



# The Signal Station

1st Quarter 2024  
Issue 2

## Welcome back!

Now that I have everyone's ATTN again; This year saw the CWRT of Gettysburg move to a new meeting location at the ACHS Battlefield Overlook Event Center. The Grand 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg commenced while the still closed LRT continues to have its accessibility improved by the NPS. The closure of South Confederate Ave still hinders tours for the LBGs. There was much FOMO regarding the Commemoration and Rededication of the National Cemetery. Thankfully it was a success after much nail-biting when a possible government shutdown loomed right up the week of the events. O.M.G! Such a dramatic year. I know, there are a lot of acronyms in this paragraph. I will get to the point ASAP. After hearing from our Holiday Banquet speaker, Jill Oglie Titus, we know Gettysburg has always been chock full of them e.g. GBMA, GBPA, PGCC, ACCWCC. The evening's topic was A Grand Patriotic Spectacle: The Battle of Gettysburg at 100. A very serious book indeed that Jill was able to successfully speak to after a full buffet at the Dobbin House on December 6th.

Don't forget to renew your membership so you get an invite next year.

This annual event is made more fun with delightful raffle donations by our local supporters. An extra **Thanks** to those who *gave* and those who *collected* these gifts.

**Members:** Dave Willman, Linda Joswick, Therese Orr Chair of Book Committee, Terry Holohan, Ted Hirt, Lynn Heller, Roger Heller, Deb Novotny.

**Businesses:** Studio Elysian, La Bella Italia, King James Gallery, Union Drummer Boy, For the Historian, Lord Nelson Gallery, Regimental Quartermaster, Gettysburg Emporium, Jeweler's Daughter.

Continue to page 8 & 9 for more photos.



## Officers

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Bruce Davis, President

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Veronica Brestensky, Recording Secretary

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David Diner, Treasurer

Roger Heller, Program Director

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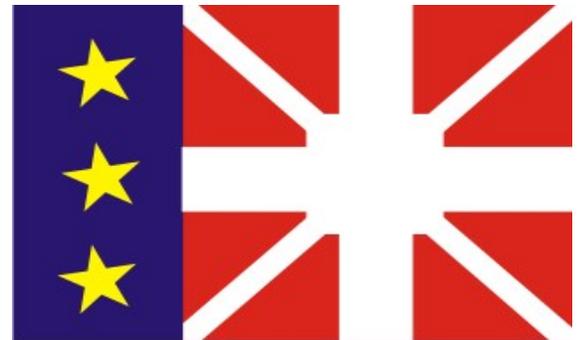
Lynn Heller, Facebook Administrator

## Board Members

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(2024) Abbie Hoffman, Lynn Heller; (2025) Rip Engle, Roger Heller; (2026) Ted Hirt, Jaimee Umstatt

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

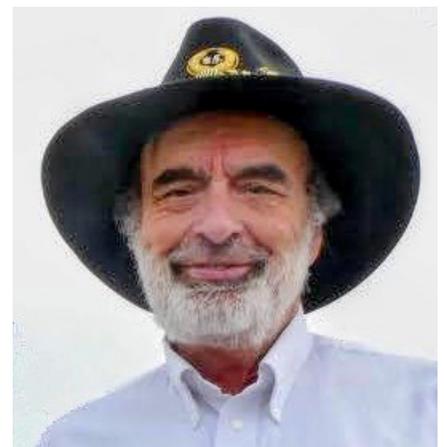


## President's Letter

Welcome to the 2nd Edition of The Signal Station! The response to the inaugural newsletter was uniformly positive and Jaimee Umstattd still seems game for the project. I'm seeing on Facebook that Jaimee just won an Ugly Christmas Sweater contest. Our editor is the personification of enthusiasm and we are fortunate to have her in charge of this publication. As this is being sent electronically, I invite you to forward to others who you think might be interested.

