during his three-month march ran in *Harper's Weekly*. Newspapers throughout the country reported on Bates' trek.

Photo: Harper's Weekly



BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

SPECIAL 13th MEMBERSHIP MEETING!!!

Sunday, February 18th, 2024
***at the* Brentsville Courthouse**
Historic Center
12229 Bristow Road

**1:00 PM - Guided Tour of the Brentsville
Grounds, including the Jail**

2:00 PM - PRESENTATION OF *The Healing*
"Conversations of Civil War Nurses"



Doesn't matter if you wore the blue or the gray

Presented by Dawn Diehl (Confederate) and Linda Harrison (Union)

Sudley United Methodist Church Dinner With the Benson-Rice Storytellers

By Janet Greentree

Photos by Janet Greentree unless noted

Three of the "History Ladies" (Nancy Anwyll, Gwen Wyttenbach, and Janet Greentree) were in attendance at the Sudley United Methodist Church on December 9, 2023, enjoying a wonderful church supper of turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, green beans, and yeast rolls. But the second part of the event was even more interesting.

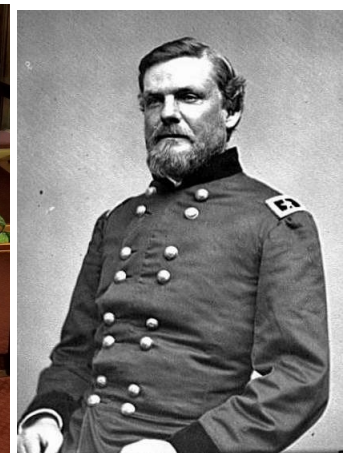


Two of our fellow Bull Run Civil War Round Table members, John Myers and Fred Eckstein, took the parts of the Benson-Rice Storytellers. Their friend, fellow reenactor Kevin Garrahan, took the role of General John Newton, who acted as the narrator and gave John and Fred a hard time. John Myers portrayed Colonel John Lovell Rice, a Union soldier who served later under General Newton. Rice was a member of Co. A, New Hampshire 2nd Infantry, having enlisted on May 31, 1861. Rice was injured at the Battle of First Manassas/Bull Run on July 21, 1861. He was shot in the chest; the bullet penetrated his lung. He was lying in a stream near Sudley Church when he was found by Amos Benson. Amos was a farmer and lived across the road from Sudley Church. Benson and his wife took him into their house for treatment.

Fred Eckstein portrayed Corporal Amos Benson, a Confederate soldier. Benson enlisted five months after 1st Manassas/Bull Run on December 3, 1861. Benson was a member of Co. A, 4th VA Cavalry. Both Benson and Rice survived the war and were in contact with each other years later. I won't tell you the whole story as you all should go next year for a fantastic dinner and a Confederate/Union story that occurred during the battle.



L-R: Gen. John Newton (Kevin Garrahan), Col. John L. Rice (John Myers), Corp. Amos Benson (Fred Eckstein)

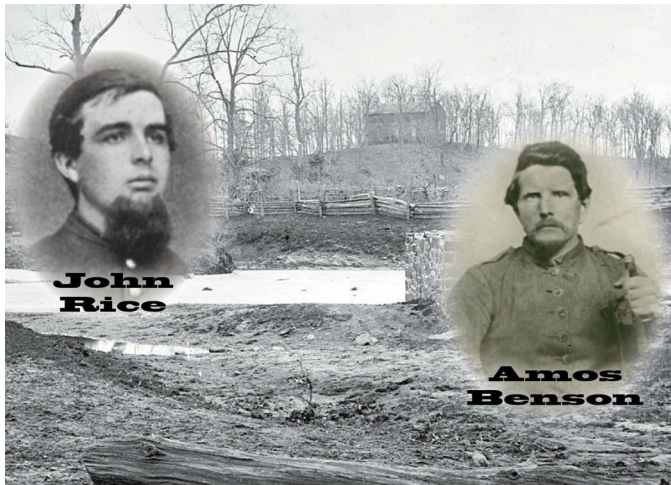


Gen. John Newton (Kevin Garrahan), and his namesake - note the resemblance.

Corporal Amos Benson is buried in the Sudley United Methodist Church Cemetery adjacent to the church.

