



The Signal Station

4th Quarter 2024
Issue 5

Greetings and Salutations!

"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."
- Albert Camus



Autumn brings us some of the most beautiful foliage, and with the falling leaves, the best views of the Battlefield. As Winter approaches, a different kind of Civil War tourist visits Gettysburg. It's the enthusiast who wants to see through the trees as the soldiers would have in 1863. September's rainy weeks will not deter the tide of visitors to our town for October's entertainment.

We look forward to another Remembrance Day in November; "the great task remaining before us", and the great friendships that make our lives so much more colorful. Afterall, "we are here to honor the living *and* the dead".

This year we are proud to report that **we have 248 members** whom we consider friends at our Civil War Roundtable. Every one of us with a story to tell. We have a fantastic home base at the Adams County Historical Society, that honors us with incredible sunsets and a gorgeous view of Blocher's Knoll. This season share that view by bringing one of your friends to a meeting and maybe, just maybe, they will join our cadre of leaves on the wind.

If that friend continues to speak to you, bring them to the Annual Holiday Banquet. They will be hooked before they know it. This December 5th, we will hear from the legendary Charlie Fennell, the foremost expert on Culp's Hill. Use the link below for quick access to our Registration Website.

Let the Harvest Festivities Begin!

<https://cwrgettysburg.org/holiday-banquet>



You are welcome to bring a non-member friend or if you are a couple of members you can double date with some nonmember friends.

DateThursday, December 5, 2024

Time6:00 PM, beginning with social time and a cash bar.

PlaceThe Historic Dobbin House

Cost.....\$32.00 per person. **DOOR PRIZES!**

Reservations must be received by Tuesday, November 26. Due to our contract obligation with the Dobbin House, there will be no refunds after that date. Space is limited, so please register early.



Officers

Bruce Davis, President

Michele Hessler, Vice President

Veronica Brestensky, Recording Secretary

Linda Seamon, Membership Secretary

David Diner, Treasurer

Roger Heller, Program Director

Linda Joswick, Webmaster

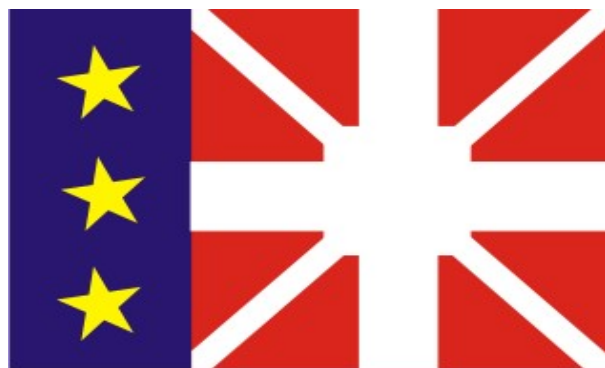
Lynn Heller, Facebook Administrator/Event Planner

Board Members

(2024)Abbie Hoffman, Lynn Heller; (2025) Rip Engle, Roger Heller; (2026) Ted Hirt, Jaimee Umstadd; (2027) Randall Livingston, Beth Wheeler.

Board Member Ex Officio: Therese Orr

Committee for The Bachelder-Coddington Distinguished Book Award of the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg: Therese Orr, Randy Livingston, Tom Reed, Jeannie Schearer, Rip Engle, Brenda Ritterpusch



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

A quick wrap on another terrific SUMMER ON THE BATTLEFIELD. In June, we gathered in Ziegler's Grove for a presentation by Licensed Battlefield Guide Jasan Hileman on Colonel Samuel Sprigg "Red" Carroll's "Gibraltar" Brigade—the moniker gained by heroics at Antietam. At twilight on July 2, 1863, the men of Ohio, Indiana and West Virginia were posted on the north end of Cemetery Ridge when ordered to meet the rebel assault on East Cemetery Hill. Carroll's troops rushed through the graveyard; most of us moved by car. From a position among the guns, Hileman credited the Gibraltar Brigade with saving R. Bruce Rickett's battery, while explaining that Michael Wiedirch's artillery was recaptured by 11th Corps troops arrived from the other side of Baltimore Pike to repulse the Louisiana Tigers.