I'm writing on Saturday the 9th of December after a morning of research at the Adams County Historical Society. County Historian Tim Smith was telling me he'd heard great things about our Holiday Banquet. I was embarrassed to admit I'd missed it. As several have inquired about my absence, expressing concern it might have something to do with my health issues from earlier in the year, I should perhaps explain: I am easily confused about dates. By the time I realized we'd set the banquet for December 6, I'd purchased Broadway show tickets for that evening and the 7th. This was fortuitous: On Monday of that week, my surgeon had cleared me of all hiatal hernia diet restrictions, so I was able to celebrate with a plate of steak frites on West 44th Street. Anyway, I knew the show at the Dobbin House would go on just fine without me. The annual banquet is produced by Lynn Heller, who can be counted on for a Tony-worthy event. With superstar vice-president Michele Hessler holding the baton, the orchestration would go smoothly. Furthermore, I'd read and admired keynote speaker Jill Ogline Titus' "Gettysburg 1963," and was entirely confident about the content portion. Nonetheless, it has been gratifying to hear such wonderful feedback. The Round Table is a team effort and every word of encouragement, every renewal of membership, every invitation to a friend or neighbor to try us out is greatly appreciated.

Our new year of programming begins on January 25—a 4th Thursday, of course—7:00 p.m. at the Adams County Historical Center. Our first speaker of 2024 will be rising star Codie Eash, who many of us know from the Seminary Ridge Museum. Codie will be bringing a program on "The Summer of 1869: Gettysburg's First Blue-Gray Reunion." I did not know there was a Blue-Gray Reunion in 1869 and will be greatly interested in what he has to say. On February 22, after nearly five years of leading our meetings, I get my first turn as the main event, presenting, "In Defense of O.O. Howard." This is kind of cool: I've already been invited to take O.O. on the road! The Pipe Creek Round Table has me scheduled for their April program. Of course, if any of the Pipe Creek folks are watching our February livestream ([cwrgettysburg.org](http://cwrgettysburg.org)), they may rescind the invitation, but I like to think I have a strong case to make and plan to make it passionately. Then on March 28, Alan Thompson will be with us, speaking to his book on Longstreet's countermarch, "In The Shadow Of The Round Tops." I have a particular identification with Thompson's book, as it has Longstreet, McLaws, Kershaw et. al. countermarching through my neighborhood. A complete list of our 2024 programming can be found on our website: [cwrgettysburg.org](http://cwrgettysburg.org). Thanks for reading. And please take every opportunity to show appreciation to Jaimee for her work. Let's get the new year off to a great start with an excellent turnout for Codie's presentation.



- Bruce Davis

## Why 'The Signal Station' name for the newsletter?

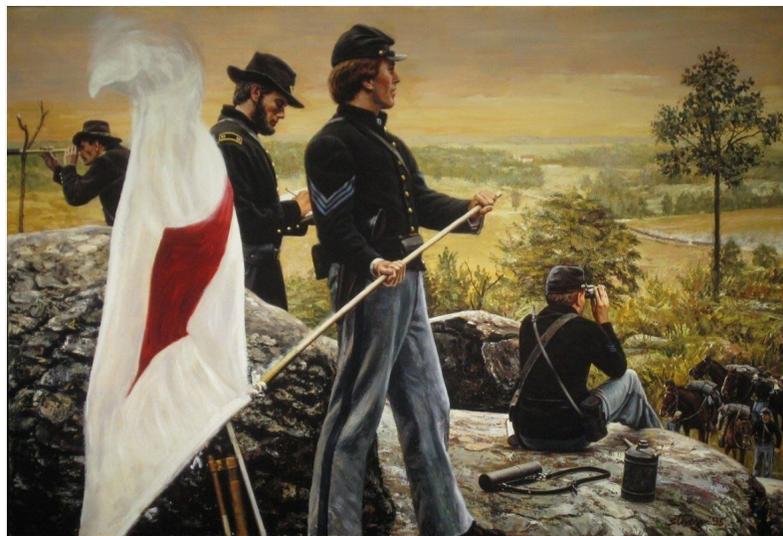
Have you ever been on the battlefield or in the borough and felt like you were being watched? Many visitors have mistaken this feeling as a ghostly encounter however, to the scholarly, they know the rolling hills, historic cupolas and town rooftops in and around Gettysburg are excellent vantage points. U.S. Signal Service was organized in 1860 and by March 1863 it was officially established as The U.S. Signal Corps. Gettysburg itself had signal stations in town on the Seminary Cupola, up on the Fahnestock Bros. rooftop, Power's Hill, Culp's Hill and famously, Little Round Top during the campaign. In 1863 the Signal Corps enjoyed superior information collection from the natural heights in and around the area. Sightseers today can enjoy incredible views from metal towers constructed throughout the park in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and although we no longer Wig-Wag messages we can wave to our friends & family below.

