

# Old Baldy

## Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia



December 12, 2013, The One Hundred and Fiftieth Year of the Civil War

## "Meade's Breakthrough at Fredericksburg"

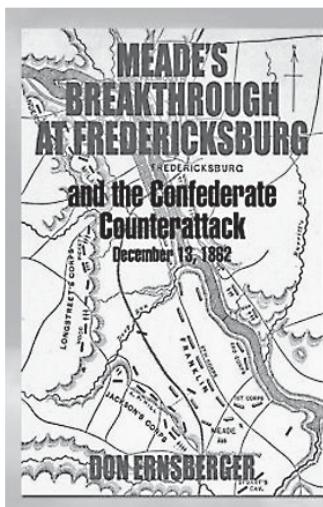


The meeting on  
**Thursday, December 12, 2013**  
will take place  
at **Camden County College** at **7:15 PM**  
in the **Connector Building Room 101 Forum, Civic Hall, Atrium.**

**Don Ernsberger** on "Meade's Breakthrough at Fredericksburg". Today when we hear or read of the Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13,

1862, attention is usually focused on the countless infantry charges up Marye's Height's into the artillery and rifles of the Confederate Army. Yet some historians have argued for many years that the key to the entire battle on December 13 was the action downstream where Meade's Pennsylvania Reserves broke, for a short time, the Confederate lines in an attempt to carry out what many believe to have been Major General Ambrose E. Burnside's true objective that day. Mindful that this critical part of the battle had been often overlooked, Civil War historian Don Ernsberger researched and wrote Meade's Breakthrough at Fredericksburg, which was published in 2012. Don will be presenting on this topic to our round table on December 12th, 2013, the eve of the 101st anniversary of the battle.

Don Ernsberger has had a life-long interest in history, particularly that of the American Civil War era. He taught history and philosophy for many years at Council Rock High School (PA) and Gwynedd-Mercy College before retiring in 2001 to work for eight years as a deputy chief of staff for the United States Congress. To date he has written six well-received books on Civil War military history. He also has been an avid Civil War reenactor with the 69th PA.



### Notes from the President...

Hope everyone had a good **Thanksgiving** and **Hanukah** celebration enjoying some family time. Our Round Table has much to be thankful for this year as our membership reached 50, the By-Laws were modernized, we took a trip and we are settling into our new home at **Camden County College**. The coming New Year will bring continued opportunities for our group. Look forward to hearing from those who attended the 150th of the Address and its activities.

Thank you to those who have contributed to the **Hancock Roof Fund** as we have already raised \$300. Let **Bob Russo** know if you know anyone else who would like to aid this worthy cause. A special note of thanks to **Bill Sia** and **Ed Komczky**, for sharing their newly acquired books at the last meeting.

Civil War Historian **Paula Gidjunis** shared the stories of civilians on the home front last month in a fine presentation. This month we welcome **Don Ensberger**, who previously educated us on the Pettigrew Tremble Charge, to tell us about **Meade at Fredericksburg**. It will be a fitting end to this calendar year. Our Board will be meeting the week of our General Meeting, so be present for the updates.

Remember to be at Laurel Hill Cemetery at noon on the 31st for the Champagne Toast to General Meade. Also be sure to get your dues to **Herb Kaufman**, so that we may continue to provide the great programs and activities you have enjoyed this year. Check the schedule for the upcoming spring classes at the Civil War Institute at Manor College.

Enjoy the coming Holiday Season as you celebrate **Christmas**, **Kwanzaa** and **New Year's**. Travel safe and tell all you meet about the great group that meets on the second Thursday of each month in Blackwood. Invite them to join us next month when "The Governor" comes to town.

*See you all on the 12th.*

*Rich Jankowski, President*

**Please join us at**  
**7:15 p.m. on Thursday, December 12th,**  
**at Camden County College, Blackwood Campus,**  
**Connector Building - Room 101.**

## **From the Treasurer's Desk**

# **Greetings and best wishes for a very wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year to all the members of the Old Baldy CWRT.**

Can you believe it, it is almost 2014!! As we approach the new year just a brief reminder that annual dues are due.

Our round table has just completed a banner year that featured outstanding speakers on a wide variety of topics. Of course, all members will continue to receive our truly superb monthly Old Baldy newsletter. More importantly, the round table has continued to flourish in South Jersey. Our membership has steadily increased, and it is anticipated that your continued membership and participation will allow Old Baldy to continue as the premier Civil War round table in this area.

Thanks to all members who are attending our monthly meetings. Kerry Bryan, our Program Chairwoman has already been hard at work lining up a great list of speakers and programs for next year.

