

# Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

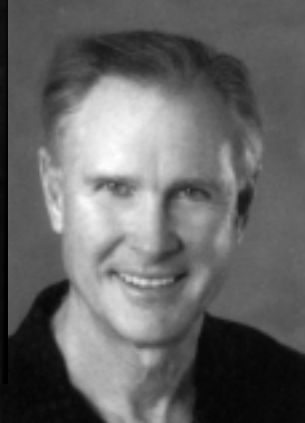


May 2004, The One Hundred and Forty-Third Year of the Civil War

## May Meetings of 2004



Gordon Rhea



### May 5 Wednesday Special Program

The May 5th Special Program of the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table will start at 7:30 pm on Wednesday at the Civil War and Underground Railroad Museum at 1805 Pine Street in Philadelphia. The speaker will be **Gordon Rhea**. Gordon's topic will be "*Cold Harbor*". Gordon is the author of *The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864*; *The Battle for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern, May 7-12, 1864*; *To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May 13-25, 1864*, and *Cold Harbor, Grant and Lee, May 26-June 3, 1864*; winner of the Fletcher Pratt Literary Award. His newest book is *Carrying the Flag, The Story of Private Charles Whilden, the Confederacy's Most Unlikely Hero*. He has been a speaker at Old Baldy several times and is a frequent lecturer throughout the country. He lives in Saint Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands and in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, with his wife and two sons.

### May 13 Thursday Meeting

The May 13th Meeting of the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table will start at 7:30 pm on Thursday at the Civil War and Underground Railroad Museum at 1805 Pine Street in Philadelphia. The speaker will be **William Welsch**. William's topic will be "*General Samuel Cooper*". William is a noted Civil War author.

Jefferson Davis said,

*"The many who measure the value of an officer's service by the conspicuous part he played upon the fields of battle, may not properly estimate the worth of Cooper's services in the war between the States."*

Although General Cooper's contributions to history are everlasting, he is one of the least recognized and written about generals that served the South. Adjutant and Inspector General Samuel Cooper served both the United States of America and The Confederate States of America.



General Samuel Cooper  
June 12, 1798  
December 3, 1876

### "Color Bearers at Gettysburg"

At the April meeting **Mike Dreese's** gave us a fine presentation of stories in his books "*Never Desert the Old Flag*" and "*This Flag Never Goes Down*".

His presentation consisted of fascinating stories of Union and Confederate color bearers and their flags during the climactic three-day Battle of Gettysburg. What powerful mystique these battle-flags held that caused ordinary men to perform almost super-human deeds.

*continued on next page*

**Bring a friend, neighbor and another Civil War buff to enjoy a fascinating subject and to support our speakers at Old Baldy.**

Why men vied for the honor of carrying their banners when death or serious injury was almost always the inevitable result.

He presented a fresh perspective of this famous battle while capturing the bravery, the sacrifice, the dedication, and even the humor, of the men who carried and protected the flags.

**Michael Dreese**



Photos - Pat Caldwell

## Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers for Winter/Spring/Summer 2004

### May 5 - Wednesday **Special Program** **Gordon Rhea**

Author

The Topic: *The Battle of Cold Harbor*

### May 13 - Thursday **William M. Welsch**

Author

Topic: *"General Samuel Cooper, CSA"*

### June 10 - Thursday **Edward Bonekemper**

Author

Topic: *Was Ulysses Grant a Butcher?*

### July 8 - Thursday **Nancy Caldwell**

President Old Baldy CWRT

Topic: *Civil War Horses*

### August 21 - Saturday **H. Wilson Greene**

Executive Director of Pamplin Park, Author, Historian

Topic: *TBA*

**Annual Fund Raising Dinner**  
**Reservations Required**  
**Radisson Hotel, Route One, Trevoese, PA**

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, begin  
at 7:30 PM at the  
Civil War Library and Museum,  
1805 Pine Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Questions to Mike Cavanaugh at 215.725.3602 or  
chief96pbi@juno.com

## The President's Letter

*Hi Everyone,*

I hope everyone had a good holiday. Old Baldy members have an exciting month ahead of us. We have not one but two meetings this month. The first one being on Wednesday, May 5th when we will hear a special program presented by author **Gordon Rhea** on the Battle of Cold Harbor. And right behind this meeting is our usual Thursday meeting on May 13th when we will have author **William Welsch** speak on General Samuel Cooper, CSA.

