

# Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

March 10, 2022

The Civil War: April 12, 1861 - August 20, 1866

## “First Fallen: The Life of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, the North’s First Civil War Hero”

### Meeting Notice

The March 10th meeting will be virtual only. Members will receive the meeting link via email, and others interested should email [oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net) to request access.



Meg Groeling



On May 24, 1861, Col. Elmer Ellsworth became the first Union officer killed in the Civil War. The entire North was aghast. First Fallen is the first modern biography of this national celebrity, Northern icon, and mostly forgotten national hero.

Ellsworth and his entertaining U.S. Zouave Cadets drill team had performed at West Point, in New York City, and for President, James Buchanan before returning home to Chicago. He helped his friend and law mentor Abraham Lincoln in his quest for the presidency, and when Lincoln put out the call for troops after Fort Sumter was fired upon, Ellsworth responded. Within days he organized more than 1,000 New York firefighters into a regiment of volunteers.

When he was killed, the Lincolns rushed to the Navy Yard to view the body of the young man they had loved as a son. Mary Lincoln insisted he lie in state in the East Room of the White House. The elite of New York brought flowers to the Astor House and six members of the 11th New York accompanied their commander's coffin. When a late May afternoon thunderstorm erupted during his funeral service at the Hudson View Cemetery, eyewitnesses referred to it as “tears from God himself.” The death of the young hero was knocked out of the headlines eight weeks later by the battle of First Bull Run. The trickle of blood had now become a torrent that would not stop for four long years.

Meg Groeling is a regular contributor to the blog Emerging Civil War, exploring subjects beyond the battlefield such as personalities, politics, and practices that affected the men who did the fighting. A writer, teacher, and curriculum developer since 1987, she has taught at both the elementary and middle school levels for more than thirty years. She graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a B.A. in liberal studies and has been involved in continuing education for her entire career.

Meg received a master's degree from American Public University, majoring in military history with a Civil War emphasis. Savas Beatie published her first book, The Aftermath of Battle: The Burial of the Civil War Dead, in the fall of 2015. This is a volume in the Emerging Civil War Series, although it differs from the others in that it takes on a much broader range of subjects. The book has received excellent reviews and has already gone into its second printing. She lives in Hollister, California, in a lovely 1928 bungalow covered with roses outside and books inside.

### Notes from the President

Welcome to **Women's History Month** as we advance on this year's campaign. You will notice Dave had to make a change to our program for this month. Jim Remsen will visit in the Fall. This month **Meg Groeling** will be visiting from California to tell us about Col. Elmer Ellsworth. You may have read some of

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By Rich Jankowski,  
President OBCWRT

her comments on the Emerging Civil War blog. We are hoping the weather gets and stays warm as we enter Spring this month and maybe have some baseball.

If you have not done so yet, please submit your dues for 2022 so we may continue our programs as well as education and preservation activities. You may pay using the button under the membership tab on our website or send a check to **Frank Barletta**. Thank you for your continued support over the last several years. Our Round Table has become a pillar in the Civil War community, leading the way and assisting other groups to advance. Be sure to invite others to join us on our journey.

**Chris Bagley** brought in a crowd last month with his presentation on the "Horse at Gettysburg." His frequent mention of Old Baldy went over well with those in attendance. The turnout included folks from at least nine states and one country as we continue to spread the Old Baldy message and welcome guests. Review the write up in this newsletter and view the recording on our YouTube channel if you missed it. Watch for more great programs in the coming months including Blockade running and the Signal Corps.

Be sure to submit your fee to Frank for the book raffle. We have many good books to share with meeting attendees. The fee will cover costs and determine who wants to participate to keep this portion of the meeting night moving smoothly. We will be seeking a few volunteers to assist in reorganization the books once **Mike DiPaolo** revises the spreadsheet. We also need members interested in interviewing other members for our profile series.

Thank you to the members who volunteered to be judges for **History Day**. The History Day staff appreciated the assistance. All judges are hoping for the event to be in person next year. Rumor has it that there could be a **Don Wiles** in person visit in the coming months. Stay tuned for further details. Flat Old Baldy has been out and about presenting members with their earned pins. Watch for the pictures in upcoming newsletters. This month catch a glimpse of long-time member and past president **Steve Wright**.

Our annual picnic and 45th anniversary celebration will be on May 14th in Marlton, thanks to Paul and Susan Prentiss. The details will be emerging soon. The **South Jersey History Fair** will be on June 11th in Glendora. Sign up to staff our display and tell local citizens about our Round Table. Continue to submit your suggestions on we can better market OBCWRT and get more people to know about us.

Looks like the Lamp Post Diner will have to wait at least another month for our next premeeting meal. Remember to support your local food establishment on meeting night. Enjoy the changing weather. Pray for the survival of people of Ukraine.

*Look forward to seeing all on the Zoom screen on the 10th.*

**Rich Jankowski, President**



## Membership Awards



Steve Wright  
35 Years

## From the Treasure's Desk

Hi Members,

I want to thank all of you who have paid your membership dues in such a timely manner. Just a reminder that you can now pay your dues online. I have been surprised how many of you have utilized this method. You all are much better with computers than me. For those who want to pay by check, they can be sent to:

Frank Barletta 44 Morning Glory Drive Marlton, NJ 08053  
or in person at an upcoming meeting. Should you have any question, please contact me at 856-334-5856 or frank.barletta@comcast.net.

Dues remain the same for 2022 - \$25.00 for Individual - \$35.00 for Family

Just visit our web page, OldBaldyCWRT.org, click on, "Membership" on the top bar, which will take you to the next page. Choose a method of payment, visa, etc., and then click on "Buy Now". This will take you to the submission page, complete form and click on, "Pay Now". Done

# Today in Civil War History

**1862 Monday, March 10**

## **Eastern Theater**

In a skirmish at Burke's Station, Virginia, a company of Federal cavalry gets slightly the better of a Confederate force.