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The Benson-Rice Storytellers



Rice and Benson (photo courtesy of John Myers)



SUDLEY SPRINGS CHURCH. Battlefield of BULL RUN V.
Hospital for Union Army. July 21, 1861



Sudley Church 1861
(above)

Amos Benson's grave (left)

On Find-A-Grave.com, one E. H. Wier of Bristow, VA, posted the following:

"Amos Benson was born in Baltimore County, Md., September 7, 1825, and died in the Johns Hopkins Hospital November 5, 1901. He went to Virginia with his father's family in 1840 where he spent his long and useful life. He joined the Methodist Church in 1842, and later the M.E. Church, South, remaining a faithful and honored member until his death. In early life he married Margaret A. Newman, with whom he spent nearly fifty years, in the sweetest and purest domestic felicity. She preceded him to the better land about four years ago. At the beginning of the civil war he joined Company A, Fourth Virginia Cavalry. He fought through the war and surrendered with Lee's Army. He was a brave soldier, faithful to his convictions. Years after the war, a Federal soldier whose life he had probably saved by care and tender nursing in his home, desired to make him recompense. He declined to receive anything for himself, but accepted a handsome donation for Sudley Church which was being rebuilt. He was laid to rest in the cemetery of that church. The pallbearers were comrades of Company A, Fourth Virginia Cavalry: Henry Lynn, Curl Lynn, William Wilkins, Bob Cushing, Robert Haislip, B.L. Pridmore."

After Benson lost his wife, he lived in the Dogan House in Groveton. He was related to the Dogan family.

Col. John L. Rice is buried at Springfield Cemetery in Springfield, MA. Listed below is part of his obituary, published in the Aurora of the Valley in Newbury, VT:

"John moved to Cornish, New Hampshire about 1855. On May 31 1861, he mustered in to Company A, New Hampshire

(cont on page 23)

The Benson-Rice Storytellers

2nd Infantry Regiment (also known as the Cheshire Rifle Guard). John was shot through the body (through the lung) during the Battle of First Bull Run (First Manassas) on July 21, 1861, and was left on the field. His family was notified of his death on July 26, and a funeral was held in Ascutneyville on July 28. John's obituary was published in Aurora of the Valley (Newbury, Vermont) on August 3, 1861. On August 17, 1861, the Vermont Journal (Windsor, VT) published this notice: "John L. Rice, of Cornish, whose funeral sermon was recently preached, and whose funeral sermon was published in this paper, it appears is a prisoner at Richmond, and though wounded, is rapidly recovering."



The Dogan House (photo courtesy of John Myers)



John Rice's grave

Newspaper accounts in 1862 state he was held prisoner for about 6 months and spent a short furlough before returning to his company. On November 19, the Vermont Journal reported he had been promoted to Captain of the 16th New Hampshire.



Reenactors portrayed soldiers and musicians



George Barnard's 1862 photograph of the Sudley Church (Library of Congress)



"Hecatomb at Sudley Church, where over 100 Federal troops were buried" (Barnard, Library of Congress)

Centreville Military (CMRR) Railroad Tour

Saturday, March 9



Subject matter: The CMRR, the first railroad built exclusively for military purposes, was built between Nov. 1861 – Feb. 1862 and operated from Feb 4, - March 8, 1862 - providing food, forage, and supplies to the Confederate forces (44, 000 strong), horses and mules camped in and around Centreville.

Five (5) tour stops (Manassas Depot, Bull Run trestle site, CMRR roadbed remnants [Compton Road], CMRR terminus site, and historic St. John's Episcopal Church). Optional tour stop after lunch (CMRR roadbed remnant in Bull Run Reg. Park). Trail and cross-country walking required - TOUR NOT ADVISED FOR MOBILITY-CHALLENGED PERSONS.

Tour Guides: Blake Myers & Jim Lewis

Assembly Time/Location: 9:00 AM / Manassas Visitor Center (Historic Manassas RR Depot) @ 9421 West St., Manassas, VA 20110

Mode of Transportation: Car Caravan - will consolidate into vehicles for main tour only, and vehicles for main tour plus optional lunch/tour stop

Tour Start Time: 9:15 AM

ETA for main tour only vehicles returning to Manassas Visitor Center: 1:00 PM

Optional Lunch: McDonald's (Centreville) - Individual tabs

Uniform of the Day: Appropriate dress for weather conditions, comfortable walking shoes, and bring a walking stick as needed/desired.

