



# MASON-DIXON LEDGER

Newsletter of the West Virginia Mason-Dixon Round Table  
Morgantown, West Virginia

645 Sylvan Place  
Morgantown, WV 26505

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2

February 2024

## Our Next Meeting

***The Dividing 'Lin fer de North and South': The Creation of a Border and the Continuation of a Borderland between Slavery and Freedom in Washington, D.C.***

**Rachael Barbara Nicholas**

**7pm, February 16, 2024**

Our first speaker of 2024 is a PhD candidate studying nineteenth-century American History at West Virginia University. Rachael Barbara Nicholas has a B.A. in history and classics from Ohio Wesleyan University and an M.A. in public history from West Virginia University. Rachael has been a seasonal park ranger at Gettysburg National Military Park since 2018. She is also a graduate instructor at West Virginia University and a research assistant for the National Digital Newspaper Program.

Ms Nicholas will discuss the early stages of emancipation in Washington, D.C. She will explain how the movement of Union soldiers and enslaved people enacted a legal border between slavery and freedom (*i.e.*, emancipation) that coexisted with an antebellum borderland in which freed people's legal status remained uncertain and continually contested by Border State slaveholders and politicians.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual dues are \$30 for an individual membership and \$50 for a family. If you have not yet done so, please renew your membership. Please include the following information: Name, Address, City, State, Zip, and Email address. Please communicate this information with your dues to our Treasurer:

Clarke Ridgway  
4009 Morningside Way  
Morgantown WV 26505



## Where We'll Meet

Our February meeting will be at the usual site, Suncrest United Methodist Church, 479 Van Voorhis Road. We will be meeting in Old Drummond Chapel. We are requested not to park in numbered slots of the church parking lot. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m., with the Executive Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. (As before, keep an eye out for additions and/or changes!)

As always, guests and Civil War enthusiasts are welcome to our meetings, regardless of membership status. Interested students are automatically included as members free of charge.

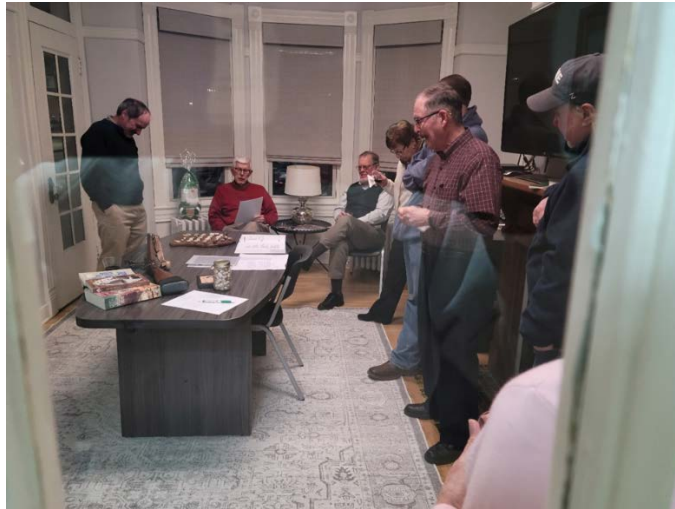
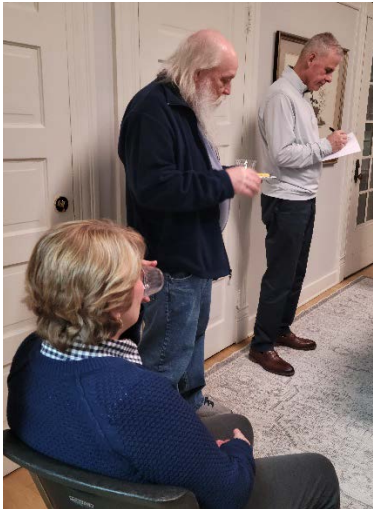


## **OUR LAST MEETING**

**Annual Social**

**January 30, 2024**

Tradition suffered a minor setback during the timing of our traditional festive start of the year. Schools were declared to be closed on the third Tuesday in January, and our hosts, Laura and Steve Walker had a prior commitment on the following Tuesday, so it was agreed to postpone the social to January 30. It was worth the wait. There were the usual tables filled with food and drink. This year, there were two quizmasters firing off trivia questions as fast as they could be answered (and most of them were). Steve Walker kept diligent score and pronounced Matt Lively the winner. He was presented with an elegant gift basket, courtesy of Walker Realty. Laura Walker, much to her surprise, came closest to guessing the number of bullets in Jack Bowman's jar, and was presented with the ceremonial minie-ball trophy. Steve had his restored firearm on display, and described his joy in firing off a few rounds from it at one time.



