

The Signal Station

Welcome To Summer in Gettysburg!
Where the coolest place is the Devil's Kitchen.

Each year, as the July sun rises over the quiet streets of Gettysburg, our town braces for not a clash of armies, but of locals and the relentless tide of tourists. Summer here isn't a season; it's a full-scale campaign. The once peaceful sidewalks become crowded battlegrounds of crocs and cameras, the air thick not with smoke, but bug spray and anticipation. Eighteen-wheelers challenge daring SUVs as they jockey for space through the town square. Like the weary civilians from 162 years ago, residents navigate the chaos with grit and strategic retreats, dodging traffic, managing businesses, and clinging to hidden shortcuts like secret supply lines.

The days leading up to the battle anniversary can feel like a prolonged skirmish. Through all of the revelry and delight, this town is in the history books for one reason, a battle where the most soldiers fought and died during the American Civil War. The Anniversary is a celebration of a United States Victory, however July 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th... 1863 are dates on an awful lot of stones in the cemeteries across this country. Let that cannon blast resonate through you while you are here and I give you permission to pick up another book. There are always more stories waiting to be discovered. — Jaimee



Back row: Ann Monasky, Robert Lustrea, Bruce Davis, Roger Heller
Front row: Mark Quattrock, Beth Wheeler, Michele Hessler, Lynn Heller, Jaimee Umstattd, Randy Livingston



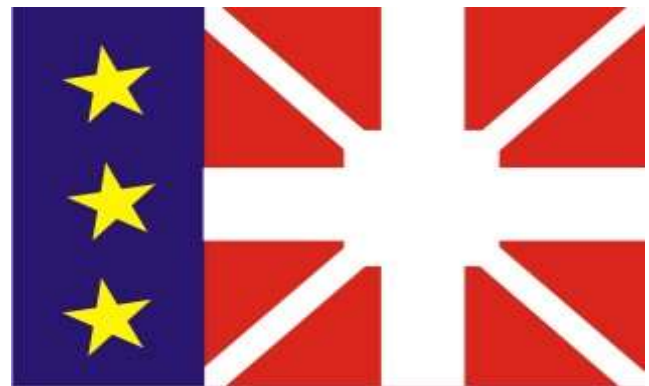
3rd Quarter 2025
Issue 8

Officers

President: Michele Hessler
Vice President: Beth Wheeler
Recording Secretary: Veronica Brestensky
Membership Secretary: Linda Seamon
Treasurer: David Diner
Program Director: Roger Heller
Past President: Bruce Davis
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Event Planner & Facebook Admin: Lynn Heller

Board Members (elected for 3 year terms)

(2026) Ted Hirt, Jaimee Umstattd
(2027) Randy Livingston, Mark Quattrock
(2028) Robert Lustrea, Ann Monasky
Board Member Ex Officio: Therese Orr



CHRONICLES OF "THE MOST IMPORTANT ROUND
TABLE, IN THE MOST IMPORTANT SMALL TOWN, AT
THE MOST IMPORTANT BATTLEFIELD, IN THE MOST
IMPORTANT COUNTRY IN THE WORLD."

Joe Mieczkowski

President's Letter

Dear Members of the Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg,

I grew up as a military brat. My family moved approximately every 18 months until I reached high school. I vowed that when I was finally a “grown-up,” I would settle in one place and never move again. Despite that promise, my husband and I lived in four different states during the first six years of our marriage—until we arrived in Pennsylvania.

Initially, we were planning to move to the suburbs of Philadelphia. But on the weekends, when we were supposed to be house hunting, we often found ourselves heading west on the turnpike instead. We'd spend time walking the battlefield, perusing the bookstores, enjoying meals at local Gettysburg restaurants, and dreaming aloud about retiring here someday. Then one day we simply asked each other, “What if we moved here now?” Five minutes later, we were looking for houses in Gettysburg. Twenty-five years later, we're still here and I've never regretted it for a moment. Nor is my story unique. Time and again, when I meet new Roundtable members and fellow battlefield “stompers,” I hear similar tales. Just last month, while introducing Therese Orr as she presented the 2025 book award, she shared a familiar story: she and her husband kept visiting Gettysburg for vacations, eventually realizing that after retirement that this was where they truly wanted to live. On our first summer tour of the season, Deb Novotny told us how, at just eight years old, she told her parents they should move the family to Gettysburg. They declined to do so, but as soon as she was able, she relocated here and never left.