### ***Remember, it is your round table.***

Let us know of your interests and how Old Baldy CWRT can best provide you with education, friendship and an enjoyable evening.



*Brigadier General  
John Gibbon*

December 13, 1862, in a doomed attempt to drive the Confederates from Marye's Heights. But few accounts detail the equally brave if futile sacrifice of Brigadier General John Gibbon's 2nd Division on the plains south of the Rappahannock River that sleet-driven day. At best, the story of the 2nd Division has been relegated in history books to a supporting role in the hopeless Union attack. At worst, the division's repulse by Stonewall Jackson's corps has been unfairly blamed on the men themselves.

Most of the regiments in Gibbon's division that day came from Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts. The men were veterans of the vicious Virginia campaigns of 1862, including the battles of Second Manassas and Cedar Mountain. The division was badly bloodied at Antietam in September of that same year in fighting at Miller's Cornfield and the East Woods, suffering more than 1,000 casualties. One of the regiments, the 12th Massachusetts, left its com-

## ***Brigadier General John Gibbon's Brief Breach During the Battle of Fredericksburg***

*This article was written by  
Judy Yandoh  
November 2001 issue  
of America's Civil War  
magazine.*

Much has been written about the ill-starred soldiers of the Army of the Potomac who died at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, on

***As we enter 2014, your annual dues are due. We have some really great programs and discussions planned and we hope that you will remain a member of our renowned round table.***

Dues remain only \$25.00 (\$35.00 for the entire family). If you wish to continue to have our outstanding newsletter sent by USPS, please add a donation of \$10. for the year, in addition to your dues.

Please bring your dues to the next meeting, or mail your dues payable to:

**"OLD BALDY CWRT"**  
**Herb Kaufman, Treasurer,**  
**2601 Bonnie Lane,**  
**Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006.**

We hope that everyone will come out to a meeting and join in the discussions. It's a great night out with friends who share your interests and enthusiasm for this era.

***All the best for the holidays and coming year,  
Herb***

manding officer and 224 of its 334 men on the field — the highest casualty rate of any Union regiment at Antietam. Following the Battle of Antietam, the battered division was joined by two new regiments, the 16th Maine and the 136th Pennsylvania, that had not yet been tested in battle. In early September, the 16th Maine had been abruptly ordered from the defenses around Washington, D.C., to take part in the Maryland campaign. The green regiment left behind its tents, knapsacks and overcoats, naively — and wrongly — believing that their baggage would soon follow. Their fellow soldiers in the 2nd Division cruelly nicknamed the 16th Maine the 'Blanket Brigade' for their humble attempts to protect themselves from the cold rain and driving winds of the early Virginia autumn. Both new regiments did poorly on the march from Antietam. It was their first long march, and straggling quickly became a problem. The 16th Maine also gained an unsavory reputation for foraging, leading the division's surgeon general to complain to the regiment's commanding officer, Lt. Col. Charles Tilden: 'Your regiment are poor soldiers but damn good foragers.'

On November 14, 1862, near Warrenton, Va., Brig. Gen. John Gibbon, the tough Regular Army officer who had made the Iron Brigade one of the finest fighting units in the Union Army, took over command of the 2nd Division. Gibbon had wanted a higher command, although he hated to leave his beloved Western brigade. Given the Eastern makeup of his new command, Gibbon was apprehensive

*Continued on page 3*

about taking charge. He was tempted to bring the Iron Brigade along with him to provide the new men with living examples of proper military bearing.

Gibbon was a born fighter who demanded strict discipline and endless drilling from his soldiers. Following a review of the division shortly after taking command, he sent a letter to his officers concerning the general poor appearance of the regiments and their camps. Determined that only the most competent officers would command his brigades, Gibbon shuffled the various regiments, changing the seniority of many of the regimental commanders and allowing former junior colonels to take command of the brigades.

Colonel Charles Wheelock of the 97th New York protested the new arrangement and the resulting loss of seniority. He was frankly informed by Gibbon that the Army was a profession and that some men were simply better soldiers than others. To further his point, Gibbon asked Wheelock what his profession had been before the war. Wheelock said he was a butcher. Gibbon joked a little wryly that he had not supposed the colonel had followed a calling so closely linked to his military one. At the end of November, the division went into camp in an open field near Brooks Station on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad, roughly 12 miles south of Fredericksburg. Assuming the camp would be their winter quarters, the soldiers began building huts to make themselves comfortable during the oncoming winter. On Thanksgiving Day, appropriately enough, the baggage of the 16th Maine finally arrived, reuniting the bone-chilled men with their knapsacks and overcoats.

