



The Signal Flag

BRANDYWINE VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Campaign # 25

Skirmish # 7

March 2012

From the Rear Ranks:

Greetings Members! This month we have an exciting meeting that I hope everyone will enjoy. Back by popular demand, Charlie Zahm will perform many well-known songs and instrumentals from the Civil War. Following Charlie's concert we will have our March Social once again organized by Flo Williams. I hope to see you all there! I have included a New York Times article from March 7, 1862 for your reading enjoyment. It is one of the early communications Lincoln makes to Congress that will culminate in the Emancipation Proclamation later that year.

Respectfully yours,
Chip Crowe
President,
Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table

IMPORTANT FROM WASHINGTON: A Message from President Lincoln, Proposition to Aid the Border States in the Gradual Abolishment of Slavery.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT LINCOLN: WASHINGTON, Thursday, March 6. The President to-day submitted to Congress the following Message: Fellow-citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives: I recommend the adoption of a joint resolution by your honorable bodies, which shall be substantially as follows: Resolved, That the United States ought to cooperate with any State which may adopt a gradual abolishment of Slavery, giving to such State pecuniary aid, to be used by such State in its discretion, to compensate for the inconveniences, public and private, produced by such change of system. If the proposition contained in the resolution does not meet the approval of Congress and the country, there is the end; but if it does command such approval, I deem it of importance that the States and people immediately interested should be at once distinctly notified of the fact, so that they may begin to consider whether to accept or reject it. The Federal Government would find its highest interest in such a measure, as one of the most efficient means of self-preservation. The leaders of the existing insurrection entertain the hope that the Government will ultimately be forced to acknowledge the independence of some part of the disaffected region, and that all the Slave States north of such parts will then say, "The Union, for which we have struggled, being already gone, we now choose to go with the Southern section." To deprive them of this hope substantially ends the rebellion, and the initiation of emancipation completely deprives them of it, as to all the States initiating it. The point is not that all the States tolerating Slavery would very soon, if at all, initiate emancipation, but that while the offer is equally made to all, the more Northern shall, by such initiation, make it certain to the more Southern that in no event will the former ever join the latter in their proposed Confederacy. I say "initiation," because, in my judgment, gradual and not sudden emancipation is better for all. In the mere financial or pecuniary view any member of Congress, with the census tables and the Treasury reports before him, can readily see for himself, how soon the current expenditures of this war would purchase, at a fair valuation, all the slaves in any named State. Such a proposition on the part of the General Government, sets up no claim of a right by Federal authority to interfere with Slavery within State limits, referring, as it does, the absolute control of the subject in each case, to the State and its people immediately interested. It is proposed as a matter of perfectly free choice with them. In the annual Message last December I thought fit to say: "The Union must be preserved, and hence all indispensable means must be employed." I said this not hastily, but deliberately. War has been, and continues to be, an indispensable means to this end. A practical re-acknowledgment of the National authority would render the war unnecessary, and it would at once cease. If, however, resistance continues, the war must also continue, and it is impossible to foresee all the incidents which may attend and all the ruin which may follow it. Such as may seem indispensable or may obviously promise great efficiency toward ending the struggle must and will come. The proposition now made, though an offer only, I hope it may be esteemed no offence to ask whether the pecuniary consideration tendered would not be of more value to the States and private persons concerned than are the institution and property in it, in the present aspect of affairs. While it is true that the adoption of the proposed resolution would be merely initiatory, and not within itself a practical measure, it is recommended in the hope that it would soon lead to important results. In full view of my great responsibility to my God and to my Country, I earnestly beg the attention of Congress and the people to the subject. (Signed,) ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



~ Officers ~

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

~ Committee Members ~

Preservation: Bob Sprague, John Walls
Nominating Committee: Vince Carosella
Speakers: Roger Arthur
Trips: Greg Buss
Credentials/Greeter: Ted and Marilyn Pawlik
Round Table Telegram: Robert Sprague
Publicity: Jim Lawler
Historians: Bob Sprague
Social Dir: Flo Williams
Banquet: Jim Lawler
Photographs – Hank Fisher

~Members at Large ~

David Hoffritz, Dave Kohler, John Whiteside

~ Official Sutler ~

Harriett Mueller: Books / Periodicals
302-429-6201

~ 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: Welcome





Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
Come to our next meeting
March 7, 2012

Speaker: Charlie Zahm
Topic: "Musical Presentation and March Social"
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: West Chester Borough Hall, Gay Street



Charlie Zahm is a truly gifted musician and baritone voice. He is a master of traditional English language folk music – in particular, Irish, Scottish, maritime and Early American; and he is one of the most popular singers at Celtic and maritime music events in the Eastern United States. Charlie's interest in the great collection of music from the War Between the States was sparked when several friends in the Civil War community convinced him that with his wide array of Scottish, Irish and otherwise traditional American songs under his belt, he was more than halfway there to a strong Civil War repertoire -- and that he would be a welcome addition to that community through his music.



