

May 2020 – Spring Campaign 42

Ninth meeting- May 05, 2020-CANCELLED

Tenth meeting- June 02, 2020- CANCELLED

From the Brigade Commander: Barry Arnold

Our April meeting was cancelled because of our trying times as we attempt to cope with the Corona virus outbreak. With the safety of our members at stake and the state regulation of our state prohibiting large groups from meeting, we could not have our meeting. Now, it looks as if I must once again say, that we will not meet in May because of the very same issues.

I hope everyone will listen to the instruction of medical leaders and wash their hands, use sanitizers, and maintain a safe distance around people. I want to see all of you at our round table meetings for the foreseeable future. **Sadly, we will also cancel our May and June meetings at the Holiday Inn.** I will let you know, in the near future, if we can re-schedule one final meeting of the campaign season for late June or early July. Also, I want to inform (remind) you that our annual field trip and brush cutting scheduled for April 18, 2020 **Gettysburg was also cancelled.**

Further, after speaking with Dennis Frye and recognizing that the state of West Virginia has issued a stay-at-home order coupled with the knowledge that Harper's Ferry National Historical Park is closed at the current time with no official tours, no restroom facilities available, no access to the parking lot, it just did made sense **to cancel our plans for our May 30, 2020 field trip.**

So, to recap, no more field trips for the year and no May 05 or June 02 dinner meetings. We are crossing our fingers that we could possibly set up a later meeting in the summer, but we will have to see how things work out. For sure, we will be keeping you informed as to the feasibility of meeting at a later date this summer. We certainly hope you can join us. Until then, please stay safe.

Last month I informed you of a cemetery in Norristown. The Montgomery Cemetery where General Hancock and others notable civil war veterans are buried. Now, I want to inform (remind) you of a cemetery here in Bethlehem. That cemetery is Nisky Hill Cemetery located near the city hall. The notable Civil War veteran is General William Doster. He was born in Bethlehem on January 8, 1837. One of seven, he attended the Moravian school until age 14. Afterwards, he went on to Yale College graduating in 1857. In 1859 he graduated from Harvard Law School. When the war broke out he raised a company for Harlan's Light Cavalry of which he was made captain. They were transformed into the 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry. Doster was appointed Provost Marshal in Washington, D.C. He was appointed Brigadier General and return to the 4th Cavalry where he took command. At Gettysburg, he served under General Pleasanton and was positioned on the federal left flank. Then on the 5th of July was ordered to chase the fleeing rebels. He fought Lee's rear guard. He contracted malaria and was too ill to return to duty. Instead, he returned home to Easton and never returned to the war. As a lawyer he was assigned to defend Lewis Payne and George Atzerodt, two of the Lincoln conspirators. After the war, he returned to Northampton county and practiced law in Easton. Residing in Bethlehem, he was president of the Lehigh National Bank and the New Bridge Street Company. Doster died July 2, 1919 and was buried in Bethlehem at Nisky Hill Cemetery. Some of you may recall our work day at Nisky Hill on October 29, 2016 when we spent a Saturday performing clean up and light restoration at that cemetery.

Barry

2020 Statistics by Jim Duffy

Hi, friends, I just wanted to tell you how sorry I was we could not meet in April at what would have been our eighth meeting of our 42nd campaign. **Now it appears we will not meet again in May or June 2020.** I am hopeful we can come up with a summer meeting when we are finished with the Corona doldrums and return to our meetings at the Holiday Inn. As you know, we still have our big raffle coming up and we will certainly have that the next time we meet. When we meet next, please consider bringing a friend or two to our very informative meeting. In the meantime, stay well.

Programs for 2019-2020 Campaign

Director, Membership Request– Jeff Gates, 610-966-5773...Please read.....

I'm hoping you all had a chance to start thinking about re-joining our group. During last year's campaign, our membership remained just shy of 90 people. I'm looking forward to your rejoining and request your assistance in our endeavor to find new members. Bring a friend, co-worker, family member to a meeting as we try to break back into

the triple digits of membership. It's that time of year again to renew your membership to the Civil War Roundtable. The Dues for the 2019-2020 Campaign have not changed and remain at \$25.00 (Full Time Student \$10.00). If you have not done so yet, please mail in your membership form and check to the Roundtable address. (See last page for form).

