



# Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

December 11, 2025

The Civil War: April 12, 1861 - August 20, 1866

## “December Old Baldy General Meeting and Social Gathering”

December Old Baldy General Meeting & Social Gathering  
It has been a great year for OBCWRT! On Thursday December 11th enjoy a social evening with friends. The meeting starts at 7:15 PM at the William G. Rohrer Center located at 1889 Marlton Pike East, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08003 or on Zoom. Share with the leadership your feedback on our Round Table, and suggestions for improving and expanding the organization. Then relax and enjoy your fellow members in celebration of our year and the future. Round Table members, family, and friends are all invited to our General Membership Meeting to celebrate the end of the year and take a break from the holiday frenzy. Round Table members, family, and friends are invited to discuss the past year and nibble on delicious treats. Thanks to everyone who offered to bring food or drink for our social gathering. Looking forward to seeing everyone for cheer, fun, food, and fellowship. Bring a companion to enjoy the evening.

### Meeting Notice

Join us at 7:15 PM on Thursday, December 11th.

Free and open to the public.

In-person meeting at Camden County College, William G. Rohrer Center, 1889 Marlton Pike East, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003, and simulcast on Zoom.

“Members, and Friends of the Roundtable who receive our email communications, will automatically receive the Zoom link and do not need to request it”

If you are not already receiving Old Baldy communications, please email [oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net) at least 24 hours prior to request Zoom access.

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## Notes from the President

**WELCOME** to December! I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving! As I noted in the November newsletter, we held a Board meeting on November 3.

The discussion focused on the path forward going into 2026 as we continue to search for replacements for those officer and program positions that remain unfilled as current individuals end their tenure. Special note to **Dave Gilson** at Programs and **Don Wiles**, Newsletter with our gratitude for their outstanding support to Old Baldy through the years. Until a definitive path forward can be identified, we will continue to be focusing on maintaining the basic functions necessary to support our monthly meetings. We also discussed the revitalization of the Old Baldy Website which is very close to being updated and targeting to have the conversion completed going into 2026. There are some additional ways we are considering to utilize the Website to enhance our communications going forward. Will reach out as this develops.

Want to thank **Matthew Borowick** who came in person to the November meeting to personally present the **2025 Matthew Borowick Marketing Award** from the CWRT Congress to Old Baldy. Also want to thank

**Rich Jankowski** who provided a well received acceptance speech. As we move forward, need to remind ourselves of the importance of marketing to attract new members and keep the round table moving forward. Any suggestions on how to better market ourselves to potential new members, especially to the next generations, is welcome.

Our December meeting (December 11) will be our season social. I am happy to note that all of the requested items to support the social have been committed to. All members who can attend in person are encouraged to attend and I hope to see as many members as possible there. Good opportunity to celebrate ourselves and mingle.

As part of our end of year celebration, I wanted to recognize our members who are reaching a key membership milestone in the next few months (through February 2026), Thank you for your continued participation, congratulations:

**Randy Acorcey (5 years)**  
**William Buchanan (5 years)**  
**Janet Whaley (5 years)**  
**Barney Yetter (5 years)**  
**Jerry Jennings (5 years)**  
**Harriet Monshaw (5 years)**  
**Ed Komczyk (30 years)**  
**Harry Jenkins (35 years)**  
**Irene Wright (40 years)**  
**Steve Wright (40 years)**

As also noted in November, December sees two events. December 13 is **Wreaths Across America** at the Beverly National Cemetery at 10:00 AM (we sponsored 10 wreaths) and December 31st is the celebration of **Meade's birthday** at 11:00 AM at the Laurel Hill Cemetery (Meade talk, Wreath dedication and Champagne toast). Please consider attending these events.

Early Preview: January will be a Zoom only meeting. The speaker will be **Ron Kirkwood**; **"Tell Mother Not to Worry: Soldier Stories From Gettysburg's George Spangler Farm"**. Will repeat announcement in the January Newsletter.