Clearly, many of us share a deep and lasting connection to this extraordinary town. It is stories like these that remind me how honored I am to have recently been elected President of the Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg and how truly privileged I am to serve in this role.

The best news? You don't need to live in Gettysburg to be an active part of our Roundtable. A quick glance at our membership rolls shows participants from 23 states plus the District of Columbia. Thanks to the outstanding technical capabilities of the Adams County Historical Society, we can stream all our indoor programs. Be sure to check our website and Facebook page each month for the live-stream link. While we don't film our outdoor summer walks, we invite you to attend if you're visiting the area. Guests are always welcome, so bring a friend or neighbor along! And if you're new to town and looking to meet people, the Roundtable is a wonderful place to start.

I've truly appreciated the many kind congratulations I've received in recent weeks. If we haven't yet had the chance to meet, and you see me at a program, event, or around town, please don't hesitate to introduce yourself. I'll admit I'm not always great at remembering names, but I'm always ready to make new friends.

Yours,

Michele Hessler

President, Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg



The Bachelder-Coddington Distinguished Book Award of the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg.



Photo of Therese Orr and Michele Hessler courtesy of Facebook Livestream

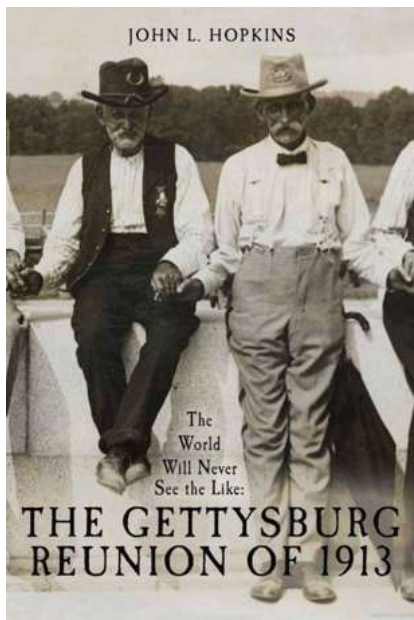
Ron Kirkwood is a long time Friend of the George & Elizabeth Spangler Farm. Once more the common thread of his Award Winning Book, *Tell Mother Not to Worry*. This book is a valuable research tool to those driven to know every story on this hallowed ground. It houses a list of the wounded soldiers names who were treated at the 11th Corps Field Hospital site as well as never-before-heard stories and accounts from those soldiers.

“(Our) members felt that Ron’s book best illustrated its mission to award the best book published in 2024 on the Gettysburg campaign, the Gettysburg civilian experience or the history of the Gettysburg National Military Park. The committee was especially impressed with the amount of research it took to find the information on all of the soldiers and family members that were highlighted in this book” Therese Orr

quoted from TribLIVE article. (Link below)

<https://tinyurl.com/TellMother>

This year’s **Honorable Mention** in close second was *The World Will Never See the Like. The Gettysburg Reunion of 1913*



Also in the running were:

The 2nd U.S. Sharpshooters at Gettysburg - Mark Allen

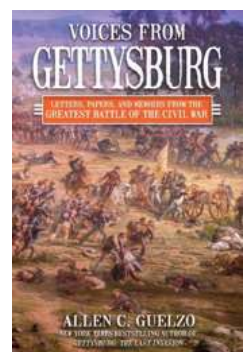
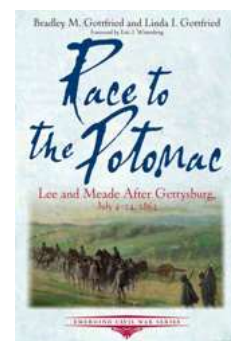
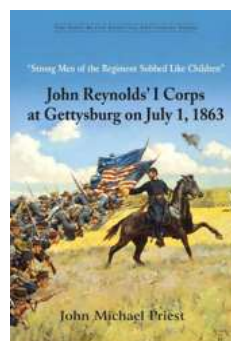
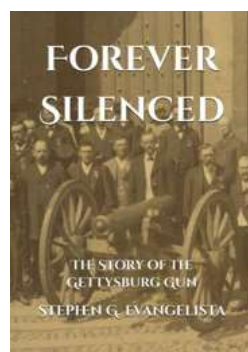
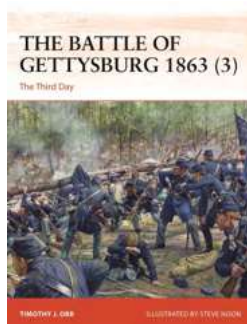
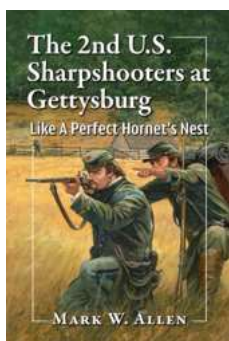
The Battle of Gettysburg 1863 (3) - Timothy Orr

Forever Silenced: The Story of the Gettysburg Gun - Stephen Evangelista

John Reynolds’ I Corps at Gettysburg July 1, 1863 - John Michael Priest

Race to the Potomac: Lee and Meade After Gettysburg, July 4-14, 1863 - Bradley Gottfried

Voices From Gettysburg - Allen Guelzo



For your next Foraging Party

It's another beautiful day at Gettysburg National Military Park. You have been reading all of the bronze plaques, stopping at each state monument (pulling out your mobile device to read its dedication speech) and suddenly water isn't enough anymore. You need a snack. You could hoof it the mile or so to town or you could keep rolling all the way to the Michael Bushman farm if you just looked around you. Suddenly you recall the chapter on Foraging in John Billings' book, *Hardtack & Coffee*. The plight of the soldiers inspires you to forge ahead and hope the land will provide.

The battlefield is lush with edible plants, fruits, nuts, mushrooms and roots. A little-known fact is that you are alright to nibble on these wild treats provided you follow a few rules. The Superintendent's Compendium on the NPS website encapsulates this nicely. It was last updated April 15, 2025.

<https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/management/superintendents-compendium.htm>

(c)(1), (c)(2) The following fruits, nuts, and berries may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption within Gettysburg NMP in the following quantities:

- Acorns 1 peck / person / day
- Apples 1 bushel / person / day
- Blackberries 1 peck / person / day
- Blueberries 1 peck / person / day
- Cherries 1 peck / person / day
- Crabapples 1 peck / person / day
- Hickory nuts 1 peck / person / day
- Peaches 1 peck / person / day
- Raspberries 1 peck / person / day
- Strawberries 1 peck / person / day
- Walnuts 1 peck / person / day
- Wineberries 1 peck / person / day
- Collection of Mushrooms: Edible mushrooms may be collected for personal use only, in the amount of 1 peck / person / day. NOTE from the author: Mushrooms can be really tricky so don't touch them unless you have been trained. However, the humble Puffball mushroom is easily identifiable. To ensure you have a true puff ball, it should look like fresh mozzarella when you cut into it, there are no frilly gills as seen on typical fungi.

1 bushel apples = 42 to 48 pounds

1 peck = 10 to 14 pounds

So, Yes! If you'd like to taste the peach that grows in The Peach Orchard, you may pick a peck of peaches (say that 5 times fast!) An important thing to note here is that any foraging done in the Park is for 'Personal Use Only'. This is not the beginning of your new Etsy store or bespoke farm stand. What you do with your Peck a Day does matter because ultimately, **the produce of this park belongs to everyone**. Share a meal with your mess mates and nourish your soul. Look to the next page for some dining ideas.

While the boys in the 1860s wouldn't think twice about squirrel, rabbit, groundhog or even absconding with someone's chicken, that is not allowed in the park. In fact, the only mention of hunt in the entire compendium is Hunt Ave (where incidentally I've seen some pretty epic puffball mushrooms.)