The continual movement of the various armies through the region had stripped the countryside of food. The soldiers had to survive on Army-issued hardtack, salt beef and black coffee that always seemed to be in short supply. Hunger plagued the 2nd Division, and many soldiers resorted to trickery to obtain more to eat. Orders for boxes of hardtack were forged, and men with long poles stood along the railroad tracks trying to knock boxes of food off passing trains.

By early December the weather had turned bitterly cold, and green firewood had to be carried into camp from half a mile away. Any old railroad ties the men found lying about were quickly turned into kindling. Many of Gibbon's soldiers were half-clothed, and some of them were even without shoes until large supplies of clothing finally arrived in camp later that month.

As the regiments drilled unceasingly, rumors swept through camp about the division's future. Speculation ended when orders were received to send all surplus baggage and sick soldiers to the rear — a sure sign that a new battle was coming. Accordingly, on December 9 the division left camp and marched four miles toward



*Major General Ambrose Burnside*



*Major General William Franklin*



*Major General George Meade*

the Rappahannock. The cold had frozen the infamous Virginia mud to the consistency of iron, making the march somewhat easier. One captain in the 16th Maine wrote a friend: 'You may be curious to know how a man feels at the prospect of going into battle within a few days. I am free to confess that for me I do not hanker after the job. I think though I can conscientiously admit to you that I never felt lighterhearted or more buoyant in spirit than at the present movement of our troops upon the enemy's position.' On December 11, Gibbon's division reached the low hills above the eastern bank of the Rappahannock, a mile and a hair south of Fredericksburg. As the soldiers waited they listened to the furious cannonade that marked the initial attempt of the army's Right Grand Division to cross the river there. Incongruously, they also heard excellent music being played by the mounted band of Brig. Gen. George Bayard's Cavalry Brigade. Meanwhile, Army engineers spent the morning constructing two pontoon bridges across the icy river. Perhaps ominously, Confederate pickets did not seriously contest their work.

The next morning, I and VI Corps, making up the Left Grand Division of Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's reconstituted army, began crossing the bridges in a heavy fog. Major General William Franklin cautioned the men to avoid any regularity in their steps that might cause the bridges to sway from their moorings; one of the advance regiment's had foolishly placed its band at the head of the column, and the band's lockstep had almost sunk both bridges. Dense fog, darkened by smoke from the cooking fires, hid the regiments from view as they reached the far shore.

While waiting to cross the bridge, Austin Stearns of the 13th Massachusetts was ordered to report to the color sergeant to serve as corporal of the guard. His comrades all crowded around him to say goodbye, believing that they would never see him again. At Antietam, all the regiment's color guard but one had been killed or wounded. Stearns was not noticeably heartened by the turnout. Meeting little resistance, Federal troops found themselves on a broad plain approximately 11/2 miles wide, bordered on the west by a long, heavily forested ridge; on the east by the river; and on the north by Deep Run, an impassable stream. To the south the ridge disappeared into the plain at Hamilton's Crossing near Massaponax Creek. The Old

Richmond Road ran north and south, cutting the plain in half. There was a ditch on both sides of the road, and earth had been heaped alongside the ditches to form an embankment. Railroad tracks ran along the base of the ridge in a slight depression.

After crossing the bridge, the 2nd Division turned left and marched about three-quarters of a mile down along the river through open country cut by ditches. The division

halted near Mansfield (also known as Bernard House), where Franklin made his headquarters, and then moved to the right toward the Old Richmond Road. As the division moved forward, the 13th Massachusetts deployed as skirmishers and slowly advanced. Confederate skirmishers quietly melted back without firing a shot to the cornfield beyond the road and did not contest the regiment's advance. The division halted about 200 yards from the road, and the brigades of the 2nd Division formed an oblique line of battle, with the left thrown forward and the right resting on VI Corps' left flank. Major General George Gordon Meade's division of Pennsylvania Reserves formed on Gibbon's left, and Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday's division rested on Meade's left and curved toward the Rappahannock, facing south. In this position Gibbon's men spent the night.

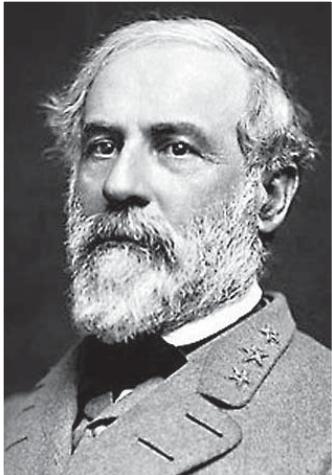
The 12th Massachusetts bivouacked along the Old Richmond Road as the picket guard for the 2nd Division. The pickets of both armies were so close that conversations were easily carried on between them. One trusting Confederate picket even accepted an invitation to join the Massachusetts men for coffee and hardtack.