## **Western Theater**

There is a skirmish reported at Jacksborough, in Big Creek Gap, Tennessee.

**1863 Tuesday, March 10**

## **The North**

President Lincoln is reduced to pro-claiming an amnesty for Union deserters to stem the steady tide of men going absent without leave. Men who return to active duty by April 1 will not be punished.

## **Western Theater**

Federal troops re-occupy Jacksonville, Florida.

**1864 Thursday, March 10**

## **Eastern Theater**

Grant meets Meade at Brandy Station. The smartly turned out Zouave regiment, the 114th Pennsylvania, parade in his honor and the band plays on, oblivious to the fact that the new commander is tone deaf and cannot tell one tune from another.

**1865 Friday, March 10**

## **Eastern Theater**

Kilpatrick's cavalry rally and eventually beat off the Confederate raiders during the early hours of the morning. Bragg's men withdraw from Kinston after failing to defeat the Federal forces under Cox.

## **Women of the Civil War: Heroines of the Civil War**

The number of women who actually bore arms in the war, or who, though generally attending a regiment as nurses and vivandieres, at times engaged in the actual conflict was much larger than is generally supposed, and embraces persons of all ranks of society. Those who from whatever cause, whether romance, love or patriotism, and all these had their influence, donned the male attire and concealed their sex, are hardly entitled to a place in our record, since they did not seek to be known as women, but preferred to pass for men; but aside from these there were not a few who, without abandoning the dress or prerogatives of their sex, yet performed skillfully and well the duties of the other.

Among these we may name Madame Turchin, wife of General Turchin, who rendered essential service by her coolness, her thorough knowledge of military science, her undaunted courage, and her skill in command. She is the daughter of a Russian officer, and had been brought up in the camps, where she was the pet and favorite of the regiment up to nearly the time of her marriage to General Turchin, then a subordinate officer in that army. When



**Woman's Work  
in the Civil War**  
By L.P. Brockett, M.D.  
And Mrs. Mary C. Vaughan  
1867



**Nadine Lvova Turchin**

the war commenced she and her husband had been for a few years residents of Illinois, and when her husband was commissioned colonel of a regiment of volunteers she prepared at once to follow him to the field. During the march into Tennessee in the spring of 1862, Colonel Turchin was taken seriously ill, and for some days was carried in an ambulance on the route.

Madame Turchin took command of the regiment during his illness, and while ministering kindly and tenderly to her husband, filled his place admirably as commander of the regiment. 'Her administration was so judicious that no complaint or mutiny was manifested, and her commands were obeyed with the utmost promptness. In the battles that followed, she was constantly under fire, now encouraging the men, and anon rescuing some wounded man from the place where he had fallen, administering restoratives and bringing him off' to the field-hospital. When, in consequence of the "Athens affair," Colonel Turchin was court-martialed and an attempt made by the conservatives to have him driven from the army, she hastened .to Washington, and by her skill and tact succeeded in having the court-martial set aside and her husband promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General, and confounded his accusers by bringing his commission and the order to abandon the trial into court, just as the officers comprising it were about to find him guilty. In all the subsequent campaigns at the West, Madame Turchin was in the field, confining herself usually to ministrations of mercy to the wounded, but ready if occasion required, to lead the troops into action and always manifesting the most perfect indifference to the shot and shell or the whizzing minie balls that fell around her. She seemed entirely devoid of fear, and though so constantly exposed to the enemy's fire never received even a scratch.

Another remarkable heroine who, while from the lower walks of life, was yet faithful and unwearied in her labors for the relief of the soldiers who were wounded and who not unfrequently took her place in the ranks, or cheered and encouraged the men when they were faltering and ready to retreat, was Bridget Divers, better known as " Michigan Bridget," or among Sheridan's men as "Irish Biddy." A stout robust Irish woman, she accompanied the First Michigan Cavalry regiment in which her husband was a private soldier, to the field, and remained with that regiment and the brigade to which it belonged until the close of the war. She became well known throughout the brigade for her fearlessness and daring, and her skill in bringing off the wounded. Occasionally when a soldier whom she knew fell in action, after rescuing him if he was only wounded, she would take his place and fight as bravely as the best. In two instances and perhaps more, she rallied and encouraged retreating troops and brought them to return to their position, thus aiding in preventing a defeat. Other instances of her energy and courage are thus related by Mrs. M. M. Husband, who knew her well.



**Bridget Divers  
(Irish Biddy)**

"In one of Sheridan's grand raids, during the latter days of the rebellion, she, as usual, rode with the troops night and day wearing out several horses, until they dropped from exhaustion. In a severe cavalry engagement, in which her regiment took a prominent part, her colonel was wounded, and her captain killed. She accompanied the former to the rear, where she ministered to his needs, and when placed in the cars, bound to City Point Hospitals, she remained with him, giving all the relief in her power, on that fatiguing journey, although herself almost exhausted, having been without sleep four days and nights. After seeing her colonel safely and comfortably lodged in the hospital, she took one night's rest, and returned to the front. Finding that her captain's body had not been recovered, it being hazardous to make the attempt, she resolved to rescue it, as" it never should be left on rebel soil." So, with her orderly for sole companion, she rode fifteen miles to the scene of the late conflict, found the body she sought, strapped it upon her horse, rode back seven miles to an embalmer, where she waited whilst the body was embalmed, then again strapping it on her horse, she rode several miles further to the cars in which, with her precious burden she proceeded to City Point, there obtained a rough coffin, and forwarded the whole to Michigan. Without any delay Biddy returned to her Regiment, told some officials, that wounded men had been left on the field from which she had rescued her Captain's body. They did not credit her tale, so she said," Furnish me some ambulances and I will bring

them in." The conveyances were given her, she retraced her steps to the deserted battle field, and soon had some eight or ten poor sufferers in the wagons, and on their way to camp. The roads were rough, and their moans and cries gave evidence of intense agony. While still some miles from their destination, Bridget saw several rebels approaching, she ordered the drivers to quicken their pace, and endeavoured to urge her horse forward, but he balked and refused to move. The drivers becoming alarmed, deserted their charge and fled to the woods, while the wounded men begged that they might not be left to the mercy of the enemy, and to suffer in Southern prisons. The rebels soon came up, Bridget plead with them to leave the sufferers unmolested, but they laughed at her, took the horses from the ambulances, and such articles of value as the men possessed, and then dashed off the way they came. Poor Biddy was almost desperate, darkness coming on, and with none to help her, the wounded men beseeching her not to leave them. Fortunately, an officer of our army rode up to see what the matter was, and soon sent horses and assistance to the party."