BRCWRT Contacts: Blake Myers – jb11thva@cox.net (703 868-1728), or Jim Lewis – antietam1862@verizon.net (703 593-2956)

The tour is FREE! If interested in attending, please sign up via BRCWRT's website or at the February 8, 2024, BRCWRT Membership meeting



PRINCE WILLIAM/MANASSAS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024
8:00AM – 4:30PM

Manassas Museum
9101 Prince William St. Manassas, VA 20110



Save the date for the 9th Annual Prince William/Manassas Symposium! Each year local historians and experts explore the many facets of County history through a wide variety of lectures. Tickets are \$10 for an all-day program. The Symposium also marks the release of the Sixth issue of the *Journal of Prince William History*, which will be on sale for the special one-day price of \$5.

2024 Topics Include:

- Batestown Community
- Hurricane Agnes & Occoquan
- Cemeteries of Prince William County
- The Rise of Stonewall Jackson
- Legacies of County Resolves



PRINCE WILLIAM
Historic Preservation



Co-sponsored by the Manassas Museum, Prince William County Historical Commission, and Historic Prince William.

For more information contact 703-792-4754
or register at [www.pwcva.gov/
department/historic-preservation/events](http://www.pwcva.gov/departments/historic-preservation/events)

Connect with us on social media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pwhistoric

X: @PWHHP

Instagram: PWC History





CIVIL WAR TRAVELS **WITH MS. REBELLE**

By Janet Greentree

**Major General John
Newton, USA**

This article came about because of a dinner on December 9, 2023, at the historic Sudley United Methodist Church in Manassas (please see page 20 for more information on the dinner and the storytelling event). Reenactor Kevin Garrahan portrayed General John Newton and looks remarkably like him. It occurred to me that I have not written about Newton, so here is his story.

John Newton was a Southern boy; he was born on August 24, 1823, in Norfolk, Virginia, to Thomas V. Newton, Jr. and Margaret Jordan. His father was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 1796-1799 and a U.S. Congressman for 33 years. His grandfather Thomas Newton was a collector at the port of Norfolk. The Newton family had 8 children, some with unusual names. John's siblings were: Amy Caroline, Cincinnatus W., Thomas, Washington Irving, Virginius, Augustus, and Lucius. John was the youngest. His brother Cincinnatus was an elector for Jefferson Davis in 1860. His brother Washington Irving was a major in the 2nd Dragoons during the Civil War but resigned due to ill health in October 1861. Washington Irving married Cornelia Stanley Armistead, the sister of Gen. Lewis Armistead. His brother Virginius had just graduated from West Point when he died at 23. His brother Augustus also died at 23.

John was educated in Norfolk schools. He had remarkable mathematics skills. His father secured him an appointment to West Point in 1838 at age 16. He graduated 2nd in the class of 1842 (out of 56 cadets). More of his classmates went on to be Civil War generals for the Confederacy than for the

Union. The Confederates were: Richard Heron Anderson, Daniel Harvey Hill, James Longstreet, Mansfield Lovell, Lafayette McLaws, Gustavus Woodson Smith, Martin Luther Smith, Alexander Peter Steward, and Earl Van Dorn. The Union generals were: Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana, Abner Doubleday, Henry Lawrence Eustis (No. 1 in his class), John Pope, William Starke Rosecrans, George Sykes, and Seth Williams.



Thomas V. Newton Jr.

After graduation, Newton accepted a commission in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He taught engineering for three years at West Point, teaching military architecture and fortification design. He spent much time at different forts, including Fort Trumbull in New London, Fort Wayne in Michigan, Fort Warren in Boston, and Forts Porter, Ontario, and Niagara in New York. He continued teaching during the Mexican-American War as well.



Fort Wayne, Michigan

(cont on page 27)

MS. REBELLE

Newton married Anna Morgan Starr of New London, CT on October 24, 1848 in New London. Anna was a descendant of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. Her parents were Jonathan Starr and Catherine Sythoff. Her father's grandfather married a daughter of John & Priscilla Alden. Her family was prominent in New London.



