

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2020 - October - Edition X

Upcoming Events

A note from the Editor

I have noted on this schedule the events that have notified me, that their event is canceled. If you are interested in any event on this schedule, I suggest **you contact the event** or the contact person listed to determine if the event is canceled or not canceled.

Civil War Sponsored

None at this time

Sanctioned

None at this time

Other Events recommended by WVRA members

Burlington (Apple Harvest Festival) - CANCELED October 3-4. Contact Dave Judy for more information 304-749-7957

Rich Mountain Battlefield Tour
- October 3, 2020, 1 pm.

Droop Mountain (CANCELED) --October 9-11 <https://battleofdroopmountain.com/2019-battle-of-dry-creek>

Hurricane Bridge Battlefield Tour - Oct. 24. (see below)

Guyandotte -- Nov 5-8, 2020 (tentative) contact Roger House for more information

Other Events

Cedar Creek, Oct. 17 and 18, 2020 - Middletown, Va. - **CANCELED**

Fredericksburg, Dec. 11-13, 2020, Fredericksburg, Va.

Bulltown - CANCELED
2021

Chancellorsville May 1-2, 2021 - NPS Event

Other Time Periods

Timeline - November 7-8, Troops and Trains. RR Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, PA. <https://rrmuseumpa.org/events/>

Next Meeting

No meeting is scheduled at this time.

Liability Certificate

A PDF copy of the WVRA's liability or insurance certificate was emailed to members with an email address on April 6. That email also contained the April newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact me at ccritch608@yahoo.com

Treasurer's Report

September 1 through 31, 2020

Beginning balance	\$2,927.34
Credits	\$0.00
Debits	
WVRA Domain Name Registration (5 years) (reimbursement to Peter Baxter)	\$ 113.26
Ending Balance	\$2,814.08

Submitted by Jack Rush, Treasurer, WVRA

Upcoming Events

Droop

West Virginia State Parks has canceled Droop Mountain.

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Hurricane Bridge Battlefield Tour

Author Historian Phillip Hatfield, PhD will host a tour of the March 28, 1863 Hurricane Bridge battlefield Saturday, October 24, from 11 am until 1:30 pm. Event is free, family friendly and if Covid-19 precautions are still in effect, will observed current guidelines. Dr. Hatfield's study of this battle has shown it was much larger than previously thought, and also had a key but often overlooked strategic importance for both armies. Be prepared to walk up to a half mile and dress for a wooded area outdoors. Park at Hurricane Town Elementary School parking lot. Shuttle service to the battlefield area will be provided.

GPS to the school lot is 300 Harbor Lane, Hurricane, W. Va. 25526.

@35thstarpublishing

-- Submitted by Bill Donegan

Civil War Roundtables The Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable

The SJCWRT has meetings scheduled for Tuesday, October 13 and November 10. No speaker or location has been announced yet.

Event Reviews

None at this time

Other Features

Wandering Through The Grave Yard

Recently, while reading about the Civil War in Clarksburg, I came upon a brief biography of Robert Sanders Northcott, Lt. Col. of the 12th West Virginia Infantry.

Northcott, a Tennessee native, was living in Clarksburg at the time of Lincoln's call for additional troops in the mid-1862. He was appointed Lt. Col of the 12th Virginia

Infantry and by March, 1865 was brevetted Brigadier General of Volunteers. In died in 1906 and his weather-beaten tombstone, partially legible stands in the Odd Fellows Cemetery. I stumbled upon it while searching for more famous figures buried in this cemetery.



Figure 1 Brevet Brigadier General Robert S. Northcott, 12th West Virginia Infantry. Weather-beaten gravestone is in the Odd Fellows cemetery in Clarksburg.

Attempts to Remove Statue Have Been Stonewalled - So Far

(Excerpts from an article by Joann Snoderly in the Exponent-Telgram, Aug. 9, 2020)

So far, the Harrison County Commission has voted twice, both times by 2-1 votes, to keep the statue of Thomas J. Jackson on the front lawn of the Harrison County Court House. One of the yes votes lost the primary election and now a new commissioner will be selected in November. Could that change the vote?

