



The Signal Flag

BRANDYWINE VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Campaign # 22

Skirmish # 8

April 2009

From the Rear Ranks:

“Grant and Sherman: The Friendship That Won The Civil War” by Charles Bracelen Flood, New York, 2005.

“As soon as real war begins, new men, heretofore unheard of, will emerge from obscurity, equal to any occasion.”

- William Tecumseh Sherman, six weeks before Bull Run.

“I knew wherever I was that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come if alive.”

- Sherman to Grant, March 10, 1864, summing up their successful Western campaigns.

“But what next? I suppose it will be safe if I leave General Grant and yourself to decide.”

- Abraham Lincoln to Sherman, after congratulating him on his capture of Savannah, Christmas, 1864.

“He stood by me when I was crazy and I stood by him when he was drunk, and now sir, we stand by each other always.”

- Sherman, speaking of Grant, 1865.

“I know him well as one of the greatest and best of men. He is poor and always will be, but he is great and magnanimous.”

- Grant, praising Sherman in a letter to Jesse Grant, his father.

“We were as brothers, I the older man in years, he the higher in rank.”

- Sherman, summing up their friendship.

“When I reached the Treasury-building, and looked back, the sight was simply magnificent. The column was compact, and the glittering muskets looked like a solid mass of steel, moving with the regularity of a pendulum.”

- Sherman, May 24, 1865, the Grand Review in Washington.

From: Robert Paul Sprague, Archives.

I remain your most obedient servant, Robert Paul Sprague

~ *Officers* ~

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Vice President: Chip Crowe
Secretary: Ted Pawlik
Treasurer: Dave Walter

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Vince Carosella
Speakers: Roger Arthur, Joe Lehman
Trips: Greg Buss
Credentials: Vacant
Greeter: Loretta Thomas
Publicity: Bill Stiman
Historians: Bill Sitman and Bob Sprague
Social Dir: Flo Williams

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David Hoffritz, James Lawler, Lynne Fulton

~ *Official Sutler* ~

Bob Sprague: Books / Periodicals
610-644-0353

~ *Annual Membership* ~

Individual \$25.00; Family \$40.00; Student \$15.00
(Full time student up to age 23)

? **Questions ? Contact:**

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Unsolicited articles from our members are welcome.
Please contact Lynne!

**We are wheelchair assessable*

What is the BVCWRT all about???

We were founded in 1987. According to our by-laws, "the purpose of the Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table shall be to provide a congenial medium through which persons having a common interest in the events of the American Civil War - its causes and effects, engagements, personages, units, armaments and other things pertaining thereto - may satisfy their interest and broaden individual knowledge through discussion, lectures, field trips and the exchange of books, paper and other data. The purposed is also to consider the preservation and protection of the battlefields, sites, landmarks, relics and collection of the period."

In plain English, we are an organization of diverse people brought together by our common interest in the American Civil War. This interest can range from the casual to the obsessive. We intend to tailor our activities and presentations to appeal to all our members, novice or expert.

Welcome New Members & Reenlistments

The Round Table welcomes our new members since our last meeting. Please welcome them and share your Civil War enthusiasm.

New Members:





Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
Come to our next meeting
April 1, 2009

Speaker: Noah Andre Trudeau
Topic: "Southern Storm"
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: West Chester Borough Hall, Gay Street

Publisher's comments: Southern Storm

Award-winning Civil War historian Noah Andre Trudeau has written a gripping, definitive new account that will stand as the last word on General William Tecumseh Sherman's epic march—a targeted strategy aimed to break not only the Confederate army but an entire society as well. With Lincoln's hard-fought reelection victory in hand, Ulysses S. Grant, commander of the Union forces, allowed Sherman to lead the largest and riskiest operation of the war. In rich detail, Trudeau explains why General Sherman's name is still anathema below the Mason-Dixon Line, especially in Georgia, where he is remembered as "the one who marched to the sea with death and devastation in his wake."