Our Roundtable members come together each month to look through the binoculars of the past. We turn the dials to focus on specific sights of the war. Our presenters are generous, gifted individuals who share our fascination of this era. We look through the spyglass and bring the vision of our collective past up to meet our eyes in the present. The people we never had a chance to meet, the sights and smells of the time are almost tangible thanks to our members sharing their knowledge each time we meet.

This is a newsletter for all of us. Please share your stories. I'm looking for highlights on books, battle stories, civilian stories, artifact show & tells and more. These do not have to be Gettysburg related. After all, we are a Civil War Roundtable of Gettysburg not *exclusively* for Gettysburg. If you have something that interests you, chances are it will also interest us. You can email submissions for **The Signal Station** directly to [gettysburgcwrtnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:gettysburgcwrtnewsletter@gmail.com).

May this newsletter also be a flare out to the those who are interested. Forward the quarterly email on to friends, direct them to the link on our webpage [www.cwrtgettysburg.org](http://www.cwrtgettysburg.org). Thank you again for the warm reception on the first issue.

Together we can only make it better.



*Signals from Little Round Top, A painting by Don Stivers*

On the last day of The Great Gettysburg Reunion of 1913, thousands of visitors boarded trains and got into their automobiles to head home. About one hundred veterans stayed behind. They were members of the now well established Signal Corps. There were two Signal Stations set up; One on Little Round Top; The other on Seminary Ridge. These men, who were a combination of Confederate and United States Veterans, proceeded to send messages across the fields using their signal flags just as they had done 50 years before. The final line that wig-wagged across the fields that afternoon:

“North, South, East and West, hand clasped in hand, United, we the children stand.”

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*“I have taken occasion to notice the practical working of the Signal Corps, U.S. Army, in the field, and regard it as a valuable auxiliary to an army. With the aid of their powerful glasses, acting as both scouts and observers, the officers who have acted with me have rendered invaluable service when no other means could have availed. I regard their permanent organization as a matter of first importance.”*

*John Buford November 20, 1863*

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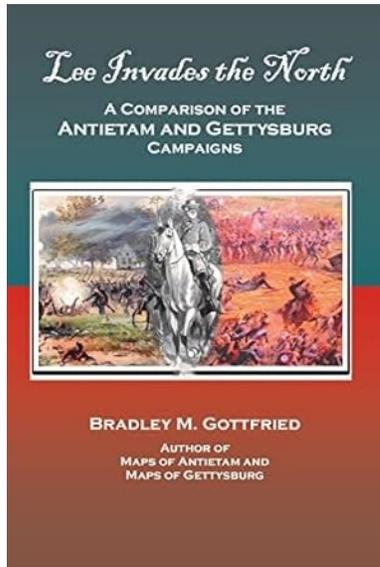
# Fall Meetings



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



*Above: September 28, 2023: Bradley Gottfried spoke about his latest book, a fascinating comparison of the Antietam and Gettysburg Campaigns. Many friendly faces showed up that night.*

*Right: October 26, 2023: Dennis Doyle spoke with the Roundtable about Illinois Regiments at Gettysburg. It was a full house.*