It was a bitterly cold night; a strong wind was sweeping the plain and chilling the men to the bone. No fires were allowed, and the men shivered and suffered in the dark as they tried to sleep on the frozen ground. Throughout the night they could hear the rumble of artillery moving and the felling of trees as the Rebels strengthened their positions.

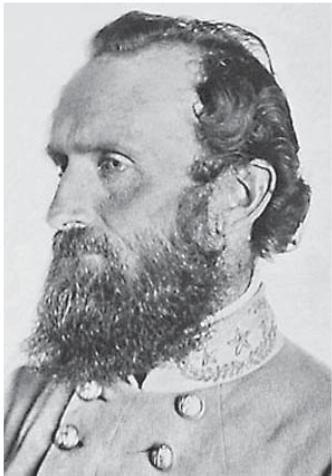
While the men hunkered down for a long, miserable night, Maj. Gens. Franklin, John Reynolds and William Smith devised a strategy for the following day. They agreed that the ridge must be assaulted and taken with the 40,000 men of the Left Grand Division and General Robert E. Lee's right flank turned at any cost. Early that evening, Franklin presented the plan to commanding General Burnside, who galloped off promising Franklin that he would have his orders by midnight.

The orders did not arrive until 7 the next morning. Instead of the planned assault by 40,000 men, the stunned generals learned that they were to seize the heights with only one division. In obedience to the unfathomable orders, Reynolds moved to attack with Meade's Pennsylvania Reserves, supported by Gibbon's 2nd Division.

Major General A.P. Hill's 'Light Division' of Stonewall Jackson's 11 Corps held the long ridge faced by the soldiers in the Left Grand Division. Hill formed a battle line 1 1/2 miles long, with his left a short distance from Deep Run and his right anchored on the road leading from Hamilton's Crossing to the Old Richmond Road. The dense cover of trees on the ridge hid Hill's battle-tested Virginia and North Carolina troops from view, while the movements of the Union troops were clearly visible on the plain below. Brigadier General James Lane's Confederate brigade was posted along the railroad tracks. An undefended gap of 600 boggy, wood-filled yards extended beyond the railroad



General  
Robert E. Lee



Lieutenant General  
Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson

tracks separating Lane from Brig. Gen. James Archer's brigade. Brigadier General Maxcy Gregg's South Carolina brigade waited behind the gap.

The positions held by the Confederates were not strongly fortified. Frozen ground and the lack of time and digging tools had prevented the Southern soldiers from entrenching and building substantial field fortifications. Instead, priority had been placed on building the military road that ran along the ridge into Fredericksburg. Twelve artillery pieces under the command of Captain J.B. Brockenbrough were posted on a ridge 40 yards beyond the railroad in front of Lane's left flank. The 7th North Carolina was ordered forward to protect the artillery. Two hundred yards to the rear, Captain Greenlee Davidson commanded nine guns placed near some slave cabins. The batteries were ordered to hold their fire until the Union infantry advanced to close range.

Dense fog still enveloped the Rappahannock plain as Franklin's forces moved out. Bugle calls, shouted orders and the braying of mules cut through the fog as the regiments prepared for battle. Swinging their arms and stamping their feet to keep warm, soldiers clustered around small morning fires to prepare coffee and smoke their pipes as they waited for the word to attack. At 9 a.m. the fog began to lift and the 13th Massachusetts moved forward as skirmishers. The soldiers slowly advanced from the Old Richmond Road onto the wet clay soil of a ploughed cornfield. As the regiment approached the wooded ridge, the men were ordered to lie down and support Captain James Hall's 2nd Maine Battery, which had

taken position on a slight elevation to the regiment's rear. Rolling onto their backs to load their rifles, the men were quickly covered with sticky mud that stuck to their clothing like glue.

Gibbon's 3rd Brigade, under the command of Brig. Gen. Nelson Taylor, advanced through the field behind the 13th Massachusetts. The ankle-deep mud impeded the men's progress as Confederate artillery fire swept the slowly advancing line. A shell tore through two men and knocked down the color guard of the 83rd New York. About 300 yards from the railroad track, Taylor ordered his soldiers to lie down for protection behind a slight rise. The 2nd Brigade, commanded by Colonel Peter Lyle, followed Taylor's brigade into the field. About 100 yards behind the 3rd Brigade, Lyle ordered his men to lie down as well. Then the 1st Brigade, commanded by Colonel Adrian Root, took up positions to the right and rear of Hall's battery, on the left of the other two brigades. Like the others, Root's men lay down to find what cover they could in the open field.