Fall 2019 & Winter/Spring 2020 PROGRAM REGISTRATION

All Members and guests of the Lehigh Brigade are ordered to
[Holiday Inn Conference Center Lehigh Valley in Breinigsville](#)

7736 Adrienne Drive Breinigsville, PA 18031 Phone 610-391-1000

The deadline for accepting dinner reservations is the last Thursday, before the monthly meeting held on the first Tuesday of the month (unless otherwise noted). For the next meeting, the deadline for making dinner reservations will be announced. Please note no meetings in May nor June due to the Coronavirus.

For dinner reservations and/or information: Contact any of the following:

James Duffy – 610-253- 4549 duffysocwk@aol.com

Carol Detweiler 215-234- 4884 cdetweiler01@comcast.net

Ed Oechsle – 610-882-9228 ehoechsle@ptd.net

Format of all meetings:

Sutler's Call	6:00-6:30 p.m.
Mess Call	6:30-7:30 p.m.
Program	7:30 p.m.

Update on Future Field Trips:

Claire Kukielka

All field trips and conservation activities are cancelled for the remainder of the year due to the Corona epidemic. We plan on reconsidering dates for the 2020-2021 season. More information to come.

The Military Commission and Bethlehem Attorney Doster's Defense of Lincoln Assassination Conspirators Atzerodt and Powell

By: Alan Y. Lowcher

"Sic Semper Tyrannis!" With those words and a woman's scream from the Presidential Box, the audience at Ford's Theater was plunged into chaos. Several physicians examined the unconscious President and pronounced the wound mortal. It would be unseemly for the

President of the United States to die in a house of entertainment — on Good Friday, no less. But the doctors agreed that Lincoln would never survive the carriage ride to the White House. The President was carried out onto Tenth Street, Union officers scanning the scene for someplace — anyplace — to take the dying Chief Executive. From across the street, a voice called out "Bring him in here," and Lincoln was carried into a boarding house and laid in the bed of Louisa Peterson, who was away at the Bethlehem Female Seminary. The President died in her bed at 7:22 AM on Easter Saturday, April 15, 1865. Telegraphers flashed the news around the country. Wednesday, April 19th was designated as a national day of mourning.

Secretary of War Stanton directed the search for Lincoln's assassin — and the perpetrators of the brutal assault on Secretary of State Seward — from the Peterson house. With the full weight of the military and police brought to bear, it was only a matter of days until the Lincoln conspirators — John Wilkes Booth, David Herald, George Atzerodt, Lewis Powell (a/k/a Payne), Mary Surratt, Dr. Mudd, Edman Spangler, and two early signers on in the plot to kidnap Lincoln but who were not involved in the plans to assassinate Lincoln — Samuel Arnold and Michael O'Laughlin — were identified, caught, and incarcerated, except for Booth who died of a gunshot at the Garrett farm in Virginia. Another conspirator — John Surratt, Jr., Mary's son -- had fled to Canada. He would elude capture for a year and was tried before a civilian court in 1867, the U.S. Supreme Court having held in *Ex Parte Milligan* that trying civilians in a military court was unconstitutional when the civilian courts were functioning. The statute of limitations having run on the lesser charges, Surratt was released when the jury could not unanimously agree on the remaining murder charge.

Stanton favored convening a military commission to quickly try and execute the conspirators. The commission met for the first time on May 8, 1865. All of the defendants except Atzerodt and Powell were represented by attorneys. Bethlehem native Brevet Brigadier General William E. Doster was hired by Atzerodt's brother to defend George. The commission appointed Doster to represent Powell, who could not secure his own counsel. Doster was a Yale graduate and obtained his law degree from Harvard. He served with the 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry and rose quickly to the rank of Lt. Colonel. His military career was cut short when he contracted malaria after the Gettysburg campaign. In 1865 he was honored with the rank of Brevet Brigadier General "for gallant and meritorious service in the field." Although his illness kept him out of the saddle, Doster turned his combative skills to good use practicing law in Washington City in 1864.

Faced with an eye-witness identifying Powell as Seward's attacker, and weapons, an escape map, and Booth's bank book found in a trunk in Atzerodt's hotel room — Atzerodt was assigned to assassinate Vice President Johnson Doster surely realized that his clients would be convicted. All he could do was try to persuade the commission to spare their lives. In the case of Atzerodt, Doster argued that he was too much of a coward to be that heavily involved in the conspiracy. Atzerodt, after all, failed to carry out Booth's instructions to kill the Vice President. Instead, he downed several drinks at the Kirkland House bar, mere feet from Johnson's room, and then made his way out of Washington City. Doster might also have highlighted his client's lack of intelligence: Atzerodt made a bee-line for a relative's house in nearby Maryland. His trail was not hard to follow. Doster's defense of Powell portrayed the former Confederate soldier as an abused, innocent farm boy turned murderer by the recently concluded cruel war. Doster also argued that Powell suffered from a kind of insanity. After all, Powell was heard to scream as he ran from Seward's home, "I'm mad! I'm mad!" In the end, Doster's eloquent pleas on behalf of both clients came to naught. Atzerodt and Powell were hanged together with David Herold and Mrs. Surratt.