When the war ended, Bridget accompanied her regiment to Texas, from whence she returned with them to Michigan, but the attractions of army life were too strong to be overcome, and she has since joined one of the regiments of the regular army stationed on the plains in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains.

Mrs. Kady Brownell, the wife of an Orderly Sergeant of the First and afterwards of the Fifth Rhode Island Infantry, who, like Madame Turchin was born in the camp, and was the daughter of a Scottish soldier of the British army, was another of these half soldier heroines; adopting a semi-military dress, and practicing daily with the sword and rifle, she became as skillful a shot and as expert a swordsman as any of the company of sharpshooters to which she was attached. Of this company she was the chosen color-bearer, and asking no indulgence, she marched with the men, carrying the flag and participating in the battle as bravely as any of her comrades. In the first battle of Bull Run, she stood by her colors and maintained her position till all her regiment and several others had retreated, and came very near falling into the hands of the enemy. She was in the expedition of General Burnside to Roanoke Island and Newbern and by her coolness and intrepidity saved the Fifth Rhode Island from being fired upon by our own troops by mistake. Her husband was severely wounded in the engagement at Newbern, and she rescued him from his position of danger and having made him as comfortable as possible attempted to rescue others of the wounded, both rebel and Union troops. By some of the rebels, both men and women, she was grossly insulted, but she persevered in her efforts to help the wounded, though not without some heart-burnings for their taunts. Her husband recovering very slowly, and being finally pronounced unfit for service, she returned to Rhode Island with him after nursing him carefully for eighteen months or more, and received her discharge from the army.



Kady Brownell

**Save the Date**  
**May 14, 2022**

Mark **Saturday May 14th** with a bold red circle as we are going to not only celebrate **Old Baldy's 170th birthday** but also the **45th Anniversary of our Round Table**. Join us in celebrating these two extraordinary events. Round Table members, family and friends are all invited over to hosts Paul and Susan Prentiss' home located at 16 Heather Drive in Marlton, NJ.

Who knows what the season will bring but we will implement common sense health protocols for the picnic. We will be out in the back yard, sitting in lawn chairs to maintain social distancing. The dining fare will be similar to last year but with improvements. We will have hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, sheet cake, chips, cheese & crackers plate, and whatever you want to bring.

It's a bit too early to plan other than setting the date so please look for the initial Picnic Planning email in March. Send your ideas to Paul at [pprentissfamily@gmail.com](mailto:pprentissfamily@gmail.com) to make this momentous event a smashing success.

# A Boy Sailor's Tragic Odyssey

By Joseph F. Wilson,  
Member OBCWRT



A Boy Sailor

Heavy smoke drifted through the streets of New York City in the summer of 1863 as multiple fires illuminated the night sky. Rioters roamed the streets of a city under siege. Innocent people came under attack while buildings burned to the ground after Congress passed a law authorizing a draft that forced all eligible males into the Union Army.

More than fifty buildings burnt to the ground in the draft riots. One of the shops reduced to ashes was the workplace of young Jimmy Nugent. Being a major source of income for the family, the 16 year old Irish boy had to seek another prospect for earning money. While wandering the ravaged city, Jimmy came across the Naval Shipyard. It was a perfect opportunity.

Adventure on the high seas and potential riches attracted the boy. But he mostly wanted to make life easier for his mother. Less than a year later, a rising tide of regret washed away all expectations of money and exciting exploits. Any thoughts of a dreadful prison never crossed his mind when signing on with the Navy.

With his mother's permission, Jimmy eagerly signed on as a Second Class Boy in the United States Navy. After his father passed away, he took on the responsibility of supporting his mother and siblings. The pay for the position amounted to 8 dollars a month but could be much higher if assigned to a ship in the blockade. Any U.S. ship capturing a Confederate blockade runner shared in the generous bounty.

Ann Nugent, an Irish immigrant, beamed with pride over her son's new status. Standing at just 5 feet 2 inches, the diminutive boy sailor looked much younger than his stated age. Jimmy Nugent landed a permanent assignment on the USS Granite City. Formerly a Confederate blockade runner, the 160 foot captured gunboat now served the Federal Navy in the Western Gulf Squadron under Rear Admiral David Farragut.

Boredom at sea manning the blockade gave way to a bit of excitement when the USS Granite City captured a Confederate blockade runner. Jimmy wrote home to his mother proudly proclaiming, "We have taken a prize worth \$100,000 dollars and my share will be \$500 dollars when confirmed."

An impressive array of six 24 pound howitzers and one 12 pound rifle made the ironclad gunboat more suited for action than blockading. That action came early for Jimmy. After only 4 weeks at sea, the Federal gunboat left the blockading force and headed for the coast of Texas to take part in the fighting in the Second Battle of Sabine Pass on September 8th, 1863. The Granite City steamed up the Sabine River carrying several hundred of the 5000 troops intent on gaining a foothold in Texas.

Three other gunboats and seven troop transports accompanied the Granite City. A heavy bombardment from the rebel guns at Fort Griffin disabled and captured two of the gunboats. The USS Granite City and the USS Arizona barely made their escape. The battle resulted in a miserable failure for the Union. But it was highly successful in leaving an impression on the mind of a young boy. One sampling of the horrors of war frightened the teenage sailor and aroused doubts as to whether he made the right choice for employment. Jimmy wrote a letter to his uncle that included a message for his mother, "tell mother I won't be so eager to leave home next time."