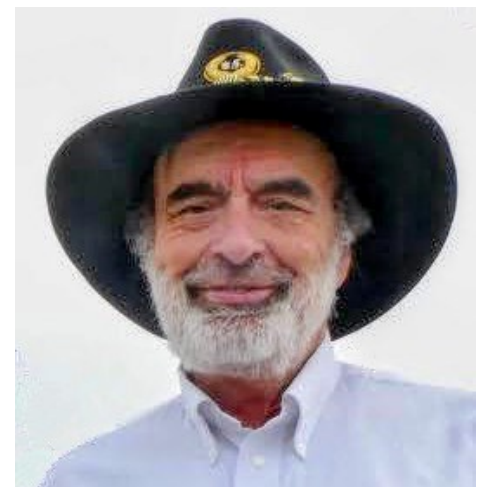


Photo courtesy of Beth Wheeler

In July, we were back in the Wheatfield with LBG Larry Korczyk. Last summer, Larry oriented us to the initial fighting in these 19 acres. This year's meeting focused on John Caldwell's division of II Corps, ordered south from Cemetery Ridge, entering the Wheatfield as survivors of 3rd and 5th Corps were being driven away. General Caldwell brought four brigades to the battle, under the respective commands of Edward Cross, Patrick Kelly, Samuel Zook, and John Brooke. The Cross contingent was of particular interest to me, personally. Earlier this year, I gave a Round Table presentation on Major General Oliver Otis Howard. At Gettysburg, Edward Cross was leading what had been

Howard's brigade on the Virginia Peninsula. On May 31, 1862, when Howard took the brigade across the Chickahominy to meet the emergency at Seven Pines, Colonel Cross had command of the 5th New Hampshire; Francis Barlow—who most of you know well—was leading the 61st New York; Colonel James Miller was at the head of the 81st Pennsylvania. Miller would be shot through the heart in the same fighting that cost Howard his arm; command of the 81st went to Lt. Colonel Charles F. Johnson who would subsequently be disabled in the Seven Days fighting at White Oak Swamp. With Miller dead and Johnson on the casualty list, next up was Major H. Boyd McKeen, who would in turn be wounded at Malvern Hill. McKeen would recover and came to Gettysburg as Colonel of the 81st with responsibility also for the newly formed 148th PA. When Cross was killed on July 2, McKeen took command of the brigade. 11 months and a day later—the third of June, 1864—Henry Boyd McKeen, a graduate of Princeton University and pre-war lumber merchant, would meet his death leading a hopeless charge at Cold Harbor.

On August 22, Ralph Siegel leaned against an artillery piece on Howard Avenue as he told of German-Americans who fought north of town on July 1, 1863. The Licensed Battlefield Guide is as entertaining as he is informative. Siegel was recently interviewed on the popular podcast Addressing Gettysburg, sharing advice on preparing for the upcoming Licensed Battlefield Guide exam. The program is well worth hearing, even if, like me, you have no intention of spending \$250 on a process you're not likely to pass, anyway. Count me more than content with Town Guiding—and the honor of serving as presiding officer of the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg.



—Bruce Davis

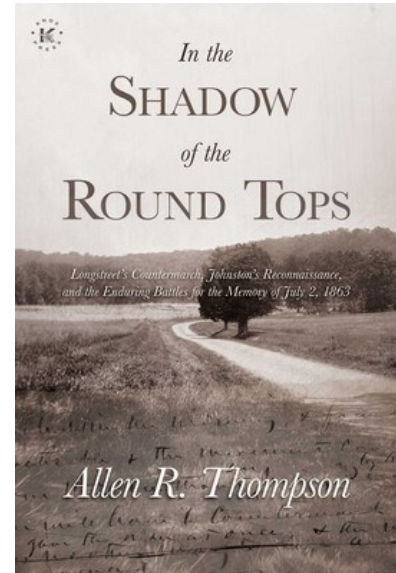
The Bachelder-Coddington Distinguished Book Award of the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg.

In the Shadow of the Round Tops by Allen R. Thompson

Brenda Ritterpusch presented the Award at September's Meeting. She declared there were two books that made it to the top. Cory Pfarr's book, *Righting the Longstreet Record at Gettysburg: Six Matters of Controversy and Confusion*, came in a close second and deserves Honorable Mention. Ultimately, Thompson's book was declared most note worthy based on these points below.

