



The Newsletter of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table — Vol. XXXII, Issue 6, JUNE 2025

AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN JOHN HENNESSY SPEAKS ON "THE PEOPLE'S ARMY: THE LIFE AND MIND OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC" AT THE JUNE 26th, 2025 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Mark Trbovich

The Army of the Potomac was the primary Union fighting force in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War (1861–1865). Known as "Mr. Lincoln's Army" for its close association with the sitting United States president, its dual mission was to defeat the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and to safeguard Washington, D.C. The Army of the Potomac was created in July of 1861 from the wreckage of the army Federal General Irvin McDowell had led to Bull Run. For an insightful look at this renowned army, we have one of the area's outstanding speakers visiting our Round Table again after memorable lectures.

John Hennessy retired in 2021 as the Chief Historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, where he worked for the final 26 years of his NPS career. Before coming to Fredericksburg, he worked as an exhibit planner for NPS sites across the country, as a Preservation Specialist with the New York State Office of Historic Preservation, and, as an opening act, a front-line ranger-historian at Manassas National Battlefield Park, where he began his career.

He is the author of four books, most notably *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign*

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, June 26, 2025

Note Date Change!

6 P.M. Social Hour

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

GUEST SPEAKER:

John Hennessy

TOPIC:

"The People's Army: The Life and Mind of the Army of the Potomac"

and Battle of Second Manassas. His books, articles, and essays have appeared under the imprint of Simon & Schuster, Cambridge University Press, Stackpole Books, LSU Press, the University of North Carolina Press, and another dozen publications. In the coming years he will be working on projects relating to the history of the Fredericksburg region during the war, the Army of the Potomac, slavery and freedom in the Rappahannock region, and a study of the care and relief of the wounded in the Army of the Potomac.

Come join us early at our June 26th, 2025 Membership Meeting to have an opportunity to chat with John and your colleagues before the meeting begins. Doors open at 6:00 PM; hope to see you there.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 26 John Hennessy - "The People's
Army: The Life and Mind of the Army of
the Potomac" (note date change!)

July 10 Ronald Coddington - "Civil War
Portrait Photography: Reflections of a
Generation"

August 14 Dana Shoaf - "Gutbusters:
The Development of the Ambulance Dur-
ing the Civil War"

September 11 Theodore Savas -
"Handshakes, Gambling, & Gunpowder:
How George W. Rains and Jefferson Da-
vis Changed The Course of the Civil
War"

October 9 Patrick Falci - "30th Anniver-
sary of the Making of the Gettysburg
Movie"

November 20 Jari Villanueva - "24 Notes
That Tap Deep Emotions: The Story of
America's Most Famous Bugle Call"

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Melissa A. Winn

Photos: Janet Greentree
& Melissa A. Winn

One thing I always stress is how lucky we are as a Round Table to have so many Civil War sites around us, especially the Manassas National Battlefield Park. The power of place is unrivaled and standing where the history we revere happened is bar none. So, if you have not yet been to the battlefield's new "Faces of the Fallen" exhibit, it's time to go!

The "Faces of the Fallen" exhibit at Manassas National Battlefield Park offers a poignant tribute to the soldiers who perished during the First and Second Battles of Manassas (Bull Run). Unveiled during Memorial Day weekend, this permanent installation at the Henry Hill Visitor Center humanizes the staggering toll of these pivotal Civil War battles.



The exhibit features 120 photographs and accompanying short biographies of soldiers who were killed or mortally wounded on the Manassas battlefield. The representation includes 66 Union and 54 Confederate soldiers, mirroring the casualty ratios from the battles. The project is the culmination of almost a year of research, collab-

oration with approximately 80 private, state, and federal resources, exhibit design, fabrication, and installation.



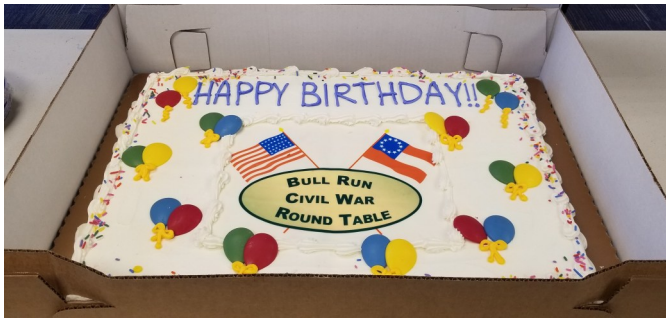
It's breathtaking. Check it out before our June speaker arrives, as John Hennessy himself is no stranger to that battlefield. Hennessy is a distinguished American Civil War historian renowned for his extensive contributions to battlefield interpretation, public history, and scholarly research. His career with the National Park Service (NPS) spanned four decades, during which he played pivotal roles in preserving and elucidating the complex narratives of Civil War sites. That career, of course, began in the early 1980s when he was a seasonal ranger at Manassas National Battlefield Park. His book *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas* is widely regarded as the definitive account of the 1862 battle, noted for its meticulous research and insightful analysis. He also authored *The First Battle of Manassas: An End to Innocence, July 18–21, 1861*, further cementing his reputation as a leading authority on the battles. We're very lucky to have him join us this month to talk about the Army of the Potomac. Don't miss it!

Our monthly membership meetings will no longer be accessible via Zoom due to changes in the platform and usability. You can still enjoy our meetings in person or via Facebook LIVE at <https://www.facebook.com/bullruncwrt> or on our website archive at https://bullruncwrt.org/BRCWRT/AudioArchives/Audio_menu.html.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

At our May meeting, members received an interesting presentation from historian Patrick Schroeder about the many myths surrounding Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. We also celebrated the BRCWRT's birthday, with cake, of course!



Finally, we continue to sell prints to help the Round Table fund its activities. This month we're offering a Don Troiani print, "For God's Sake, Forward!". All proceeds from print sales go to fund the BRCWRT's Preservation activities.

Huzzah!



SUPPORT BRCWRT ACTIVITIES

A large Union print is being offered for sale at our June 26th General Membership Meeting: Don Troiani's *For God's Sake, Forward*.

The print depicts General John Reynolds with the 2nd Regt. Wisconsin Volunteers (Iron Brigade), at the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 1863. It's #10 in the Epic of Gettysburg Series, signed & numbered 104/1500. Copyright 1996.

The print is double-matted in a wood frame measuring 42" by 35". The print shows some mold, especially on the white border. The matting shows some slight warping. Accordingly, we are asking only \$100 for it. Another used and framed copy of this print was recently sold on *Horse Soldier* for \$425.



The Bull Run Civil War Round Table would also like to express its gratitude to Mr. Frank Roberts of Stockbridge, GA, who met our member Stephanie Vale at a conference in the Shenandoah Valley and mentioned that he had Zoomed our meetings in the past. After the conference, he gave her a \$350 donation to be used by the Round Table as we see fit. It's great to see that our work is enjoyed by folks outside of Northern Virginia!