As what has become a repeating reminder (plea), to keep the meetings moving forward and to keep our newsletter being published, we still require members to volunteer (1) as Zoom meeting coordinator to assist **Randy Acorcey** with Meetings set-up, (2) a Zoom Equipment coordinator (need two in case someone cannot attend) and (3), someone to assemble the Newsletter (replace Don after December). These are critical positions we need to fill. If anyone considers they may have some interest, please reach out and I will be happy to discuss with you individually.

We are moving forward with preparing for the 50th anniversary in 2027 and have picked up one member to serve on the planning committee. Continue to look for a few more, so please let me know if you may have some interest and will be happy to discuss with you.

**Wishing everyone Happy Holidays and a Safe, Healthy and Happy 2026!!**

**Calvin Kinsel, President**

## **Member Profile - Jerry Jennings**

*by Kim Weaver*  
**OBCWRT Member**

Born and raised in Binghamton, N.Y., Jerry Jennings has been interested in military history since his boyhood playing with a set of Civil War plastic soldiers. With adulthood, Jerry favored Civil War history books. "I read many books about the Civil War. The 1993 movie Gettysburg came out around the same time I had read Killer Angels and Shelby Foote's epic 3-volume Civil War, and I had gone to see reenactments at Gettysburg."



**Jerry Jennings**

#### **OBCWRT Awards**

American Battlefield Trust  
for 25 Year Service to the Trust  
presented to OBCWRT

The Society For Women  
and the Civil War  
for Service to the Society  
presented to OBCWRT

Civil War Roundtable Congress  
The Wallace L. Rueckel  
Innovation Award  
presented to OBCWRT (2022)

Civil War Roundtable Congress  
Sustainability Challenge  
presented to OBCWRT  
(2023)

Kevin M. Hale Award  
for best Historical  
Newsletter in New Jersey  
(2017, 2022)

Candid  
Gold Transparency Award  
presented to OBCWRT  
(2024, 2025)

Matthew Borowick  
Marketing Award  
presented to OBCWRT  
(2025)

Jerry was living in Philadelphia when he discovered the old Civil War Museum on Pine St. and subsequently the Old Baldy CWRT, which he promptly joined. "In the 1990s, I was a regular attendee of the Roundtable meetings on the second floor for many years - until the tragic closing of the museum in August 2008. But I kept my membership over the years."

Fortunately, Zoom has made it possible for Jerry to resume attending Roundtable presentations. Among his favorite speaker topics are Ulysses S. Grant and Nathan Bedford Forrest, both portrayed as "men of fire" by Civil War historian Jack Hurst. "I am interested in both men because they shared a "can-do" attitude of confidence and aggressive, relentless pursuit of victory. Despite being outnumbered in nearly every engagement, Forrest's record of success is truly remarkable (I think he only "lost" one battle in the whole war). Grant was a great general, but also a very fine person, and I remain inspired by his humility as a leader." (By coincidence, Jerry's brother-in-law is a direct descendant of Forrest.)

The Civil War is full of compelling stories and Jerry would like to turn one of them into a screenplay. He completed two years of training in screenwriting at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and has won several screenplay competitions. "It has always been my hope to find a great Civil War story to adapt into a feature screenplay. I welcome collaboration with any Old Baldier who might be interested."

Jerry lives in Narberth, Pa. with his wife Jane, a piano and voice teacher whose background is in classical singing and opera. They have been married for 35 years and have two adult sons. (Ironically, Jerry intentionally bought two sets of the Civil War toy soldiers from the old Pine Street Civil War Museum for his two boys - and neither one has developed any particular interest in the Civil War!)

Jerry Jennings, Ph.D. is an award-winning screenwriter and author and is the retired vice president of clinical services for Liberty Healthcare Corporation after 30 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in history and psychology from SUNY at Stony Brook, a doctorate in psychology (focus on history and psychology) from the University of New Hampshire, and a post-doctoral clinical fellowship from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania. He has been taking adult education classes in history and ancient philosophy at Villanova University.

