

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

2016 – Edition 5 – April

Upcoming Events

Sponsored Events

None proposed at this time

Sanctioned Events

Beverly Heritage Days, July 22-24

Events Recommended by WVRA members

Barboursville (W.Va.) Civil War Days – May 13-15

Grafton National Cemetery – Lantern Tour, May 27th; 8:30 pm, contact Mark Tennant

Philippi Blue and Gray Reunion – June 3-5, 2016

McConnellsville (Ohio) – July 8-10, register by mail. Contact crcritch608@yahoo.com for registration form.

Dry Creek (Greenbrier State Forest) – Aug 19-22

Bulltown – October 7-9, 2016 – Hosted by 10th W. Va. and Army Corps of Engineers, contact Sam Krafft for details

Elmwood Manor – Union, West Virginia, August 26-28, 2016, contact Chris Johnson at wvaca@hughes.net

Peterstown, WV (Monroe Co.) Civil War Festival Oct 7-9, 2016. Contact: Chris Johnson-wvaca@hughes.net

Guyandotte (W. Va.) Civil War Days – November 4-6

Other - 2016

Buchanan, Virginia – April 28-29 (suggested by our friends in the 24th Va/83rd Pa)

New Market – May 13-15

Barboursville (W.Va.) Civil War Days – May 13-15

Thunder in the Valley - Cross Keys and port Republic, Va. June 10-12
mike@malverngranite.com

153rd Gettysburg – July 1-3

<http://www.gettysburgreenactment.com/>

1st Bull Run – July 22-24 (at Cedar Creek Battlefield) www.ccbf.us

Jackson's Mill – September (assume it will be Labor Day weekend)

Sidney, Ohio – Sept. 16-18, 2016 (suggested by the USV)

Cedar Creek – October 14-16, 2016,
www.ccbf.us

Next Meeting

At the March 5 meeting, the WVRA voted to hold its next meeting on Saturday, June 4 at the Philippi event after the Saturday battle. The meeting will be held at the Pavilion by the river next to THE bridge. Meeting time will be between 3 or 4 pm.

Beverly Heritage Days

At the March 5 meeting, the Beverly Heritage Day event was approved as a WVRA Sanctioned Event. If you are interested in attending as a Civil War reenactor, contact Mark Tennant soon.

According to our by-laws: "*Sanctioned Events are those not planned or organized by the WVRA, but approved by the Association for official participation. Attendance at sanctioned events is expected of all WVRA members.*"
Note -The rest of that by-law can be found at WVRA.org.

Beverly Heritage Days – Centuries of History are scheduled for July 22 through July 24 at Beverly, W. Va. This event will be a "timeline" featuring living history and other programming from periods throughout Beverly's history. By timeline, the intent is to allow living history from multiple time periods. Preliminary planning shows living historians from the pioneer and Native American, Civil War and World War II periods. However, other periods may be represented.



Figure 1- Park Clean Up Day - Three WVRA members participated in the Rich Mountain clean up on April 2. Over 30 bags of trash were collected along with satellite dish, a handful of tires, etc. Chuck Critchfield, Phyllis Baxter and Hunter Lesser

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Union, West Virginia

Chris Johnson (25th Va) has issued a call to all living historians to attend the “Federal Occupation of Union, West Virginia at Union in Monroe County August 26-28, 2016. He says he needs Union troops, Southern civilians, Confederate Home Guard, and artillery demonstrations. Chris asks WVRA members to put it on their calendar now. Details will come soon.

School of the Soldier

The 31st Va. and 36th Va. of Wise's Legion are having a School of the Soldier at Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park. The WVRA and any members (CS and US) are 'cordially' invited to attend since there is little interest with the WVRA to hold our own School of the Soldier.

31st Virginia School of the Soldier is scheduled for Friday through Sunday, April 15 through 17. This is an encampment April 16 (Editor's note: not sure what they mean by an encampment)

36th Virginia School of the Soldier, Friday through Sunday, May 27 through May 29. There is an encampment on May 16.

