



December, 2023

**Brigade Commander:**

Barry Arnold

**Regimental Commander:**

Laura Kleinschmidt

**Adjutant & Company**

**Commander:**

Claire Kukielka

**Brigade Librarian**

Kay Bagenstose

**Paymaster:**

Jim Duffy

**Membership Director:**

Jeff Gates

**Board Members:**

Neil Coddington

Bill Frankenfield

Jeff Gates

Kim Jacobs

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*We strive for accuracy. But if you see something that doesn't look right, please contact us. Sources for newsletter content available upon request.*

## From the Brigade Commander

Captain Taylor's sword arrived safely in the Lehigh Valley, and we expect to have it on display at our December meeting. I hope you agree that the effort and financial support needed to return the sword to the hometown of its original owner was worth it. Many thanks to the many of you who played a role in this great success. The sword will be "unveiled" during a December 13<sup>th</sup> ceremony at Nitschmann Middle School. You'll find details inside, including how to sign up to attend the ceremony.

A recent review of our Round Table's website visits showed an almost 30 percent increase since the previous review. It's sometimes hard to know exactly what causes a boost in visitor interest. But I'm guessing that at least some of it has to do with the Taylor sword and, especially, the article written by our own Frank Whalen, which was published in late October on WFMZ.com. You'll find the second installment of that article inside.

Speaking of our website, let me bring to your attention to two recently posted items: "[Restoration Victories: Bulldozers on Battlefields](#)" and "[GAR Museum and Archive: Connecting the Public Campaign.](#)" You can access the first item via the link (above) or by visiting the "upcoming events" page on our website. You'll find a summary of the latter news item, sent to us from our friends at the GAR Museum & Library in Philadelphia, inside on page 4.

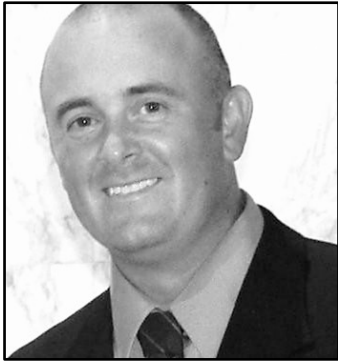
*Barry*

The Civil War Round Table of Eastern Pa., Inc. is a proud leader of America's battlefield preservation movement. It has been designated by the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) as a Top 300 Lifetime Donor, a Brigade member of the Color Bearer Society, and a member of ABT's 25-Year Club, all in recognition for its loyal and general support of battlefield preservation.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Our 46th Campaign Year! ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Join us for:  
“A Soldier’s Civil War Christmas”**

**Tuesday, December 5, 2023**



When the Civil War broke out, Christmas was largely uncelebrated in the US. But by the end of the war, Christmas had become a day rooted in an idealized vision of home. Although individual traditions

varied, the upheaval of war made the Christmas season seem more important to separated families and reminded them of the importance of home. The way Americans observed Christmas also changed during the war and set the stage for the more modern holiday we know today.

We invite you to join us as historical reenactor, lecturer, and tour guide, Michael Jesberger, leads a discussion about one of our nation’s favorite holidays.

**SIGN UP TODAY ...**

to attend “A Soldier’s Civil War Christmas” with Mike Jesberger on Tuesday, December 5.

**Dinner & lecture fee: \$30 ★ Lecture-only fee: \$5**

As always, all fees are payable at the door.

**Delta Hotel by Marriot**

**7736 Adrienne Drive • Breinigsville**

Dinner start: 6:30 PM ★ Lecture start: ~ 7:15 PM

**Deadline to reserve a spot for dinner:**

**Friday, December 1 by/before 12:00 p.m.**

To register, contact Jim Duffy

([duffysocwk@aol.com](mailto:duffysocwk@aol.com)) or 610-253-4549

(email preferred).

**Walk-in lecture reservations are  
NOT required!**

**November, 2023, meeting recaps**

- ★ 2 re-enlistments: Richard Vas Dias and Jeff Heller
- ★ Donations: Kay Bagenstose
- ★ 25 dinner attendees and 15 lecture walk-ins
- ★ Book raffle proceeds: \$91
- ★ Print raffle ticket sales: \$20

**November book raffle winners:**

(l-r): Connie Taglieber, Claire Kukielka, Bill Frankenfield, Linda Clark (speaker), Laura Kleinschmidt, Joe Riggs



**November’s guest speaker, Linda Clark**

(l-r): President Barry Arnold, Speaker Linda Clark, Program Chair Quartermaster Laura Kleinschmidt.



Linda will donate her honorarium to the Adams County Library.