Photo courtesy of Jaimee Umstadd



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

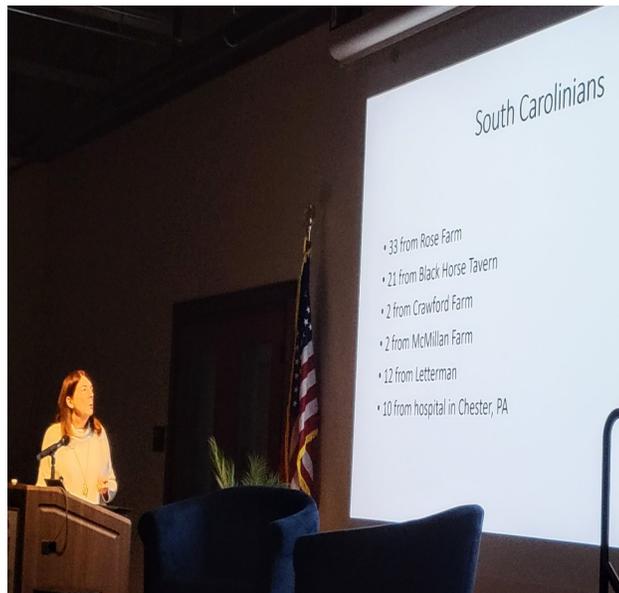


Photo courtesy of Jaimee Umstadd

*Above: November 16, 2023: Janet McCabe, aspiring Licensed Battlefield Guide, graced us with a fantastic talk about Rufus Weaver. Everyone left that meeting knowing something new about Samuel Weaver's altruistic progeny.*



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

*Above: November 16, 2023: Therese Orr handing the Award to author Scott L. Mingus.*

## Member Book Review by Randal Livingston

### *Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou* by Timothy B. Smith

Timothy B. Smith, professor of history at the University of Tennessee at Martin, has written an excellent book on the opening actions in the Vicksburg Campaign. With *Early Struggles for Vicksburg*, Smith adds to his planned five volumes on the “rethinking of the timeline of Vicksburg” (Smith 2022, xv) and updates the seminal works on the campaign with New Military History material (Smith 2022, xvii). This fits with his proposition that the initial Vicksburg actions, the Mississippi Central Campaign, and the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, are strategically linked together and fill a gap in the literature related to the start of the overall Vicksburg Campaign (Smith 2022, xvii). Smith goes on to state that the Vicksburg Campaign should be understood and analyzed in five chronological phases: 1) early actions in 1862, 2) the bayou battles fought to break through to Vicksburg in early 1863, 3) the battles fought in central Mississippi moving west towards Vicksburg, 4) two separate Union attacks against Vicksburg, and 5) the final siege isolating Vicksburg (Smith 2022, xv). *Early Struggles for Vicksburg* is the fourth of five major works Smith has written, moving him into the company of leading historians about the Vicksburg Campaign. In addition to *Early Struggles for Vicksburg* (released in 2022) to address Phase 1, Smith has written *Bayou Battles for Vicksburg* (to be released in 2023) to address Phase 2, *The Siege of Vicksburg* (released in 2021) to address Phase 5, and *The Union Assaults at Vicksburg* (released in 2020) to address Phase 4. Smith acknowledges the monumental three-volume work of Edwin Bearss (Smith 2022, xvii) and the *Blue & Gray* magazine feature articles by two of the National Park Service’s best historians, Terrance J. Winschel and Thomas E. Parson (Smith 2022, xvi) but does not seek to overshadow them with his own work on Vicksburg. Smith recognizes the advent of the New Military History shift in historiography (Smith 2022, xvii), where historians now address social, political, and economic aspects of the soldier’s lives, the effects of the war on the freedmen and the politics of the administration in control of the government. He also points out that these foundational writings are now close to forty years old (Smith 2022, xvii), and his objective is to embellish them with these new topics. Smith is very effective in doing this. He accomplishes this embellishment by including significant numbers of manuscript sources, letters, and soldiers’ diaries to his already generous research of traditional primary and secondary sources. He integrates this material by quoting soldiers who are recalling their experience of combat or their experience of riding a steamboat down the mighty Mississippi River in the middle of the night. Smith covers a wide range of soldier experience by deriving inputs from over 460 manuscript collections in 85 libraries and historical societies in his research, and all are included in his lengthy bibliography. Smith has accomplished his objective of applying the New Military History agenda to the writing and understanding of the Vicksburg campaign with *Early Struggles for Vicksburg*. He has used his excellent research to produce a detailed treatment of

the Mississippi Central Campaign and its strategic connection to the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, all described with a writing style that is very interesting, smooth, and extremely readable.