The soldiers of the 2nd Division endured constant and severe fire from the enemy batteries. The ground had frozen solid that morning but was now covered with several inches of mud and water. Shell and shot whizzed and plunged among the Federal soldiers as they squirmed deeper into the mud and tried ineffectually to hide behind their knapsacks. The continuous cannon and rifle fire, the screaming

of wounded horses, shouted orders, the blare of bugles and the cries of wounded men created an unholy roar on the battlefield. Dark clouds of smoke from the guns rolled over the soldiers. A piece of shell tore open the knapsack of one Maine soldier and lifted a pack of cards high into the air. They fell to the ground, said an observer, 'like a shower of autumn leaves.'

The 88th Pennsylvania, on the right of the line, was ordered to advance and fire a volley into Brockenbrough's battery. A blast of Confederate canister panicked the regiment, which turned, almost to a man, and ran for the rear. Taylor and the regiment's officers were finally able to stop the flight and return the 88th to the field. Later in the morning, Union sharpshooters managed to work their way into positions to the right of the Confederate battery, and the 7th North Carolina was unable to dislodge the marksmen. Brockenbrough was wounded, and the battery and its support regiment withdrew.

At 1 p.m. Meade's division moved forward, and Taylor was ordered to advance his brigade toward the section of the ridge held by Lane's brigade. The Federal regiments advanced through the skirmish line of the 13th Massachusetts, which headed for the rear to get more ammunition. The rest of the regiment, including the supposedly doomed color-bearer Austin Stearns, returned to the Bernard House, where the men remained for the rest of the battle. Fistfights almost broke out in the rear when the mud-covered skirmishers were asked why they had not stood up and fought like men instead of lying down like dogs.

About 150 yards from the railroad, the 83rd New York and the 11th Pennsylvania came under rifle and artillery fire. The 11th's colonel and five of its officers were shot down as the regiment quickly lost 85 of its 180 men. A shell took off the head of one man and passed through the body of another. Within half an hour, both regiments melted away to the river, leaving the 97th New York and 88th Pennsylvania to hold the line. The 83rd New York had suffered 130 casualties out of its original 292 men.

As Taylor's brigade exchanged fire with the North Carolina troops, two brigades of Meade's reserves reached the boggy wood in the large gap between Archer's and Lane's positions. Finding the woods undefended, the Pennsylvanians rushed into the gap. Three companies from the 37th North Carolina wheeled across the railroad tracks and poured a galling fire into the Federals' right flank. At 1:30 p.m. the 2nd Brigade moved forward under Colonel Lyle. As the brigade advanced, the 12th Massachusetts became separated and advanced independently. The remaining regiments moved to the left of the 97th New York and the 88th Pennsylvania.

The 2nd Brigade's attack quickly stalled. Fifteen minutes later, Gibbon ordered the 1st Brigade to take the Confederate position at bayonet point. The orders came forward: 'Unsling knapsacks and fix bayonets.' A soldier in the 16th Maine had his knapsack removed in a most unusual man-

ner: a piece of shell struck his blanket, which was strapped to the top of his pack, and the momentum caused man and knapsack to revolve around each other before parting company.

At the command 'Forward,' the 1st Brigade moved at doublequick across the muddy field toward the broken lines of the other two brigades. By this time, only the 88th Pennsylvania, the 97th New York, the 12th Massachusetts and the 136th Pennsylvania remained on the field ahead of them. The 90th Pennsylvania and the 26th New York had left the field, claiming to be out of ammunition.

When the 1st Brigade reached the stalled Union line, the front line slowed as large numbers of men fell dead and wounded from the enemy fire. Soldiers began to blast away without orders, but somehow the brigade officers managed to keep them moving forward. Instinctively the men bowed their heads as a storm of bursting shells, canister and Minie bullets descended upon them. One quick-thinking Maine soldier hoisted a wounded comrade on his back and headed lickety-split for the rear. An officer ordered him back into the ranks, but the private replied without looking back, 'Captain, you must think I'm a damned fool to let Baker die here on the field!'

The soldiers made it to the railroad and leaped over the ditch with a cheer. By this time the North Carolina regiments defending the tracks were out of ammunition, having stripped even the dead and wounded of their remaining cartridges. Two members of the 16th Maine were speared by bayonet-tipped rifles thrown at them by the Confederate defenders, but the Federals drove the defenders from their position. With their right flank turned, the rest of Lane's men fell back 100 yards into the sheltering woods.

The bluecoats followed the retreating Confederates into the woods. As regimental officers attempted to disentangle the mixed regiments and get them back into line, Colonel Root galloped back to Gibbon and asked for more troops and further orders. Gibbon told him to press forward and promised to send him support.