Bull Run Civil War Round Table



Upcoming 2025-2026 Program of Events

Date	Event
June 26, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: John Hennessy - “The People’s Army: The Life and Mind of the Army of the Potomac” (note the changed date for the meeting)
July 10, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Ronald Coddington - “Civil War Portrait Photography: Reflections of a Generation”
August 14, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Dana Shoaf - “Gutbusters: The Development of the Ambulance During the Civil War”
September 6, 2025	Fall Tour 1: “Civil War Vienna/Oakton” Tour leader Jim Lewis
September 11, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Theodore Savas - “Handshakes, Gambling, & Gunpowder: How George W. Rains and Jefferson Davis Changed The Course of the Civil War”
October 9, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Patrick Falci - “30th Anniversary of the Making of the Gettysburg Movie”
November 1, 2025	Fall Tour 2: “Grant Hall, Fort McNair” Tour leaders Sam Laudenslager and Andy Monahan
November 20, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jari Villanueva - “24 Notes That Tap Deep Emotions: The Story of America’s Most Famous Bugle Call”
December 11, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Robert Dunkerly - “The Other Surrenders: Spring/Summer 1865”
January 8, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Aaron Siever “Battle of Pickett’s Mill, Georgia, 1864”
February 12, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: William Connery “Civil War Northern Virginia 1861”
March 12, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Tim Dustin - “The Mexican War: Training Ground For The Civil War”
April 9, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Dr. Curt Fields “An Evening with Gen. U. S. Grant”
May 14, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Rich Condon - “Emancipation in the Department of The South”
June 11, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Robert Zeller - “The Grand Review: Discoveries and Explorations in Civil War Photography”
July 9, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Scott Mingus - “Human Interest Stories from the Gettysburg Campaign”

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

SPOTSYLVANIA TOUR After Action Report

By Sam Laudenslager

Photos by Sam Laudenslager unless noted

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table originally scheduled our visit to the Spotsylvania battlefield for 2024, to coincide with the 160th anniversary of that engagement. But spring hurricanes, followed by a record-breaking heatwave, scrubbed our mission to HOT-sylvania NMP. The field trip was rescheduled to April 2025, which enabled our Round Table tour group to relive weather conditions somewhat similar to those experienced at SpotsylRAINia during May, 1864.

We were fortunate to have Greg Mertz, retired NPS Ranger at Fredericksburg-Chancellorsville-Spotsylvania National Military Park, to lead us at Spotsylvania. Greg has previously led other BRCWRT visits to Fredericksburg area Civil War sites.



Tour leader Greg Mertz at Spotsylvania marker

Greg began by describing the situation faced by the opposing Union Army of the Potomac (AOP) and Confederate Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) following the bloody stalemate in the Wilderness. Each army had sustained some 18,000 casualties (more than 35,000 casualties overall) during that 3-day contest. Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, commanding the AOP plus the Federal 9th Corps, an independent 17,000 man reinforcement brought in from the Western theatre, could elect between

1. Moving back to Fredericksburg, via Plank Road (modern Rt. 3) to regroup/resupply; or
2. Attempt a turning movement to reach the Richmond-Telegraph Road (modern Rt. 1); or
3. Confront Gen. Lee's ANV, wherever it was.

Grant chose to "OPEN DOOR #3".

Conversely, Gen. Robert E. Lee had lost his strategic advantages of terrain and concealment. His tactical options were now limited to reacting to whatever Grant might do. Lee now had to not only block "the road to Richmond", but also shield his own main supply base at the critical rail junction at Hanover Station. In addition, Lee had lost his able and trusted 1st Corps commander, Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, seriously wounded by "friendly fire" in the Wilderness. Major Gen. Richard Anderson would now command ANV 1st Corps.

Spotsylvania, in 1864, consisted of a few dozen inhabitants and just a half dozen buildings: a one-room Court House, the court clerk's office, a one-room jail, a hotel, a tavern, and two churches (three, counting Zion Meeting House, a half mile away from the Court House but within today's town limits). However, Brock Road

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SPOTSYLVANIA TOUR

from the Wilderness met the Fredericksburg Road at the Court House, and the Piney Branch Church Road, Old Court House Road, Catharpin Road, and Shady Grove Church Roads all converged just to the west of Spotsylvania. And so, a race between the two armies to this rural crossroads town was on.



Sanford's Spotswood Hotel, Spotsylvania VA, the only building circa 1864 that survives. Today it's an office building housing law offices.

Our guide, Greg Mertz, noted that the Federals actually "won" that race. Around 7:00 am, May 8th, Union Cavalry (3rd Division, AOP Cavalry Corps, BG James Wilson commanding) entered Spotsylvania. Wilson had been Gen. Grant's aide-de-camp in the Western theatre, and was one of two Staff officers whom Grant brought East with him. The other was Phil Sheridan. Neither would have a good day at Spotsylvania on May 7th-8th.

Wilson's on-paper cavalry "division" was actually an understrength brigade (perhaps 500 men) when it left Culpeper for battle in the Wilderness. It was now down to some 300 troopers and would face 8 regiments of Bryan's and Wofford's battle-tested Georgia infantry brigades, marching down the Fredericksburg Road to link up with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Now outnumbered by at least 5 - 1, Wilson abandoned Spotsylvania by noon, his troopers riding hard to escape to Burnside's 9th Corps.

Phil Sheridan's May 7th-8th day was no better. Ordered to clear the way for the AOP infantry to reach Spotsylvania by Brock Road, his Federal cavalry was checked by Confederate General William H.F. "Fitz" Lee's cavalry division. The Union cavalry pulled back to Todd's Tavern crossroads (Brock Road/Catharpin Road/Furnace Road), to issue more ammunition. This turned into an unplanned overnight rest stop when Custer's cavalrymen dismounted to graze their horses. This in turn devolved into a mammoth traffic jam when the AOP's 5th Corps (Maj. Gen. Gouverneur Warren), marching via Brock Road, and the 6th Corps (Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick), marching via Furnace Road, both arrived at Todd's at nearly the same time (around 11:00 pm), to find the junction already clogged by Sheridan's snoozing troopers and unsaddled mounts. It would take all of May 7th to resolve this 5th Corps/6th Corps/Cavalry Corps entanglement.

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Although Generals Phil Sheridan and James Wilson had had weak performances as newly-minted commanders of Federal cavalry, Gen. Richard Anderson, commanding the ANV 1st Corps, delivered an epic "Opening Act" at the "Spotsylvania Playhouse". Upon receiving Lee's order to move rapidly towards the Court House, he ordered his Corps to move out to their Spotsylvania objective - 4 hours ahead of schedule! En route, his cavalry scouts came upon an unfinished railway cut and Anderson sent his forces down that path, while having his soldiers cut a new direct route to the critical road junction. He would steal a full day's march on the Army of the Potomac!

Then, upon arriving in the area, he immediately set his troops to entrench and fortify a shallow ridge line that surrounds Spotsylvania town. Anderson's earthwork line would eventually stretch nearly 6 miles from the Po River, north across the Spindle farm clearings, then turning east to meet Fredericksburg-Old Courthouse Road. It became known as the "Mule Shoe", because it looked like a horse shoe. It would also prove to be a very tough nut for the Union army to crack.