Charlie's interest in history (in fact, one of his degrees is in history) led him to disciplined research of the period, and how it affected the body of music now so important to its proper understanding.

Further, after finding a photo of Col. Lewis Zahm of the Third Ohio Cavalry at a library in Ohio (pictured here to the right), Charlie found the first of many family connections to the War. Col. Zahm -- still much revered in Ohio -- was the uncle of the first Charles Louis Zahm (and lent his name to the child, though it is now spelled differently). Charlie is the fifth in line to hold that exact name; so he is actually, in part, named after a Civil War officer. Charlie does his best to present these great songs with the honor due both them and the subjects they recollect. His 13th CD, "Americana," is heavily influenced by music of the War, and the collection of songs has proven a favorite of those who enjoy the study of this period. When not performing in civilian outfit, Charlie represents a member of the 79th New York Volunteers -- the Highlanders -- and Charlie's knowledge of this great regiment of well-traveled soldiers, as well as his grasp of Scottish history (the first few hundred men of the 79th were either Scottish or Scottish-American) help to bring the Highlanders alive through songs they sang or which relate to their experience. Charlie performs at many re-enactments, scholarly meetings (such as Round Tables), historic sites and concerts, and he puts a program together all enjoy. Charlie also appeared as a singing soldier in the film **Gettysburg: Three Days of Destiny**. For more information about Charlie Zahm and his scheduled performances, visit www.charliezahm.com.



Meeting Room Guidelines:

The Executive Board has established the following guidelines for all meetings by the Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table:

- No food or beverages are permitted in the Council Chambers.
- Each member is asked to be certain that NO trash or debris is left under their chairs or on the floor.
- Each member is requested to be certain that their chair is aligned correctly at the end of each meeting.
- Each member is reminded that we are all "responsible" for the condition of the Council Chambers.
- Each member is reminded that we are all good stewards and need to be responsible for all of our actions.

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Executive Board Meeting
Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
February 15, 2012

Those present: Roger Arthur, Greg Buss, Chip Crowe, Hank Fisher, Dave Kohler, Marilyn Pawlik, Ted Pawlik, Bob Sprague, John Walls, Dave Walters, Flo Williams

Presiding: Chip Crowe – President

1. The Executive Committee decided to hold the March Social as planned. Because of the anticipated extra visitors due to the program by Charlie Zahm, all members are to be alert to insure there is no eating or drinking in Council Chambers and to double check the Chambers prior to closing up for the night.
2. Hank Fisher brought up the question as to what is our Plan B if the West Chester Borough Hall is not available to us for whatever reason. He indicated he would check with the Exton Library to see what their policy on using their meeting room.
3. Greg Buss confirmed the date of May 12, 2012 for the field trip to Culp's Hill in Gettysburg. Charlie Fennel has been confirmed as the tour guide for this date. For those staying over night, arrangements will be made for dinner. O'Rourke's was suggested as one possibility. Greg will also check on a group rate for the Wyndam Hotel. The tour will start at 10 AM. If finished early enough it was suggested seeing the Cyclorama at the visitor's center. Further details will follow.
4. Ted and Marilyn Pawlik will organize the day trip to Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. The plan is to arrange for a guide for a Saturday in June, car-pooling on your own and lunch at a nearby restaurant for those interested. Details will follow.
5. Bob Sprague reported on behalf of the Preservation Committee that acknowledgements were received of the recent donations made and that to date the Round Table has donated approximately \$28,000 for preservation.
6. Chip Crowe will contact Ryan Conroy to be guest speaker at the May 2nd meeting.
7. Nominations for officers for the 2012/2013 campaign will be held in April with elections being held in May. Hank Fisher volunteered to run for Vice President. Other openings include Editor of Newsletter and Speaker Committee.