#### References

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- Smith, Timothy B. *The Union Assaults at Vicksburg: Grant Attacks Pemberton, May 17-22, 1863*. Lawrence Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2020.
- *The Siege of Vicksburg: Climax of the Campaign to Open the Mississippi River, May 23-July 4, 1863*. Lawrence Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2021.
- *Bayou Battles for Vicksburg: The Swamp and River Expeditions, January 1-April 30, 1863*. Lawrence Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2023.
- Winschel, Terrance J. “Grant’s March Opening Phase of the Vicksburg Campaign.” *Blue & Gray Magazine* XIII, no. 5 (June 1996).
- *The Vicksburg Campaign: Disaster at Champion Hill and Big Black Bridge*. *Blue & Gray Magazine*, Special Issue, (2001).

#### Book Reviews

- Schieffler, G. D. Review of *Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25–December 31, 1862*, by Timothy B. Smith, *The Journal of Southern History* 89, no. 3 (August 2023): 568-9, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/early-struggles-vicksburg-mississippi-central/docview/2841146073/se-2>.
- Stith, Matthew M. Review of *Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25–December 31, 1862*, by Timothy B. Smith. *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 120, no. 3 (2022): 343-345. [doi:10.1353/khs.2022.a899964](https://doi.org/10.1353/khs.2022.a899964).
- Wagenhoffer, Andrew J. Review of *Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25–December 31, 1862*, by Timothy B. Smith. <https://cwba.blogspot.com/2022/09/review-early-struggles-for-vicksburg.html>.
- Winschel, Terrance J. Review of *Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25–December 31, 1862*, by Timothy B. Smith. *The Journal of Military History* 87, no. 1 (2023):217-219

## Preservation Fund



Last Quarter we donated to The Lincoln Cemetery and we were able to see Preservation in Action in early October. Orange flags blossomed from the hallowed grounds of the Goodwill Cemetery signifying unseen graves discovered by the ground penetrating radar. Jean Green said one of the biggest surprises was to find burials in unexpected places, such as in front of the rostrum.

Left: Jean accepting the Gift at the October Meeting

Right: Orange Flags seen on Lincoln Cemetery grounds on October 24th, 2023.



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

Photo courtesy of Jaimee Umstatt

*“There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here and there, but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody.” — Richard Moe*

I don't think we've said enough about our latest preservation gift. Preservation has been a big part of the Round Table mission but was necessarily on the back burner during the covid passage. With a recent accumulation of funds, the Round Table Board discussed what might be our next project. Among several worthy possibilities, Secretary Veronica Brestensky lifted up the Lincoln Cemetery Project Association, drawing immediate interest and unanimous support. Jean Green, who is on the Board of the Adams County Historical Society and is leading the Cemetery Association gave our Board members a tour of the grounds and then came to our monthly meeting of October 26 to express appreciation and accept a check for \$1,000.

While many of you will be familiar with Lincoln Cemetery, for those who are not, here's what's posted on a Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Historical Marker: “Established in 1867 by the Sons of Goodwill for the proper burial of Gettysburg's African American citizens and Civil War veterans. Some thirty members of the US Colored Troops are buried here, having been denied burial in the National Cemetery because of segregation policies. Also here are many of the town's earliest black residents, reinterred when the town's 'Colored Cemetery' was cleared in 1906 to provide space for new houses.” Another plaque inside the fence line further explains “The Sons of Goodwill” was “A Society of Black Men For The Burial Of Colored Citizens Of Gettysburg.”

If anything, our support of Lincoln Cemetery is more gratifying to me now than when we first made the decision. Some of you know I've been licensed as a Gettysburg Town Guide. In preparing for a Black History Tour, I've become fascinated by the stories of persons who now reside in the historic burial ground, including Basil Biggs, Margaret Palm, Owen Robinson, Lloyd Francis Asbury Watts and many others. If the names are not familiar to you, short biographies can be easily accessed on the web. I'm remembering a wonderful program by Licensed Battlefield Guide Richard Goedkoop on the Culp's Hill monuments, “What Mean These Stones?” I've come to realize that the stones at Lincoln Cemetery carry evocative meaning as well and am proud that the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg can help preserve the memory.

- Bruce Davis

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



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller

Brenda Rittenputsch spoke on behalf of the Book Committee at the September meeting announced this year's winner of The first ever Bachelder-Coddington Distinguished Book Award of the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg. Of the seven nominees **the winner is...**

*If We Are Striking for Pennsylvania, Volume 1* - Scott Mingus and Eric Wittenberg.