Mule Shoe salient trail marker



Generals Sedgwick and Warren sorted out their logistic fiasco late on May 7th and had their two army corps moving on the Brock Road during the night. Warren's 5th Corps was in the lead, followed by Sedgwick's 6th Corps close behind. The Blue column would emerge from a tree-shielded road into the Spindle field clearing around 8:00 am, May 8th.

Warren's 5th Corps was in column formation, marching 4 abreast. Their lead element was Col. Peter Lyle's Massachusetts Brigade. They wheeled right off Brock Road when the tree line ended at the Spindle farm. With their right wheel, Lyle's brigade was already in line of battle, and the blue line immediately attacked Anderson's Confederates, entrenched on Laurel Hill ridge at the other side of the Spindle cornfield. After Lyle's brigade stepped off, Col. Andrew Dennison's Maryland brigade, next in line of march, also wheeled right from Brock Road to cross the Spindle field behind Lyles. The terrain heavily favored Anderson's Confederates. The Federals advanced up a gentle uphill slope, across a 3/4-mile open field of fire, against entrenched defenders who were nearly hidden from view by a tree line in front of the trenches. Volley after volley of musketry demolished the 5th Corps brigades.

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SPOTSYLVANIA TOUR

The Laurel Hill battleground is directly across Brock Road from the sign marking the main entrance to the Spotsylvania National Battlefield park. The May 8th Laurel Hill fight would unfold like a Bill Murray movie ("Groundhog Day") as brigade after brigade, then division after division launched piecemeal attacks on the Confederate trench line. Gen. Sedgwick's 6th Corps arrived that afternoon to join the fray. At 6:00 pm Sedgwick launched a general assault by his New Jersey and Pennsylvania Reserve divisions. But by dusk, this combined effort would also be beaten back. At the end of the day, Anderson's Confederates had repulsed nearly a dozen Union assaults upon the ANV defenses. Some 1500 Federals lay dead on Laurel Hill's slope, while Confederate casualties numbered just 300.



Spindle Field - Laurel Hill is the tree line at left background

Civil War era parlance for being battle hardened was "to have seen the Elephant". On the morning of May 9th, Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick rode to the Brock Road edge of the Spindle field tree line. His 6th Corps artillery van had arrived overnight. Sedgwick thought that the previous day's disaster might have been due to a lack of artillery support. He planned to solve that problem by placing several gun batteries near the juncture of his 6th Corps line (north of Brock Road) with the 5th Corps battle line (south side of Brock Road).

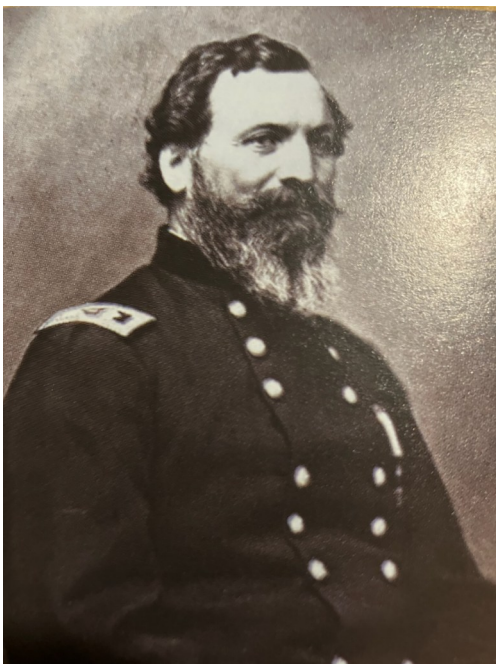
Meanwhile, overnight Confederate brigade commanders extended their defense by sending a picket line into the Spindle field. Col. John Bratton also dispatched his "Palmetto Sharpshooters" of the 2nd South Carolina into the Brock Road woods as snipers, to bedevil 5th Corps soldiers from within their own lines.

"Uncle John" Sedgwick was known for his "hands on" command style. This morning was no exception, as he supervised the placement of the guns (Battery H, 1st New York Artillery) near what is now the main entrance road to the National Battlefield

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Park. Sporadic rifle fire crackled throughout the area; a 6th Corps brigade commander, Gen. William Morris, had been shot off his horse, severely wounded, earlier that morning. Both Sedgwick's Chief of Staff, Martin McMahon, and his personal aide, Hyde, warned him not to go near. Around 8:00 am, Gen. Grant rode up with his staff. Grant briefly conferred with Sedgwick, inquiring about the 6th Corps readiness after the previous days' fight; Sedgwick expressed confidence in his troops. Grant rode off, but the activity within Union lines drew Confederate attention. The pace of the incoming musketry soon picked up. A shot pinged off a cannon barrel. A gunner dropped to the ground, taking cover by the gun's carriage. "Uncle John" went over to encourage him: "Go to your place; they can't hit an Elephant at this dis-".



Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick



Sedgwick Monument at site of Sedgwick's death

Although sniping continued all along the battle line, May 10th would be a somewhat quiet day, which both Lee and Grant used to regroup. Upon arriving near the Spindle farm, General Lee's trained eye as a military engineer immediately spotted a serious problem with his Laurel Hill defenses. The Laurel Hill line was improvised by torchlight, without surveying tools, along the high ground of the ridge. This resulted in a giant bulge in the line — 1800 yards wide, 1300 yards deep — a "salient" in military jargon, a "Mule Shoe" in Southern regional parlance.

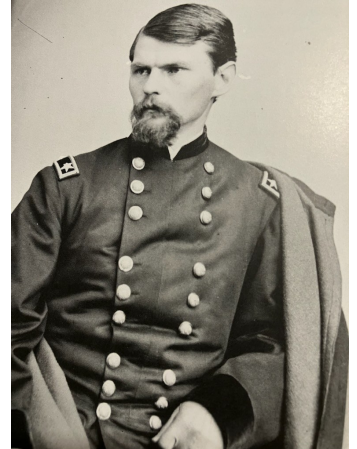
Greg explained that a salient creates several problems: (1) it increases the length of the area to be defended, (2) it spreads the space between individual defenders, (3) it prevents defenders from delivering enfilade fire, and (4) it is very vulnerable to incoming converging artillery fire. So Lee immediately put his men to work to build a fallback position across the base of this Mule Shoe.

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Meanwhile, on the Federal side, Winfield Hancock's 2nd Corps arrived, deploying to the Union left flank, with 6th Corps in the middle and Warren's 5th Corps remaining in front of Laurel Hill as right flank. Sedgwick's death led to a reshuffle of the 6th Corps command, with Brig. Gen. Horatio Wright (Sedgwick's personal choice as a possible successor) assuming Corps' command. Col. Emory Upton, commander of the 121st New York, was rewarded with acting command of a 6th Corps brigade.

Col. Emory Upton, just 24 years old (West Point class of 1861), was a rising star in the AOP officer corps. His 121st N.Y. overwhelmed the Confederates along the Sunken Road during the 2nd battle of Fredericksburg (Chancellorsville campaign), and had seized a heavily fortified bridgehead during a battle at Remington (2nd Rappahannock Station). Before Gen. Sedgwick was gunned down, Upton had sent a note to Sedgwick's Chief of Staff, Martin McMahon.