A tense time during the trivia contest. Note Steve's peacekeeper on the table to maintain order.

## BELL RINGING FOR SALVATION ARMY

Below we see many of our members spreading Christmas cheer in front of the Bass Pro Shops in Granville. Organizer Jack Bowman reported that our kettles raised \$632.02. More pictures can be seen on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064511239352>



From left: Jack Bowman, Matt Lively, John Fredrick, Clarke Ridgeway, Dianne DeAngelis and John DeAngelis

## MATT LIVELY: HISTORIAN

This was the subject line of Secretary John Fredrick's email to all members, giving a second notice of our president's one-session introductory class for the WVU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. The lecture was entitled, appropriately, *The American Civil War 101*, and took place on Friday February 2. The 25 audience members present, including Jack Bowman and your humble editor, were given a broad sweep of the four-year battle, as well as events preceding, in about two hours. In the comment period afterwards, Jack opined that this was

a most remarkable rendering of events. For neophytes, it was eye-opening to be shown the entirety of the occasion, start to finish, as opposed to the remarkable details of certain events, as talked about in our meetings. Matt also did a great job of publicizing our organization, and it is hoped that this will lead to an infusion of new blood into our group.

## FROM THE CWRT CONGRESS

### ***CWRT Congress Speaker Series***

Special events are all scheduled on Fridays. Register for any of these at <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/events.html>

#### February 2024 Speakers

Derek Maxfield, **MAN OF FIRE: WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN IN THE CIVIL WAR**, Friday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Author/Historian Derek Maxfield tells the incredible story of William Tecumseh Sherman as a man who found himself in war – and that, in turn, secured a place for him in history. Before the Civil War he searched throughout his life to discover who he was while striving to please the over-achieving family that adopted him. He made strides in that direction when he attended West Point Military Academy and found that life as a soldier suited him. Condemned for his barbarousness or hailed for his heroics, the life of this peculiar general is compelling...and thoroughly American.

Alexander Rossino, **CALAMITY AT FREDERICK**, Friday February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm. The loss of Robert E. Lee's Special Orders No. 191 is one of the Civil War's enduring mysteries. In this meticulous study, Alexander Rossino presents a bold new interpretation of the evidence surrounding the orders' creation, distribution, and the loss outside Frederick in September 1862. Rossino made extensive use of primary sources to explore these subjects and other important questions related to the orders. The result is a well-documented reassessment that sheds new light while challenging long-held assumptions.

#### March 2024 Speakers

Curtis Older, **HOOD'S DEFEAT NEAR FOX'S GAP: PRELUDE TO EMANCIPATION**, Friday March 1 at 7pm. This is an exceptional analysis of John Bell Hood's troop movements during the battle of South Mountain. For the past 160 years, all other authors misplaced Hood's troop positions on the Fox's Gap battlefield by approximately a half-mile. The actual location of Hood's attack reconfigures the entire placement of the competing forces and, thus, the conclusions about the struggle. The failure to understand the topographical characteristics of the battlefield led others to make false assumptions. Before

Older's book, the battle for Fox's Gap and South Mountain was never accurately reported or understood.