In early August an article appeared in the Clarksburg paper that provided some interesting history of the statue. Interestingly enough, this story points to the partisan nature of the erection of

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this statue. Little or no support came from Republicans, still the traditional party of Lincoln in the 1950's. It seems that the Republican newspaper of the time, Clarksburg Telegram, gave no mention of the statue. There is no mention in the recent article as to any coverage in the Democratic newspaper (Exponent??), but the Republican paper publisher apparently wanted to steer away because Jackson backed the South in the Civil War.

As Joann Snoderly writes in her article:

"As the debate of the statue continues, documents at the Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library [shed](#) light into the movement in the early 1950s to bring the statue to Clarksburg and its ultimate unveiling.

"David Houchin, amateur historian and special collections librarian at the Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library, will work at the request of the county commission over the coming months to put together a chronology of the effort and transcribe audiotapes that could shed light into the mindset of those on the county commission who accepted the statue.

"According to newspaper articles and other documents already presented to the commission by Houchin, the effort was headed by a steering committee formed by a Stonewall Jackson chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

"Joseph Terrell, a general manager of West Virginia Transportation Co., headed up the steering committee to bring to Clarksburg the statue by New York sculptor Charles Keck, who had previously created a larger monument for Charlottesville, Virginia, according to Houchin.

"An early estimate placed to erect the statue at \$15,000. Two anonymous donors made contributions of \$2,000 each for the project, he said.

After Keck's death, however, his [widow](#) agreed to sell the statue for \$2,500, and the granite base was secured for \$1,500.

"The whole thing was brought in for \$4,000," Houchin said, and the dedication was held on May

10, 1953, on the 90th [anniversary](#) of Jackson's death.....

".....A list of project sponsors — which includes former-Gov. John J. Cornwell; Sophia Benedum; former-Judge J. Phillip Clifford; Mrs. J. Carl Vance; former county schools Superintendent A.V. Upton; and editors of the Fairmont Times, Mineral Daily News, Martinsburg Journal, Weston Democrat and Buckhannon Record — states the fundraising effort was 'strictly non-partisan and non-sectional,' with the purpose being to honor 'one of the greatest military commanders of all time' who was 'the highest type of Christian manhood.'"

A number of participants in the project and local leaders were part of the dedication ceremonies.

" 'There was absolutely no participation by the black community in Clarksburg,' Houchin said. 'It seems as if on the Republican side ... when the Republicans were still the party of Lincoln and depended on the black vote ... I don't think the Republicans were much of a sponsor of this little move.'

" 'According to Houchin, numerous newspaper articles could be found in the Weston Democrat and other publications in the state, but no mention whatsoever of the statue could be found in the Clarksburg Telegram, which was the area's Republican newspaper at the time.

" 'I think they may have just put a blackout on this,' he said. 'I think that the publishing company and the Highland family and the Clarksburg Telegram were probably opposed to the whole thing.'

"An April 1953 letter from Roy Bird Cook to Telegram publisher Cecil Highland Sr. uncovered by Houchin seems to corroborate Houchin's assertion. In the letter, Cook questions why there was no local news coverage of the acquisition and dedication of the statue.

" 'Cook asserts in the letter that he heard from "a newspaper man" that he understood it would be the policy of the local papers "not to mention Jackson, as he had espoused the cause of the South."'

" 'I get the impression that it was rather a partisan matter at the time, although none of these

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documents say that in so many words,' Houchin said."

Questions remain thanks to the upcoming election. If the new Commissioner sides with requests to relocate Stonewall, the issue will jump to the forefront again. Additionally, what were the motivations of the Daughters in the early 1950's? A period of time when desegregation was roiling America. If it is relocated, where should it be moved? Should the union meeting plaque inside the courthouse be moved beside Stonewall?