The book has had rave reviews from esteemed historians, James Hessler, Jeffrey Hunt, Cory Pfarr, Joseph Owen, Dave Powell, etc. See the description below to confirm why this needs a place in your Civil War library.

— *About the book from publisher Savas Beatie*

*Scott L. Mingus Sr. and Eric J. Wittenberg, the authors of more than forty Civil War books, have once again teamed up to present a history of the opening moves of the Gettysburg Campaign in the two-volume study "If We Are Striking for Pennsylvania": The Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac March to Gettysburg. This compelling study is one of the first to integrate the military, media, political, social, economic, and civilian perspectives with rank-and-file accounts from the soldiers of both armies as they inexorably march toward their destiny at Gettysburg. This first installment covers June 3–21, 1863, while the second, spanning June 22–30, completes the march and carries the armies to the eve of the fighting.*

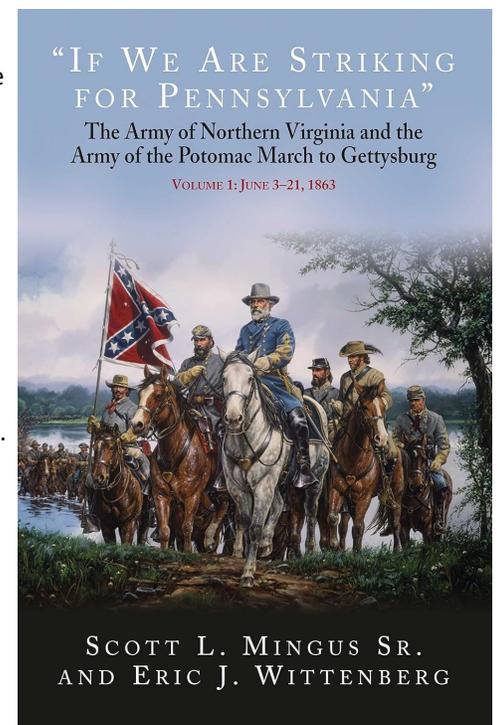
In November, Therese Orr, the Chair of the Award Committee came up to the podium to present the physical award to Scott Mingus. She proudly announced this was the first time she had ever been available to deliver the award personally. Scott graciously accepted the award saying,

"Thank you, this project started about 10 years ago when J. David Petruzzi a good friend of mine, contacted me and said, you want to do a Gettysburg Campaign Day by Day book, and I said, Sure, I'd be happy to do that. So, I started working on it and working on it and working on it. Jay David parted ways with the project. I ended up taking it on myself. A few years ago

I brought Eric on as the partner to make the thing happen. So, we're grateful." The book's co-author Eric Wittenburg was not in attendance due to a "significant health crisis". However, Eric sent a written statement in with Scott to be read in his absence. Eric's note read;

"I regret a significant health problem has kept me from being there in person evening. Please know that I am with you in spirit and all of the messages of support you sent have been received and have given me the strength to face this health crisis. The good news is that I should make a full 100% recovery. Thank you for recognizing the work that Scott and I did on 'If we are striking for Pennsylvania'. When Scott invited me to assist him on completing this magnificent project I jumped at the opportunity. Helping to tell this epic saga is one of the great accomplishments of my life and one for which I am very proud. Many thanks to Scott for including me on this project. We set out to accomplish something on a vast scale and we accomplished what we set out to achieve and that is telling the story from the military, civilian, political, and even international perspectives. Weaving all that together in what a collab narrative was a great challenge I am proud of what we have done together in doing so. It's not my first Bachelder Coddington Award, I am grateful for you recognizing the work Scott and I did on this project. Thank you, I look forward to seeing you all in person very soon."

Keep your eye out for Volume 2 "*If We Are Striking for Pennsylvania*": *The Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac March to Gettysburg Volume 2: June 22-30, 1863*



# Holiday Banquet December 6, 2023

1776  
*Dobbin House  
Tavern*



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Jordan Umstadd



Photo courtesy of Jordan Umstadd



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



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Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Lynn Light-Heller



Photo courtesy of Jordan Umstadd



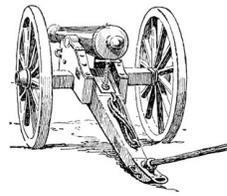
Photo courtesy of Jordan Umstadd



Photo courtesy of Jordan Umstadd

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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.