And just following our meetings will be the World War II seminar with Old Baldy Round Table in conjunction with the Delval and Allentown Round Tables. This should be a terrific program. Our program director, **Mike Cavanaugh** has once again put together a great lineup of speakers. This will feature keynote speaker, **Dr. Thomas Childers**, author and professor of History at the University of PA. And on our panel of veterans to name just a few will be **Mr. Bill Guamere**, a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division - "Band of Brothers" (the series which is showing on History Channel as I am writing this), **Mr. John Horan**, signalman on the original crew of the USS New Jersey and **Mr. Tony Nemec** who was with the 4th Parachute Division of the German Army. There is no better way to learn about World War II than to hear actual stories from veterans who lived through it.

**So PLEASE come out and support your round-table. Tell your friends and family and let's have a great turnout!**

*Hope to see you all at the meeting and the seminar!*

*Nancy*

## Today in Civil War History

**May 5, 1864**

### ***Grant and Lee clash in the Wilderness forest***

The forces of Union General Ulysses S. Grant and Confederate General Robert E. Lee clash in the Wilderness, beginning an epic campaign. Lee had hoped to meet the Federals, who plunged into the tangled Wilderness west of Chancellorsville, Virginia, the day before, in the dense woods in order to mitigate the nearly two-to-one advantage Grant possessed as the campaign opened.

The conflict quickly spread along a two-mile front, as numerous attacks from both sides sent the lines surging back and forth. The fighting was intense and complicated by the fact that the combatants rarely saw each other through the thick undergrowth. Whole brigades were lost in the woods. Muzzle flashes set the forest on fire, and hundreds of wounded men died in the inferno. The battle may have been particularly unsettling for the Union troops, who came across skeletons of Yankee soldiers killed the year before at the Battle of Chancellorsville, their shallow graves opened by spring rains.

By nightfall, the Union was still in control of the major crossroads in the Wilderness. The next two days brought more pitched battles without a clear victory for either side. Grant eventually pulled out and moved further south toward Richmond, and for the next six weeks the two great armies maneuvered around the Confederate capital.

**1862 Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia, begins**

**1863 Hooker begins to retreat from the Battle of Chancellorsville**

*History Channel*

## Today in Civil War History

**May 13, 1863**

### ***Grant moves on Jackson, Mississippi***

Union General Ulysses S. Grant advances toward the Mississippi capital of Jackson during his bold and daring drive to take Vicksburg, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. In April, Grant had moved his troops down the Mississippi River and around the Vicksburg defenses, landing south of the city before moving east into the interior of Mississippi. He intended to approach Vicksburg from the east to avoid the strong Confederate defenses on the riverfront.

Grant, however, had to contend with two Rebel forces. John C. Pemberton had an army defending Vicksburg, and Joseph Johnston was mustering troops in Jackson, 40 miles east of Vicksburg. Grant's advance placed him between the two Southern commands. He planned to strike Johnston in Jackson, defeat him, and then focus on Vicksburg when the threat to his rear was eliminated.

On May 12, Grant's troops encountered a Rebel force at Raymond, Mississippi, which they easily defeated.

The following day, he divided his force at Raymond, just 15 miles from Jackson, and sent two corps under William T. Sherman and James McPherson to drive the Confederates under Johnston out of Jackson, which they did by May 14. Grant also sent John McClelland's corps west to close in on Pemberton in Vicksburg. A few days later, on May 16, Grant defeated Pemberton at Champion's Hill and drove the Rebels back into Vicksburg. With the threat from the east neutralized, Grant sealed Vicksburg shut and laid siege to the city. Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, and the Confederacy was severed in two.

**1861 Union troops occupy Baltimore**

**1864 Struggle for the Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania concludes**

*History Channel*

## May ...a deadly month in the East

**May 5-7, 1864 Wilderness**

Other Names: Combats at Parker's Store, Craig's Meeting House, Todd's Tavern, Brock Road, the Furnaces

Location: Spotsylvania County

Principal Commanders: Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Maj. Gen. George G. Meade [US]; Gen. Robert E. Lee [CS] Forces Engaged: 162,920 total (US 101,895; CS 61,025)

Estimated Casualties: 29,800 total (US 18,400; CS 11,400)

The opening battle of Grant's sustained offensive against the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, known as the Overland Campaign, was fought at the Wilderness, May 5-7. On the morning of May 5, 1864, the Union V Corps attacked Ewell's Corps on the Orange Turnpike, while A.P. Hill's corps during the afternoon encountered Getty's Division (VI Corps) and Hancock's II Corps on the Plank Road. Fighting was fierce but inconclusive as both sides attempted to maneuver in the dense woods. Darkness halted the fighting, and both sides rushed forward reinforcements. At dawn on May 6, Hancock attacked along the Plank Road, driving Hill's Corps back in confusion. Longstreet's Corps arrived in time to prevent the collapse of the Confederate right flank. At noon, a devastating Confederate flank attack in Hamilton's Thicket sputtered out when Lt. Gen. James Longstreet was wounded by his own men. The IX Corps (Burnside) moved against the Confederate center, but was repulsed. Union generals James S. Wadsworth and Alexander Hays were killed. Confederate generals John M. Jones, Micah Jenkins, and Leroy A. Stafford were killed. The battle was a tactical draw. Grant, however, did not retreat as had the other Union generals before him. On May 7, the Federals advanced by the left flank toward the crossroads of Spotsylvania Courthouse.