Sherman's swath of destruction spanned more than sixty miles in width and virtually cut the South in two, badly disabling the flow of supplies to the Confederate army. He led more than 60,000 Union troops to blaze a path from Atlanta to Savannah, ordering his men to burn crops, kill livestock, and decimate everything that fed the Rebel war machine. Grant and Sherman's gamble worked, and the march managed to crush a critical part of the Confederacy and increase the pressure on General Lee, who was already under siege in Virginia.

Told through the intimate and engrossing diaries and letters of Sherman's soldiers and the civilians who suffered in their path, *Southern Storm* paints a vivid picture of an event that would forever change the course of America.

About the Author Noah Andre Trudeau is the author of "Gettysburg". He has won the Civil War Round Table of New York's Fletcher Pratt Award and the Jerry Coffey Memorial Book Prize. A former executive producer at National Public Radio, he lives in Washington, D.C.

Announcements:

- **Bus Trip on April 18th** - The **bus is now full**. The Round Table wishes to thank Gregg Buss for scheduling our transportation and organizing our tour.
- **Banquet** – If you are planning to attend the banquet in May please fill out the reservation slip found on our website <http://bvcwrt.home.comcast.net> and bring your reservation and check to the next meeting.

BOOK REVIEW

They witnessed Sherman's march to the sea

By Jonathan Kirsch
August 18, 2008

THREE years ago, we were invited to see the story of William Tecumseh Sherman's march to the sea through the eyes of novelist E.L. Doctorow in "The March," a series of fictional (or fictionalized) vignettes. Now we are offered a kind of reality check in "Southern Storm," a work of history that relies on hard facts and the actual words of those who were there and yet manages to present the story with clarity, coherence and even a kind of tragic grandeur.

Sherman proposed marching a Union army out of newly conquered Atlanta and across Georgia to Savannah in 1864, tearing up the railroad lines and destroying the enemy infrastructure along the way. The goal was to deliver a death-blow to the Confederacy by cutting its lines of communication, supply and maneuver. But Sherman understood that he could not carry out the plan unless he dispensed with the supply train that customarily followed a 19th century army with rations and supplies. Rather, he would allow his men to "forage liberally" along the way -- that is, to take what they needed from the civilian population -- and thereby earned his reputation as a kind of latter-day Attila the Hun.

"If Georgia can afford to break our railroads, she can afford to feed us," he said. "Please preach this doctrine to men who go forth, and are likely to spend it."

Noah Andre Trudeau, a former National Public Radio producer and author of the well-regarded "Gettysburg: A Testing of Courage," has retrieved a wealth of source material -- letters, journals, speeches, newspaper accounts, even weather reports from both sides -- about one of the most famous (or notorious) operations of the Civil War, and he succeeds in constructing a seamless historical narrative out of the bits and pieces of human memory. The specialist reader will appreciate his care and diligence in the handling of source material, but the general reader will also find much to admire and enjoy in these pages. Day by day, sometimes hour by hour, we are able to march along with Sherman and his men from Atlanta to the Atlantic.

Opportunity of war

Although the book is a history rather than a biography, Sherman himself stands out in high relief. Haunted by the death of his young son, a failure at banking, law and real estate, he was ready to "hide myself in any obscure corner" when the outbreak of the Civil War opened a new opportunity.

His wife lobbied her own influential relatives to secure a field command for her husband, and his posting to the army commanded by Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh, Tenn., turned out to be the first step toward greatness. "He stood by me when I was crazy," Sherman later recalled, "and I stood by him when he was drunk." Even at the height of his fame as a battlefield hero, however, he was still described by one soldier as looking like "some old farmer, his hat all slouched down and [wearing] an old brown overcoat."

Sherman was dedicated to the cause of the Union, but he was half-hearted about the liberation of slaves and actively opposed enlisting them in his army. "I have had the question put to me often: 'Is not a negro as good as a white man to stop a bullet?' Yes, and a sand-bag is better; but can a negro improvise roads, bridges, sorties, flank movements, etc., like the white man? I say no." On that point, he was not so different from the Southern matron who insisted, rather indignantly, that slave keeping was sanctioned by the Bible: "I can see nothing in the scriptures which forbids it."