8. A check was sent for a deposit for the banquet at the Elks Club on May 15th. To keep the cost down, it was recommended not to have the cheese appetizers. It was also recommended to ask John McGuckin to bring his speaker as it works well at the Elks.
9. The Executive Committee brainstormed guest speakers for the next campaign.
10. The Historian will put together a pamphlet for the banquet acknowledging the 25th anniversary of the Round Table.
11. Marilyn Pawlik will run extra copies of the Round Table pamphlet to distribute to other members who participate in other events.

**Minutes of the February 1, 2012 Meeting
BVCWRT
Submitted by Ted Pawlik
Chip Crowe - Presiding**

Treasurer's Report: (Dave Walter)

The bank balance as of 12/31/2011 was \$3324.28. Receipts for the month of January totaled \$505.00. Expenses for the month of January totaled \$324.56 leaving net revenue for the month of \$180.44. The bank balance as of 01/31/2012 was \$3504.72. There are 81 members of the BVCWRT.

Preservation Committee: (Chip Crowe)

The Preservation Committee made a recommendation to donate \$200.00 to the Civil War Trust for the preservation of the Perryville Battlefield. Every dollar donated is matched by \$3.28. A motion was made to adopt this recommendation and was seconded. The members present voted to pass the motion.

Field Trip: (Greg Buss)

Greg announced that the field trip to Culp's Hill would be on May 12th pending final confirmation from tour guide Charlie Fennell. Members are to arrange their own transportation to Gettysburg.

Other Business:

A sign up sheet was passed around asking member to volunteer to bring in goodies for the March social. The social will follow the performance by Charlie Zahm.

The speaker for the May meeting, Carol Berkin, informed Chip Crowe that, due to a family conflict, she will not be able to attend the meeting. Chip is in the process of getting another speaker.

The Union League of Philadelphia is having a free open house on Friday February 4, 2012 from 11 AM to 2 PM. Tours will be given and some of their historical artifacts will be on display. There is also a formal ball in the evening with tickets costing \$95.

Mike Kochan announced that he has available on DVD a book on torpedoes – from the Turtle to the Civil War. Cost is \$10.00.

Roger Arthur announce that he is offering a 3 session course thru the Chester County Night School on "1862 – The Turning Point". The course starts on March 20th. Those interested can register online thru the night school. Also, on March 24th, he is organizing a bus trip to Lincoln's Summer Home.

Ted Mann indicated he has placed on the Suttler's Table a 12 program series on Abraham Lincoln. The program is part of the Modern Scholars Series.

Speaker for the Evening: Jack Lieberman – Commodore Percival Drayton USN.

BOOK RAFFLE – Preservation Committee – March 7, 2012

The following books will be raffled off:

“**A Victor Not A Butcher: Ulysses S. Grant’ Military Genius.**” By Edward H. Bonekemper III.

“**They Called Him Stonewall: A Life of Lt. General T. J. Jackson, C. S. A.**” By Burke Davis.

“**Cigars, Whiskey & Winning: LEADERSHIP LESSONS from General Ulysses S. Grant.**” By Al Kaltman.

“**Lee’s Terrible Swift Sword: from Antietam to Chancellorsville – An Eyewitness History.**” By Richard Wheeler.

All raffle tickets for this drawing are: \$1.00 per ticket; \$5.00 for 6 tickets.

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION!

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Unfortunate bad news – Ed Bearss lost his daughter on February 13.

As many of you know, Ed lost his wife a few years ago as well.

After Sara was diagnosed with cancer at the beginning of the month it quickly became clear that it had spread so far and fast that it would not be possible to operate. She went into hospice care at Retreat Hospital in Richmond on Friday and died peacefully early Monday morning, 13 February. Her sister was with her. Sara will be buried in the Bethel Baptist Church cemetery, where her mother's family has a large plot, in Brandon, Mississippi.

Memorial contributions may be made in Sara's honor to the Library of Virginia Foundation.