## Update: Captain Taylor Sword

At our November Round Table meeting, President Barry Arnold shared news that a display area for the sword and other Civil War artifacts was being readied by the Historic Bethlehem Museum and Sites organization for a December 13<sup>th</sup> unveiling ceremony at Nitschmann Middle School. The event date was intentionally chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg—the site where Captain Taylor received his mortal wound.

The display area will provide students with a close-up view of the sword that belonged to their hometown hero and, among other things, introduce them to William Wobach, a peer of sorts, via photograph. William, a member of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania, lied about his age when he enlisted. In actuality, he was just 14 years old.

### You're Invited to the Unveiling Ceremony

If you wish to attend the ceremony on December 13<sup>th</sup>, you **must** be registered in advance with the school's security personnel. Our own Ed Root will take care of this detail for us. If you wish to attend, be sure to contact Ed as early as you can at [sartilly@hotmail.com](mailto:sartilly@hotmail.com). Attendees should plan to arrive at the main entrance of the school Nitschmann by 11 am.



◀ *Nitschmann Middle School is located at 1002 W. Union Blvd., Bethlehem. Available parking in the school lot and on nearby streets is **LIMITED**, so be sure to plan for the extra time it may take to find a place to park and walk to the school.*

*All ceremony attendees should enter through the main entrance of the school, which, conveniently, is labeled, in large letters above the entryway, as "Main Entrance." The entrance has been marked in the photo using a large arrow.*

## Campaign 46 Lecture Schedule: Mark Your Calendars!

The list below represents our lineup of Campaign 46 speakers and the titles of their presentations. (You'll find information about the December lecture on page 2 of this newsletter). For more details, watch for monthly newsletters or visit our Round Table's website [www.cwrteasternpa.org/](http://www.cwrteasternpa.org/).

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January 2	"Thirteen Months in Dixie <b>OR</b> the Adventures of a Federal Prisoner in Texas"	Steven Knowlton
February 6	"Cedar Mountain"	M. Chris Bryan
March 5	"Women Combat Soldiers in the War"	James Hedtke
April 2	"Fort Sumter's Long Shadow: Mr. Lincoln Calls for an Army, and Northern States Respond"	Leon Reed
May 7	"Point Lookout Confederate POW Camp"	Bradley Gottfried
June 4	"Who is James Longstreet?"	Lt. General James Longstreet, CSA, and his wife, Helen Dortch Longstreet

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## A Message from the GAR Museum & Library, Philadelphia



Each year, our Museum Research Administrator, Walt Lafty, and other volunteers answer the hundreds of research questions sent annually by our members. These folks know where to find answers using the Museum's collections but, working exclusively with paper records, the task is time-consuming.

Anyone who has used databases like the National Archives, Library of Congress, Fold 3 and Ancestry.com, knows how valuable these tools are and how much we rely on them to save time. And although the GAR Museum & Library is an esteemed resource for

researching American history, transferring information from our paper lists to a searchable database would greatly increase search efficiency and enhance the preservation our collections.

The Museum is asking for financial support of a new campaign called "Connecting the Public," which intends to raise the needed funds to purchase software and support needed to allow multiple-user access to unlimited records. Donations by check should be made payable to "GAR Museum" and mailed to 8110 Frankford Ave., Philadelphia, PA. 19136. Be sure to indicate in the note section of your check that the donation is for the "Connecting the Public" campaign.

The GAR Museum & Library has been designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

First published in the October 22, 2023, issue of WFMZ.com

## **History's Headlines: Jonathan Taylor of Bethlehem (Part II)**

**by Frank Whalen, CWRT of Eastern Pa., Inc.**



*Our November, 2023, newsletter issue offered the chance to learn more about 20-year-old Jonathan Taylor, who moved with his family in 1858 to Bethlehem, Pa. He is the original owner of the sword recently acquired by our Round Table. Last month, we left Mr. Taylor while he was attending Weaversville Academy, a private high school and one of Pennsylvania's first high schools, located in Northampton County in the village of Weaversville, Pa.*

◀ *Weaversville Academy*

*Image: Lehigh Valley Press*

Shortly following the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the 19-year-old Taylor enlisted in Company A, First Pennsylvania Volunteers. The regiment was mustered in at Harrisburg on April 20th 1861. If he was like many young soldiers at the time Taylor might have assumed that the war would be over before he had a chance to fight. His regiment was at Harpers Ferry on July 21, 1861, when the battle of Bull Run took place. Washington socialites in their carriages with picnic baskets quickly fled following a Union Army battered against Jackson's "stone wall." It signaled the war would be a long one.