However, that is not the end of the story. In 1978, a historian examining Doster's legal files came across a May 1, 1865 "confession" made by George Atzerodt to the Provost Marshal of Baltimore. Atzerodt's statements directly linked Mrs. Surratt and Dr. Mudd to Booth's original plot to kidnap Lincoln and spirit him to Richmond. More tellingly, Atzerodt confined Booth's instructions to Mrs. Surratt — after Booth's plans turned from kidnapping to assassination — to make ready the rifles that she had hidden in her Surrattsville tavern for Booth to pick up after assassinating Lincoln. Inexplicably, the Provost Marshal turned over Atzerodt's statement to Doster, not Secretary of

War Stanton. Doster suppressed Atzerodt's statement and never spoke of it. Had he revealed it, the evidence of Mrs. Surratt's guilt would have been that much stronger and Dr. Mudd — who escaped the death penalty by one vote — surely would have hanged alongside Mrs. Surratt and the others. An unanswerable question remains: Had General Doster chosen to reveal the "confession," could he have made a plea deal with the military commission to spare Atzerodt the death penalty in exchange for Mudd's life?

Doster returned to Bethlehem after the war to practice law. He represented many local companies including Bethlehem Iron Company and the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, and Bethlehem's prominent citizens and their families. He married Evelyn Augusta Depew in 1867. They had two sons and a daughter. The marriage was "dissolved" and in 1888, 51 year old Doster married 19 year old Ruth Porter, a great beauty, and heiress to two prominent East Coast families. The musically gifted Ruth was a founder of the Bach Choir. Scandal befell the family when Ruth divorced General Doster and married her stepson, Edward Depew Doster, who was just a year older than she. And what of Louisa Peterson's bed? Peterson's father sold the house for \$4,500 to a speculator who hoped that the government would buy it for a museum. The bed upon which President Lincoln died was sold for \$80. According to Louisa's brother Fred who gave an interview to the Chicago Historical Society 1926, the family could have sold the bed many times over. The story of Miss Peterson, her bed and its connection to Bethlehem would never have been known except for a letter that Louisa wrote in 1864 asking about her trunk that had not arrived home yet from school. The letter, found in the Moravian Archives, included details about Petersen's family that led to the "Bethlehem" connection to the household where Lincoln died.

Sources:

The Morning Call, November 24, 2017, In Bethlehem's Moravian history, archivists find connections to Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, by Nicole Radziewich.

Chicago Historical Bulletin, February 1926, containing an interview of Fred Peterson that first appeared in the New York Times, February 9, 1913.