If you would like to send Ed a personal note or card of condolence, his mailing address is: 1126 17th Street South – Arlington, VA 22202-1606

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The Limits of Lincoln’s Mercy

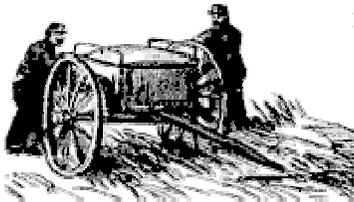
By RON SOODALTER

On a frosty day in late February 1862, at a little past noon, 400 people stood solemnly within the stone-walled courtyard of the Tombs, New York City’s jail. Eighty were marines, dressed in Union blue and standing rigidly at attention with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets; the rest of the crowd consisted of reporters, politicians and observers who had cadged invitations to an unusual execution. The condemned, flanked by government officials, was a small, dark-haired man in a black frock coat. His arms were pinioned, a black hood covered his face and a noose encircled his neck. He had been convicted of having piratically, feloniously, and forcibly captured 800 Negroes, with intent to make them slaves. His name was Nathaniel Gordon, and he was about to become the only man in American history to be executed for the crime of slave trading. After Gordon’s conviction, his lawyers had exercised the one option open to them a direct appeal to the president of the United States. The Constitution states that the president shall have the power to grant reprieves and pardons and no president in the history of this nation has been so praised, or so criticized, for his use of the pardoning power as Abraham Lincoln. He was, to some, a man of compassion and mercy, to others, a sentimental meddler who continually undermined military discipline and the sanctity of the courts. But in this case the habitually merciful Abraham Lincoln withheld his customary clemency and allowed the execution to take place. Why? Library of Congress: *The execution of Nathaniel Gordon*. There were three areas in which Lincoln’s pardoning power could be applied. The first related to cases in the civil courts. During his tenure, Lincoln reviewed 456 civil cases; 375 of them over 82 percent received pardons. The second class had to do with those in rebellion

against the government. This being the Civil War, more than half the country qualified. The third category was in military cases. It was here that Lincoln received the most criticism for what was perceived as his interference in the flow of military justice and discipline. He made it clear from the beginning that he was unwilling for any boy under 18 to be shot, and he had a tendency to pardon youths who had fallen asleep on guard duty or had deserted. Gen. Joseph Hooker once sent an envelope to the president containing the cases of 55 convicted and doomed deserters; Lincoln merely wrote Pardoned on the envelope and returned it to Hooker. Two men who felt that Lincoln had to be protected from his own kinder instincts were members of his cabinet. Gideon Welles, the secretary of the Navy, confided to his diary that the president is always disposed to mitigate punishment, and to grant favors, adding that sometimes this is a weakness. Edward Bates, Lincoln's first attorney general, defined the president as an ideal man, with but one failing: I have sometimes told him, Bates recalled, that he was unfit to be entrusted with the pardoning power. Why, if a man comes to him with a touching story his judgment is almost certain to be affected by it. Should the applicant be a woman a wife, a mother or a sister in 9 cases out of 10 her tears, if nothing else, are sure to prevail. His inclination toward mercy was certainly not lost on his generals, either. William Tecumseh Sherman made his frustration known in an 1864 letter to the judge advocate general, writing that he planned to execute a good many spies and guerrillas, without, as he put it bothering the president. Lincoln did interfere freely in affairs of military discipline. Responsible for the conduct of an increasingly ferocious war, he would not countenance taking life if no good would be served. But his approach to clemency for those in the ranks was neither whimsical nor haphazard. He believed that the most serious offenders should be punished; he offered no pardon to bounty jumpers or recruiters for the Confederacy. He refused to show favoritism to officers over enlisted men, and turned a deaf ear to the pleas of soldiers whose offenses smacked of meanness or brutality. Lincoln once told a friend, I reckon there never was a man raised in the country on a farm, where they are always butchering cattle and hogs and think nothing of it, that ever grew up with such an aversion to bloodshed as I have and yet I've had more questions of life and death to settle in four years than all the men who ever sat in this chair put together. But, I've managed to get along and do my duty, as I believe, and still save most of them. Nevertheless, he added, there are some cases where the law must be executed. It was in this frame of mind that Lincoln approached the Gordon case. Along with Gordon's lawyers came petitions containing thousands of names seeking mercy. The law, under which the man had been condemned, they argued, had been a dead letter for decades. Moreover, he harmed no Americans or committed treason.