Meanwhile, a determined Confederate counterattack led by Thom-

as' Georgia brigade swept the 2nd Division's front line with a murderous fire. A Union veteran of the fight later wrote a poem about what must have been on the minds of the embattled Federal soldiers there: 'If your officers are dead and the sergeants look white/Remember it's ruin to run from a fight,/So take open order, lie down, and sit tight,/And wait for support like a soldier,/Wait, wait, wait like a soldier.'

Root returned again to Gibbon to plead for more troops; Gibbon again promised reinforcements. By this time the 26th New York and 90th Pennsylvania had returned to the fight after being threatened by Gibbon's staff officers. The two regiments advanced to the railroad tracks, where they joined the 107th Pennsylvania. Root demanded that Lyle send the two returning regiments into the woods, but Lyle refused.

At about 2:15, Root's line began to break as first the 104th



New York and then the 94th New York gave way on the left and retreated from the woods. Confederate troops mounting strong counterattacks began reoccupying the woods on the brigade's left.

At 2:30, Gibbon left the field after being wounded in the wrist by a shell fragment. Command of the division went to Taylor, who instructed Root to withdraw from the woods when 'their safety demanded it.' Realizing that without support his position could not be held, Root reluctantly gave the order to fall back. Hall's battery joined the retreat after firing a last round into the advancing Confederates. The battery had fired 1,100 rounds of ammunition and lost 16 men and 31 horses during the fight.

By 3 p.m. it was obvious that the Union assault had failed. The 2nd Division's battered regiments marched back to the Old Richmond Road in good order, bringing their wounded with them. As the 88th Pennsylvania was withdrawing, Private Nathan White turned toward the Confederate guns and jokingly called out, 'Cease fire and come to shoulder! ' At that instant he was shot in the head and fell over dead. The division formed a new battle line, but darkness ended the fighting. Volunteers carrying lanterns and stretchers were sent between the lines to recover the wounded and retrieve what arms and ammunition they could.

The exhausted soldiers spent another bitterly cold night sleeping on the frozen mud and dreading the return of battle the next morning. Before daylight, the men moved

## Today in Civil War History

### Thursday December 12, 1861 Carolina Coastal Conflict Continues

The armies may have mostly settled into winter camps around the countryside by now, but mere bad weather was not enough to put a halt to the activities of the U.S. Navy. The blockade effort continued to be strengthened as the number of ships available to be put on patrol continued to be increased. Actual military efforts were today concentrated on the Ashepoo River area. Ships carrying sailors and Marines steamed in and out of the main base which had been established in Port Royal Sound. The purpose of the venture was to locate any concentrations of Confederate forces, and beyond that, to allow captains and navigators to familiarize themselves with the tricky and complicated inlets of the coastline.

### Friday December 12, 1862 Fog Frustrates Fredericksburg Fighting

The first part of the battle had started yesterday, as the Federal troops under Gen. Ambrose Burnside had struggled to build pontoon bridges to transport their men across the Rappahannock River while under fire from Confederate sharpshooters. After repeated failures the effort had finally succeeded and Union troops moved to establish their beachhead before night fell. When morning came it was hard to tell—a thick fog had risen from the river overnight and filled the valley, lasting until noon. Troops continued to move in the limited visibility, but slowly, and when the fog finally broke up it was far too late in the day to launch an assault. The major activity on the Union side was to move as many men as possible as far up the hill as possible. Looking down on the action, Lee sent orders to Stonewall Jackson, guarding another ford farther downstream, to rejoin the main force.

out again in support of Doubleday's division, but there was no further fighting.

On the 15th, a truce was called to allow both sides to bury their dead. Union and Confederate burial parties chatted freely as they pursued their grim duties. The dead were found in every imaginable position, and many of the Union corpses had been stripped of their uniforms.

That evening, the Left Grand Division began withdrawing across the pontoons in a heavy rain. By 4:30 a.m. the last of Franklin's command had crossed the bridges. Farther north, the Right Grand Division had suffered a similar fate. At a terrible cost, the brave men of Gibbon's 2nd Division had carried out their orders to support Meade's attack. The division had suffered 1,267 casualties out of a total force of 3,500 men. The 12th Massachusetts had lost 105 of 258 men; the 16th Maine lost 230 of 417 in its first fight, but won the proud reputation of a fighting regiment.

Although the main battle had been an abysmal failure, Gibbon's soldiers had accomplished what no other Union division at Fredericksburg had managed: they had breached—however briefly—the formidable Confederate line. In the end, however, it had all been for naught. Fredericksburg was destined to remain a haunted name among the men who survived the battle.