For the next 8 months the Granite City performed blockading duty, while occasionally firing her guns in support of infantry parties landing on the shores of Texas. Jimmy was safe for now. Not until May of 1864 would the Granite City once again sail into harm's way. This time he wasn't so lucky.

On April 15th, 1864, the USS Granite City, accompanied by the USS Wave, steamed up the Calcasieu River in Louisiana to take on refugees and a load of supplies gathered by local Unionists. But the stores were stolen by Union supporters from local southern farmers. The farmers didn't take too kindly to the theft and quickly sent word of the intrusion to Confederate forces 30 miles away. An assembled force of 4 artillery guns and 300 infantry marched

immediately to meet the invading Federals.

The steamers anchored in the Calcasieu River totally unaware of the looming threat. When the sun rose on May 6th, the Confederate force had already crept dangerously close to the unsuspecting gunboats. A terrific barrage of artillery shells and musketry opened on the ships as the stunned Union sailors jumped from their bunks and desperately tried to man their guns. The surprise attack pummeled the ships relentlessly with lead balls and hot fragments of exploding iron.

Somewhere onboard, a terrified Jimmy Nugent sought cover. Several shells penetrated the hull of the Granite City. The Wave didn't fare much better. On the deck of the two ships lay 36 killed or wounded sailors. Not long after the start of the lopsided battle, a white flag flapped in the breeze above both gunboats. A total of 111 sailors remaining from the two crews marched for a Confederate prison in Texas.

Jimmy never suspected the enormous suffering from the coming ordeal that lasted 8 months. The Confederates allowed one last letter to family back home. Jimmy wrote his mother, "Dear Mother, we had to surrender the ship or sink. I am a prisoner now but I feel just as safe here as I would on the ship. We expect

to be exchanged."

The boy's feelings of safety were unfounded and any hopes of exchange vanished. Not far from Hempstead, Texas, a loving son only trying to support his mother entered Camp Groce. The stockade prison had previously served as a training camp for Confederate soldiers. A teenage boy, whose life experiences still hadn't expanded beyond that of a school boy, soon realized the danger. The suffering and privations of a vile prison camp could never have been foreseen by even the veteran sailors.

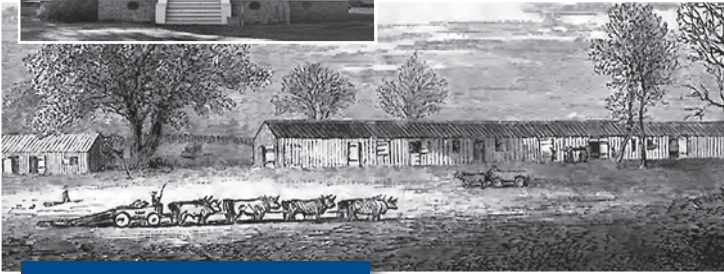
Talk of exchanging prisoners collapsed in 1864. In a private deal, northern officials balked at the south's request to exchange naval prisoners. The south demanded the north's most prized naval prisoner, Admiral Franklin Buchanan, be included in the deal. The Confederate Admiral fell into Union hands at the Battle of Mobile Bay. Not until February, 1865, would Buchanan be released. His release proved much too late for the Union sailors. By then, the appalling conditions in the prison camp had already snuffed out the life of most of the sailors.

The last surviving prisoners of the USS Granite City went home in December of 1864 after 8 months confinement. From the time of their capture in early May, 1864, until finally being released in December, the sailors watched most of their comrades go out the gates of the squalid prison feet first to a waiting grave. Included among the dead was a young 17 year old Irish boy from New York.

Even with the vitality of youth on his side, Second Class Boy Jimmy Nugent fell victim to the deplorable conditions at Camp Groce. Of the 111 sailors from the USS Granite City, and the USS Wave, who marched hale and hearty through the prison gates, only 32 saw their loved ones again. Jimmy held on longer than most. He died on November 2nd, 1864, only a month before release.

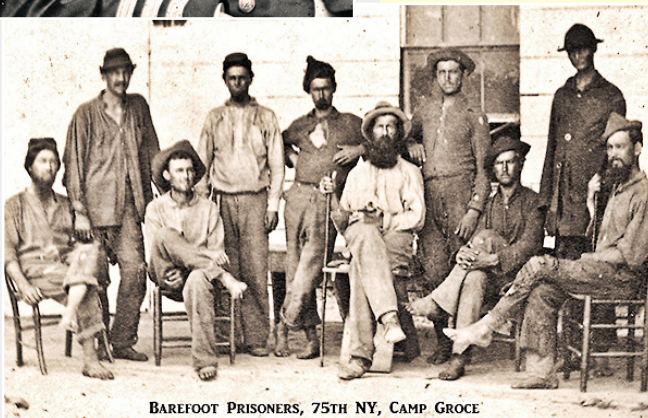
The Confederate prison at Andersonville, Georgia, garners the most attention for the starvation, exposure, and disease that claimed the lives of so many Union soldiers. A lack of proper food, water, and a shortage of medicine plagued Camp Groce in Texas just as it had in Andersonville.