Result(s): Inconclusive

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### **May 8-21, 1864 Spotsylvania Court House**

Other Names: Combats at Laurel Hill and Corbin's Bridge (May 8); Ni River (May 9); Laurel Hill, Po River, and Bloody Angle (May 10); Salient or Bloody Angle (May 12-13); Piney Branch Church (May 15); Harrison House (May 18); Harris Farm (May 19)

Location: Spotsylvania County

Principal Commanders: Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Maj. Gen. George G. Meade [US]; Gen. Robert E. Lee [CS] Forces Engaged: 152,000 total (US 100,000; CS 52,000)

Estimated Casualties: 30,000 total (US 18,000; CS 12,000)

After the Wilderness, Grant's and Meade's advance on Richmond by the left flank was stalled at Spotsylvania Court House on May 8. This two-week battle was a series of combats along the Spotsylvania front. The Union attack against the Bloody Angle at dawn, May 12-13, captured nearly a division of Lee's army and came near to cutting the Confederate army in half. Confederate counterattacks plugged the gap, and fighting continued unabated for nearly 20 hours in what may well have been the most ferociously sustained combat of the Civil War. On May 19, a Confederate attempt to turn the Union right flank at Harris Farm was beaten back with severe casualties. Union generals Sedgwick (VI Corps commander) and Rice were killed. Confederate generals Johnson and Steuart were captured, Daniel and Perrin mortally wounded. On May 21, Grant disengaged and continued his advance on Richmond.

Result(s): Inconclusive

### **May 11, 1864 Yellow Tavern**

Other Names: None

Location: Henrico County

Principal Commanders: Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan [US]; Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart [CS] Forces Engaged: Divisions

Estimated Casualties: 800 total

As the battle between Grant and Lee raged at Spotsylvania Court House, the Union cavalry corps under Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan embarked on a cavalry raid against Richmond. After disrupting Lee's road and rail communications, Sheridan's cavalry expedition climaxed with the battle of Yellow Tavern on May 11. The outnumbered Confederate cavalry was defeated, and Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart was mortally wounded. Sheridan continued south to threaten the Richmond defenses before joining Butler's command at Bermuda Hundred. After refitting, Sheridan rejoined the Army of the Potomac on May 25 for the march to the southeast and the crossing of the Pamunkey.

Result(s): Union victory

### **May 24, 1864 Wilson's Wharf**

Other Names: Fort Pocahontas

Location: Charles City

Principal Commanders: Brig. Gen. Edward Wild [US]; Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee [CS] Forces Engaged: Brigades

Estimated Casualties: 165 total

On May 24, Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry division (about 3,000 men) attacked the Union supply depot at Wilson's Wharf and was repulsed by two black regiments under Brig. Gen. Edward Wild (about 1,800 men).

Result(s): Union victory

### **May 28, 1864 Haw's Shop**

Other Names: Enon Church

Location: Hanover County

Principal Commanders: Brig. Gen. David M. Gregg [US]; Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee and Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton [CS] Forces Engaged: Divisions

Estimated Casualties: 744 total (US 344; CS 400)

Gregg's cavalry division, supported by Torbert's division, advanced to cover the Army of the Potomac's crossing of the Pamunkey River and movement toward Totopotomoy Creek. Fitzhugh Lee's and Hampton's cavalry divisions, later reinforced by Butler's South Carolina brigade, met the Federals at Enon Church. After seven hours of mostly dismounted cavalry fighting, the Federal advance was stopped. Both Confederate and Union infantry began arriving in the vicinity as the cavalry fighting raged.