Colonel Emory Upton, 121st New York Regt. (Library of Congress)

Upton proposed trying a tactic that he had employed at Fredericksburg and Rappahannock Station. He recommended attacking with a "column of regiments" formation (instead of in a "line of battle"); and, instead of attacking on a wide front, to focus an all-out drive upon a specific "weak point" objective. In effect, he would pound a horse-shoe nail through the Mule Shoe into the "Mule's Hoof".



McMahon not only approved Upton's plan, he passed it up the chain of command through David Russell (Upton's Division superior), to Horatio Wright (6th Corps), and to the top - Generals Meade and Grant, while Russell personally assigned 9 more regiments to Upton's brigade. At 3:00 pm, this brigade (now a 12-regiment 5000-man division) quietly moved up the Shelton farmhouse lane. Their march was hidden by woods on both sides of the lane. By 5:00 pm, they were in position in a block formation 3 regiments wide and 4 regiments deep, hidden from the view of Brig. Gen. George Dole's Georgia brigade (3 regiments, 1100 men).

Our BRCWRT group hiked the farmhouse lane to the "Dole's Salient" monument, which marks the starting point of Upton's attack.

Upton gave specific orders to his regimental commanders detailing what each unit was to do in their attack. The front 3 regiments would double-time across the football field-sized clearing (weapons unloaded, no cheering), then sprint the final 40-50 yards, hurdle the earthworks, and bayonet any defenders. The second line would provide firepower. The third line would widen the breach, and the final line would support. Regiments on the right would turn to the right, sweeping down the trench line;

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regiments on the left, would sweep up the trench line. At 6:00 pm, Upton attacked. Within minutes, his first regiments were in the rebel trenches. By 7:00 pm, Upton's force had overwhelmed 7 Confederate regiments of 3 different brigades and achieved a breakthrough.



Ohio and New Jersey monuments frame the breakthrough area

Our guide, Greg, noted that although he had explained, earlier during our tour, the problems created by a salient, a salient offers one advantage: Interior lines that make it possible to rush soldiers from one defensive sector to any threatened position. The Mule Shoe was manned by Lee's ANV 2nd Corps, led by Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell, who promptly dispatched elements of 5 brigades to plug the gap. Upton, now isolated, having sustained some 1000 casualties, and with no Blue support in sight, withdrew his assault force at sundown.

This "near miss" prompted Grant to think about what might have been had Upton's drive been made with more strength, by a Corps instead of a reinforced brigade. Grant was up early, planning a major effort against the Mule Shoe. While the battle area appeared quiet on May 11th, it was teeming with engineers and junior officers searching for any weaknesses in the Confederate line, while Hancock's 2nd Corps and Burnside's 9th Corps were marching to new positions to prepare for attacking at dawn on May 12th.

Lee was aware of the activity behind the Union lines, but he lacked the scouting services of his cavalymen. J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry corps was fighting for its life that same day at Yellow Tavern near Richmond. Stuart would be killed in that fray. Lacking better intelligence information, Lee concluded that Grant was either moving back to Fredericksburg, or making a turning movement via the road and "on to Richmond".

Lee hoped to engage the Union army in the open field, or to defeat AOP units in detail as they marched back to Fredericksburg. He would send Heth's ANV 2nd Corps and A.P. Hill's 3rd Corps to block Grant's path, but he needed artillery to do this. So he ordered his artillery corps chief to remove 22 field guns from the Mule Shoe and move them to the Spotsylvania road junction. Lee guessed wrong!

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At 4:30 am, the entire Union 2nd Corps, 50 regiments, almost 20,000 men emerged from the morning fog, crashing into the Mule Shoe trenches. Hancock's troops hit the Mule Shoe, from both sides of its northern tip - right in the area where those guns had been placed. By 6:30 am, the famed Stonewall Brigade was erased.

By 6:30 am, Hancock's corps had pushed through the cap of the "mushroom" and had almost reached Lee's new interior line being constructed 50 yards behind the salient. Confederate Gen. John Gordon had saved the day at Wilderness and again during Upton's previous assault. Ninety minutes later, Gordon's division counterattacked once again, pushing the Federals back to the earthworks that they had just overrun. The Union 2nd Corps effort bogged down, literally as well as figuratively; the early morning drizzle was now steady rainfall and became a torrential downpour during the afternoon. And the open field which Hancock's men crossed earlier had become a bog, hampering reinforcements and artillery.

Greg Mertz led our Bull Run group along the 2-mile-long NPS Bloody Angle Trail. The Trail follows the north face of the original ANV Mule Shoe trench line, then loops back across the interior breastwork line that Confederates built across the base of the salient to seal the breach. Greg shared several anecdotes about the savage fighting that occurred at the Bloody Angle, the point where the outer trenches and interior breastworks met. This see-saw battle of charge and countercharge and savage hand-to-hand combat continued for 22 hours.

A mature White Oak tree stood near the Angle where the trench line and new breastworks met. It became a landmark focal point for both Yankee and Confederate. "Stumpy" was felled by the musketry crossfire that engulfed it. A portion of Stumpy's trunk is now displayed in the Smithsonian Institution.



Stumpy stone marker in foreground in front of 15th New Jersey monument

Stumpy remnant in Museum of American History (Smithsonian Institution)



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After the May 12th-14th fighting, the situation along the Spotsylvania front would stabilize, with the opposing forces hunkered down in mud-filled trenches, glaring at each other across the 200 yard wide Landrum Lane bog "no man's land". There would be sniping, occasional skirmishes, and two vicious firefights at Myers Hill and Harris Farm; but nothing approaching the savagery of the fight at Bloody Angle.

Although Lee's army had held the trenches, Spotsylvania gutted the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee had lost 3 of his 4 corps commanders (J.E.B. Stuart killed at Yellow Tavern, James Longstreet seriously wounded at the Wilderness, A.P. Hill too sick to command), a division commander ("Allegheny" Johnson, taken prisoner in the Mule Shoe), and 13 division commanders. In the Mule Shoe alone, he lost two entire brigades, the Maryland and "Stonewall" brigades, 3000 veterans who were now prisoners of war, plus 22 cannons. The ANV, 65,000 strong when it first faced Grant on May 3rd, now mustered 43,500 men (35% casualties). Withdrawal to new defense lines along the North Anna river would also cost the ANV its supply base at Guinea Station.

Grant's army was bloodied but not beaten. Army of the Potomac sustained 18,500 casualties at Spotsylvania, including a Corps commander and a Division commander, plus another 18,000 troops who were casualties at the Wilderness. But "the Heavies are coming!"; reinforcements of 30,000 men from the Washington fortifications were already on their way.

Lee abandoned Spotsylvania on the evening of May 21st. Meanwhile, the Army of the Potomac had already disengaged during the nights of May 19-20th. The Union army's new objective was Hanover Junction, the critical meeting place of Lee's supply lines via the Virginia Central and the Richmond-Fredericksburg railroads.