Figure 2 Clarksburg Odd Fellows Cemetery in the back. With all the vandalism in that part of the cemetery, it's good to see the Senator still standing.

ATTENTION MEMBERS

As I mentioned on the Facebook page, I invite members to send me a story on your relatives who fought in the Civil War -- or any war in particular. This was suggested by Tim Glaser and I think it is a great. Also, as I have done in the past with ZERO results, send me your favorite reenacting story. Or a story of your favorite reenactment.

-- Chuck Critchfield, editor

A Tribute to Edwin C. Bearss: Champion of West Virginia Battlefields

By Hunter Lesser

Edwin Cole Bearss, legendary battlefield guide and preservationist, Chief Historian *Emeritus* of the National Park Service and decorated Marine veteran of World War II, passed away on September 15, 2020 at age 97. See battlefields.org for a marvelous eulogy to his amazing life.

As NPS Chief Historian and a board member of what is now the American Battlefield Trust, Ed was a tireless advocate for battlefield preservation nationwide. He played a key role in the preservation of numerous properties in West Virginia, including Rich Mountain Battlefield. Ed supported efforts by the fledgling Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation, ensuring this important site would be protected for the ages.

Ed was a masterful interpreter and spellbinding battlefield guide. He believed you had to walk a battlefield to understand it. His deep, raspy voice and dramatic style were unforgettable, aptly described by one reviewer as "Homeric monologues." Ed kept a breakneck schedule into his 90's—on the road for some 200 days a year, with a huge following of loyal fans, the Bearss Brigade.

I was fortunate to be Ed's "color man" on a number of West Virginia battlefield tours. A few anecdotes might best describe the magic of this "Pied Piper" of history:

Ever the Marine, Ed was indefatigable. Once he drove through the night to lead a tour early the next morning. Dismissing our concerns, he replied, "I'm running on adrenaline!" Even later in life, Ed enjoyed racing up steep terrain to the historic "high ground" while leading tours. He eyed his younger guests impatiently as they huffed and puffed to keep up at battlefields like Rich Mountain, Kessler's Cross Lanes, Greenbrier River and Camp Allegheny. Pointing out features with his ever-

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present swagger stick, Ed used the ground to drive home his colorful narratives.

One day as our tour bus bounced to a halt at Valley Mountain in Pocahontas County, Ed jumped out and began to narrate the events of Robert E. Lee's first campaign of the Civil War. Weather played a prominent role in the story. It happened to be raining as we got off the bus, and everyone sported rain gear or umbrellas. Not Ed. Standing in the cold rain, clad in a cotton t-shirt, he began to spin the tale. "It was raining harder than this in 1861," Ed rasped while relating the non-stop rain, the sickness and failure of Lee's campaign. "Much harder than this!"

As Ed continued, the rain got heavier. He was soaking wet, but in no hurry. Soon the storm became a downpour. Ed wore a "Rich Mountain Battlefield" cap, which flattened on his head from the pummeling rain. Finally, with a gleam in his eye, Ed boomed: "NOW it's raining like it did in 1861!"

The haunting landscape at Camp Allegheny made that mountaintop stronghold one of Ed's favorite Civil War battlefields. "And I've seen most of them," he added with a wink. During the Congressionally-appointed Civil War Sites Advisory Commission tour in the 1990's, I helped Ed guide a busload of distinguished historians, dignitaries and Washington staffers to various West Virginia battlefields. One spring day, as the bus climbed U.S. Rt. 250 to the intersection of a gravel road that led to Camp Allegheny, we discovered three inches of freshly fallen snow! Tree branches hung ominously in the narrow roadway, giving it the look of a tunnel.

The bus driver would go no further. The beltway staffers balked as well. We were stymied. I knew Ed desperately wanted that group to see Camp Allegheny (as did I). Seated behind the driver, Ed turned to the rear and looked at me, seated beside historian James McPherson of Princeton. He rasped: "How far is it to Camp Allegheny?"