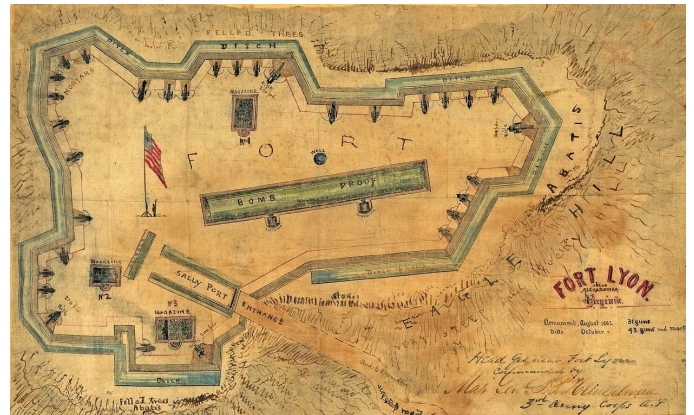
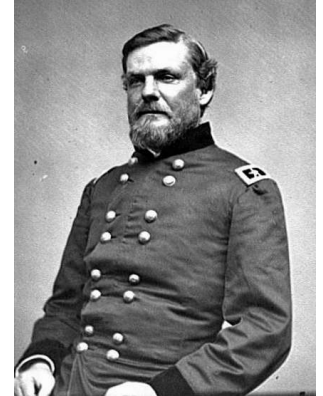
The Newtons would have 12 children. As per the times, many of them did not reach maturity. Their children were: John Virginus, Margaret, Virginus M., John Thomas, Augustine M., Anna Maria, Francis Julian, Victor M., Thomas M., Francis Borgia, Mary, and an unnamed infant son. Their births were all over the country, as their parents were stationed at different commands. Mary is the only child buried with her parents at West Point. The others are



scattered all over the country. Mrs. Newton died on June 28, 1914 at her residence, Rossleigh Court, at 1 West 85th Street, NYC, which bordered on Central Park. She had outlived her husband by 19 years.

After teaching at West Point, Newton worked in fortification construction and engineering projects along the Eastern Seaboard, Great Lakes, and the Gulf of Mexico. In 1856 he was promoted to captain and was chief engineer of the Utah Expedition in 1858. Instead of joining the Confederacy, he stayed with the Union. When the Civil War began he was the chief engineer of the

Department of Pennsylvania, and later the Department of the Shenandoah. He first saw action at Hoke's Run (Falling Waters, in what is now West Virginia) on July 2, 1861. In August, 1861 he was commissioned a brigadier general of volunteers and worked on the defenses of Washington by building Fort Lyon in Alexandria VA. Nothing remains of the fort today. He left the defenses of Washington in March, 1862.



He fought at the battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862 and was slightly wounded while storming Marye's Heights. His men suffered tremendous casualties; of his three brigades, over 1,000 were killed, wounded, or missing. Both Newton and fellow Gen. John Cochrane were dissatisfied with Gen. Burnside's performance at Fredericksburg. Newton said: "there was a want of confidence in General Burnside's military capacity and that the troops of my division and of the whole army had become entirely dispirited." They took it upon themselves to ask President Lincoln to remove Burnside.

(cont on page 28)

MS. REBELLE

Lincoln did remove him, but it impacted Newton's career. He rose to major general of volunteers on March 20, 1863, for his service at Fredericksburg. He fought at South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Salem Church (slightly wounded), Gettysburg, the Atlanta Campaign, and Natural Bridge in Florida. He also fought in the Peninsula Campaign under General George McClellan.



The charge at Marye's Heights

Last month, I mused that Carl Schurz was the only general that I knew of that had two monuments at Gettysburg. Well, that is not true, as I found out while doing research on General Newton. Newton was in action on the second day with the 1st Corps. He has a monument at the end of Reynolds Avenue near Chambersburg Road. Newton was ordered by General Meade to replace Reynolds after Reynolds' death. General Abner Doubleday was first selected as division commander, but Meade did not care for him and appointed Newton. He has a second monument on East Sedgwick Avenue for the 2nd day of the battle with the 6th Corps, 3rd Division. His third marker is an inverted cannon marking the HQ of the 1st Corps on Pleasanton Avenue near the Pennsylvania monument. The marker reads:

"Army of the Potomac, 1st Corps Headquarters, Major General John Newton, July 2. 3. 4. 1863". The monument was erected in 1913 by the Gettysburg National Military Park Commission. Part of Newton's First Corps faced off against the Confederates at Pickett's Charge.