Sarah Kay Bierle, *CALL OUT THE CADETS*, Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Virginia's Shenandoah Valley had seen years of fighting by the spring of 1864. Union Major General Franz Sigel prepared to lead a new invasion force into the Valley, operating on the far right flank of Grant's Overland Campaign. Confederate Major General John Breckinridge scrambled to organize a defense. He included the young VMI cadets who rushed into the battle when ordered...an opportunity for fame and glory. In *Call Out the Cadets*, Sarah Kay Bierle traces the history of this May 15, 1864, battle. She not only discusses the military aspects, but also follows the history of individuals whose lives or military careers were changed because of the fight. (Battle of New Market 160th Anniversary – 5/15/2024)

#### April 2024 Speakers

John L. Hopkins, *THE WORLD WILL NEVER SEE THE LIKE: GETTYSBURG REUNION OF 1913*, Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. It was front-page news throughout the country—the largest gathering of Union and Confederate veterans ever held. The 1913 Gettysburg reunion is a story of 53,000 old comrades and former foes reunited, and of the tension, even half a century later, between competing narratives of reconciliation and remembrance. John L. Hopkins fills his marvelous account with detail from the letters, diaries, and published accounts of Union and Confederate veterans, the extensive archival records of the reunion's organizers, and the daily stories filed by the scores of reporters who covered it. This is the first full story of this extraordinary event's genesis and planning, the obstacles overcome on the way to making it a reality.

Richard Hatcher, III, *THUNDER IN THE HARBOR – FORT SUMTER AND THE CIVIL WAR*, Friday April 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Fort Sumter, Charleston. April 12, 1861. The bombardment and surrender of Sumter was only the beginning of the story. Both sides understood the military significance of the fort and the busy seaport, which played host to one of the longest and most complicated and fascinating campaigns of the entire Civil War. Richard Hatcher's presentation entitled, *Thunder in the Harbor - Fort Sumter, and the Civil War*, is the first modern study to document the fort from its origins through the war and up to the present. (Notice that the presentation is on the 163rd anniversary of the bombardment.)

#### May 2024 Speakers

Fergus Bordewich, *KLAN WAR: ULYSSES S. GRANT AND THE BATTLE TO SAVE RECONSTRUCTION*, Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Author/Historian Fergus Bordewich defines the KKK as "the first organized terrorist movement in American history." *Klan War* reveals the bloody, Reconstruction-era roots of present-day battles to protect the ballot box and stamp out resurgent white supremacist ideologies. To repel that virulent tidal wave of violence, President

Ulysses S. Grant waged a two-term battle against both armed Southern enemies of Reconstruction and Northern politicians seduced by visions of postwar conciliation, testing the limits of the federal government in determining the extent of states' rights.



## BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

**ANOTHER STORY ABOUT CIVIL-WAR GOLD !!**

# Lost Treasure of Blountsville: An Oddball Story

Robert S. Davis, December 18, 2023, [blueandgrayeducation.org](http://blueandgrayeducation.org)

Until recently, I ran a local history program at a community college. One afternoon, after a typically long day, I rested at my desk, getting myself together before heading home to Blountsville, Alabama. This elderly gentleman came to my office. He explained to me that for many years, he had been searching for the lost gold of the Confederate States of America.

The South had been fabulously wealthy, he claimed, and the buried treasure of the Lost Cause would today be worth billions of dollars. By knowing the secrets of the Masons, this treasure allegedly could be found.



*Robert S. Davis as history detective*

My visitor presented me with a fat folder of papers. He explained that the treasure is buried just outside of Blountsville. His preliminary excavations had turned up the location, and he had figured out how to get past the nitroglycerin booby traps that the Confederacy had laid out on the floor plan of King Solomon's Temple.

In fact, the folder did contain various soil reports and other scientific data that my visitor paid to have made. I particularly noted the high amounts of uranium and other radioactive materials. I wondered if that material could be responsible for my poor radio reception when I passed that area.

I queried my guest. Were Indian mounds near this site? Oh yes, he replied. They ring the ground. Could these green remains that he thinks are Confederate mines possibly be deteriorated copper from Indian burials? He replied that he saw where I was going with this, but that the Confederates had probably chosen that site because it was well-known as an Indian burial ground and would have religious and mystical significance.

Finally, I asked, what has this to do with me? He explained that the file contained a power of attorney consigning to the college, for the benefit of the students, the mineral rights for the site.

The property owners had given him these rights for a percentage of the treasure. However, they wanted to renege on the deal after he had used dynamite and a bulldozer on the property. The owners finally shot at him to drive him off. As he was going in for heart surgery, he wanted the college to have the papers in case he finally "cashed in." I thanked him and filed the records under "gold."