Paymaster John Reed of the USS Granite City survived the ordeal and later wrote about the awful conditions at Camp Groce. He stated, "Many men suffered for water to cool their parched lips. The camp through the hot season was in the filthiest condition with sinks overflowing, causing the most intolerable stench. The condition



Camp Groce

Admiral, CSA  
Franklin Buchanan



BAREFOOT PRISONERS, 75TH NY, CAMP GROCE

New York Prisoners  
at Camp Groce

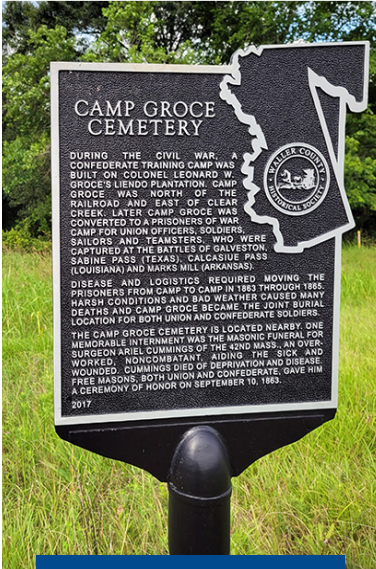


Texas Memorial

of the prisoners was terrible. Men wasted to the appearance of death itself."

The description related by John Reed echoes the testimony given at the trial of Confederate Captain Henry Wirz, the commandant at Andersonville Prison. Wirz was found guilty after the war for the atrocities at Andersonville and hanged to avenge the dead. Officials in Washington had little concern for what happened at Camp Groce. No clamor for justice arose for the sailors of the USS Granite City. No military court convened for Jimmy Nugent.

The records always state the total number of men who died in the war. It is well to remember that not all were men. Many young volunteers several years from manhood had their precious young lives robbed in a war fought by many innocent young boys like Jimmy.



Cemetery Marker

James Nugent's final resting place is likely the old Union POW Cemetery near Hempstead, Texas. When buried in the pits, only a carved cedar cross marked the graves of the prisoners. By the turn of the century the markers withered away. Sometime in the 1940's the land was cleared for a pasture, removing any sign of the prison cemetery. Instead of flowers, only cow dung marks the graves. Jimmy's identity vanished in the fog of war as if he had never lived. Texas recently installed a marker on the cemetery grounds. A nice gesture, but too little and much too late.

Ann Nugent mourned the death of her son. The Pension Bureau didn't make it any easier for the heartbroken mother. The Bureau required she give up Jimmy's wartime letters as proof of his experience. She reluctantly submitted the cherished letters and eventually got a pension a few decades after the war. She collected the much needed funds until she passed away in 1907.

Even in death, Jimmy continued to support the mother he loved so dearly.

*Joseph F. Wilson is the writer and producer of the documentary "Civil War Prisons – An American Tragedy" now available on Amazon. And he lectures on the Pennsylvania Reserves and Andersonville Prison. Contact – joe21@aol.com*

**By Rebecca Larson,  
White Roses, 1997**

**Nurses were not part of the Armies, There was no Nursing Corps. These were women who went off to contribute their efforts to helping the wounded, dying and ill. They helped in Hospitals, Battlefields and Camps. There are very few records and photographs of these brave women so the accounts are few.**

## "Those White Roses"

**Frances Ann Livingston Pyne "Fanny" Lawrence Ricketts**

Fanny was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, but the exact date is not recorded. She was the daughter of British Officer Captain J. Sharpe Lawrence. Her mother's name was Ricketts. She was the couple's third daughter and she was educated at home. In January 1856, Fanny married Captain James B. Ricketts, a distant cousin. They moved to Rio Grande on a southwestern frontier outpost, and were stationed there for three years.

In April 1861, the couple was transferred to Fort Monroe, Virginia but were separated in July when the army advanced on Centerville.

Fanny heard several different stories after the battle of Bull Run concerning her husband's fate. One officer said he saw the Captain fall, repeated his dying words and placed the Captain's sword in Fanny's hands. Fanny refused to believe him. She believed that he was wounded, captured, and being held prisoner. She went to General Scott and asked for a pass, which he granted. Fanny then persuaded the quartermaster to loan her a carriage and driver, which took her as far as the Confederate outpost. She sent a note to her husband's former friend, General J. E. B. Stuart, a Confederate officer.

Stuart sent for her, listened to her story and wrote out a parole-of-honor for her to sign. Fanny angrily replied, "I am no spy but the wife of a wounded officer, and I will go as your prisoner, but I will never sign a parole." She tore the parole into pieces. Stuart, amused by her spirit, gave her a pass.





Frances Lawrence Ricketts

Fanny found her husband two days later in a residence that had been converted into a hospital. She established herself as her husband's nurse but she also cared for other Union wounded. In the hospital, gangrene raged. Fanny was convinced that the wounded must be moved to Richmond or they would all die of the plague. Fanny's advice was heeded and the wounded were moved.

Fanny and her husband were sent to Libby Prison, where the Captain was selected for execution. He was saved at the last minute, and the Captain and Fanny were exchanged for Southern prisoners.

After the war, the couple returned to Washington. Little is known of their lives after the War.

**Mary Ann Brown Newcomb**

Mary volunteered her nursing services at the onset of the War Between the States. Although she was offered a salary on several occasions, she refused it:

I have a commission from a higher power than any on earth, and you need not interfere. I shall go where I please and stay as long as I please... I will accept no commission from anyone... When the doctors don't want me they will say so and I will go, but you can't give me a commission. I am doing the work my husband wished me to do when he died.

Mary's history also is virtually unknown. The tidbits of letters found written to friends behind the lines are the only records of her nursing service. Her letters include tales of nurses behind the battle lines, "nurses sickened at the sight of amputated limbs, thrown out of one of the windows of the operating room until they made a pile five feet high just as they fell." She continued: "[We] walked out on battle-fields where the dead and dying lay so thick that we might have walked a mile with every step on a dead body."

She wrote on one occasion of attempting to care for a critically ill patient and being chastised by a ward master for staying up past nine o'clock. Knowing how important her duty to the soldier was, Mary responded that she was no hired nurse and that she would break the rules whenever humanity demanded it. She suggested that the ward master mind his business and she would attend to hers.

Mary helped to catch two surgeons who were secretly selling hospital supplies to civilians. The doctors were dismissed and two others were demoted. Mary was proud of her part in the breaking of the black market ring.