1st Corps HQ (above and below); 1st Corps monument (upper right); 6th Corps monument (right)

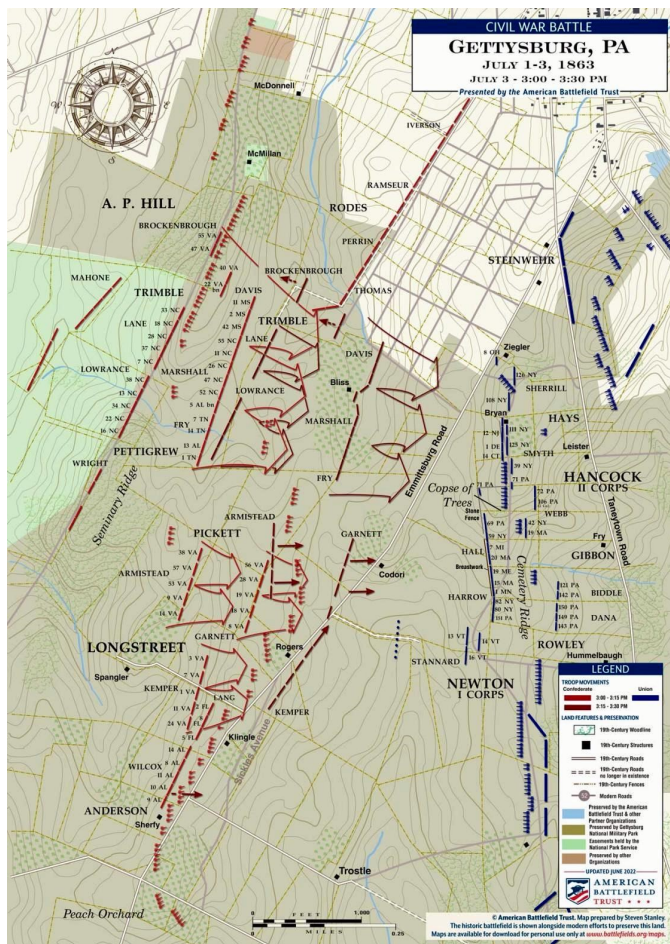
(1st Corps HQ Photos: Janet Greentree)



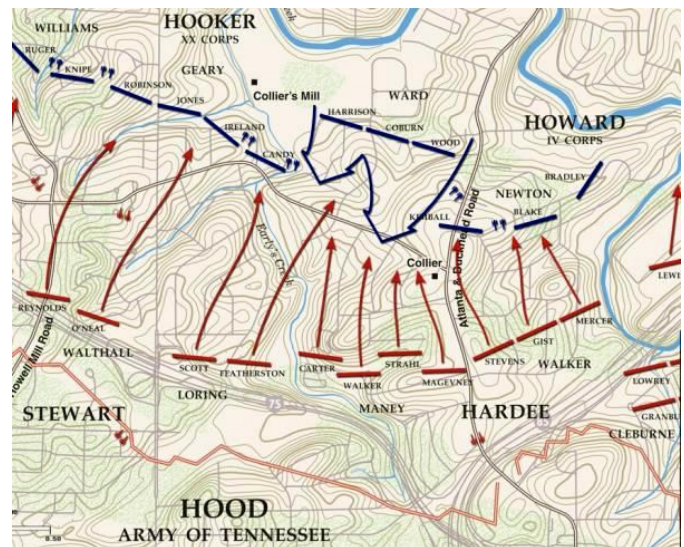
After the battle of Gettysburg, he pursued the Confederates to Warrenton, VA. His OR report lists what his troops did day by day: "July 4, the troops maintained the same position. The day was devoted to collecting and caring for

(cont on page 29)

MS. REBELLE



In May 1864 Newton was transferred to the Army of the Cumberland to command the 2nd Division, 4th Corps under General George Thomas. He fought in the capture of the city of Atlanta. At the battle of Peach Tree Creek he held off an attack by General John Bell Hood on July 20, 1864. From October 1864 to June 1865 he was in command of the District of Key West and the Tortugas.