Enjoy your park and just maybe you will find another way to preserve it.

—Jaimee

Recipes for your loot.

Feel free to use modern conveniences to cook these 19th century recipes.



Apples and Onions

1/4 cup butter

4 cups onions sliced

4 cups apples quartered

2 tsp salt

2 TB Sugar

Heat fat in skillet; add onions and apples. Cover and steam for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until apples are soft and onion are tender and slightly browned. Add salt and sugar. Serve Hot.

Dressing for your Greens

2 hardboiled eggs

1 TB mustard

1 TB catsup

1 TB tarragon

2 TB white wine vinegar

Teacup of thick cream

Mash the egg yolks in a bowl. Add in mustard, catsup, tarragon vinegar and thick cream. Whisk together thoroughly. Pour over greens (dandelion, lamb's quarters, young cleavers, etc.)

Fried Wild Puffball Mushroom

Large Puffball mushrooms

Salt & Pepper

Egg

High heat oil for frying

Breadcrumbs

1 cup of flour

Pour about 1/4 inch oil in a cast iron pan and set to medium heat. Peel the skin off the mushroom then cut into 1/4 inch thick slices. Dip the mushroom into the flour then into beaten egg and then one more dip into the flour. At this point the oil should be hot enough. Check it by tossing in a bit of flour and it should sizzle. Add the mushroom slices and cook until they are golden on each side. Serve with nice salad greens.



"The way they cook dinner in camp"—Library of Congress

Peach Marmalade

12 large ripe yellow peaches

2 oranges (keep zest of one orange)

½ lemon

Sugar

Peel and chop peaches. Peel oranges and lemon and chop very fine (you can use a food processor); mix the citrus, zest and the peaches together. Measure the mixture and add an equal amount of sugar by weight. Boil the mixture for about 20 minutes stirring and mashing the whole time. Pour into sterilized glass jars and let cool then store in your fridge.

Wineberry Spritzer

Wineberries

Seltzer

Fresh Lemon or Lime

(Optional: Vodka or white wine)

Distribute the wineberries between stemless drinking glasses. Muddle the wineberries in the glass with a muddler or back of spoon. Add some citrus zest and a fresh squeeze of lemon or lime. Pour in sparkling water and add ice cubes.

***"We may live without poetry, music and art;
We may live without conscience, and live without heart;
We may live without friends; we may live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks."***

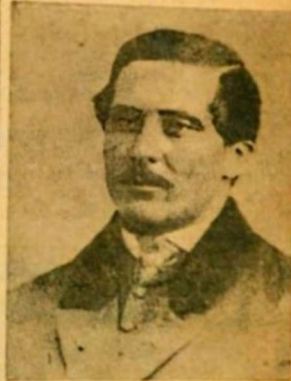
by Edward Robert Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Earl of Lytton

The Unexpected Rewards of Reading Second-hand Books



Youth Held Prisoner Two Days To Shoe Horses For Confederates During Battle

Local descendants of John E. Hamilton, who as a boy of 17, was held prisoner two days by Confederate officers in his own blacksmith shop on Keckler's Hill to shoe Rebels' horses, recalled today the story of his battle experiences. Later he enlisted and served in the Union Army.



JOHN E. HAMILTON

John Eline Hamilton was born September 26, 1841, and was a lifelong resident of Cumberland Twp. He began the trade of blacksmithing at the age of 18 years as an apprentice with a Mr. Thomas who had a blacksmith shop at "Texas," about 4 1/2 miles north of Gettysburg, along what is now known as the Biglerville Rd. Texas was only a cross-road area containing two or three houses and the blacksmith shop.

After learning his trade, Mr. Hamilton had his own shop on his father's land at the brow of Keckler's Hill, very close to the present site of Sanders Bros. Store.