- Submitted by Chris Johnson

Grafton National Cemetery Lantern Tour,

On Friday May 27, at 8:30 pm, the Grafton National Cemetery will host a lantern tour. Please contact Mark Tennant if you are interested. This is the same event he has helped to organize over the past several years. All registered reenactors invited to a catered meal at 6:00 pm. Gas money is available. Contact Mark Tennant for details. The reenactors who I have talked with in the past about this event, have highly praised the ceremonies and recommend it to all to attend.

McConnellsville, Ohio

I received information on the annual McConnellsville, Ohio event, July 8, 9 and 10. Ralph McCready, WVRA member is involved in the event and invites all WVRA members to attend. McConnellsville is not far from the Ohio River and therefore close to many of us in West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania, not to mention our Eastern Ohio members.

This is another event that I have heard nothing but good comments concerning. The event “sponsor” has created a small village that is the center of the Sunday reenactment. This year's Sunday reenactment is title “Sherman marches on Georgia.” Ralph has sent me registration forms as this event has no on-line registration process. I can email the forms to you if you are interested (ccritch608@yahoo.com)

Philippi

Lt. Col. Kevin Skaggs has provided me with a copy of the registration forms for Philippi. There is no on-line registration for the June 2-5, 2016 event. If you would like a copy of the registration form, let me know.

Memory Vs. History

While surfing through You Tube videos on the Civil War, I found an interesting lecture from well-known historian Gary Gallagher, discussing the disappearance of the Union from the memory of the Civil War. Simply put, he advocated that at the time of the war, the vast majority of Northern citizens supported the war as an effort to restore the Union not a war of emancipation. Now, he opined, our collective memory is much more focused on freeing the slaves and the war to preserve the Union, has slipped away. He cites primary sources that show only a minority of abolitionists would have supported a war to free the slaves.

From there, he discussed the difference between the memory of the Civil War and the History of the Civil War and how there are often two distinct things. It was a very fascinating talk, especially in light of the continuing discussion about the causes of the war, which seem to erupt every so often. Like after South Carolina's legislature voted to move the Confederate battle flag from the capitol grounds to a museum.

Gallagher's talk led to another You Tube video of UCLA professor Joan Waugh, and her presentation to Chautauqua in 2013 during which she discussed the four different interpretations or memories of the Civil War. In other words, the war is remembered primarily in four different ways. First there is the Union Cause which says that secession should not be allowed to destroy this country, which is based on liberty, freedom, democracy and is the greatest country on earth. Next there is the Confederate or Lost Cause argument that celebrates the sacrifices of the southerners who fought to gain independence from the tyrants of the North which also tends

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downplay the role slavery played in the war. Third is the Emancipation view which tends to focus on the removal of the stain of slavery from the soul of this nation. Lastly she described the Reconciliation memory which tends to combine the agreeable parts of the Union and Lost Cause and ignores the Emancipation memory. It is characterized by emphasis on forgetting the quarrels of the war and promoting the post-war brotherhood and comradeship, the bravery and dedication of the participants. As Waugh suggested, it is the National Park Service theme at battlefield parks.

I had heard of the Lost Cause controversy for years, which I believe began before the war was over but was really picked up in 1866 by former Confederates, primarily Virginians. Jubal Early is mentioned prominently for his role in initiating this memory. I picked up a book entitled “The Myth of the Lost Cause – Why the South Fought the Civil War and Why the North Won.”

In this book, author Edward H. Bonekemper III presents the seven leading contentions of the Lost Cause school of memory or as he terms it; the “Myth of the Lost Cause.”

1. Slavery was a benevolent institution for all involved but was dying by 1861. There was therefore no need to abolish slavery suddenly, especially by war.
2. States’ rights, not slavery was the cause of secession and the establishment of the Confederacy and thus of the Civil War.
3. The confederacy had no chance of winning the Civil War and did the best it could with the limited resources it had.
4. Robert E. Lee, who led the Confederates to near-victory, was one of the greatest generals in history.
5. James Longstreet caused Lee to lose the Battle of Gettysburg and thus the Civil War.
6. Ulysses S. Grant was an incompetent “butcher” who won the war only by brute force and superior numbers.
7. The Union won the war by waging unprecedented and precedent-setting “total war.”

Needless to say, the title gives you a big hint that this author is going to refute the seven contentions listed above. He presents in some detail, his opposition to the Lost Cause memory. He also discusses to some extent how the Lost Cause memory has filtered down to the present day and how it still flavors the political discourse today.