Above all, Sherman was ruthless in battle, a trait that turned out to be essential to the success of his march to the sea. When he negotiated with the Confederates for an exchange of prisoners, for example, he was willing to trade his own POWs only for Union soldiers who were healthy enough to be returned to the ranks.

The ill and injured soldiers who arrived at the exchange point "were turned around almost in sight of their liberation," Trudeau writes. Later, the soldiers under his command were admonished not to waste their ammunition on slaughtering livestock: "Let the men catch and kill their hogs with their sabers," one officer declared, "a weapon that can be used equally as well to kill hogs as rebels."

Damage done

Yet Trudeau also points out that the operations were neither quite as barbaric nor as one-sided as they are advertised to be, especially in the long memory of the South. Union soldiers encountered armed resistance on their march to the sea, and most of the damage they managed to inflict was directed toward railroads and government buildings rather than civilian dwellings.

One soldier from Michigan, for example, was ready to put his torch to a house when he was confronted by a 10-year-old girl: "Mr. Soldier," she said, "you would not burn our house would you, if you do where are we going to live?" As the soldier himself recalled, the little girl "looked into my face with such a pleading look that I could not have the heart to fire the place, so I dropped the torch and walked away."

'Holy war'

It's impossible to read "Southern Storm" without occasionally thinking of the headlines in the daily newspaper. At the worst moments of the Civil War, for example, some Southerners argued for making peace with the Union, but Jefferson Davis insisted that success in battle was the only way to end the war. "Victory in the field is the surest element of strength to a peace party," he declared, sounding a bit like our own president. And Sherman insisted that he was fighting "a holy war, with absolute right on our side, with pure patriotism," and he saw the defeat of the South as an opportunity for "the United States of America to resume her glorious career in the interest of all mankind."

The unspoken theme of "Southern Storm" is that all wars, then and now, are fought by flesh-and-blood human beings, and Trudeau's real achievement is that he allows us to see their faces, to hear their voices, and to look into their hearts and minds. And he does so with both a historian's discipline and a novelist's eye for the telling detail.

Jonathan Kirsch is the author of, most recently, "The Grand Inquisitor's Manual: A History of Terror in the Name of God," due out in September.



1868 [engraving](#) by [Alexander Hay Ritchie](#) depicting the March to the Sea

Minutes of the March 4, 2009 Meeting

BVCWRT

Submitted by Ted Pawlik

John Walls Presiding:

- The annual banquet will be held at the Elks Club in West Chester on May 19, 2009. Mark Neely will be the banquet speaker. The fee is yet to be finalized but every effort will be made to keep it the same as last year.
- The current officers have agreed to serve in the 09/10 campaign. The Executive Committee is always looking for volunteers to serve on various committees. Anyone interested is to contact any member of the Executive Committee.
- Ted Pawlik was contacted by Tim Gruber who is involved in an effort to get the Pennsylvania state death certificates that are at least 50 years old available on line. This will aid in research. Anyone interested in supporting this effort is asked to contact his or her state representative and state senator. Addresses, FAQ, sample letters, forms, links etc can be found at users.rcn.com/timarg/PaHR-Access. Tim Gruber's e-mail address is timarg@rcn.com.

Field Trip (Greg Buss):

- Greg Buss announced that the field trip, to include Ford Theater and the Booth Escape Route with Roger Arthur acting as tour guide, is scheduled for **April 18th**. The trip will be leaving West Chester at **6:15 AM**. Participants are to pack their own lunch to eat in route. The tour will stop for dinner at Captain Billy's. Dinner **is not** included in the fee for the field trip
- The cost of the field trip is \$50.00. Checks should be made payable to **BVCWRT** and sent to **Greg Buss, 502 Langford Drive, Downingtown, PA 19335**.
- **Payment for the trip is due by April 1, 2009**. There are 45 seats on the bus and will be reserved on a first come, first serve basis determined by receipt of the fee.
- The entrance fee for Ford's Theatre is covered by the \$50.00. However, participants will be responsible for the entrance fee to Surratt Tavern and the Mudd House.
- Greg Buss can be contacted at his cell phone at 610-563-1117 or email at grbuss@yahoo.com.