"Less than two miles," I answered cheerfully. Ed repeated loudly to the group; "Hunter says it's less than two miles."

"Is it a good road, Hunter?" "A gravel forest road with good base," was my reply. Ed cried out, "Hunter says it's a good road!"

"Do you think we can make it, Hunter?" Ah, the crux of the matter. "Yes, I replied warily, thinking of the repercussions if that bus slid off the mountain, "if we take it slowly."

"Hunter says we can make it! Ed bellowed, "LET'S GO!"

And we did. Camp Allegheny figured prominently in their report to Congress.

When you visit an historic battlefield, protected and interpreted for posterity, give thanks to Ed Bearss, a true American legend.

Other Time Periods

Book Review

The British Are Coming

by Rick Atkinson

I am a fan of Rick Atkinson's trilogy of the American Army in Europe (and Africa) during World War II. The three books are an exhaustive and entertaining narrative and analysis of the US Army's march to victory over Italy and Germany from 1942-45.

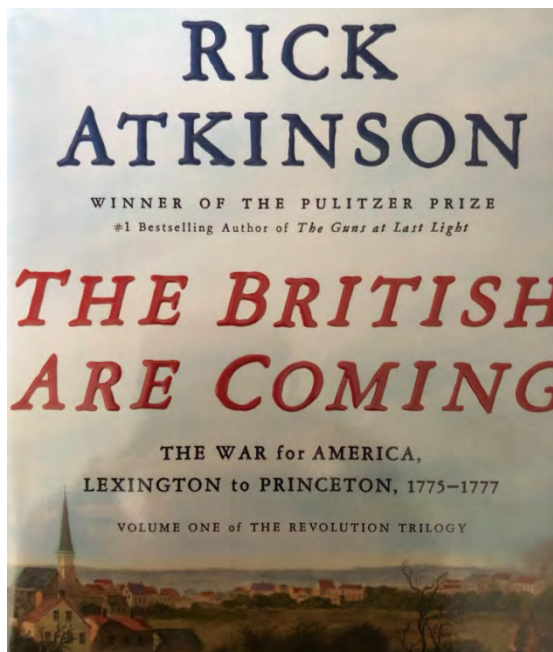
I was excited to see he was tackling the American Revolution and I eagerly bought and read The British Are Coming - The War for America, Lexington to Princeton, 1775-1777. However, Atkinson took a subject that was vastly different. The primary source material that he used to make his World War II trilogy so outstanding was just not available. Boundless sources exist to help the historian write about World War II. The Revolution sources have been exhausted, at least on this side of the pond. The result is a history of that period that resembles many other volumes written beforehand.

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Don't get me wrong, I recommend this book and Atkinson still manages to discover stories that add to already written history - especially from the British side. He has a very engaging writing style, that makes the book easy (for me) to read. The maps and pictures add greatly to this volume. Atkinson's analysis of the actions of both sides is welcomed and interesting.

-- Chuck Critchfield



For Sale

Tim Koch (or Cook?) a reenactor in the Morgantown area is selling a large group of Civil War reenacting equipment from weapons to clothing. As of October 2019, he still had items remaining. For more information call Tim at 304-906-552.

FREE!!!

Two children's camp dresses, two teenage camp dresses, one adult camp dress (size 14). Contact Porter Stiles through Instant Messenger or Facebook for pictures and further information. FREE!!!!

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"They Said It (or didn't)"

Quotes from the famous, nearly famous, not famous and infamous.

"Don't believe everything you read on the Internet just because there's a photo with a quote next to it."

-- Abraham Lincoln, February 31, 1866

"Unhappily for us, unhappily for Britain, the madness of an avaricious minister...has brought upon the stage discord, envy, hatred, and revenge, with civil war close in their rear....Our streets are again filled with armed men. Our harbor is crowded with ships of war. But these cannot intimidate us. Our liberty must be preserved. it is far dearer than life."