I found this book very interesting. This subject could lend itself to a dense, academic study. However, he keeps the book moving. Anyone ascribing to the Lost Cause will probably not enjoy the book. The chapter on Robert E. Lee in particular will irritate some.

I would recommend it as a good explanation of the post-war interpretation of the war, to anyone interested in that era.

- C. L. Critchfield

WVRA Officers 2016 (executive board)

President – Mark Tennant

Vice President – Bill Brisendine

Treasurer – Jim Barnes

Secretary – Jack Rush

Newsletter editor - Chuck Critchfield*

Website – Peter Baxter*

1st W. Va. Rep – Chuck Critchfield

25th Va. Rep – Chris Johnson

1st Va. Cavalry – John Brasuk

Artillery – vacant

TASAS – Diane Tennant

* Non-voting member of executive board

Treasurer’s Report

From Jim Barnes. WVRA Treasurer:

Starting balance: \$4376.32

Credits: 90.00

Debits: 22.95

(Webcom and bank service charge)

Ending balance: \$4440.37

Submitted April 6, 2016

By Company Into Line

The command of the United States Volunteers has asked company commanders to work on the basic company maneuvers for the upcoming season. Since I can’t get anyone to show for School of the Soldier any longer and since this subject is beneficial to both sides, here is a brief summary of one of those maneuvers – “By company; into line; MARCH!”

Simply put, this is the maneuver that takes a company from column of fours (or march by the

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right flank) into a battle line, facing in the same direction that column was headed – straight ahead. The captain will order the column of fours to form into battle line by commanding:

“BY COMPANY, INTO LINE”

“MARCH”

At the command march, the first sergeant will continue to march straight forward. The men will go to right should shift, take the double quick step and move into battle line by the shortest route arriving successively from the right and assuming shoulder arms while continuing to move forward to the step. Remember, you are basically forming a battle line and therefore you are forming to the first sergeant's left. The front rank will be forming first with the corresponding rear member forming directly behind him.

In my days as a private, I was always careful to observe when the company was initially formed, who was on my right and left and directly behind or in front of me. These same soldiers should be on your right, left, etc. once the By Company Into Line maneuver is completed.

If the company, once formed by this command into a battle line, is part of a column of companies, the captain will be reminding the company that the dress is to the left. If the company is not part of a column, the dress is like on the first sergeant.

Editor's Corner

Jim Barnes posted an interesting video from a reenactment showing an advancing line of battle passing over or past enemy casualties prostrate on the ground. The Company commander pauses and fires his pistol at one of the wounded. Then a few seconds later, an infantryman falls out of the ragged in to shoot the same man again.

It is hard to tell, but the pistol muzzle appears to be directed at the soldier. The rifle muzzle was directed at the ground several feet away from the casualty.

Neither is safe. I hope all WVRA members realize this is not behavior that is acceptable.

The video is available on the WVRA-TASAS Facebook page.

I have been shot close range twice that I can recall. Once at Cheat Summit at a range of less than 20 feet through a small tree. The muzzle blast hit me, but did no permanent damage. At Ogelbay, charging and taking breastworks, a cavalryman shot me with a revolver at close range and I suffered a minor burn on the top of my hand. I remember Jim being shot a close range in one of the Rich Mountain reenactments and Mark Tennant getting a full blast from a small arms weapon at Philippi. I hear more stories of ram rods being used, wadding loads, etc.

Please do not send any correspondence to the PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the respective insurance policies that the 1st West Virginia and the 25th Virginia infantry units participate in, you must be a member of record. TASAS members who are also spouses of 1st W. Va. members are covered under the USV insurance.

The newsletter is being sent by email to members of record who provided a VALID email address. It is posted on the WVRA website also. It is mailed to anyone who pays the \$15 annual mailing costs. It continues to be my plan to publish related articles of interest in addition to the items mandated by our by-laws (meeting minutes, treasurer's report, etc.).

Yours truly, has no connection to the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page and takes no responsibility for it. Nor do I have any responsibility for the WVRA Facebook page. I would suggest that the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page seems to have more up to date information.

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The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA

WVRA website - wvra.org

Facebook – *WVRA – TransAllegheny Soldiers Aid Society*

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