Treasurer's Report (Dave Walter):

- The bank balance as of March 1, 2009 was \$2294.57. Subsequent to the financial statements being prepared, a deposit in the amount of \$350 was made for the annual banquet leaving a balance of 1944.57.
- There are 70 dues paying members.

Preservation Committee (Bob Sprague):

- Bob Sprague received a letter from the Civil War Preservation Trust acknowledging the Round Table's donation to preserve the Cedar Creek Battlefield.
- Chip Crowe announced an opportunity for a match of \$5.89 for every \$1.00 donated to preserve the Sailor's Creek battlefield. With this purchase, the entire battlefield will be preserved.
- A motion was made to donate \$500 for the preservation of Sailor's Creek battlefield. The motion was seconded and approved by the general membership.

Speaker for the Evening: Chip Crowe on the Chickamauga Battle.

"Jimmy Carter's Crazy Slavery Theory..."

[*NY Daily News* By *Ira Stoll*] Saturday, March 21, 2009

Jimmy Carter's crazy slavery theory: He thinks the Civil War was un-Christian. Here's the latest outrage from Jimmy Carter, the ex-President so many Americans love to hate: He claims the Civil War - which he calls, Southern-style, "The War Between the States" - was un-Christian and could have been avoided.

The comments come in a new book, "In Lincoln's Hand: His Original Manuscripts With Commentary By Distinguished Americans." Carter comments on a passage by Lincoln in which Lincoln writes: "I am almost ready to say this is probably true - that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet."

Carter writes that he finds the Lincoln writing "very troubling." Continues Carter: "He ignores the fact that the tragic combat might have been avoided altogether, and that the leaders of both sides, overwhelmingly Christian, were violating a basic premise of their belief as followers of the Prince of Peace." He concludes: "A legitimate question for historians is how soon the blight of slavery would have been terminated peacefully in America, as in Great Britain and other civilized societies." Carter's comments are so stunning that at a recent discussion about the new book at the New-York Historical Society, both the book's co-editor, Joshua Wolf Shenk, and another "distinguished American" who contributed to the book, Cynthia Ozick, distanced themselves from them. Shenk said he disagreed, and Ozick mocked the idea of negotiating with slave masters.

Carter holds up the British - who didn't fight a war over slavery - as an example, but a careful look shows that case to be thoroughly unconvincing. Parliament had acted in 1807 to ban the slave trade and in 1833 to abolish slavery altogether. By the time the Civil War began in 1861, America's legislature had yet to follow suit - and the Southerners didn't appear in any great rush to do so.

How much patience should Lincoln have had with the immoral institution? How many more lashes should have fallen on the backs of American blacks during Carter's hypothetical waiting period for slavery to terminate "peacefully"? The period wouldn't have been particularly peaceful for the slaves. One might as well argue that the bloodshed of the American Revolution could have been avoided, given that British rule was eventually terminated peacefully in Canada.

This debate is about more than history. When Carter met with leaders of the terrorist group Hamas last spring, it provoked widespread outrage from American politicians and commentators and condemnation from American and Israeli government officials. At the time, I was inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt, figuring that if he won the return of kidnapped Israeli soldiers such as Gilad Shalit, Eldad Regev or Ehud Goldwasser - or even the return of their remains - all would be forgiven. Having Carter do the talking was a convenient way for the Israeli and American governments to stick to their stated policies of not negotiating with terrorists.

But given the Civil War comment, we can no longer see each misstep or mis-statement in isolation as just another crazy comment from an old man who wasn't that good a President anyway. Carter seems to go to irrational extremes to avoid forthright confrontation or conflict with evil of any kind - even when ending human slavery is at stake.

The Obama administration is going to be faced with policy decisions on negotiating with Hamas, Iran, North Korea and others whose hands are stained with crimes akin to slavery. It may help President Obama structure the internal discussions if he considers whether he wants to perceive America's conflicts in the fashion of Lincoln, his fellow Illinois politician, or in the manner of Carter, waiting around for a peaceful termination while today's victims and slaves suffer beatings and are deprived of their freedoms. **Stoll is author of "Samuel Adams: A Life." From Temple website submitted by William Vosseler**

Secret message in Lincoln watch

The Civil War-era inscription by a watchmaker is revealed at last.