1. His exploration on how Interpretation can be affected by memory.
2. He refers to current terrain, buildings, and roads so that you as the reader can go out and scout those sites for yourself.
3. His work is strongly supported by a variety of detailed primary sources and the end notes are excellent and extensive.

DO YOU LIKE TO READ? PLEASE JOIN US OUR AWARD COMMITTEE AND HELP US SELECT THE 2025 DISTINGUISHED AWARD WINNER. Contact any of the members to inquiry about joining.



On Guard

As a licensed battlefield guide I am often asked about the monuments in Gettysburg, a subject that has long been controversial. On a recent visit to the great History Museum in Denver I came across this monument in an unobtrusive corner.

This monument stood in front of Colorado's State Capitol until it was toppled in June 2020 during protests for Black lives. Installed in 1909 to memorialize Colorado's role in the Civil War, the monument holds multiple meanings for viewers today: a tribute to those who've served and sacrificed in the nation's armed forces, a reminder of atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples, a symbol of white supremacy and injustice, a casualty of destructive lawlessness, and more. After the statue fell, when some people said "monuments like these belong in a museum," This huge monument called On Guard can still be seen, but no longer at the Capitol.

— Joe Mieczkowski



The bronze sculpture depicts a Union Army soldier in raincoat, boots, spurs, and hat, holding a rifle and with a sheathed saber. It measures approximately 8 x 4 x 4 ft., and rests on a granite base measuring approximately 10 x 8 x 8 ft.[2]

Summer on the Battlefield



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

July 25, 2024

*Larry Karczyk
concluded his
Wheatfield Part 2.
It was a gorgeous
sunny evening. We
were able to
traverse a lot of
ground until the
sun set over the
Rose Farm.*



Photo by Jaimee Umstattd



Photos by Jaimee Umstattd





Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo by Jaimee Umstatt



Photo by Jaimee Umstatt

**August 22,
2024**

*Ralph Siegel led
us through the
life and legacy of
Major General
Carl Schurz on the
1st Day
Battlefield.*

*We relished our
last on-field tour
while the setting
sun became the
perfect beautiful
backdrop.*



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo by Jaimee Umstatt

September In House Meeting



Screen shot from Facebook Live



Photo by J.Umstatt



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

September 26,
2024.
Above: The night
began with
5 Good Minutes
Kristina Heister,
Superintendant of
the Gettysburg NMP,
explaining beaver
habitats in the Valley
of Death.

Left: Michele Hessler
presents speaker
award to
Mr. Mansfield.



Photos courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

It was a chilly rainy
night with a fiery talk
from **Derek Mansfield**
entitled, *Sherman,
Man or Monster*.
Book collections grew
that Thursday evening.
(I can speak to this
personally.)

See the line-up of up-
coming speakers at the
back of this newsletter.



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

December 7th, Seven Years in the Making

Born during an historic ice storm, it was small wonder that I have been drawn to historic events & places throughout my life. Subsequent visits to Gettysburg created a spark that brought me to where I am now. Variations of this story is shared by many. Thousands of us find the need to move here to feed the flame. No matter what life threw at us we were going to end up here. For us, it wasn't an exaggeration to say, all roads led to Gettysburg. You've read a lot of books about Gettysburg (probably still a drop in the bucket for all of the books written). You've taken your friends and family out on the battlefield sharing the stories you have come to love. You've taken Frassinito's *Gettysburg Now And Then* on the field for your own study and get the excitement of Easter morning, while looking for rocks with famous carvings throughout the park. It's not enough and your family is starting to give you the side-eye when you mention something historical. The only thing for you to do is to take the next step... become a Licensed Battlefield Guide. Problem solved! You can give guided tours to other people's families.



Becoming a Licensed Battlefield Guide isn't something you can do overnight. It isn't going to make you rich; It's not going to make you famous and you have to pay for it, in more ways than one. It's \$250 this year to take the Guide Exam. If you are deemed worthy by the process there are annual Fees to keep your license. Then there is the element of time, you are spending to give those tours. All this being said, there are many of us who would amputate our right arm to be able to spend our days on the battlefield. Sharing the stories of the brave men and women on this battlefield is our way of keeping their memories, their personalities alive. Being an LBG is being a bonafide steward of the experience.