ESCAPED INTO HILLS

On the 26th of June, 1863, Gen. Early's division of Confederate troops came south toward Gettysburg on the Biglerville Rd. The officers stopped at the Hamilton blacksmith shop and kept Hamilton, then 17, a prisoner two days to shoe their horses. A guard was kept on duty the entire time to watch that the work was done. Mr. Hamilton overheard some of the men say that he was to be forced to accompany the Confederates to do their blacksmith work. While a guard dozed during the second day's work, Hamilton left his shop, went into the hills about a mile away and hid. Only his mother knew where he was and she took food to him. During this halt of Gen. Early, one of his horses died in the barnyard of the Hamilton farm.

When the Battle of Gettysburg

was over, Hamilton resumed his trade for a time before serving as a "90-day" man.

Later, he went to Lancaster and enlisted in the Regular Army. He became a member of Co. D, 195th Pennsylvania Volunteers, with which company and regiment he served until his honorable discharge from the service on the 31st of January, 1866, at Washington, D. C. He served under the command of Capt. Christian B. Hubble.

BLACKSMITH 61 YEARS

After the war my grandfather returned to Adams County and moved his blacksmith shop to his own property, which he purchased from the Starry family in April of 1867, on the top of Keckler's Hill where he worked at his trade 61 years and then enjoyed a much-earned retirement for six years before his death January 18, 1927. He is buried in St. Francis Xavier Cemetery at Gettysburg.

A pocket-size testament carried by Hamilton throughout his service, given to his granddaughter, Ruth Hamilton Light, Carlisle

St., is now on display in Rovensteel's National Museum at Gettysburg.

The regimental flag of the 195th Pennsylvania Volunteers is among the many flags in the display cases at the entrance of the state capitol at Harrisburg.

BROTHER, COUSIN SERVED

Robert A. Hamilton, a son and last surviving member of the immediate family of John Eline Hamilton, now resides in Gettysburg after living many years in Maine and Florida. Ruth Hamilton Light, John Hamilton Diehl and Esther Fink are grandchildren of John Eline Hamilton and reside here. Joseph P. Hamilton is a great-grandson.

A brother of John Eline Hamilton also served his country, Marcus Jerome Hamilton. He was a private in Co. B, 138th Pennsylvania Infantry. He was engaged in many battles of the Civil War and is buried in the National Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Prof. Calvin Hamilton, a first cousin of John E. Hamilton, was born in 1841. He was a member of Co. K, First Pennsylvania Reserve Cavalry, and was wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg on the 2nd of July, 1863. Mr. Hamilton will be remembered by a few now living as the genial and always courteous superintendent of the Gettysburg National Cemetery from 1889 to 1914. He is buried in the National Cemetery here.



Photo courtesy of NPS Archives Item # 27775
Not currently on display

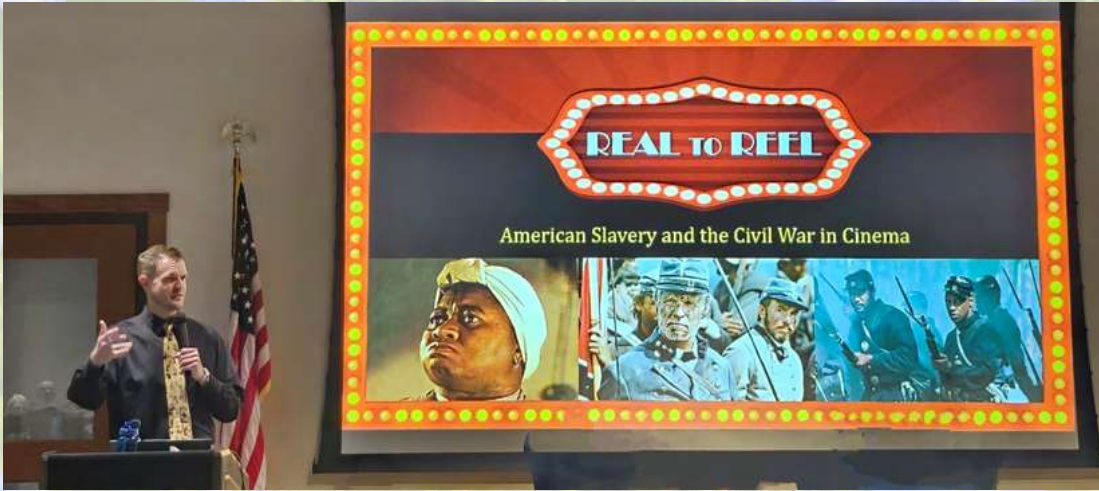


Photo courtesy of www.pacivilwarflags.org



St. Francis Xavier Cemetery, Gettysburg
This is a great old cemetery with many veterans included in John's regiment.
Photo by Jaimee Umstatt