Result(s): Inconclusive

### **May 23-26, 1864 North Anna**

Other Names: Telegraph Road Bridge, Jericho Mill (May 23); Ox Ford, Quarles Mill, Hanover Junction (May 24)

Location: Caroline County and Hanover County

Principal Commanders: Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Maj. Gen. George G. Meade [US]; Gen. Robert E. Lee [CS] Forces Engaged: Armies

Estimated Casualties: 4,000 total

Description: After the fighting at Spotsylvania Court House, Grant continued his Overland Offensive against Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. He was brought up short on the North Anna River by Lee's widely studied "hog snout line," which forced Grant to divide his army into three parts in order to attack. On May 23, 1864, one of A.P. Hill's divisions assaulted the V Corps which had crossed the river at Jericho Mill, resulting in bloody see-saw fighting. On the 24th, Union infantry was repulsed at Ox Ford (the snout) but advanced to near the Doswell House on the Confederate right. Lee hoped to strike an offensive blow, but he was ill, and the opportunity for defeating an isolated part of the Federal army passed. Once the threat of Lee's position was revealed, Grant withdrew both wings of the army back across the North Anna River. Grant outflanked the position by moving downstream and continued his advance on Richmond.

*continued on next page*

Result(s): Inconclusive

### **May 28-30, 1864 Totopotomoy Creek**

Other Names: Bethesda Church, Crumps Creek, Matadequin Creek, Shady Grove Road, Hanover town

Location: Hanover County

Principal Commanders: Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Maj. Gen. George G. Meade [US]; Gen. Robert E. Lee [CS] Forces Engaged: Corps

Estimated Casualties: 2,200 total (US 1,100; CS 1,100)

Description: Operations along Totopotomoy Creek opened with cavalry combats at the Pamunkey River crossing at Dabney's Ferry (Hanover town) and at Crump's Creek on May 27. During the cavalry fight at Haw's Shop on May 28, Union and Confederate infantry arrived in the vicinity. The Confederates entrenched behind Totopotomoy Creek. On the 29th, the Union II, IX, and V Corps probed Lee's position along the creek, while the VI Corps felt its way toward Hanover Court House. Early on the 30th, the VI Corps turned south to come in on the far right flank of the Union line (II Corps) but bogged down in swampy Crump's Creek without getting into position. The II Corps forced a crossing of Totopotomoy Creek in two places, capturing the first line of Confederate trenches, but the advance was stopped at the main line. The IX Corps maneuvered into position on the left of the II Corps, driving back Confederate pickets on the Shady

Grove Road. In the meantime, the V Corps, moving near Bethesda Church on the far left flank of the Union army, was attacked by Early's corps. The Federals were driven back to Shady Grove Road after heavy fighting. Confederate Brig. Gen. George Doles was killed by a sharpshooter near Bethesda Church on June 2.

Result(s): Inconclusive

## **Civil War Events**

**June 11 - June 13**      **Focus Weekends**

**July 12 - July 15 (Two day programs)**

**July 16 - July 18**

**August 13 - August 15**

Gettysburg Focus Weekend featuring Licensed Battlefield Guides. Sponsored by the Blue and Gray Education Society. Fee.

*For more information, contact: (888) 741-2437*

**Apr 24 - Apr 25 Pennsylvania Reenactment**

15th Annual Neshaminy Civil War Reenactment "Battle of Bethesda Church" Virginia Campaign 1864 at Neshaminy State Park, Bensalem.

*For more information, contact: (215) 204-5452*

**May 6 - May 9 Virginia Seminar**

"Footsteps of Jackson, Part 2—Stonewall in the Valley," seminar and tour based in Lexington. Historians Ted Alexander & Dennis Frye plus Robert Tanner, Ron Maxwell, Keith & Patricia Gibson, Holt Merchant, Frank O'Reilly, John Schildt, Mike Cavanaugh. Lectures, panel, walking tours to Lexington landmarks, full-day tour of 1862 Valley Campaign sites.

*For more information, contact: (717) 264-7101*

*Chambersburg Civil War Seminars Chambersburg, PA*

**June 27 - July 3 Gettysburg Institute**

"Uncle Sam's Web Fleet: The Navies" Fee includes lodging, meals, lectures, tours. Speakers: Ira Meistrich, Craig Symonds, Geoff Perret, Senator Glenn McConnell, Harold Holzer, Lisa Norling, David Surdam, Robert Browning Jr., Stephen Wise, David Mindell, John Hightower, John Waugh, David Hedrick, John Coski, Spencer Tucker, Michael Bennett, Joseph Reidy, Alan Nolan. Tour of Washington or Annapolis.

*For more information, contact: (717) 337-6590*

*Civil War Institute, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA  
www.gettysburg.edu*

**Old Baldy  
Civil War Round Table  
of Philadelphia  
1805 Pine Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103  
215.735.8196  
Founded January 1977**

**President: Nancy Caldwell  
Vice President: Pat Caldwell  
Treasurer: William George  
Secretary: Steve Lieberum**

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