Peach Tree Creek, July 20, 1864

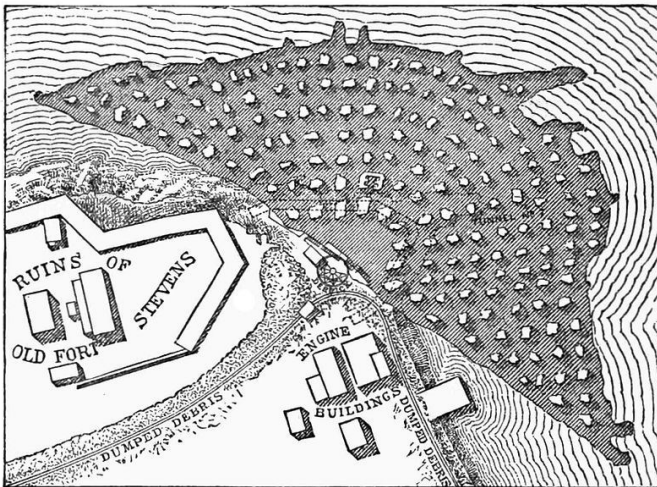
the wounded. On the 5th, the corps was concentrated, and attention was also given to the collecting of arms, the burial of the dead, and the care of the wounded. On the 6th, the corps marched to Emmitsburg. On the 7th, marched to Hamburg. On the 8th, marched to Turner's Gap, where it took up position against a threatened attack of the enemy. On the 10th, it took position beyond Beaver Creek. On the 12th, it marched to Funktown Heights, and was posted in line of battle in presence of the enemy. On the 14th, it marched to Williamsport. On the 15th, to near Crampton's Pass. On the 16th, to near Berlin. On the 18th, it crossed the Potomac, and marched thence to Waterford, VA. On the 19th, to Hamilton. On the 20th, to Middleburg. On the 22nd, to White Plains. On the 23rd, to Warrenton. On the 25th, to Warrenton Junction."

In April 1866 he had reverted back to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was sent to New York City, where he lived the rest of his life. He began improvements and removed obstructions in the East River at Hell Gate. Hell Gate is a narrow strait separating Astoria and Queens from Randall's and Ward's Islands in Manhattan. The river at that point was full of large rocks and had been treacherous for ships going back to the 1600s. Newton was in charge of eliminating the rocks. He estimated the cost to be \$1 million plus \$2 million in loss of revenue for ships who would not be able to use the strait. He decided to use Hallet's Point Reef off of Queens to begin his work. He designed 7,000 feet of tunnels and used trains to haul dirt

(cont on page 30)

MS. REBELLE

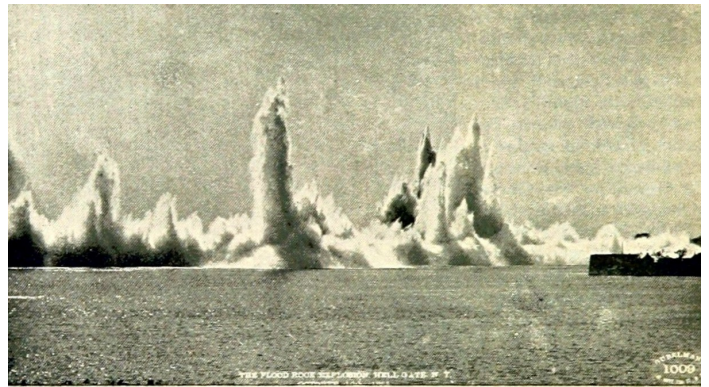
and debris out of the reef. When the inside looked like Swiss cheese, Newton blew it up. The project took 7 years. 7,000 holes were dug and filled with 30,000 lbs. of dynamite. Newton's daughter Mary pressed the button to blow it all up. It took until 1891 to clear up all the debris. The *New York Times* devoted their entire first page to the explosion: "A deep rumble, then a dull boom, like the smothered bursting of a hundred mighty guns far away beyond the blue horizon, rolled across the yellow river. Up, up, and still up into the frightened air soared a great, ghastly, writhing wall of white and silver and gray. Fifty gigantic geysers, linked together by shivering, twisting masses of spray soared upward, their shining pinnacles, with dome-like summits, looming like shattered floods of molten silver against the azure sky."