Spring Meetings



Jared Frederick: Photo by Jaimee Umstattt



Michele Hessler & Jared Frederick photo by Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

April 24th, 2025

To the Left: Rip Engle
declaring,
"The people have spoken!"
on our election day.

Below: Jackie Spainhour visits
to accept our Preservation
Donation to help Save the
Klinge Farm House from being
demolished and forgotten.



The most welcoming Lynn Light-Heller. Photo courtesy of Facebook



Jackie Spainhour and Bruce Davis. Photo by Jaimee Umstattt



Kevin Pawlak, Beth Wheeler, Dan Welch. Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

Evergreen Cemetery Outing



photo by Lynn Light-Heller

June 11th, 2025
The rain held off just long enough for our visit to Evergreen Cemetery with renowned LBG and Evergreen Cemetery Board Member, Deb Novotny.



Deb Novotny with the Wills Family (David Wills was responsible for the creation of the Soldiers' National Cemetery.)

Photo by Jaimee Umstadd



photo by Lynn Light-Heller



Roger Heller: photo by Lynn Light-Heller



Our Elected Officials:
Bruce Davis, Beth Wheeler, Michele Hessler.
Photo by Lynn Light-Heller.



Deb recounts the story of George Bushman, buried in Evergreen. He was an LBG and taxi driver that was murdered by two local boys in 1918. For the whole story revisit the Signal Station Q2 2024 edition.
Photo by Lynn Light-Heller



WHAT IS THIS?! According to Deb, no one living knows. If you do, contact Brian Kennel, the current caretaker for the cemetery.
info@evergreencemetery.org
photo by Jaimee Umstadd



photo by Jaimee Umstadd

Camp Letterman Tour

June 30th, 2025

Fran Feyock secured permission from the developers for a tour of Camp Letterman.

To the Left: Michele and Fran on the site.

To the Right: Our group glad for sunshine after storms delayed the tour.

Below: Our group walks down Camp Letterman Drive to the location of the hospital graveyard. The rear dirt pile holds the site's hallowed topsoil.



Photo by Jaimee Umstattd



Photo by Jaimee Umstattd



Photo by Jaimee Umstattd



Licensed Battlefield Guides assembled, Gettysburg's guardians of history.

Photo by Jaimee Umstattd



Photo by Jaimee Umstattd



Trevor Floyd, Manager of Aldi strikes a pose and fits right in with Roger Heller.

photo by Jaimee Umstattd

Events and Programs!

Our humble town boasts opportunities to listen and learn year-round, so celebrate Gettysburg and join us at these Upcoming Events with our Community partners.

May 26 – September 1st, 7 p.m. One Hundred Nights of Taps. The famous 24-note call is sounded at the Pennsylvania Monument in Gettysburg National Military Park.

<https://lincolnfellowship.wildapricot.org/100-Nights-of-taps>

July 1st, 2nd, 3rd Gettysburg National Military Park 162nd Battle Anniversary. Join Park Rangers and Licensed Battlefield Guides for a series of free guided walks and talks that discuss, explore, and reflect on this important chapter in our nation's history.

<https://www.nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/battle-anniversary.htm>

July 1st, 2nd, 3rd 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Seminary Ridge Museum. 162nd Anniversary On The Ridge. Numerous free presentations, guest speakers and projects. Including on July 1st you can help rebuild the Seminary barricade 162 years to the day after U.S. soldiers constructed the original from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. <https://www.seminaryridgemuseum.org/events>

July 4th, 5th, 6th 162nd Gettysburg Civil War Battle Reenactment at the Daniel Lady Farm. Immersive all-day event featuring live firing cannons and a reenactment. Tickets required.