By Brett Zongker Posted on Wed, Mar. 11, 2009

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - For nearly 150 years, a story has circulated about a hidden Civil War message engraved inside Abraham Lincoln's pocket watch. Yesterday, museum curators confirmed it was true.

A watchmaker used tiny tools to pry open the watch at the National Museum of American History, and a descendant of the engraver read aloud the message from a metal plate underneath the watch face.



"April 13 - 1861," part of the inscription reads, "Fort Sumpter [sic] was attacked by the rebels on the above date. J Dillon." Another section repeats the date, states the location as Washington, and says: "Thank God we have a government." A third section, perhaps by another engraver, mentions Jefferson Davis and the year 1864.

Jonathan Dillon, then a watchmaker on Pennsylvania Avenue, had Lincoln's watch in his hands when he heard that the first shots of the Civil War had been fired in South Carolina. The Irish immigrant later recalled being the only Union sympathizer working at the shop in a divided Washington. Dillon's story was passed down among family and friends, eventually reaching a New York Times reporter. In a 1906 article in the paper, an 84-year-old Dillon said no one, including Lincoln, ever saw the inscription, as far as he knew.

Dillon had a fuzzy recollection of what he had engraved. He told the newspaper he had written: "The first gun is fired. Slavery is dead. Thank God we have a president who at least will try." For years the story went unconfirmed. The watchmaker's great-great-grandson, Doug Stiles, heard the tale of the engraving from his great-uncle decades ago. A few months ago, he used Google to find the Times story, and last month he passed the information to Smithsonian curators, who knew nothing of the engraving.

Yesterday, watchmaker George Thomas carefully opened the watch. "The moment of truth has come. Is there or is there not an inscription?" he said, teasing the museum audience, which gasped when he confirmed it was there. Thomas called Stiles up to read his ancestor's words.

"Like Pearl Harbor or 9/11, this was the reaction he had," Stiles said of the Civil War inscription.

Later, Stiles said: "My gosh, that was Lincoln's watch, and my ancestor put graffiti on it!"

Lincoln's family donated the watch to the museum in 1958. It was Lincoln's everyday pocket watch, one of the president's only valuable possessions he took to the White House from Springfield, Ill., said Harry Rubenstein, curator of the museum's politics division.

Sherman, William Tecumseh (1820-1891), United States general in the American Civil War



(1861-1865). Sherman is remembered for his campaign in Georgia and the Carolinas in which the Northern troops devastated the Southern landscape and resources.

Sherman was born on February 8, 1820, in Lancaster, Ohio, and educated at the U.S. Military Academy. After an undistinguished military career he resigned from the army in 1853 to become a partner in a banking firm in San Francisco. He was president of a military college in Alexandria, Louisiana (now Louisiana State University) from 1859 to the beginning of 1861, when Louisiana seceded from the Union. At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, he offered his services to the Union Army and was put in

command of a volunteer infantry regiment, becoming a brigadier general of volunteers after the First Battle of Bull Run. Sherman led a division at the Battle of Shiloh on April 6 and 7, 1862, and was rewarded for his part in the victory by being promoted to major general of volunteers. In December of that year he failed in an attempt to seize the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg, on the Mississippi River, but in 1863 he fought under General Ulysses S. Grant in the campaign that ended in the capture of that city in July. He was given command of the Army of Tennessee in the fall of 1863 and fought in the Battle of Chattanooga.

In 1864 Sherman was made supreme commander of the armies in the West and was ordered to move against Atlanta, Georgia. During the opening months of the campaign, he lost the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, and he did not capture Atlanta until almost three months later, on September 1. After ordering the burning of the military resources of the city, he launched his most celebrated military action, known as Sherman's march to the sea, in which, with about 60,000 picked men, he marched from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia, on the Atlantic coast. After reaching Savannah, Sherman next set out to join forces with Grant in Virginia by marching from Georgia up through North and South Carolina. During Sherman's march, the Northern soldiers pillaged the areas they passed through demolishing military resources along with houses, farms, and railroads. Destruction was especially severe in South Carolina because Union soldiers blamed the state for starting the war. In February 1865 Columbia, the capital of South Carolina, was burned to the ground, although the origins of the fire are unknown. Sherman hoped that the destruction of his march would lower Southern morale and help end the war.