As a prolific writer and researcher, Jerry has published 8 books and 70+ journal articles and chapters on diverse topics, including Holocaust history, history of psychotherapy, and treatment of violent men. He has written and published pro bono three memoirs on behalf of Holocaust survivors.

## **Today in Civil War History**

### **1861 Wednesday, December 11**

#### ***The Confederacy***

Charleston, the most important port of South Carolina, is ravaged by a fire which sweeps through the city.

### **1861 Thursday, December 11**

#### ***Eastern Theater***

The Army of the Potomac moves across the Rappahannock River and begins to occupy Fredericksburg. Lee maintains his army in its strongly fortified positions on the wooded heights around the town, where he resolves to await the Federal attack.

#### ***Western Theater***

Brigadier-General Nathan Bedford Forrest, with 2500 Confederate cavalrymen, moves out from Columbia, Tennessee, at the start of an operation against General Grant's long lines of communication.



## 1863 Friday, December 11

### **Eastern Theater**

Union siege guns outside Charleston continue their bombardment of Fort Sumter's tortured rubble. Today a shell finally penetrates one of the powder magazines, touching off an explosion which kills 11 and wounds 41 of the garrison. Union cavalry raiding Confederate railroads in West Virginia are in action at Big Sewell and Meadow Bluff.

## 1864 Sunday, December 11

### **Western Theater**

Sherman's troops rebuild the King's Bridge over the Ogeechee, destroyed by the retreating Confederates. The Union Army deploys before Savannah but fails to cut the road north to Charleston. Grant continues to badger Thomas.

## 1865 Month of December

North Carolina, Georgia, and Oregon all approve the Thirteenth Amendment, although Mississippi rejects it. Oregon's decision on December 11 enables Secretary of State Seward to declare a week later that the Thirteenth Amendment is now in effect since it has been ap- proved by 27 states.

## Remembering - Wally Rueckel

The OB CWRT and the Civil War roundtable community are saddened to hear of the recent passing of Wally Rueckel. While he was not around as long as some leaders in the Civil War roundtable community, he was a trailblazer, and he had an impact across the nation.

In 2010, Wally helped co-found the Brunswick Civil War Roundtable in Southport, N.C., which has since grown to become the nation's largest. He spearheaded an effort to encourage roundtables across North Carolina to coordinate on speakers, allowing them to share expenses and improve travel efficiency for presenters. In 2017, he joined with other key leaders to revive the CWRT Congress. He shared his story at the first two conferences and aided any round table that contacted him.

I stayed in touch with Wally and his wife, Nan, over the years as they shared with us their experiences with the Brunswick group. He watched OB CWRT advance and offered advice to keep us on track. In 2022, when the CWRT Congress announced an Innovation Award named after Wally, OB CWRT applied and received the first Wallace L. Rueckel Innovation Award. We used several of the methods and suggestions that Wally had told us.

CWRT-Congress vice-president Carol VanOrnum came to Cherry Hill in September 2022 to present the award in person. Since Wally was unable to attend the event, the following April (2023), Flat Old Baldy, Debbie, and I went down to Southport, NC, to visit Wally and Nan. While there, we took a picture with Wally and the award named after him at his home. Following lunch with Wally, we toured the Old Baldy Lighthouse and attended a meeting of the Brunswick CWRT. Chris Mackowski was the presenter that evening. It was great to experience the event, as Wally made us feel welcome.