Hell Gate excavation plans

The explosion created a shock that was reportedly felt as far away as Princeton, NJ, and was one of the largest man-made blasts prior to the atomic bomb. The

Times labeled it "another triumph of human skill over the resistance of nature." In 1885 Newton also blew up Flood Rock and his daughter pressed the button a second time. Civil War General Phil Sheridan was in attendance, along with abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher. For his expertise in doing this, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. As Don Hakenson is so fond of saying, "you just can't make this stuff up."



FLOOD ROCK EXPLOSION AT HELL GATE IN OCTOBER, 1885. RAND DRILL COMPANY'S DRILLS AND EXPLOSIVES.

The Flood Rock explosion, October 1885

The *North Carolinian* in Elizabeth City, NC, on May 8, 1895, wrote about Hell Gate in Newton's obituary. "To successfully accomplish the removal of the dangerous rocks at Hell Gate required the solution of difficult engineering problems never before grappled with and the invention of new apparatus, notably a steam drilling machine, which has been in general use. Those empowered to select a man for the work hit upon General Newton, and he carefully and conscientiously studied the problems, and the accuracy of his conclusions was shown in the exact correspondence of results with the object that he sought. Hallett's Reef and Flood Rock, having been scientifically examined under his directions, were destroyed by two great explosions, the first on September 24, 1876, and the second on October 10, 1885."

(cont on page 31)

MS. REBELLE

He retired from the Army in 1886 after 44 years of service, just short of the mandatory age of 64 for retirement. He was Commissioner of Public Works in NYC from 1886-88. In 1886 he received a degree of Doctor of Laws from St. Francis Xavier College in NYC. Also in 1886 Notre Dame awarded him the Laetare Medal for American Catholics. He was also president of the Panama Railroad Company (now the Panama Canal Railroad Company) from 1888-1895. He also served as president of the Columbian Steamship Line. Four years after his death in 1899, the Corps of Engineers named a 175 foot steamboat in his honor.



He died on May 1, 1895, at the age of 78 in his home at 40 West 75th Street, New York City. He passed away from endocarditis and acute articular rheumatism. Funeral services were first held at the family residence on May 2, 1895. A requiem mass was then held at the Church of St. Francis Xavier at 55 West 15th Street in NYC. He was first buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens, NY, on May 4, 1895. He was then reburied at West Point on June 14, 1895, in Section XXI, Row D, Site 047-048.



40 West 75th Street, NYC



St. Francis Xavier Church



(cont on page 32)

MS. REBELLE

Newton reminds me of the accomplishments of one of my favorite generals, Egbert Ludovicus Viele (see March 2012 *Stone Wall*), who designed Central Park and the subway system in New York City. His Viele map is still displayed on the walls of NYC engineering offices. Wonder if Viele and Newton knew each other? Engineers are really smart. My father was a mechanical engineer for the Navy and worked on diesel engines for ships and catapults on aircraft carriers.



Grave of General John Newton, West Point
(Photo: Janet Greentree)

NOTE: Ms. Rebelle's hobby is traveling the country finding and honoring the graves of our 1,008 Civil War generals. So far she has located and photographed 427 - 169 Confederate and 258 Union. You may contact her at jlgrtree@erols.com.

NEWS BRIEFS

By Melissa A. Winn

ABT Launches Prize For History

The American Battlefield Trust in December launched a new program to call attention to the integral connection between the grounds on which the nation's formative conflicts were decided and the fundamental role these landscapes play today as primary resources by which scholars and historians come to more deeply understand the past: the \$50,000 American Battlefield Trust Prize for History.

The Prize will be awarded annually to a work of military history or biography that underscores the essential role of the nation's military conflicts on the founding, formation, and perpetuation of the country. In creating this award, sponsored entirely by a generous donor, the Trust encourages authors to create works that showcase the rich research potential of historic battlefields.

"This award is a natural extension of our work to protect our nation's hallowed grounds," said David Duncan, president of the American Battlefield Trust. "As we near the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding, and of the battles in which citizen soldiers secured independence and liberty, our hope is to galvanize readers to action on behalf of the threatened sites, introducing the pressing need for preservation to audiences already interested in American history."