<https://danielladyfarm.com/>

July 5th, 7:30 p.m. Songs and Stories of a Civil War Hospital at Christ Lutheran Church. Performance of first personal accounts from soldiers and nurses about Christ Lutheran hospital, Civil War poetry, and Civil War-era music by well-known local musicians.

<https://christgettysburg.org/songs-stories-of-a-civil-war-hospital/>

July 5th, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Confederates Take the Shriver House Once a year, visitors can experience the battle through the eyes of this ordinary family that lived through extraordinary circumstances. Tickets required. <https://tinyurl.com/Shriver-House-Takeover>

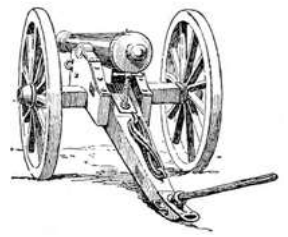
Fridays: July 4th - August 1st at 8:30 p.m. Campfire Programs with a Ranger. Evening campfire talks on a wide variety of topics on the Battle of Gettysburg and the American Civil War. Programs take place at the Pitzer Woods Amphitheater, near Auto Tour Stop #6. <https://nps.gov/thingstodo/gett-campfire-programs.htm>

July 19th & 20th, Gettysburg National 19th Century Base Ball Festival. Come see what base ball was like in the 19th century as 28 clubs from all over the US compete on five fields all weekend. Clubs will be playing by the same rules and customs of 1864 while using the same style uniforms and equipment. <https://www.gettysburgbaseballfestival.com/>

August 15-17th, Bobby Horton at The Majestic Theatre. Bobby Horton offers two distinct programs daily, Songs & Stories of the Civil War, and The Long Steel Rail in America. www.gettysburgmajestic.org

September 18-20th, Civil War Symposium Antietam & It's Legacy at Shepherd University. Our line-up features distinguished academic historians and public historians and offers a blend of battlefield walks, lectures, and discussions that consider the bloodiest day in our nation's history and its consequences.

<https://www.shepherd.edu/civilwar/2025-fall-seminar>



Upcoming Speakers

July 24
6:30-8:30 p.m. (on-field)
Fred Hawthorn
140 Things a Battlefield
Guide Should Know:
Cemetery Hill Edition.

August 28
6:00-8:30 p.m. (on-field)
Larry Korzyck
The Wheatfield Part 3

September 25
Derek Maxwell
William T. Sherman Part 2

October 23
Dr. Scott MacKenzie
Founding of West Virginia

November 20
Hampton Newsome
Gettysburg's Southern Front

December 4
Dr. James Broomall
Holiday Banquet

**“What is a weed? A plant
whose virtues have never
been discovered.”**

– Ralph Waldo Emerson



Our meetings are the Fourth Thursday of each month.

We meet at ACHS Battlefield Overlook Events Center, 625 Biglerville Road, Gettysburg, PA. The doors open at 6:30 pm. Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

The Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg, PA

2025 MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg, PA welcomes new and returning members to join us for our monthly meetings and activities. Individual membership dues are \$30 a year. A family membership is \$45 a year per family living at the same address. Your membership runs from January 1 to December 31 of the calendar year.

New members can join anytime during the year and dues are prorated as follows:

<u>Join</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Family</u>
January – December	\$ 30.00	\$ 45.00

Please fill in the information requested below and return it with your dues payable to **Gettysburg Civil War Roundtable • PO Box 4236 • Gettysburg, PA 17325**. You may pay your dues with PayPal using the link at <https://cwrgettyburg.org/membership.htm>. For further Gettysburg Roundtable information, please visit our website at cwrgettyburg.org.

☐ NEW MEMBERSHIP

☐ RENEWAL

\$ _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (☐ LAND LINE ☐ CELL) _____ E-MAIL _____

If you would like notifications to be sent to more than one email, please list the emails below:

Thank you, and welcome to the Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg, PA