John Butler, president of the Brunswick CWRT, said, "He was always outgoing and very engaging." "Wally's personality and efforts to bring a quality product to the members always made everyone feel welcome." "He was a mentor and good friend," and "He will be sorely missed." You can learn more about Wally and the Brunswick CWRT on their website <https://brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com/>



**Rueckel Award**

*by Rich Jankowski  
OBCWRT Member  
Past President*



**Wally Rueckel**

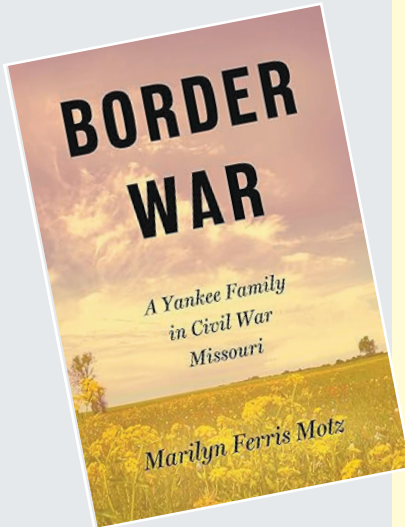


**Wally Rueckel  
and  
Rich Jankowski**

# American Civil War Books

(to be released December 2025)

Compiled by Kim Weaver  
OBCWRT Member



## ***Border War: A Yankee Family in Civil War Missouri***

by Marilyn Ferris Motz/University Press of Mississippi

When fiddler and farmer Henry Smith and his wife Harriet moved from Michigan to southwest Missouri in 1858, they considered themselves part of a Yankee cultural community whose taste and aspirations were shaped by northern publications and represented by the new Republican Party. By 1861 Vernon County Court Judge Henry Smith no longer called himself a Yankee or Republican, but he hoped his isolated prairie community would remain in the Union. Montevallo's location at the intersection of roads from Boonville and Lexington south to Carthage and from Springfield to Fort Scott, Kansas, placed the Smith family's log house in the path of troops fighting to establish Confederate or Union control of Missouri. The Smiths saw neighbor turn against neighbor as they played reluctant host to the succession of Union troops, Confederate soldiers, bushwhackers, and jayhawkers who swarmed past their homestead.

This book features the evocative writings of the young couple to illuminate wide-ranging challenges faced by many rural American households in the Civil War era. Throughout the turmoil, the Smiths documented their experiences in diaries, letters, school essays, magazine publications, and petitions. Drawing on archives, family papers, and government records, author Marilyn Ferris Motz pieces together the Smiths' saga. As the Civil War divided family and community alike and future dreams were abandoned to focus on immediate survival, these personal writings capture what it meant to live during a time of immense uncertainty and mortal danger.

## ***Lincoln's Frock Coat: The Enduring Mystery of an Assassination Relic***

by Reignette G. Chilton/McFarland

This book explores three frock coats that belonged to Abraham Lincoln, and the faithful White House servants who cherished them after his untimely demise. Each garment, recognized as the "bloodstained coat Mr. Lincoln wore on that memorable occasion," evoked "tears that fell like rain" until a renowned historian established only one as the authentic assassination relic and discarded another as a fake. The third frock coat endures as a "significant emblem of American royalty."

This work takes a diverging opinion. It looks beyond the palpable adulation of those who claimed Lincoln's "tragedy-soaked raiment" and examines the heroic actions of two army surgeons who treated the nation's liberator at the crime scene. It carefully inspects their written accounts and the visual proof to identify which frock coat manifests evidence of the mortal blow that upended a wounded nation yearning to unite as "one country, one destiny."

## ***John Brown in New York: The Man, His Family, and the Adirondack Landscape***

by Sandra Weber/Excelsior Editions

## ***Missouri and the Secession Crisis: A Documentary History***

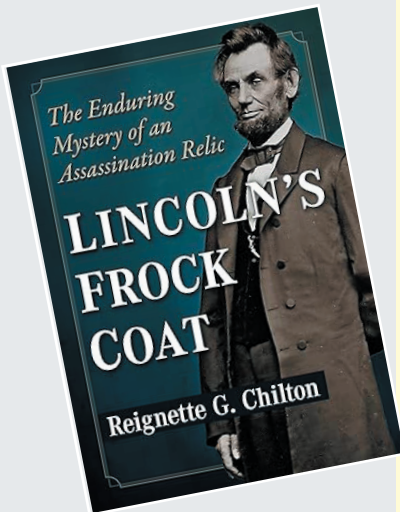
by Dwight Pitcaithley/The University of Tennessee Press