Taylor's unit had only been mustered in for three months of service. For some that brief stint with war was enough. But in the summer of 1862, Taylor was one of the first in Bethlehem again to respond to Lincoln's call. Although young and inexperienced Taylor must have had something, what some would call natural leadership qualities or others would call charisma. Whatever it was, it is clear he enjoyed both the respect of his men and the confidence of his superiors.

After a period of training the 129th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment was sent to join the Army of the Potomac in late September of 1862, shortly after the battle of Antietam. The leaves were gone from the trees by that December when the Army of the Potomac finally caught up with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia on the banks of the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg, Virginia. "Almost 200,000 men stared at each other across that barrier," notes one source.

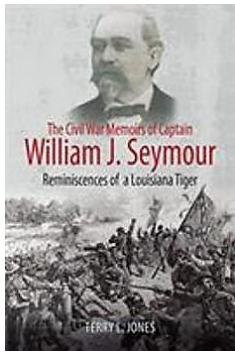
Facing Lee was 38-year-old General Ambrose Burnside. Well-liked with a fierce demeanor, he looked like what a fighting general should look like. He had managed to convince Lincoln he could swiftly smash Lee's army and win the war. Better known later for the lavish facial hair later called sideburns, Burnside's plans for the battle were marred by a series of mishaps, including a delay in the arrival of pontoon bridges. House to house fighting took place in Fredericksburg as Union troops struggled to control the ground by the riverbank.

The goal of the Union Army was a stonewall atop Marye's Heights manned by the Confederates. The task was daunting. After they left the city, soldiers had to descend a valley bisected by a water-filled ditch and ascend an open slope of 400 yards to reach the base of the heights. "Artillery atop

Marye's Heights and nearby elevations would thoroughly blanket the Federal approach," states the National Park Service website. "A chicken could not live on that field when we open on it," a Confederate cannoner succinctly stated. The cannoner's remarks were not an idle boast. And what exactly Burnside hoped to achieve is still debated. But around noon on December 13th the assault began, and it went on until dark. In the first hour over 3,000 Union soldiers were dead.

"And still the madness continued," notes the National Park Service's account. "More units tested the impossible," it continues. "We came forward as though breasting a storm of rain and sleet, our faces and bodies being only half-turned to the storm, our shoulders struggled," remembered one Federal. "Everybody from the smallest drummer boy on up seemed to be shouting to the full extent of capacity," recalled another. But each blue wave crested short of the goal. Not a single Union soldier laid his hand on the stone wall.

*The final segment of this story will appear in the January, 2024, issue of the Civil War Roundtable of Eastern Pa., Inc. newsletter.*



**Book Review: "The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour: Reminiscences of a Louisiana Tiger," edited by Terry L. Jones**

Savas Beatie, 2023. (Originally published in 1991.)

*This review, by Michael C. Hardy, has been edited to fit the space. According to Hardy, the updated edition of this book has been well edited and includes additional content; newly included maps (by Hal Jespersen) compliment the text, as does the bibliography.*

William J. Seymour served the Confederacy as a staff officer at the brigade level, making his memoirs special, as accounts from men who served at this level are rare. He penned his memoirs in post-war years, using his journals and local newspaper articles to inform his work. Seymour provides a fantastic level of detail about the battles and campaigns he witnessed but do not include the detailed inner workings of a Confederate brigade in the Army of Northern Virginia.

He begins with an extremely detailed account of the river defenses and battles in the lower Mississippi River area in early 1862. Day-by-day entries allow the reader to follow along with the action as witnessed by Seymour. Incidents in the narrative are not confined to the army; for example, Seymour mentions numerous Confederate vessels connected to river defense and describes how he literally dove into his subsequent capture, parole, subsequent arrest, and imprisonment. Reminiscences pick up in April, 1863, with Seymour back in Virginia and having assumed his position with Hays's Louisiana Brigade. He provides great details about the battle of Chancellorsville, the Gettysburg campaign, Rappahannock Station and Mine Run, the Overland Campaign, and Jubal Early's 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign.

Considering the lack of detailed Confederate accounts pertaining to Early's actions in the summer and fall of the 1864, Seymour's accounts, especially during the months of May and June, 1864, are extremely helpful to those researching the fight for the "Breadbasket" of the Confederacy. Unfortunately, the latter part of Early's movements in Seymour's memoir lacks the day-to-day narrative that marks the earlier months of 1864.