That afternoon, I drove past the site indicated, and I saw his excavation. I chose not to stop and talk with the owners. I was already as involved as I cared to be.

When I later checked the gold file, I found it empty. Maybe he came back and retrieved the papers. Maybe I should have done more to secure the papers or made copies. Perhaps I should have stopped and talked with the property owners. Who knows; maybe I missed my chance to be a hero in a popular novel! I wonder who would have played me in the movie . .



## Historic Quote

*"Stonewall being our foremon and Rades [Rodes] his second, gave orders to move forward and attact the enemy, we had no gawn more than one quarter of a mile before we cum in contact with the enemys Picketts the firing comenst, volla after*



*volla of musketry was poured in to them, whitch soon put them to flight, and in this way we drove them several miles through the roughfest woods I ever saw, capturing a number of prisoners, and many other valuable articals."*

Pvt. Jeremiah Tate, 5th Alabama Inf., describing the May 2, 1863, Confederate flank attack at Chancellorsville.

**FROM *THE CALLING CARD*, THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
THE SOCIETY FOR WOMEN AND THE CIVIL WAR**

<http://www.swcw.org>

Do you want to become a member of the Society for Women and the Civil War (SWCW)? Just visit their website: <http://www.swcw.org/join-the-society.html>



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**Research Resource (November)**  
***Civil War Photographs at the Library of Congress***

[About this Collection](#) | [Civil War](#) | [Digital Collections](#) | [Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)



The Prints & Photographs Division of the Library of Congress holds thousands of images relating to the Civil War, found in many different collections. Use the link above to search these collections for glass negative prints, stereograph cards, ambrotypes, tintypes, *carte de visite*, and eyewitness drawings.

## **Women of the Month**

### **The National Association of Army Nurses of the Civil War**

In June 1881, Former Superintendent of Army Nurses, Dorothea Dix, founded the Ex-Nurses Association of the District of Columbia. The Association was primarily a social organization tasked with rendering assistance to its members, and working to secure Federal benefits and recognition for Union Army nurses. The group met annually, and also

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attended the encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Membership in the association grew to former nurses outside of the DC area, and in 1892 it changed its name to the National Association of Army Nurses of the Late War. This was also the year that Congress finally granted pensions to Union Army nurses, a victory gained through the lobbying efforts of the Association and its allies in the GAR.

By 1897, membership had swelled to more than 500 former nurses, and included such luminaries as Harriet Dame, Annie Wittenmyer, Clara Barton, Cornelia Hancock, and Mary Ann Bickerdyke. Membership in the organization was open to anyone who had served at least three months as a paid or volunteer nurse.

In 1901, the name changed again to the National Association of Army Nurses of the Civil War, to distinguish it from the Spanish-American War. The association continued its fellowship and philanthropy until it disbanded in 1931 (when only five living members remained).



*Postcard, ca. 1911. National Library of Medicine*

--DeAnne Blanton

# Preserving the Civil War: Sites, Symbols and Battlefields as Classrooms

Davis and Elkins College &  
The Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation Present  
A Civil War Symposium



**Saturday April 6, 2024**

**At Davis and Elkins College Senate Commons  
in the Myles Center for the Arts**

- 9:00 am: Registration and Refreshments
- 10:00 am: "The Land Protection Process - Camp Bartow Case Study." Ashton Berdine
- 11:00 am: "Preserving West Virginia's History." Kyle Warmack
- 12:00 n: Lunch Break – Lunch provided on site.
- 1:00 pm: "Preserving Antietam" Dr. Tom Clemens
- 2:00 pm: "Fort Scammon: Preserving Charleston's Forgotten Citadel." Dr. Billy Joe Peyton
- 3:00 pm: Panel Discussion

Symposium Tickets: Cost \$30; Students with ID \$5

For Information and reservations, visit:

[beverlyheritagecenter.org/rich-mountain-battlefield/](http://beverlyheritagecenter.org/rich-mountain-battlefield/)

or call: 304-637-7424

**Mason-Dixon Ledger**

Visit us at *wmasondixoncwr.org*

And on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Mason-Dixon-Civil-War-Roundtable-1214529622048020/>

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