**January 6 through March 3, Saturdays and Sundays:** Gettysburg National Military Park presents The Winter Lecture Series. Featuring NPS rangers, historians, and authors from across the country, the nine-week Winter Lecture Series returns to the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center. Visit the NPS website for more details. [www.nps.gov/gett/](http://www.nps.gov/gett/)

**January 11th, 7 p.m.** Join Professor Edward Gray at the Adams County Historical Society as he discusses his new book, *Mason-Dixon: Crucible of the Nation*, the first complete history of the Mason-Dixon Line written in over a century. Tickets are free for ACHS members and \$10/general admission.

**January 13th 9 a.m. — 11 a.m.** Sensory Friendly Day at the NPS Museum, Cyclorama and Visitor Center. Free admission at this time to Explore the film, cyclorama and museum in a calmer and quieter way during the morning hours. Special hands-on activities, and relaxation book station for kids.

**January 19th, February 16th, March 15th,** Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center offers History Happy Hour (Zoom) 6:30 p.m. A different speaker each time. Limited to 100 viewers so reserve your spot today on the Events page of their website. [www.seminaryridgemuseum.org](http://www.seminaryridgemuseum.org)

**February 17th 10 a.m.— 4 p.m.** FREE Day at The National Civil War Museum 1 Lincoln Circle at Reservoir Park, Harrisburg, Join us for our February Free Day on Saturday. Enjoy living historians, games, presentations, and much more.

**February 24th 8a.m.— 5 p.m.** Our Annual Symposium returns to the Seminary Ridge Museum! Join us for the culmination of our exciting trilogy with The Battle of Gettysburg Podcast. Registration to open in January.

**March 9th, 6 p.m. —8:30 p.m.** President's Third Annual March of the Iron Brigade Dinner. Dinner and a talk at the Dobbin House. See the Seminary Ridge Museum website for more information and registration.

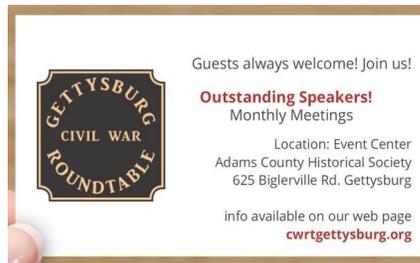
**March 14th,** Thursday Land Conservancy of Adams County 28th Annual Meeting this year at the Adams County Historical Society.

**April 25th - 28th** American Battlefield Trust Annual Conference is in Gettysburg this year. Keep an eye on their Website. More details to come. [www.Battlefields.org](http://www.Battlefields.org)

**June 7th—12th** Gettysburg College – Civil War Institute Summer Conference registration is open. <https://www.gettysburg.edu/civil-war-institute/>

## Business Cards Have Been Made!

Keep an eye out. You just might see one in the wild.



**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.

## Upcoming Speakers

January 25  
**Codie Eash**  
The Summer of 1869:  
Gettysburg's First Blue-Gray  
Reunion

February 22  
**Bruce Davis**  
Defending General O. O. Howard

March 28  
**Allen Thompson**  
In the Shadow of the Round  
Tops

April 25  
**Stephen Evangelista**  
Brown's Rhode Island Battery

May 23  
**Lisa Samia**  
The Nameless & Faceless of the  
Civil War in Poetry

June 8 (Saturday  
9:30 am to noon)  
**Fred Hawthorne**  
Places Every Guide Should  
Know: Hancock Avenue Edition

June 27 (Rain date June 28)  
**Jasan Hileman**  
Red Carroll's Brigade

July 25 (Rain date July 29)  
**Larry Korczyk**  
The Wheatfield — Part 2

August 22 (Rain date August  
26)  
**Ralph Seigel**  
11th Corps Program TBA

September 26  
**Derek Maxfield**  
General William T. Sherman's  
Civil War

October 24  
**Jeff Harding**  
How Weather Effected the Civil  
War

November 21  
**John Heiser**  
The George Rose Farm of Get-  
tysburg

December 5 - Holiday Banquet  
**Charles Fennell**  
Culp's Hill "Rediscovered"