- Dr. Joseph Warren, March, 1775, from a speech at the annual commemoration of the Boston Massacre with 40 British army officers seated in the front rows and pledged to draw swords and slaughter anyone who insulted the king.

"What real share, so far as intellect is concerned, could the peasantry of the west, be supposed to take in the affairs of the state."

- Benjamin Watkins Lee, Virginian politician from south or Richmond about 1829 in response to western Virginians complaints about lack of a voice in the Virginia state government.

*"She is steering straight for the **Cumberland** -- the **Cumberland** gives her a broadside -- She keels over -- Seems to be sinking -- No, she comes on again -- She has struck the **Cumberland** and poured a broadside into her -- God! The **Cumberland** is sinking --"*

- Telegrams describing the ironclad Virginia's attack on the Cumberland. From Looming Civil War by Jason Phillips.

"I suppose, the reasons were not so much military as political the idea being to occupy as much as Western Virginia as possible, in order to secure the support of her hard population, and to preserve if possible the integrity of the old State."

- Bishop George W. Peterkin, Episcopal Bishop of West Virginia, June 17, 1902 He was a member of the 21st Virginia during Lee's first campaign in Western Virginia.

Other Sites

American Battlefield Trust - www.battlefields.org

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Beverly Heritage Center -

www.beverlyheritagecenter.org

Mason Dixon Civil War Roundtable -

www.wvmasondixoncwr.org/

Link to Clarksburg History Museum -

<https://clarksburgmuseum.wixsite.com/history>

Battle of Gettysburg Podcast -

Addressing Gettysburg podcast -

WVRA Officers 2020

Jim Barnes - President

Ken Connell - Vice President

Jack Rush - Secretary/Treasurer

- Unit Rep (TASAS)

- Unit Rep (1st W. Va. Infantry)

Bill Brisendine - Unit Rep (25th Virginia
Infantry)

Dave Judy - Unit Rep (artillery)

Webmaster - Peter Baxter

Editor - Chuck Critchfield

ATTENTION - 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 liability insurance policy purchased by the WVRA, you must be a member. The other group is labeled simply West Virginia Reenactors Association. Tonya Daft is the administrator on the West Virginia Reenactors Association page. Please address all questions to her about that page. I am not sure who is administrator to the WVRA-TASAS page. I continue to use the WVRA-TASAS page to post announcements as it has been the page getting the most use.

As newsletter editor, I encourage submissions from members or readers, that are related to American history. I retain the right as editor to make a final decision on the content of this publication. Abusive or political submissions will not be published.

Editor's Corner

The Editor's chance to speak

THANK YOU to Jim Barnes, Hunter Lesser, Peter Baxter and Jack Rush for their contributions to this edition. Hunter's memories of Ed Bearss are priceless.

FACEBOOK - I have wandered away from Facebook and its constant barrage of political posts that

swamp my newsfeed everyday. I do however try to monitor my "Groups." Including the WVRA related groups.

Recently I came across a post from somebody bragging about the "abolitionist" history of West Virginia. Nobody should be fooled into thinking that West Virginia had strong ties to abolitionism in the mid-19th Century.

The first state constitution was rejected by Abraham Lincoln and Congress. It did not abolish slavery. The statehood movement had to add an emancipation clause before it would be accepted. In February 1863, Waitman T. Willey proposed an amendment that after July 4, 1863 all slaves under 21 years old would be freed when they reached the age of 21. The Willey amendment was accepted and the constitution ratified by the voters of West Virginia. West Virginia was forced to abolish slavery after the passage of the 13th amendment.

WE WERE VERY SADDENED to hear about the death of former member Charlie Stewart on August 18. Condolences can be sent to The Stewart Family, PO Box 212, Lynco, WV, 24857.

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Association

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$10 per year fee.

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

WVRA website - wvra.org

Chuck Critchfield - Editor

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"We tend to create stories that appeal to us. Then we impose those stories on the past."

- A Wallace Collection video produced on the 500th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt - found on YouTube

"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world."

- Robert Penn Warren