After three months of fighting, Sherman reached Raleigh, North Carolina, and was prepared to continue north to Virginia. However, the war came to an end. Following the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee to Grant on April 9, the Confederate army confronting Sherman surrendered to him at Durham Station on April 26, 1865.

After the war Sherman was commissioned lieutenant general in the regular army and, following Grant's election to the presidency, he was promoted to the rank of full general on March 4, 1869 and given command of the entire U.S. Army. He published his *Memoirs* in 1875 and retired in 1883. The famous phrase "war is hell" is attributed to Sherman.¹



General Sherman with Generals [Howard](#), [Logan](#), [Hazen](#), [Davis](#), [Slocum](#), and [Mower](#), photographed by Mathew Brady

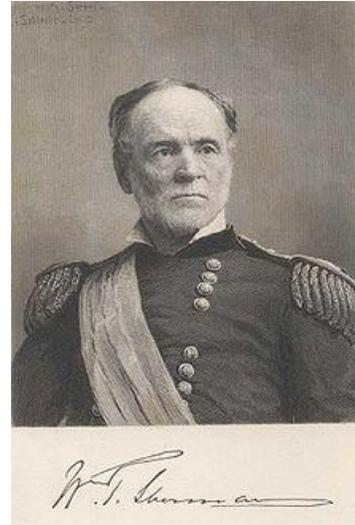


Illustration from the second edition of Sherman's *Memoirs*, 1889

MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA

Bring in the good old bugle, boys, we'll sing another song
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along
Sing it like we used to sing it, fifty thousand strong
While we were marching through Georgia.

Hurrah! Hurrah! We bring the jubilee!
Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that makes you free
So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea
While we were marching through Georgia.

Hurrah! Hurrah! We bring the jubilee
Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that makes you free
So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea
While we were marching through Georgia.

(Robert Paul Sprague, Archives, "Songs of the Civil War", 1991).

¹"Sherman, William Tecumseh," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000*. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.



Scheduled Speakers for 2008 - 2009:

Sep 3, 2008: **NO MEETING**

Oct 1, 2008: Bill Sitman - "Revenue Cutters (Coast Guard)"

Nov 5, 2008: Jari Villanueva - "The Civil War Bugle"

Dec 3, 2008: BVCWRT Members - Discussion of selected topics, plus our Christmas Social

Jan 7, 2009: Dennis Kelly – The Army of Tennessee

Feb 4, 2009: Roger Arthur - "Lincoln's Legacy"

Mar 4, 2009: Chip Crowe - "Chickamauga: the Real Story"

Apr 1, 2009: Noah Andre Trudeau – “ Southern Storm”

Apr 18, 2009 Field Trip: Ford’s Theatre, Surrate House, Dr. Mudd , Dinner at Capt Billy’s

May 6, 2009: Eugene McIlhone – Cause of the Civil War

May 19, 2009: (Annual Banquet): **Speaker will be Mark Neely**, McCabe Greer Professor in the American Civil War Era at Penn State University has agreed to speak at our banquet. Professor Neely has authored and co-authored numerous books including the Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties". Professor Neely's curricula Vitae is available at: <http://history.psu.edu/faculty/curriculaVitae/NeelyM CV.doc>

Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table Membership Application

Application Type: New _____ Renewal _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

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Note: Monthly newsletters are distributed by E-mail only.

Membership Type: Individual (\$25) _____ Family (\$40): _____ Student (\$15): _____

If family membership, please list other names: _____

Bring the completed form and a check payable to BVCWRT to a meeting or mail it to:
Dave Walter, Treasurer, 937 Thorne Drive, West Chester, PA 19382

**BRANDYWINE VALLEY
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

*c/o Lynne Fulton
144 W. King Street
Malvern, PA 19355*

FIRST CLASS MAIL