Our Round Table trip did not include Massaponax Church. However, we suggest that any visitor to Spotsylvania NMP may want to stop at this hidden gem. Massaponax Church is located 4 miles east of the National Battlefield, at the intersection of Massaponax Church Road (actually Brock Road, which changes its name at Spotsylvania Court House) with Richmond Highway (US Rt. 1). This is the site of Grant's council of war with his Army of the Potomac commanders after the Spotsylvania battles. This staff meeting was captured in 3 iconic photographs taken by Timothy O'Sullivan. Enlarged and enhanced copies of these photos can be viewed in a Civil War Trails display within this historic churchyard.

Gen. Grant with his officers, Massaponax Church, 21 May 1864
Timothy O'Sullivan (Library of Congress)



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SPOTSYLVANIA TOUR

Sixteen Round Table members braved the morning showers to walk the Spotsylvania battlefield trails. This was an encouraging turnout, considering that the BRCWRT was involved with several other events that same day, including Ben Lomond Park Day, Manassas; "Hist-Tree Day" at Blenheim historic site, Fairfax; and the "Fairfax Tattoo" fife & drums muster, also in Fairfax City.



BRCWRT tour attendees: Mike Buckley, Sandra Cox, Chris Custode, Zoltan Farago, Dennis Feldt, Gary Haskins, Robert Hemm, Tom Jones, Sam Laudenslager, Dan Lundeen, Richard Samp, Chris & Mary Straub, Mark Walker, Tom Watson, & John Scully (tour coordinator)

For further reading about the Battle of Spotsylvania see:

- The *Stone Wall* June 2024 issue (page 6). This reading list of Spotsylvania resources was published to accompany the postponed June 2024 tour and Brad Gottfried's BRCWRT meeting presentation, *The Maps of Spotsylvania*.
- A very detailed Spotsylvania bibliography is published in Gordon Rhea's book (pages 421-450) *The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House: The Road to Yellow Tavern* (LSU Press, 1997).

The next Bull Run Round Table field trip will be Saturday, Sept. 6th, a visit to Civil War related sites in the Vienna-Oakton-Flint Hill community. This caravan and walking tour will be led by BRCWRT members Jim Lewis & Brian McEnany. Please join fellow Round Table members for what is sure to be a most informative Fall outing!

BRCWRT PRESENTATION AT FARR'S CROSSROADS

By Sam Laudenslager

BRCWRT members Jim Lewis and Brian McEnany led George Mason University's OLLI History Club on a walking tour of the Farr's Crossroads historic site on Wednesday, May 7th. The Farr's Crossroads site is located on the George Mason campus in Fairfax City. GMU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (GMU-OLLI) offers non-credit mini-courses, guest lecturers and other events for Seniors (as in Senior Citizens, rather than college-age seniors). OLLI's History Club monthly online meetings feature historians and authors covering a wide range of historical topics.

Jim and Brian shared the story of Farr's Crossroads — today's intersection of Braddock Road (Rt. 620) with Chain Bridge Road (Rt. 123), adjacent to GMU's main Fairfax campus. This meeting of Ox Road with the old Mountain Road has been a busy junction since the colonial era. During the Civil War, it was an important military transportation hub, guarded by earthwork fortifications which remain today on the GMU grounds. Jim Lewis also described the construction of "Corduroy" roads.

BRCWRT and OLLI member Sam Laudenslager and OLLI History Club chairman Doug Snoeyenbose coordinated the field trip to this local historic site.



Jim & Brian talk to GMU History Club



Brian McEnany discusses historic GMU redoubt



Jim Lewis explains Farr's Crossroads, as seen in 2025



CIVIL WAR TRAVELS WITH MS. REBELLE

By Janet Greentree

Brigadier General / Brevet Major General Truman Seymour III, USA

Would you believe that General Seymour has a doppelganger in our BRCWRT? That man is none other than our John Myers. John says he has no connection to Seymour but they surely look alike. Check out the pictures of each man. There is a definite likeness. Seymour would later list himself as 5'10" on his passport application, certainly not as tall as John Myers. He was full-bearded and had a youthful appearance.



Truman Seymour was born in Burlington, Chittenden Co., Vermont on September 24, 1824 to Rev. Truman Seymour and Ann Armstrong. He was one of seven children: Ann Eliza, Truman, Robert, Julia Zebia, Mary (died at age 3), William Henry, and Charles Augustus. His father was the minister of a Methodist Church. His grandfather was also Truman Seymour, who married Zabiah Packard. His 5th great-grandfather was Richard S. Seymour, born in 1604 in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, England.

He was the first Seymour to come to America, arriving in 1639 at Hartford, CT. His occupation was a proprietor, and he was given land by the town on North Main Street in Hartford. He was one of the first settlers in the town and was later chosen as a townsman/selectman in 1655. He died in Norwalk, CT.

Seymour first attended Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont in 1840. He spent two years there and was then appointed to West Point, graduating 19th in a class of 59. Thirty-seven of the graduates would participate in the Civil War including: Union – Darius Nash Couch, Alfred Gibbs, Charles Champion Gilbert, George Henry Gordon, John Gray Foster, George B. McClellan, James Oakes, Innis Newton Palmer, Jesse Lee Reno, George Stoneman, Samuel Davis Sturgis, and, of course Truman Seymour. Confederates – John Adams, Birkett Fry (dismissed from West Point for academic deficiency in math but joined the Confederacy), William Montgomery Gardner,

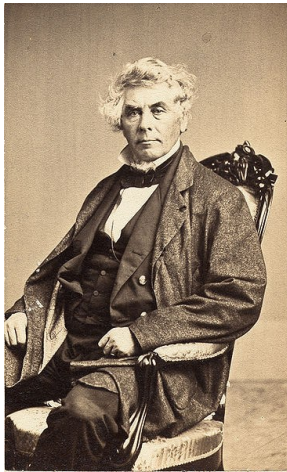


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MS. REBELLE

Thomas Jonathan Jackson, David Rumph Jones, Dabney Herndon Maury, Samuel Bell Maxey, George Edward Pickett, William Dunkin Smith, and Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox. That is quite an illustrious list of graduates.

While at West Point, Seymour took a class in drawing from Robert Walter Weir. Seymour was one of the most talented cadets and artists in the academy's history. Weir also taught U.S. Grant drawing. Weir has a painting located in the Capitol Rotunda called Embarkation of the Pilgrims. The painting depicts several pilgrims on the deck of the ship Speedwell. Miles Standish is one of the passengers located on the far right praying. Weir painted a picture of Seymour in 1852.



Robert W. Weir



Embarkation of the Pilgrims



Weir's portrait of Seymour

Later, on August 11, 1852, Seymour would marry Louisa Weir, the daughter of Robert Weir, in New York City. They would have one son, Truman Stewart, who was born on November 11, 1859 and passed away on December 16, 1859 only living a little more than a month. They would have no other children. The child is buried in West Point Cemetery.