Mary Ann Brown Newcomb

By Kathy Clark,  
Vice President,  
OBCWRT

**Old Baldy's presentation: February 10 Meeting**

**"The Horse at Gettysburg Prepared for the Day of Battle"**

**Presentation by Chris Bagley**

Chris Bagley



"The horse was the unsung hero of the Civil War": Nearly three million horses as well as mules were pressed into service by the North and South during the war. Nearly 1.5 million died many on Abraham Trostle's farm where the 9th Mississippi left many died horses on the land. The ice age wiped out European and Eastern stock of horses as we know them today. It was started through explorers like Cristopher Columbus, Hernando Cortez, and other Spanish conquistadors who slowly brought breeding horses back to the land. Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, Morgan, Standard Breed Horses were some of the breeds that returned through the years. An example was Traveler, Robert E. Lee's horse which was a Standard Breed, dapple, gray-spotted in color. Along with many different breeds there were many colors and patterns which changed as the horse aged or with the season. White was one that was not a common color. Soldiers choose their horse to blend in with their surroundings. They can be trained and prepared

for battle, and it was the soldier who trained his animal. The horse's acute sense made them aware of "things that move and things that are stationary." They are hunted, they do not hunt and were ready for battle but not a predator.

How do you train a horse? Today in a round pen where the handler learns to control the animal, doing side-to-side movement, circles, all to get a relationship with the horse. That relationship between horse and master comes even before a saddle gets put on the animal. The animal is taught to jump ditches and obstacle such as fences and learns how to put the saddle and mount on both sides. In the line of battle the horse came first, "stable call", water call where equines received care before the soldiers ate or rested. The soldiers were taught how to maneuver their mounts in different formations in close quarters. They learned how to jump fences; rocks so called "scary objects" like many different formations that were seen on the Gettysburg battlefield. The same was true for loud noises such as small arms or cannon fire. All this training did not happen overnight but could take weeks with time, training, and desensitizing the horse. The horse and rider built up a bond of trust and respect which extended throughout the life of man and animal.

Horses were perfect animals physically through eyesight, hearing, being the right age, free of injuries, able to walk and trot without difficulty. Looking at the horse's corner incisor was an effective tool for understanding the age, health, and statue of the horse. The height in hands (hands=4 inches) was from the ground to the wither. Cavalry animals were 15-16 hands tall and 5-9 years old. Artillery animals were 15 hands plus or minus an inch and are 5-7 years old. The horse must be broken to harness, full chest, and shoulders to support the collar, free of vice, 1000-1200 lbs., broad deep loins, healthy large hooves, and a willingness to be shod. The largest Cavalry Depot for horses was set up at Giesboro in Maryland outside of Washington D.C. The Northern army (cavalry or artillery) were issued by the government, but the Southern army (cavalry or artillery) had to furnish their own mount. It seems like the Southern cavalry men had a better understanding of their horse and riding, the Northern soldier did not have the skill for riding but as the war continued to get better at riding and the south got worse.

At the battle of Gettysburg there were approximately 60,000-80,000 horses and mules, with 960,000 pounds of feed and 1.2 million pounds of hay over the three-day battle. The animals need water with 400,000-800,000 gallon a day. If a soldier owned his animal or managed his animals, the horse or mule came first. If there was time left in the day that was left for other activities. The animals were brushed and groomed, watered, fed, and took care of the hooves. Stalls were given new bedding and hay was placed in the stall. During the Civil War this procedure continued with the animal's duty always coming first. When "reveille" sounded at dawn and their "stable call" for the soldiers of the cavalry or artillery to groom and feed their animal first. This proceeded throughout the day until nightfall for food, water, and care for their animal one last time. This begins all over again the next day.

Lee and troops decided to continue into the North so that it would give the Confederate farms a chance to replenish crops and get their farms back in order. That way Lee could take advantage of the Northern farms. Lee's troops needed supplies that they thought they could find in the North. Gettysburg seemed to be a good place to settle as there were ten roads in and out of the town like the spooks of the wheel. As July 1, 1863, began Buford delays until Reynolds came into view. As the troops were fighting each other in the woods to the dismay of all Reynolds was killed. Union forces went on to occupy Cemetery and Culps Hill by the evening of the first day. Union reinforcements were on route. Note: It was said that when an equestrian statute has one hoof raised, the soldier was wounded; two hooves up the soldier perished; all hooves down the soldier survived. By 1915 Henry Kirke Bush-Brown and William Storrick debunked that by having Reynolds' statute only showed one



**Presenters Book Winner - Jim Mullen**

**Regular Book Raffle Winners at the February Meeting - Gary Salkind, Harry Jenkins, Fernando Bastidas and Ken Funkhouser.**

hoof up even though he did not survive the battle. This is certainly not true for Reynolds' statue.

July 2, 1863, Meade arrives in Gettysburg and Longstreet, around 11:30am, begins his march. Sickles moves forward toward Cemetery Ridge without informing Meade. Between 3-3:30pm the attacks commence. This was during the time that Meade was on Old Baldy, and he was shot but Old Baldy did not get up like in the past. Baldy was wounded for the 6th and final time. A round tore through Meade's trousers into Baldy's body and he would not move. Old Baldy was taken off the field and did recover from his wound but did not go back to fight anymore. Meade took Major General Alfred Pleasanton's horse "Slicky" as reinforcements of infantry and artillery continue to help the Union forces.

**Old Baldy**



July 3, 1863, the battle of Culp's Hill started at dawn around 10:30-11am. The hill became under Union hands and Meade defends this position. At 1pm the Confederate open fire with their artillery fire with much smoke hanging in the air. Lee lost 1/3 of his army. Lee was defeated with 50% casualties. Lee felt it was all his fault as 51,000 casualties killed or wounded, missing, and captured with 3000-5000 animals killed. The land of the Trostle farm was full of the carcasses of animals especially around the barn and house. These were from the 9th Massachusetts's artillery under the command of Captain John Bigelow attacking the 21st Mississippi artillery. The battle lost 80 of its 88 horses.