### Trivia

**What Union regiment suffered the largest percentage of one battle casualties?**

**The First Minnesota, 82 percent at Gettysburg.**

### Saturday December 12, 1863 Ships Singe Salt Suppliers

Smoke still rose this morning from the charred wood that until yesterday had been a large salt works in St. Andrew's Bay, Florida. Acting Master W.R. Browne of the USS *Restless*, along with two other ships, had found the outpost and launched an attack on it. Artillery fire hit one of the houses of the workers, and wind had spread the flames until nearly the whole compound was incinerated. Brown wrote in his report, "It was in fact a complete village...employing many hands and 16 ox and mule teams constantly to haul salt to Eufaula Sound and from thence conveyed to Montgomery, at which place it is selling at fabulous prices—\$40 and \$50 per bushel." The operation included 22 large steam boilers and 300 kettles averaging 200 gallons each, used to evaporate sea water to harvest the salt. The 2000 bushels found were returned to the sea from whence they had come.

### Monday December 12, 1864 Major McAllister Move Mobilized

Four Union Army corps' under Gen. William T. Sherman had marched from Atlanta to the Sea—almost. They were on the outskirts of Savannah, and out in the Atlantic awaited the Navy vessels carrying their new supply source. The only thing standing in the way was an installation called Fort McAllister, and the only way to reach it was over the 1000-foot long King's Bridge over the Ogeechee River. This, understandably, had been destroyed by the Confederate defenders of McAllister. Gen. Sherman had set his engineers to work on the problem, and they reported today that the rebuilding work was nearly completed. Preparations were therefore put underway to put it to the test. The assault on Ft. McAllister would take place in the morning.

# **"U. S. Grant Won Bride While Fording River"**

Ulysses S. Grant selected an odd time to propose marriage to Julia Dent. Lieutenant Grant from West Point had met Julia while on a visit to the home of his chum in St. Louis. He fell in love with her and decided to return to pursue his attentions, relates Edna M. Coleman in "White House Gossip."

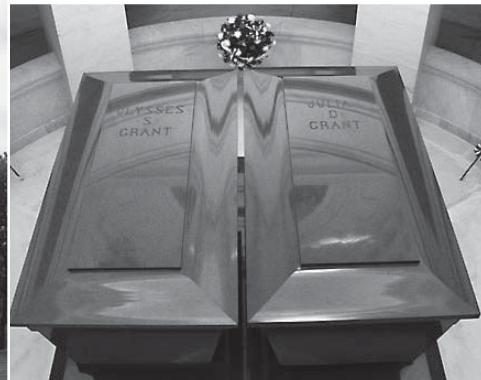
Their betrothal occurred while they were fording the Gravois River. They were in a light rig, the young man driving. The waters were swollen and the current so swift from recent heavy rains that they were in grave danger.

The manner of her clinging to him in her fear of the water inspired him with the courage to propose to her then and there. In after years she often related to her grand children the story of the betrothal, placing special stress on the old supposition that unusual strength and constancy were attributes of many pledges made over running water, says Capper's Weekly.



Hiram Ulysses Grant

Julia Dent Grant



The Grant's Tomb  
and sarcophagi

## **Trivia**

**What army Colonel, the grandson of a fur trader, brought with him to his Washington Post his valet, chef, and steward?**

**John Jacob Astor III**

## **Trivia**

**When Unionists of the deep south joined the ranks of fighting men in blue, what were they commonly called?**

**Homemade Yankees.**

## **November 14th Meeting...**

### **"Civilians in the Civil War: Homefront to the Battlefield"**

**Paula Gidjunis** presented an in-depth presentation on civilians who answered the call to support the men who did the fighting on the Battlefields. She used a PowerPoint presentation to display the photographs of many of these famous civilians. She also had excerpts from period diaries and letters. She discuss the impact of the Civil War on civilians and how they coped with the destruction of war. Many of the subjects were the women who became nurses in home town hospitals and those who went and served the wounded in battlefield hospitals. She also discussed the aid and comfort given to the underground railroad system, the civilian spy networks that supported the Army on both sides. A very interesting and educational presentation.



**Paula Gidjunis**



*Drawing the winning book lottery ticket  
from the "Great Pumpkin"*

## The Civil War Institute

The **Delaware Valley Civil War Round Table** and the Continuing Education Program at **Manor College** have six courses set for the Winter/Spring semester beginning in January – including two BRAND NEW ELECTIVE CLASSES!! Tell your family and friends that CW Institute classes make a great gift suggestion!

Classes may be taken as part of the certificate program or individually. Class hours are 6:30 till 8:30 pm, unless otherwise noted. Call (215) 884-2218 to register or for an application for the certificate program. Manor College is located at 700 Fox Chase Road in Jenkintown, PA.