## December, 2023, Civil War Book Releases

“Our People Are Warlike: Civil War Pittsburgh and Home-Front Mobilization,” by Allen York | Dec 1, 2023

Soldier of Destiny: Slavery, Secession, and the Redemption of Ulysses S. Grant, by John Reeves | Dec 5, 2023

Silent Cavalry: How Union Soldiers from Alabama Helped Sherman Burn Atlanta--and Then Got Written Out of History, by Howell Raines | Dec 5, 2023

The Lion And The Fox: Two Rival Spies and the Secret Plot to Build a Confederate Navy, by Alexander Rose | Dec 6, 2022

The Boy Generals: George Custer, Wesley Merritt, and the Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac: Volume 2 - From the Gettysburg Retreat Through the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864, by Adolfo Ovies | Dec 7, 2023

War in the Western Theater: Favorite Stories and Fresh Perspectives, by Chris Mackowski PhD and Sarah Kay Bierle | Dec 7, 2023



The Petersburg Campaign: Volume 1 - The Eastern Front Battles, June–August 1864. Book 1 of 2: The wide-ranging and largely misunderstood | by Edwin C. Bearss and Bryce A. Suderow | Dec 15, 2023 (Paperback)

The Petersburg Campaign: Vol. 2 - The Western Front Battles, September 1864–April 1865, The wide-ranging and largely misunderstood, by Edwin C. Bearss and Bryce A. Suderow | Dec 15, 2023 (Paperback)

General J. E. B. Stuart: The Soldier and the Man, by Edward G. Longacre | Dec 22, 2023

Thunder in the Harbor: Fort Sumter and the Civil War, by Richard W. Hatcher III | Dec 22, 2023

We Shall Conquer or Die: Partisan Warfare in 1862 Western Kentucky, by Derrick Lindow | Dec 22, 2023

Meade and Lee at Bristoe Station: The Problems of Command and Strategy after Gettysburg, from Brandy Station to the Buckland Races, August 1 to October 31, 1863, by Jeffrey Wm Hunt | Dec 22, 2023

The World Will Never See the Like: The Gettysburg Reunion of 1913, by John L. Hopkins | Dec 28, 2023

Laurel Brigade at Brandy Station: A Military Staff Ride, by Major Bruce H. Norton, USMC (ret.) | Dec 29, 2023

## Civil War Round Table of Eastern Pa., Inc.

### CAMPAIGN 46 MEMBERSHIP FORM (2023-2024)

Please complete the form below and mail it along with your Campaign 45 dues to **CWRT of Eastern Pa., Inc., P. O. Box 333, Allentown, PA 18105**. Make your check payable to: "CWRT of Eastern Pa., Inc."

<b>Select one:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I am reenlisting for Campaign 46 <input type="checkbox"/> I am a new recruit	<b>Indicate your membership preference:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual: \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time student: \$10
(Please print clearly, ESPECIALLY your email address!!)	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Mailing address:</b>	
<b>Email address:</b>	<b>Phone number:</b>
<b>I am including a donation (in addition to my membership dues) \$ _____.</b> <i>Your donation will be used by the CWRT of Eastern Pa., Inc. to benefit preservation efforts related to the Civil War, e.g., supporting the vital work of museums and saving battlefield acreage from developers.</i>	
<b>(NEW RECRUITS): Please tell us about your American Civil War interests and experiences:</b>	
How did you hear of the CWRT Round Table of Eastern Pa.?	
Are you a reenactor (Yes/No)? If yes, unit(s)?	
Use the space below to share name(s)/unit(s) of ancestor(s) who fought in the Civil War:	
<b>(NEW RECRUITS <u>AND</u> REENLISTERS): Do you have a particular interest in the Civil War?</b> If yes, please elaborate in the space provided below:	
Are you willing to speak to groups on some aspect of the Civil War (Yes/No)?	
Are you interested in participating in Round Table activities? If yes, please specify below: <input type="checkbox"/> public functions <input type="checkbox"/> political action <input type="checkbox"/> preservation <input type="checkbox"/> living history <input type="checkbox"/> other (note below):	
<i>Sending newsletters and other information to our members via email speeds the distribution process and allows us to divert more funds to preservation and conservation. By providing us with your email address, you are giving the CWRT of Eastern Pa., Inc. permission to contact you and/or send information to you via email. We rarely have a need to contact our members by phone, but having this information on file is occasionally very helpful. IMPORTANT NOTE: The CWRT of Eastern Pa., Inc. will <b>NEVER</b> share your contact information unless it has obtained your permission in advance to do so.</i>	

**The Civil War Round Table of Eastern, Pa., Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.**  
**Your membership dues are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.**