When I moved here years ago, there were rumors of the impending guide exam. Every year brought more rumors and finally 2024 arrived and we knew it was coming... but when? In Late Winter, a notice went out that the Association for Licensed Battlefield Guides was going to offer classes through the Summer months at \$40 a session. It was popular. Saturday classes filled so quickly, that Sunday overflow classes were added. Some LBGs demanding no payment but to pay it forward when possible, spent hours on the battlefield, gathering up prospective exam takers, rambling here and there, asking questions, encouraging study groups. Study groups formed and dissipated and formed again. The Anniversary of the battle came and then a brief respite. Just as we were about to exclaim, "Where has the summer gone!?" the notice came out.

It was August 15th and the messages came in from all directions. The official notice for the Guide Exam Registration was going to be open from August 19th until September 7th. Social Media was a flurry of posts from my friends and organizations. This was it. It became all too real. The last Guide Exam was in 2017. For seven years, there were rumors and also the comfort of knowing that it really wouldn't happen. The security blanket was off, it was time to register. August 19th, I followed an extremely helpful list of procedures for registration sent out by Fred Hawthorn the day before. I entered my payment information, Hit Submit, secured a screenshot of payment received... Reality hit me, quite figuratively and physically. I felt like I'd been punched in the stomach. The voices in my head started talking. "I'm grossly unprepared for this."; "What was I thinking? That's A LOT of money. This isn't refundable!"; "Ugh, those LBGs proctoring the exam are going to lose so much respect for me when they see my score." After the freak-out, I calmed down and asked myself the big question. Why? Why was I taking this test in the first place? Everyone has their own very personal reason for becoming a LBG. Be it a familial connection, a shared military respect, deep-seated need to educate future generations why war must be avoided at all costs, etc. There is one thing most people have in common. People generally don't like the Great Unknown, and to those who have never experienced 'The Exam' it appears to be unpassable. Few have passed on the first attempt so as I see it, I will be in good company either way. It's a win-win to take the exam for the experience that I will walk away with. I've been accused of being an optimist before, so it won't come as a surprise that I was swift to move on from the fear and convert it into motivation. I immediately began asking friends if they had registered yet and received wide ranging responses for why they were not signing up. In the end, 83 aspiring guides registered, which was a far cry from the 200 expected. Everyone handles stress differently and without knowing when the next exam will be offered by the National Park Service, these next few months will be especially difficult for the people that are studying and those that chose to wait until next time. Be good to your fellow humans and that includes starting with yourself. December 7th will be here before we know it and it will indeed 'be a day that will live in infamy.'

To be continued...

—Jaimee Umstatt

Historical Book Club

Check it Out!



The Adams County Library offers a variety of book clubs to its patrons. This year they have begun a new Historical Nonfiction Book Club. Attendance has not yet grown, but the library hopes that more participants will start to enjoy these books and discussions.

The book club is a joint venture between the Library and the Seminary Ridge Museum. They meet every other month, on the third Tuesday at 1pm at the historic Schmucker House on the Seminary grounds. The schedule gives plenty of time to work through the readings. The Library is providing some copies of these books for the club. Of course, some might want to order their own copies online for their own use.

The topics will not always surround the American Civil War, but many of our GCWRT members enjoy a wide interest in history. Last month we read an interesting history of a smallpox epidemic that burned across the entire continent during the time of the American Revolution. The coming two selections will be about the American Civil War period:

October 15th - Gateway to Freedom, by Pulitzer Prize winner Eric Foner. This is history of the Underground Railroad

December 17th - A Thousand May Fall, by Pulitzer Prize finalist Brian Matthew Jordan. This is a history of the largely German 107th Ohio Regiment in the 11th Corps.

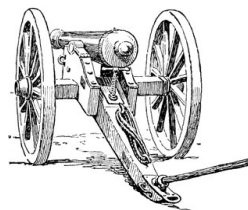
So how can you take advantage of this fascinating free local history opportunity? I am glad that you asked.

- 1) Register by contacting the Library main desk.
- 2) Obtain a copy of the book. The Library is providing a handful of copies at the main branch. You ask for them at the second floor desk, referring to the book club (there was only one copy of Gateway to Freedom left as of Friday). You will need a library card to check out the book. Some prefer to order their own copy online.
- 3) Read the book. This is not optional - the discussions are about the books, not just the topics.
- 4) Show up for an hour of discussion. Learn something! Have some fun!