<http://www.manor.edu/coned/civilwar.htm>

\* Indicates Core Course \*\* Indicates Elective Course

### \*\*The Irish in the Civil War - .6 CEUs – 6 Hours

Both Blue and Gray had a generous touch of green. So why did these men fight and die so bravely in a country that was new to them? And what generals were more gallant than the Union's Phil Sheridan and the Confederacy's Pat Cleburne?

**Dates:** Thursdays, January 16, 23, 30  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Sessions:** 3  
**Fee:** \$79  
**Instructor:** Hugh Boyle

### \*\*NEW COURSE - Desperate Measures: Unusual Incidents and Strange Adventures in the Civil War - .6 CEUs – 6 Hours

Strange but true; this axiom was never more relevant than describing many of the unusual and extraordinary occurrences during the Civil War. This course concentrates on a significant number of controversial personalities, occurrences and events, and strange and highly unusual incidents that occurred prior to and during the four years of the Civil War.

**Dates:** Wednesdays, February 12, 19, 26  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Sessions:** 3  
**Fee:** \$79  
**Instructor:** Herb Kaufman, M.Ed.

### \*\*Sherman's March to Victory - .6 CEUs – 6 Hours

Follow William T. Sherman in the campaign that captured Atlanta and likely saved Lincoln's presidency. Afterward, Sherman marches to the Atlantic, cutting a 60-mile-wide swath of destruction that has been called the first total-war strategy. Finally, he makes an even more destructive march through South Carolina and forces the surrender of Joseph Johnston in North Carolina.

**Dates:** Mondays, March 10, 17, 24  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Sessions:** 3  
**Fee:** \$79  
**Instructor:** Jerry Carrier

### \*The Civil War Overview Series – 1.2 CEUs – 12 Hours

The Civil War Series is an overview of the events that led to the war, major battles and the after-effects that still impact our nation today. The war will be examined year by year. This is a program for all ages conducted by a team of experts. It is one you will not want to miss!

**Dates:** Wednesdays, March 12, 19, 26; April 2, 9, 16  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Sessions:** 6  
**Fee:** \$125  
**Instructor:** Del Val Civil War Round Table

### \*John Brown and Harpers Ferry - .6 CEUs – 6 Hours

What kind of man was John Brown? What led him to his crusade for freedom that involved acts of lawless violence? This course answers these questions and tells of those who helped, encouraged and supported him. It will show how his hopes to ignite a slave rebellion ended in his death on a gallows. John

Brown was an important link in the chain of events that led to the Civil War. The course will reveal the man, his mission and his place in American history.

**Dates:** Mondays, April 7, 14, 21  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Sessions:** 3  
**Fee:** \$79  
**Instructor:** Patricia Caldwell, M.A.

### \*\*NEW COURSE - The Overland Campaign of 1864 - .6 CEUs – 6 Hours

"Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also." This was Gen. Grant's instruction to Gen. Meade in his plan to "hammer continuously against the armed force of the enemy." This course follows the tactics and battles of the Overland Campaign from May 5 to June 16, 1864, beginning in the Wilderness and culminating with the siege of Petersburg.

**Dates:** Thursdays, May 1, 8, 15  
**Time:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
**Sessions:** 3  
**Fee:** \$79  
**Instructor:** Herb Kaufman, M.Ed.

Be sure to visit the webpage of Manor College for Civil War trivia, book reviews, testimonials, faculty spotlight, a video, and much more. Become a fan of The Civil War Institute at Manor College on Facebook.

## Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2013/2014

**December 12 – Thursday**  
**Meade at Fredericksburg**  
Don Ernsberger

**January 14 – Thursday**  
**"Charles Smith Olden:  
New Jersey's Lincoln"**  
Bruce Sirak

**February 6\* – Thursday**  
**"Octavius V. Catto"**  
Robert Branch  
(Living Historian)

**\*Meeting on first Thursday of month**

**Questions to Kerry Bryan at 215-564-4654 or  
kerryll@verizon.net**

**You're Welcome to Join Us!**

**Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia  
Camden County College  
Blackwood Campus - Connector Building  
Room 101 Forum, Civic Hall, Atrium**

**856-427-4022    oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net  
Founded January 1977**

**Annual Memberships**  
Students: \$12.50  
Individuals: \$25.00  
Families: \$35.00

**President: Richard Jankowski  
Vice President: Bob Russo  
Treasurer: Herb Kaufman  
Secretary: Bill Hughes  
Programs: Kerry Bryan**

**WEB Site: <http://oldbaldycwrt.org>  
Email: [oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net)  
Blog: <http://oldbaldycwrt.blogspot.com/>  
Face Book: Old Baldy Civil War Round Table**