Seymour was assigned to the 1st U.S. Artillery after graduation. His first assignment was in the Mexican War where he made 1st LT. fighting at Contreras and Churubusco. When he returned to the United States after the war, he went back to West Point to teach drawing as an assistant professor from 1850 to 1853. Another war called him back into service, the Seminole War, where he fought in Florida from 1856 to 1858. He was promoted to captain on November 22, 1860.

When the Civil War began he was assigned to Fort Moultrie across the Cooper River from Charleston, SC, under Col. John Gardner. He commanded an artillery company in defense of Fort Sumter. A newspaper picture shows him in the back left of the picture as a captain under Major Robert Anderson with Anderson's staff in 1861. He was one of nine officers at Fort Sumter during the bombardment. From December, 1861 to March 6, 1862 he was sent to Harrisburg, PA as Chief of Artillery in Gen. George A. McCall's division of the 30th PA Infantry. President Lincoln nominated him as a brigadier general of volunteers and he was confirmed on April 28, 1862.

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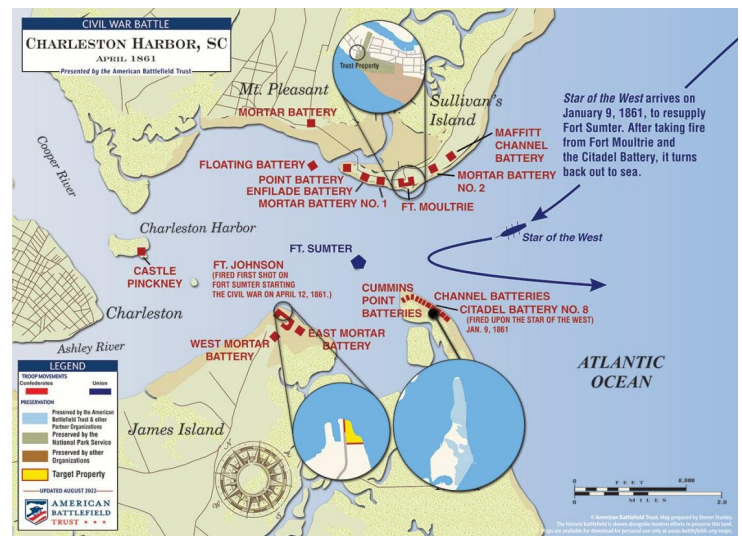
MS. REBELLE



Fort Moultrie and two views of Fort Sumter (Janet Greentree)



Major Anderson and staff



Fort Sumter battle map

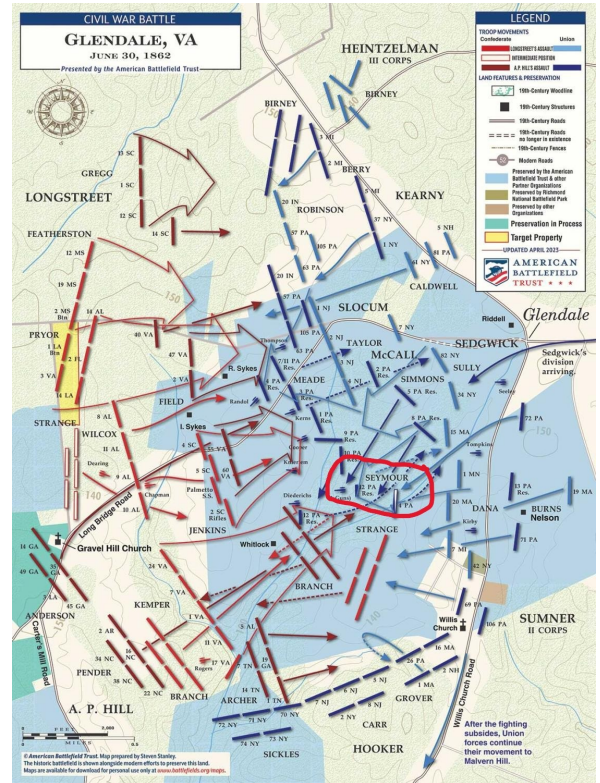
During the Peninsula Campaign Seymour fought at Mechanicsville on June 26, 1862, Gaines Mill on June 27th, and on June 30th commanded McCall's division at Malvern Hill since Gen. McCall had been captured at the battle of Glendale. His 30th PA Volunteers joined up with the III Corps and later the 1st Corps. He fought at South Mountain and Antietam. After November, 1862 he was sent to the Department of the South, where he was chief of staff from January 8th to April 23rd, 1863. He was then sent to Folly Island, SC on July 4th and attacked Morris Island on July 10th. He used the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in the attack at Battery Wagner. The 54th was comprised of free blacks from Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Unfortunately, Col. Robert Gould Shaw, who led the charge, was killed during the attack. One of his men, Sgt. William H. Carney, was the first Black man to win the Medal of Honor for his bravery during the assault of Battery Wagner. Seymour was wounded during this attack by grapeshot and sat out of field duty for the rest of 1863.

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MS. REBELLE



30th Pennsylvania Volunteers (above)



Glendale battle map (right)



54th Mass. Remembrance Day parade (left) and on their monument (right)

(Photos: Janet Greentree)



Sgt. William H. Carney

Storming Fort Wagner



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MS. REBELLE

In February, 1864 Seymour was back with the Army under Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore, who commanded the Department of the South. On February 20th Seymour had 5,500 men and fought a 5,000 man Confederate force at the Battle of Olustee. Olustee is about 40 miles from Jacksonville, FL. The battle had some of the heaviest losses by percentage rates than any other major battle in the war, which seems hard to believe. Seymour's men incurred 2,000 casualties and the Confederates about 1,000. The 54th Massachusetts fought at Olustee as well, losing 49 killed, 188 wounded, and 73 missing. Below is Seymour's General Orders No. 5:



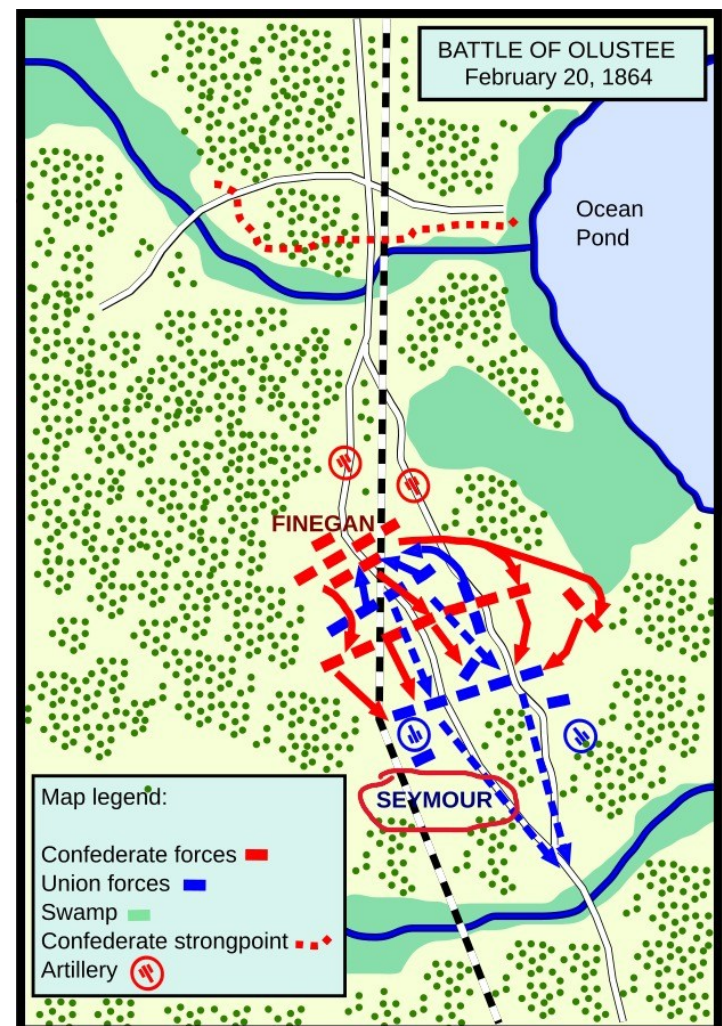
"Commanding Officer, U.S. Forces,
District of Florida, General Orders No. 5
Congratulating Troops on Their Performance
Headquarters District of Florida
Jacksonville, Fla., February 17, 1864