Rhoda White, the wife of a New York judge a strong Lincoln supporter actually visited the White House, taking with her the condemned man's wife and mother. It was a particularly difficult time for the Lincolns; their 11-year-old son Willie ill and dying of typhoid, and his parents were beside themselves with grief. Mrs. White had written Lincoln exactly the type of letter that had worked so often in the past: I would not intrude upon the sanctity of your sickroom and upon your hours of grief but for the sake of mercy, and for the sake of an afflicted mother and wife who are bowed down with sorrow and look to God and to you to lift the heavy burden they are suffering under. But Lincoln, the reputed soft touch for a weeping wife and grieving mother, refused to see them. The ladies were instead given an audience with the ever-emotional Mary Lincoln; deeply moved, Mary tried to discuss a commutation with her husband. He flatly refused. What was it about this case that failed to call forth Lincoln's widely touted mercy? He tells us himself. Although he had always hated slavery, I think as much as any abolitionist, it was still legal in more than half the country, and as Lincoln had said in speech after speech, I believe there is no right, and ought to be no inclination in the people of the free states to interfere with the question of slavery at all. But Lincoln had no such ambivalence regarding the slave trade; he abhorred it, and more to the point, the law forbade it. On one of the numerous occasions when Lincoln was asked to consider mercy for Gordon, he stated, I believe I am kindly enough in nature, and can be moved to pity and to pardon the perpetrator of almost the worst crime that the mind of man can conceive or the arm of man can execute; but any man, who, for paltry gain and stimulated only by avarice, can rob Africa of her children to sell into interminable bondage, I never will pardon. Nathaniel Gordon was executed on Feb. 21, 1862.

Ron Soodalter is the author of Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader and a co-author of The Slave Next Door: Human Trafficking and Slavery in America Today. He is a featured writer and columnist for America's Civil War magazine and a frequent contributor to Civil War Times and Military History. Article obtained from Temple Website



2011-2012 Scheduled Speakers

- September 7, 2011 Dr. Sidney Copel “Civil War Entertainment”
- October 5, 2011 Louis Caban “Lee’s Retreat”
- November 2, 2011 Dave Walter and Don Ernsberger “Battle of Ball’s Bluff”
- December 7, 2011 Dan Cashin “Confederate Privateers”
- January 4, 2012 Hugh Boyle “Dan Sickles”
- February 1, 2012 Jack Lieberman, Capt USN (Ret) “ Commodore Percival Drayton, USN”
- March 7, 2012 Charles Zahm “Musical Presentation” plus Annual Spring Social
- April 4, 2012 Flo Williams “The Postal Service”
- May 2, 2012 Carol Berkin “Civil War Women”
- May TBD Trip to Culps Hill, Gettysburg, PA is being planned by Greg Buss
- May 15, 2012 Annual Banquet – Dennis Frye, Chief Historian, Harpers Ferry National Park “Antietam”

Additional Trips planned possibly to an Exhibit at the Union League and a guided tour of Laurel Hill Cemetery

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Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table Membership Application

Application Type: New Renewal

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

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

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**ANNUAL BANQUET
BRANDYWINE VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

WHEN: Wednesday, May 15, 2012

- 6:00 pm: Cash Bar
- 7:00 pm: Dinner
- 8:00 pm: Guest Speaker **Dennis Frye, Chief Historian, Harper Ferry National Park “Antietam”**

WHERE: The Elks Lodge
335 West Washington Street
West Chester, PA 19381

MENU: Tossed Garden Salad
Choice of:

- **Boneless Breast of Chicken** Marsala, with sliced mushrooms and herbs in a Marsala wine sauce with roasted red bliss potatoes
 - **Virginia Baked Ham** with a Honey Mustard Glaze and roasted red bliss potatoes
 - **Pan Seared Filet of Flounder**, served with a lemon butter sauce and a side of rice
- All entrees include: Vegetable du jour, rolls and butter, coffee and tea
Dessert: Cheesecake with Strawberry Topping

Speaker: Dennis Frye, Chief Historian, Harper Ferry National Park “Antietam”

Cost: \$40.00 PER PERSON

RESERVATION DEADLINE – May 2, 2012 at 7:00 PM! - NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

Order Form: Detach, complete reservation, and send with payment to:

Dave Walter, Treasurer, 937 Thorne Drive, West Chester, PA 19382 - (610-363-8903)

Name _____ Chicken ___ Ham ___ Fish

Name _____ Chicken ___ Ham ___ Fish

Name _____ Chicken ___ Ham ___ Fish

Address _____

_____ X \$40.00 = Total Amount Due _____ **(DEADLINE – May 2, 2012 at 7:00 PM!)**

Make checks payable to: Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table

(Cancelled checks are your receipt)

BANQUET DATE – Wed, May 15, 2012

**BRANDYWINE VALLEY
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