This award will be presented to a work published in the previous calendar year focused on history or biography related to the three conflicts that are central to the Trust's mission: the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the

(cont on page 33)

Civil War, conflicts for which the Trust has now protected 58,000 acres at more than 155 sites in 25 states since its founding in 1987.

The initial selection committee for the inaugural Prize is led by noted Civil War historian Gary Gallagher, who helped found the Trust nearly 40 years ago. The titles that merit the highest evaluation will be forwarded to the distinguished judging panel: James Kirby Martin (Cullen Professor Emeritus, University of Houston), James McPherson (Pulitzer Prize winner, George Henry Davis '86 Professor Emeritus of United States History, Princeton University) and Joan Waugh (Professor Emeritus, UCLA).

The winner and two runner-up finalists will be announced this spring, with the award to be presented during a special evening event as part of the Trust's Grand Review Weekend, September 21, 2024, in Raleigh, NC.

Nominations must have been made by December 31, 2023. Two finalists will receive \$2,500 each, while the winning author will receive \$50,000 and an invitation to join the subsequent year's judging panel.

Stocking Up: NMCWM Gets Exciting New Acquisition

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine (NMCWM) in Frederick, MD, has acquired an exact full-scale reproduction of a Civil War Wheeling, or "Rosecrans", ambulance. Developed in 1861 by Union General William S. Rosecrans and Surgeon Jonathan Letterman, it was the most widely used ambulance during the Civil War. The museum will use the reproduction in educational and living history events during 2024.

"It's incredible to think that when the war began, the U.S. Army did not have a standardized ambulance, and in fact had very few ambulances at all," said Dana B. Shoaf, NMCWM's Director of Interpretation. "But battle teaches cruel lessons, and

Letterman, considered the 'Father of Battlefield Medicine' for his wartime medical reforms, and Rosecrans put their heads together and designed an ambulance wagon that would save countless lives."

Delivered to the museum on December 12, 2023, the newly acquired reproduction Rosecrans was built in the 1990s by a reenactor who precisely followed Civil War plans and diagrams to design it.

"The new ambulance is in excellent shape," said NMCWM Executive Director David Price. "And it, along with our 3/4-scale Rucker ambulance, a late-war ambulance, provide the museum powerful teaching tools that help tell the story of the evolution of health care in America."



The Rosecrans ambulance
(photo: Melissa A. Winn)

In December, the museum also acquired a group of rare wartime nurses' artifacts that illustrate how advances in medical care during the Civil War still impact us today. These include photographs, personal belongings, and documents related to female nurses who helped care for the more than 50,000 casualties in Gettysburg after the monumental July 1-3, 1863, battle there.



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WASHINGTON'S MARINES: THE ORIGINS OF THE CORPS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1775-1777

By Maj. Gen. Jason Q. Bohm

The fighting prowess of United States Marines is second to none, but few know of the Corps' humble beginnings and what it achieved during the early years of the American Revolution. Jason Bohm rectifies this oversight by weaving the men, strategy, performance, and personalities of the Corps' formative early years into a single story.

Jan 25 / 7:00p-8:30p Th

FREEDOM'S WORDS RINGING HOLLOW

By Larry Howard

Historian Larry Howard examines the perspectives of enslaved or formerly enslaved Virginians to determine their perspectives on the political ideas of America's Founding Fathers.

Feb 22 / 7:00p-8:30p Th

SMALL BUT IMPORTANT RIOTS: THE CAVALRY BATTLES OF ALDIE, MIDDLEBURG, AND UPPERVILLE

By Robert F. O'Neill

Small but Important Riots focuses on the fighting from June 17 to 22, 1863, at Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville, placed within the strategic context of the Gettysburg campaign. It is based on Robert O'Neill's thirty years of research and access to previously unpublished documents, which reveal startling new information.

Mar 28 / 7:00p-8:30p Th

VIRGINIA POW CAMPS IN WORLD WAR II

By Kathryn Coker

During World War II, Virginians watched as German and Italian prisoners invaded the Old Dominion. At least 17,000 Germans and countless Italians lived in over twenty camps across the state and worked on five military installations. Historian Kathryn Coker tells a different story of the Old Dominion at war.

Apr 25 / 7:00p-8:30p Th

Call (703) 367-7872 for more information.



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