The brigadier-general commanding heartily congratulates his command on the brilliant success which has attended all their movements thus far into Florida. Three flags, 8 guns, with caissons, battery wagons, and forge, many wagons and horses, and much subsistence valued at over \$1,500,000, is the fruit of their success.

To Col. G.V. Henry and his command, the battalion of Massachusetts Cavalry, under Major Stevens; the Fortieth Massachusetts Mounted Infantry, and Captain Elder, First U.S. Artillery, and his battery, this achievement is principally due; and the brigadier-general commanding especially desires to praise Capt. George E. Marshall, Fortieth Massachusetts Mounted Infantry, and his small command of 50 men, who captured and held Gainesville for fifty-six hours, receiving and repulsing an attack from more than double their numbers, and after fulfilling his mission successfully returning to the designated place of rendezvous.

These deeds will be among those remembered by us with the greatest pleasure and honor, and the command may emulate, but, can hardly expect to surpass them.

By Order of Brig. Gen. T. Seymour"



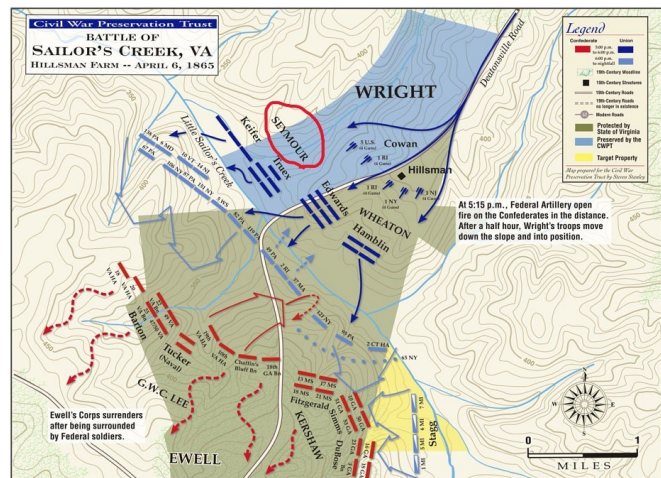
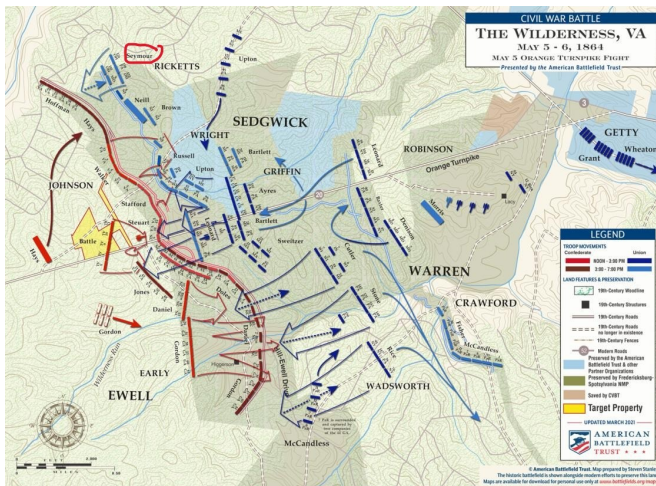
(cont on page 22)

MS. REBELLE

Here is another small paragraph from one of Seymour's general orders:

"The colored troops behaved creditably — the Fifty-four Massachusetts and First North Carolina like veterans. It was not in their conduct that can be found the chief cause of failure, but in the unanticipated yielding of a white regiment from which there was every reason to expect noble service, and at a moment when everything depended upon its firmness. The misfortune arose, doubtless, from this regiment having lately been filled with conscripts and substitutes, of a very inferior class. The issue, so finely drawn that the battle was nearly equal to its very close, the enemy's losses as heavy as my own, ground firmly held to the last, the admirable temper of the command all indicate that but for the disparity arising from the causes indicated, this might fairly have been a victory."

Seymour was assigned to Virginia after Olustee under Gen. Robert Milroy's 3rd Division of the VI Corps. He fought at the Wilderness where he was captured by a flank attack by Gen. John Bell Gordon. He was exchanged on August 8, 1864. From there he was with the Appomattox Campaign fighting in the Shenandoah Valley, Petersburg, Sailor's Creek, and finally was present at Appomattox for Gen. Lee's surrender. He is not in the picture at the home of Wilmer McLean so he was somewhere on the grounds of Appomattox.



Appomattox
Courthouse

Wilmer McLean
House (Janet
Greentree)



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MS. REBELLE

Seymour was mustered out of the volunteers on August 24, 1865 but continued in the regular U.S. Army. He found time to study art at Williams College in Massachusetts and received an M.A. (Master of Arts) degree in 1865. He later served in the 5th Artillery and was the commander of Fort Warren, MA from 1869-70 and Fort Preble, Maine from 1870-75. He completely retired from the army on November 1, 1876 and moved to Europe with his wife. They spent much time traveling around Europe, and Seymour spent much of his time painting watercolor pictures in all the beautiful spots in Europe. He and his wife moved to Florence, Italy in 1885. He loved painting with watercolors and his paintings were extremely sought after in Europe. He did not want to sell his paintings and most of his work is in private collections and museums.



Fort Warren MA (Janet Greentree)



Fort Preble ME



Three Truman Seymour paintings



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MS. REBELLE

In September 1891, writing to his friend Parmenas Taylor Turnley, whose 16 year old son had just died from typhoid fever, Seymour was struggling to find the words. "I am so feeble, so broken down, so heavy-hearted. Since your letter came this morning, I have been wandering about the house, trying vainly to realize the incomprehensible fact, and crying until I can hardly see to write." This occurred when he was living in Italy and suffering from Bright's Disease. Seymour had lost his own child 32 years prior and thought of Parmenas's son as a child of his own.