Today there are some interesting events happening with the animals called their faithful friends. They help with post-traumatic stress order, elderly, and children with physical and emotional learning disabilities benefit from interaction with horses. The horse becomes the gentle giants of our animal world. Today no horse will be "prepared for battle" ever again. Instead, you can ride by horseback along the battlefield to see the battle from the horse's point of view.

The subject of the Civil War horse is one that many of our members were interested in learning more about. Chris Bagley's book covers so much about both the animal itself, how it was cared for during the war, and the loss of so many of these faithful friends. Thank you, Chris, for this very informative presentation that you have brought to our Old Baldy meeting. Your book is an excellent resource for all horse information in a general way and as part of the soldier's excellent treatment during the Civil War. Everyone should have this book as part of their library.



**Monument to the Civil War horse Middleburg, Virginia**

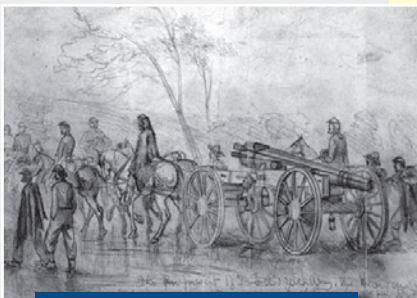
## **Seaford's Hessey Helps Rebuild Lee's "Bridge of Gold"**

**By Tom Ryan  
Author  
Historian**

Army engineers often perform duties that, while important and often crucial to victory on the battlefield, are less well publicized; therefore, do not receive the recognition they deserve. A Confederate engineer unit, however, received the abiding gratitude of the Army of Northern Virginia's commanding general in July 1863.

After suffering a devastating defeat after three days of bloodletting at the small community of Gettysburg, PA, the Rebel army under Gen. Robert E. Lee limped away toward the Potomac River. Lee's unenviable task was to get the remnants of the Gettysburg catastrophe back to Virginia for rest and recruitment.

While marching northward through the Shenandoah Valley in June toward Maryland and Pennsylvania, the Confederate troops crossed the Potomac on a pontoon bridge at Falling Waters, VA or by fording the river at Williamsport, Maryland. As fate would have it, during their attempt to return south while in retreat, those crossing points were no longer available.



**Lee on Retreat**



**Union Cavalry Charge**

Union troops had heavily damaged the bridge at Falling Waters, and incessant rains caused the Williamsport fords to be impassable. Lee's army had no other choice but to hold off the Union army marching in its wake, rebuild the Falling Waters bridge, and pray that the rain would soon abate.

While the Rebel army clustered around Hagerstown, MD, Lee ordered his engineers and pioneers to prepare entrenchments running some ten miles from their current position south to the Potomac. The Union Army of the Potomac's failure to pursue immediately from Gettysburg allowed Lee sufficient time to prepare fortifications.

When the rains continued and the river was still not fordable, Lee realized he had no other option but to repair the damaged bridge at Falling Waters. 2nd Lt. David Stewart Hessey, born and raised in Seaford, was a member of one of the engineer teams assigned to build new pontoons and repair damaged ones that had been recovered.

Work began on July 10 designing plans, and gathering lumber by stripping wood from nearby houses and barns – desperate times calling for desperate measures. The pontoons were to be three feet high, thirty feet long, seven feet wide at the top and six feet at the bottom.

Working in hot, sultry weather, by July 12, the engineers repaired or constructed a number of pontoon boats. They were floated down from Williamsport to Falling Waters and connected to the previously undamaged portion of the bridge.

Also on the 12th, Union army commander, Maj. Gen. George G. Meade, decided to order a probe of Lee's fortified position to be transformed into an attack if the situation warranted. However, when his subordinate generals did not agree with his offensive plan, Meade further delayed action.

By July 13, with the bridge "lacking by little of completion," engineer team leader, 1st Lt. Henry Harris, according to his memoirs, took stock and found that nine reconstructed pontoons and fourteen new ones were ready. Added to that was about 550 feet of trestle work.

Upon learning that the pontoon bridge would soon be completed, Lee ordered his troops to vacate their positions after dark on the 13th, and begin moving across the bridge to the safety of Virginia. After taking time that day to scout the enemy positions, Meade ordered a reconnaissance-in-force to be turned into an attack the next morning.

On the morning of the 14th, however, when the Northern troops marched forward, they found the Rebel entrenchments abandoned. The Confederate army's timely movement to the south side of the Potomac caused Union Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday to comment it was like they had escaped "on a bridge of gold." (See "A Golden Bridge," by Kent Masterson Brown, North & South Magazine, vol. 2, no. 6)

As a token of his appreciation, Gen. Lee presented Lt. Hessey with a pair of binoculars that became a prized possession. The young Delawarean had helped the Southern army survive to fight another day.

Tom Ryan is the author of the award-winning "Spies, Scouts & Secrets in

*the Gettysburg Campaign*"; Contact him at [pennmardel@mchsi.com](mailto:pennmardel@mchsi.com) or visit his website at [www.tomryan-civilwar.com](http://www.tomryan-civilwar.com).