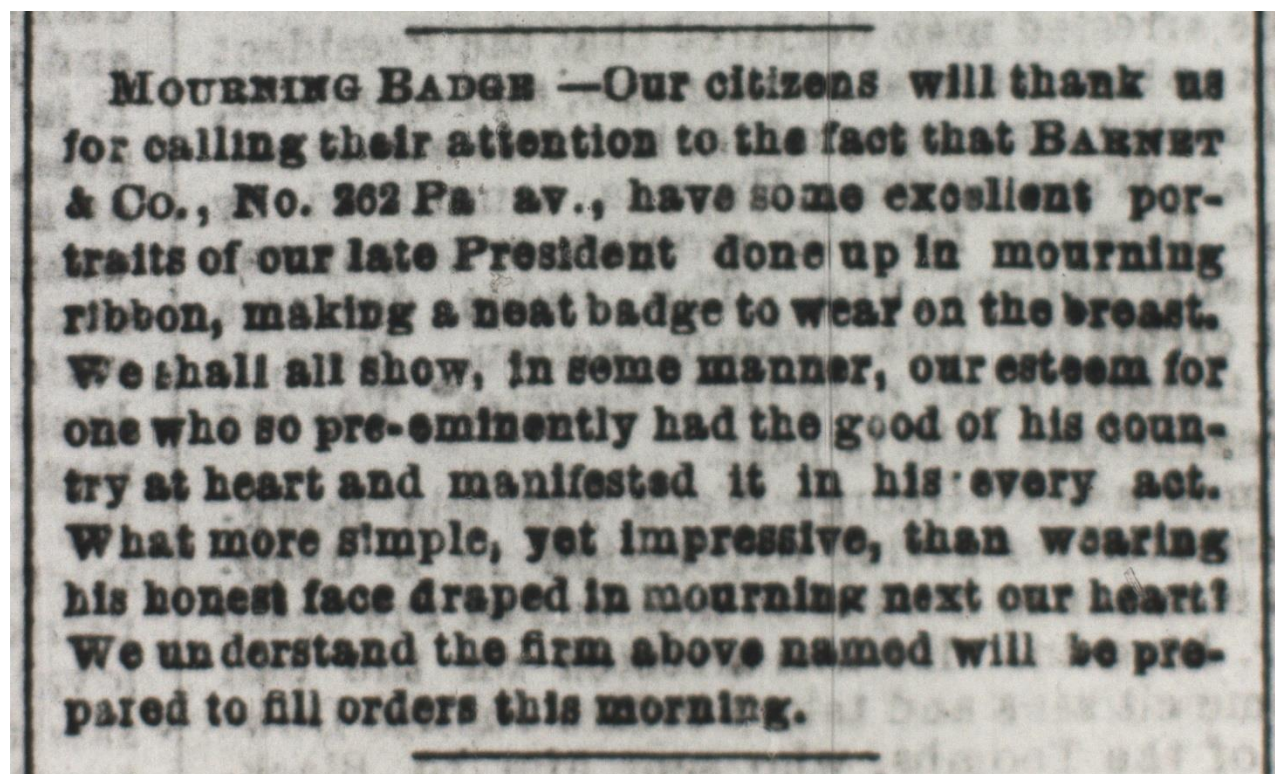
National Park Service, Ford's Theater, Washington, D.C.

The Morning Call, January 6, 2002, Bethlehem native played a role in aftermath of Lincoln 's assassination, by Edward Steers, Jr.

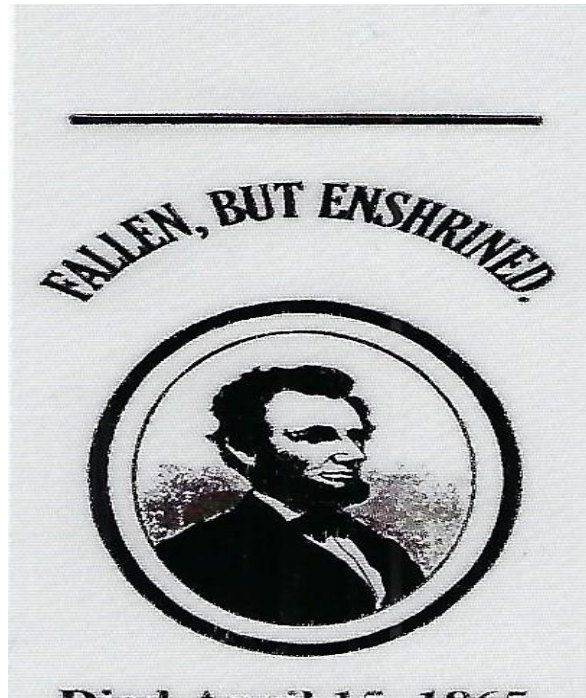
The Trial of the Lincoln Conspirators, by Doug Linder (2009)

Excerpt from the *Daily Morning Chronicle* stating that Barnet & Co., located at 262 Pennsylvania Avenue, are selling mourning badges which feature the face of President Abraham Lincoln.

"Mourning Badge"



Below is a copy of one type of Mourning badge that could be purchased. The badge below can be currently found in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem. Many thanks to Alan Y. Lowcher for providing the information.



Died April 15, 1865.

"Cling to Liberty and Right;
battle for them, bleed for them,
die for them, if need be,
and have confidence in GOD"

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*** Wednesday, April 15 7:00 pm PDT In Memory of Self & Comrades:
Thomas Wallace Colley Recollections with Michael K. Shaffer**

*** Tuesday, April 21 7:00 pm EDT The Confederate Secret Service &
the Lincoln Assassination with John C. Fazio**

*** Thursday, April 23 7:00 pm EDT Six Days in September with Alex
Rossino**

*** Monday, April 27 7:00 pm EDT Sherman's Carolinas Campaign with
Eric Wittenberg**

*** Wednesday, April 29 7:00 pm EDT Longstreet's East Tennessee
Campaign with Ed Lowe**

*** Tuesday, May 5 7:00 pm EDT Canadians in the Civil War with James
Knights**

*** Wednesday, May 13 7:00 pm EDT Three Views of Gettysburg with
Bruce Mowday**

*** Tuesday, May 19 7:00 pm EDT Did Forrest Make a Difference? With
John Scales**

* **Thursday, May 21 7:00 pm EDT Black Experience in Civil War Georgia with David Dixon**