In addition to Bright's Disease, Seymour had chronic bronchial asthma and degenerative heart disease for the last six years of his life. His doctor stated he died from heart disease. Gen. Truman Seymour died on October 30, 1891 in Florence and is buried in Cimitero Evangelico degli Allori Cemetery in Florence, Italy. His wife Louisa would outlive him by 28 years and is buried with her son in the West Point Cemetery.



The *Times* in Troy, NY wrote on July 26, 1883 the following on the 20th anniversary of the assault of Fort Wagner:

"Wednesday, July 18, was the twentieth anniversary of the assault upon Fort Wagner, in Charleston harbor, one of the bloodiest of the minor affairs of the war. The federal troops were commanded and led by Gen. Truman Seymour, who may almost be called a Trojan. He was wounded. Gen. George C. Strong was second in command. He was stationed at the Watervliet arsenal when the war broke out, and although only a first lieutenant was made a brigadier and sent to New Orleans with Ben Butler to furnish that doughty soldier with the military knowledge he lacked, but which is so requisite to the command of an army. Strong was a gallant soldier and polished gentleman, whom to know was to honor and love as few men ever are loved; a cruel piece of shell tore through his thigh, and he died while being conveyed to New York in the hospital ship of which of our fellow-citizen, Dr. R.B. Bontecou, was surgeon-in-chief. It was in this fight that the real test of the courage and endurance of the negro as a soldier was first made. The fifty-fourth and the fifty-fifth Massachusetts settled it forever by making one of the most magnificent charges of the war, and it was here that Col. Shaw offered up his young life and was buried in the trenches with his "n*****." Lieut. Col. James C. Green of this city (forty-eighth New York) was one of the first to enter the

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MS. REBELLE

rebel works, and was last seen alive by his comrades astride one of the enemy's guns. He was buried in an unknown grave, probably in the same trench with Col. Shaw. The attack ended in defeat. But in a conversation with Admiral Dahlgren, reported in his memoirs, recently published, Gen. Seymour, who was charged by Gen. Gillmore with the direction of the assault, said: "Wagner would have been taken if Gillmore had not kept back the third brigade. The first brigade went in, and though suffering terribly, was not driven back. Seymour called for the second brigade. Putnam replied that he was ordered by Gillmore not to advance; but Seymour insisted and Putnam came on, got possession of parts of the work and held them. Then, had the third brigade come on, Wagner would have been taken; but the commander obeyed Gillmore and remained."

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.

TOUR PREVIEW: Vienna/Oakton During the Civil War

Coming on Saturday, September 6, the BRCWRT will present its 2025 Fall Tour (approx. 3-1/2 hrs.), which will focus on both the events and what the locals endured in present-day Vienna/Oakton during the Civil War. Tour guide Jim Lewis (along with Brian McEnany) will discuss the Federal Independent Cavalry Brigade, primarily situated on Ayr Hill in Vienna. See where the 1st South Carolina Infantry set up its guns to impose devastation on the 1st Ohio in the locally acclaimed "Battle of Vienna". Then travel to the other encampment in Vienna, of which very few are aware. Then on to a veritable Who's Who historic cemetery in Oakton where 28 Civil War veterans (including 4 Mosby Rangers) are interred. See the remnants of a Confederate fort and hear a personal story that exemplifies the hardships endured during the war years. Transit through Oakton and learn where the Federal fortifications were positioned along the early-warning line and see where J.E.B. Stuart attempted to flank Pope's army during the Battle of Ox Hill/Chantilly. Finally, visit the Mosby Oak and then on to BRCWRT's favorite food of choice via lunch at Famous Dave's BBQ Restaurant in Oakton. It should prove to be an enriching and enjoyable experience. (See the flyer on the next page.)

Vienna (Ayr Hill) – Oakton (Flint Hill) Tour

Lunch @ Famous Dave's BBQ

Saturday, September 6



Subject matter: Imagine what it was like living in today's Vienna/Oakton area during the American Civil War. This tour will bring to life the goings-on in the immediate area, supported by period photos and fascinating stories.

(6) tour stops and (3) drive-bys: Freeman Store & immediate area, Wind-over Heights Hist. Dist., Vienna 7th Day Adventist Church, Flint Hill Cemetery, Flint Hill Stockade, Miller Heights, Fort Flint, and the Mosby Tree.

Tour Guides: Jim Lewis & Brian McEnany

Assembly Time/Location: 8:30 AM / Freeman Store & Museum, 131 Church St., N.E., Vienna (next to the W&OD Bike Trail)

Tour Start Time: 8:45 AM

Lunch: 12 Noonish (Famous Dave's BBQ - Oakton) - Individual tabs

Tour Duration: Approx. 3-1/2 Hrs.

Mode of Transportation: Caravan

Uniform of the Day: Comfortable clothing, nominal walking requirements

BRCWRT Contact: 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 August BRCWRT Membership meeting.

PRINCE WILLIAM HISTORIC PRESERVATION 2025 LECTURE SERIES

Each program is free and will begin at 7 pm.

MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE RETURNS

Elizabeth Reese

January 23

Old Manassas Courthouse
9248 Lee Avenue, Manassas

GEORGE WASHINGTON IN THE FRENCH & INDIAN WAR

Scott Patchan

March 27

Old Manassas Courthouse
9248 Lee Avenue, Manassas

NORTHERN VIRGINIA LUMINARIES

Joe Motheral

May 22

Occoquan Town Hall
314 Mill Street, Occoquan

ATROCITIES AT BULL RUN

Harry Smeltzer

July 24

Pat White Center at Ben Lomond
10501 Copeland Drive, Manassas

POTOMAC MARBLE: HISTORY OF THE SEARCH FOR THE IDEAL STONE

Paul Kreingold

September 25

Old Manassas Courthouse
9248 Lee Avenue, Manassas

VIGILANTE JUSTICE IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Kate Bitely

November 20

Occoquan Town Hall
314 Mill Street, Occoquan

PRINCE WILLIAM
Historic Preservation



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THE BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
P.O. Box 2147, Centreville, VA 20122

<http://www.bullruncwrt.org>

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Thank you for your continued interest in the BRCWRT!

Here are your payment options:

Annual Dues:

Individual: \$20.00

Family: \$25.00

Student (21 & under): FREE!

Three-Year Option:

\$55.00

\$65.00

You may use PayPal by going to http://brcwrt.org/?page_id=962 and then emailing this form to BRCWRTtreasurer@gmail.com. Note that \$1 is added to cover the PayPal fee.

-OR-

You may pay by check, made payable to: BRCWRT (Bull Run Civil War Round Table) and give the form and check to the President or Treasurer at a General Membership meeting.

-OR-

You may mail this form and the check to:

**BRCWRT Treasurer
P.O. Box 2147
Centreville, VA 20122**

NAME(S)_____

NAME(S) FOR BADGE (if different)_____

If there are any changes:

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE_____ EMAIL_____

Are there any BRCWRT activities you would like to help with (tours, selling used books, member recruitment, newsletter articles, annual picnic)?

Do you have any suggestions for additional BRCWRT activities? _____