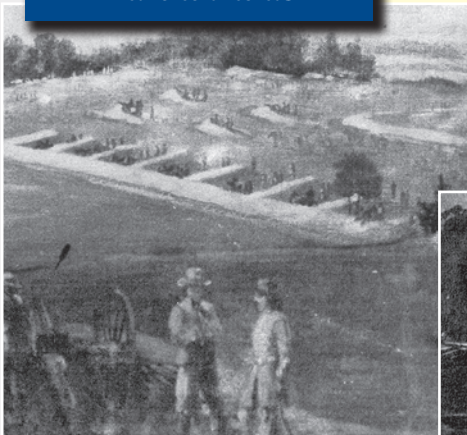


**Pontoon Bridge Location**



**Falling Waters Marker**

**Entrenchments**



**Crossing did not often go well**

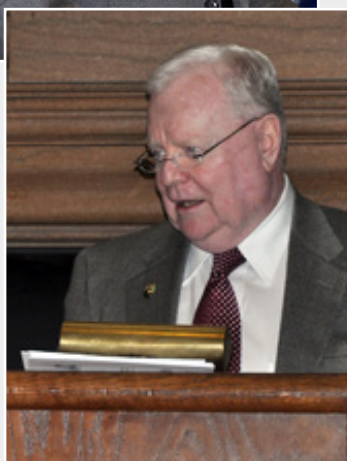


# “The Retirement of a Legend”

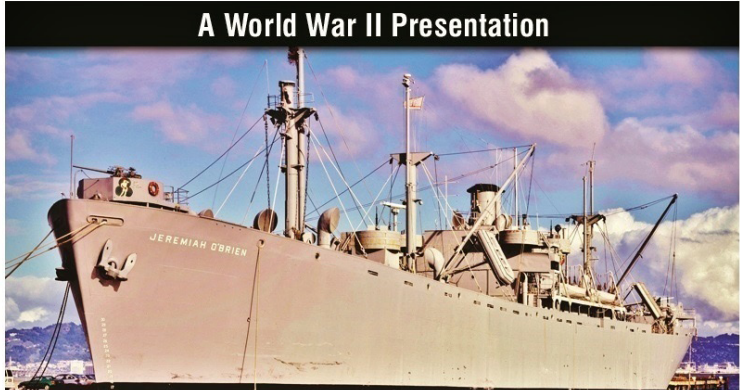


Hugh Boyle


The Old Baldy CWRT wanted to acknowledge the retirement of a legend at the Del Val CWRT. After thirty years as president, Hugh Boyle has stepped down to fully enjoy retirement with his wife Rose. The accolades and tributes have been pouring in since the announcement. He used his energy and effort to build and sustain the Del Val group as for three decades to create a family environment. He filled the role of Lincoln scholar in this region. He established the connection, taught the classes and grew the Civil War Institute at Manor College to become the History Institute offering classes on all conflicts. He served on the Board and as president of the Grand Army of the Republic Museum, growing it to be a gem of research and information in the city of Philadelphia. All who served with him appreciated his leadership and guidance. He has led trips, created projects and made connections all in the interest of promoting the education of Civil War history. He is known and respected by all in the regional Civil War community and will be missed as a leader. The OBCWRT wants to thank Hugh for the support and guidance he extended to this Round Table when it had its struggles. Thank you for your years of service and commitment to the Civil War community and society. Please enjoy your well-earned and deserved rest as others pick up the baton to carry the Round Table into the next era. Be well and stay safe.



**A World War II Presentation**



**THE MERCHANT MARINE IN WW II**



Without the U.S. Merchant Marine transporting vital supplies to the troops, the mighty Allied war machine would've come to a screeching halt.

Despite cargo ships being sunk at an alarming rate by U-Boats and bomber planes, patriotic Americans sailed into harm's way to "Deliver the Goods."

**POWERPOINT BY JOSEPH F. WILSON, WHOSE FATHER (LEFT) SERVED IN THE MERCHANT MARINE ABOARD THE FAMED "LIBERTY SHIPS."**  
[Joef21@aol.com](mailto:Joef21@aol.com)

**The Merchant Marine in World War II**

**Thursday, April 21, 7 PM, Room 103, Free Connector Bldg, Camden County College, Blackwood, NJ**



**The Society  
for Women  
and the  
Civil War**

**“Recognizing  
Women’s  
Efforts,  
1861-1865”**

**The Society for Women and the Civil War (SWCW)** is dedicated to recognizing the lives and contributions of women who lived through, or participated in, the American Civil War, as well as supporting those who research, reenact, or otherwise honor these women of the past. The society sponsors an annual conference and two publications: the monthly “Calling Card”, which provides announcements of events of interest, and “At Home and in the Field”, a quarterly e-journal which features the research interests of members.

SWCW sponsors the National Registry of Women’s Service in the Civil War. The Society offers scholarships to college and high school students. It supports the research of members, provides opportunities for cooperation in that research, and mentors author members.

SWCW encourages members who are reenactors and living historians. It offers presentations and networking to assist them in researching their subjects and in establishing and strengthening their impressions. Annual memberships for individuals (\$25.00), for individuals (plus one) (\$40.00), for students (\$15.00), and for organizations (\$55.00), are available and provide discounts for registration for the annual conference and access to members-only benefits. Dues for the calendar year may be paid via PayPal at SWCW’s website or via postal mail.

**SWCW Contact Information**

Website: [www.swcw.org](http://www.swcw.org)

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P.O. Box 3117  
Gettysburg PA 17325**

**Kevin M. Hale Award  
for  
best Historical Newsletter  
in New Jersey**

**WEB Site: <http://oldbaldycwrt.org>  
Email: [oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net)  
Face Book: Old Baldy Civil War Round Table**

**Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT  
Speakers and Activities  
for 2022**

**April 14, 2022 – Thursday  
Gil Hahn  
“The Campaign for the Confederate Coast:  
Blockading, Blockade Running and Related  
Endeavors During the American Civil War”**

**May 12, 2022 – Thursday  
Drew Gruber  
“The Battle of Eltham’s Landing  
and the New Jersey Brigade”**

**June 9, 2022 – Thursday  
A. J. Schenkman  
“Unexpected Bravery: Women and Children  
of the Civil War”**

**Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia  
Camden County College  
Blackwood Campus - Connector Building  
Room 101 Forum, Civic Hall, Atrium  
[oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net)  
Founded January 1977**

**President: Richard Jankowski  
Vice President: Kathy Clark  
Treasurer: Frank Barletta  
Secretary: Sean Glisson  
Programs: Dave Gilson  
Membership: Amy and Dan Hummel**

**Trustees:  
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