* **Monday, May 25 7:00 pm EDT The War Outside My Window with Jan Croon**

* **Wednesday, May 27 7:00 pm EDT Hinsonville's Heroes with Cheryl Renee Gooch**

* **Thursday, May 28 7:00 pm EDT Black Experience in Civil War Georgia with David Dixon**

SHARE WITH YOUR CWRT MEMBERS - DONATIONS ACCEPTED

PRIZES for 2020 RAFFLE

2020 Preservation Raffle

**Please note, raffle to be held at next Business meeting-
Due to Corona Virus, Meeting will not be June 02, 2020**

Please note Change in Procedure of Drawing

CWRT of Eastern PA, Inc. Preservation Raffle

Once again, we have an excellent array of 8 prizes which will be awarded at our June 2, 2020 meeting. We will follow last year's format in which the first winner gets to select from all eight items. Each additional winner will then select from the items remaining. Our Board felt that this was a better method rather than assigning prizes to each drawing. Historic Preservation of our sites and collections is a significant part of our Mission as an organization. There are no losers when one donates to the cause of Historic Preservation. Tickets are sold in booklets of ten for \$5.00 and are available at every meeting.



1. Appomattox Surrender Signing Print

2. Robert E. Lee Print

3. Union "General Service" Coat Button Display (mounted & donated by Barry Arnold)

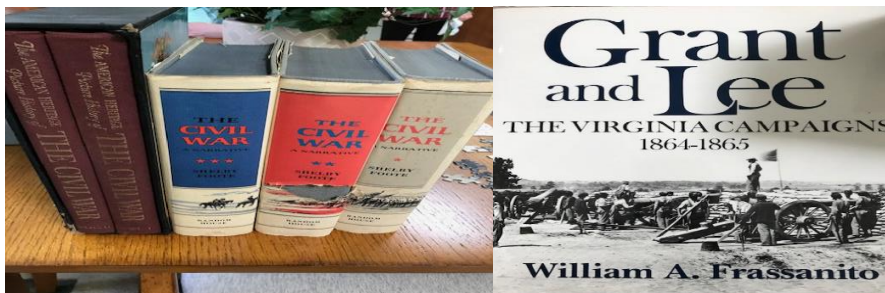


4. The Life of Billy Yank and The Life of Johnny Reb by Bell Irvin Wiley (2 Volume Boxed Set)



5. Stonewall Jackson, The Legend and the Man & Stonewall Jackson, Seven Days to the Last March by Lenoir Chambers (2 Volume Boxed Set)

6. The American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War (2 Volume Boxed Set)



7. The Civil War by Shelby Foote (3 Volume Set)

8. Grand and Lee, The Virginia Campaigns, 1864-1865 by William Frassanito (Signed Copy)

REMEMBER, WHEN YOU SUPPORT PRESERVATION, WE ARE ALL WINNERS!!!

RENLISTMENT REPORT

It is re-enlistment time for the 2019-2020 campaign. Again, our numbers have decreased over the past year and the Roundtable can use your help in acquiring some new recruits. If you know of anyone who has an interest in the Civil War, please pass his or her name and address along to me. I will send them a few complimentary newsletters and an introductory letter to the Round Table. Better yet, bring them to a dinner meeting.

The dues are \$25.00 for individuals, \$10.00 for full-time students. To avoid standing in line at the meeting, please fill out the form below and mail it with your check payable to CWRT of Eastern PA, Inc. Thanks for your support. Jeff Gates (610) 966-5773 or jefgates@ptd.net

Name _____ How long have you been a member? _____

Address _____ How did
you hear of this organization? _____

What is your occupation/profession? _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

Reenactor? ___ Unit _____

Please give name and unit of ancestor who fought in the Civil War _____

My major interest is: _____

Would you be willing to speak to groups on some aspect of the Civil War? _____

Would you be interested in participating in round table activities? _____

___public functions ___political action ___preservation ___living history

Dues (Please make checks payable to **CWRT of Eastern PA, Inc.**) ___ **Individual (\$25.00)** ___ **Full-Time Student (\$10.00)** ___ **Tax Deductible Donation**

Please fill out the Enlistment Form above for our next Campaign and mail FIRST CLASS to CWRT of Eastern PA, Inc., P.O. Box 333 ALLENTOWN, PA 18105

Dues are payable now!