Our Adams County Library is trying to get this new book club off the ground. The word about this has yet to get around. They have no trouble getting a couple dozen folks to discuss murder mysteries, but this is something different, and we want to see the concept thrive. If attendance improves then the Library will order more copies of the books and everybody benefits.

- Bill Ward

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.

October 5th, 2024 Civil War Barn Dance. Presented by Daughters of Union Soldiers.

Festivities will begin at 5pm in which you can enjoy lite fare and enter drawings for raffles and the silent auction. Dancing will begin at 7pm and will end at 10pm featuring reels, quadrilles, polkas, waltzes, and much more. Tours of the restored Civil War era barn at Beech Springs Farm will also be available led by timber framing expert David Maclay. Advanced Tickets Required. <https://www.hgaonline.org/civil-war-barn-dance>

October 12th, Family Day at George & Elizabeth Spangler Farm. Free day of history and exploration at the historic George Spangler Farm & Field Hospital—the best preserved field hospital from the American Civil War. Fall Family Day features family-friendly programming and activities—including living history, Civil War encampments, Civil War medicine, Spangler family experiences and historic barn preservation presentations. www.gettysburgfoundation.org

November 1st-2nd, 5 p.m. to 5 p.m., 24 Hours on The Ridge. Join us at the Seminary Ridge Museum, as we remain open to the public for a full 24 hours, filled with engaging activities and entertainment! During this ambitious event, Museum Admission will be FREE, with donations encouraged. www.seminaryridgemuseum.org

November 9th, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join the Adams County Historical Society for our first ever Fall Fest on Saturday, November 9th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This vendor event will feature crafts, handmade gifts, local artisan goods, food, and more! www.achs-pa.org

November 16th, 7:30 p.m. Songs and Stories of a Civil War Hospital The live performance, Songs and Stories of a Civil War Hospital, shares the authentic history of how Christ Lutheran Church was used as a Civil War hospital during and after the Battle of Gettysburg.

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

November 16th, Illumination at Soldiers National Cemetery. Join us to commemorate the Gettysburg National Cemetery dedication in November 1863. This solemn event features a luminary candle on all of the 3,512 Civil War soldiers' graves. Names of the fallen soldiers are read throughout the evening. www.gettysburgfoundation.org

November 19th, Dedication Day. in commemoration of the dedication of Gettysburg National Cemetery and Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on Nov. 19, 1863. The program also features a U.S. Naturalization and Citizenship ceremony to welcome a new group of citizens. Sponsored by the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania in partnership with the National Park Service, the Gettysburg Foundation and Gettysburg College, the ceremony begins at the cemetery's rostrum. <https://lincolnfellowship.wildapricot.org>

November 28th-December 31st, Five Christmases at the Shriver House Candlelight Tour. Guided tours of the Shriver's home illustrate how Christmas was celebrated in the mid-19th century. <https://www.shriverhouse.org>

December 6-8th, Homespun Christmas and Holiday Market. Handcrafted gifts for sale. All money earned through the Homespun market is earmarked for the upkeep and benefit of the historic G.A.R. Hall. <https://www.hgaonline.org/homespun-christmas-and-holiday-market>

Upcoming Speakers

October 24

Carolyn Ivanoff

"We Fought at Gettysburg" The 17th Connecticut

November 21

John Heiser

The George Rose Farm of Gettysburg

December 5

Holiday Banquet

Charles Fennell

Culp's Hill "Rediscovered"

*** 2025 ***

January 23

Dr. Christian Keller

Southern Strategies

February 27, 2025

James Hessler

Humphrey's Division at Gettysburg

March 27, 2025

Cindy Beaston

Wrightsville-Columbia and the Bridge in the Gettysburg Campaign

April 24, 2025

Dr. Jared Frederick

The Civil War in Cinema

May 22, 2025

Kevin Pawlek

The Second Manassas Campaign

June 14, 2025

6:30-8:30 p.m.

(Rain Date June 16)

Deb Novotny



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

2024 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://cwrgettysburg.org/membership.htm>. For further Gettysburg Roundtable information, please visit our website at cwrgettysburg.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