## ***A Nation Unraveled: Clothing, Culture, and Violence in the American Civil War Era***

by Sarah Jones Weicksel/The University of North Carolina Press

## ***Between Kin Cotton and Queen Victoria: How Pirates, Smugglers, and Scoundrels Almost Saved the Confederacy***

by Beau Cleland/University of Georgia Press





# Old Baldy's November Meeting Review

## ***"Abolition and the Underground Railroad in South Jersey"***

***By Ellen Alford***

***By Jim Heenehan,  
Director,  
OBCWRT***



***Ellen Alford***

For the November Old Baldy Civil War Round Table meeting, Ellen Alford gave an insightful talk on abolition and the Underground Railroad in South Jersey. Abolitionists such as Harriet Tubman, Abigail Goodwin and Benjamin Sheppard featured prominently in her talk as did key stops along the Underground Railroad in Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, along with sites closer to us in Camden, Haddonfield and Snow Hill (near Lawnside).

Cape May was a destination for fugitive slaves escaping across Delaware Bay. After arriving in Cape May, some got passage north to Philadelphia and freedom. Ms. Alford related the story of another group of six fugitives who were attacked by another boat of white men. The fugitives successfully fought off their white attackers until the latter pulled out pistols, but the fugitives still made their escape, landing near the lighthouse, and eventually moving north to freedom.

Harriet Tubman's role in helping fugitives travel north to escape slavery is legendary. She worked summers in Cape May's elite hotels and private families as a cook. In this way, she mixed with the guests and patrons, many of whom were slaveowners from the South, and learned much information that assisted with her Underground Railroad activities. There is a Harriet Tubman Museum in Cape May and across the street is the summer home of Stephen Smith – a founder of Pennsylvania's Anti-Slavery Society.

Camden was a major stop on the Underground Railroad with escaped slaves being ferried across the Delaware River to Philadelphia (others were ferried from Philly to Camden on their way to NYC). Slave catchers were also drawn to Camden and Ms. Alford related one incident where they captured an alleged runaway slave. As their wagon passed the nearby Macedonia AME church, their captive called out, "Kidnappers!" The church patrons heard the cry, rushed outside, saw what was happening, and surrounded the wagon. Someone cut the traces for the horses, and the slave catchers wisely allowed their captive to be freed.

Ms. Alford also talked about Peter Mott, a free Black man who owned his own home in Snow Hill (near Lawnside). He worked hard as a farmer, laborer and plasterer. But at night, he was the conductor and stationmaster on the "Lightning Train" (Underground Railroad), opening his home to fugitive slaves escaping to freedom. Mott's house still stands and can be visited today.

In addition to the exploits of the Underground Railroad, Ms. Alford also touched on other aspects of the Black experience at that time, including the 22nd Regiment of USCT, whose 600 Black soldiers were mustered into the regiment from New Jersey in January 1864. They served initially with General Ben Butler's force in Virginia in 1864, and later in the resulting siege operations against Petersburg and Richmond. Their many battles include Deep Bottom, Chafin's Farm, New Market Heights, Fort Harrison & Fair Oaks. After President Lincoln was assassinated, the 22nd USCT was the only Black regiment to participate in Lincoln's funeral procession.

And this is just a small sample of the many fascinating stories on abolition and the Underground Railroad related by Ms. Alford at our November meeting.



***November Raffle Book Winners -  
"Abolition and the Underground Railroad  
in South Jersey"***

***Present at Meeting: Joe Wilson  
Zoom Meeting Participant: Dan Hummel  
Membership List: Rich Jankowski***

# *He had not yet won a war or led a nation. He was just— Grant from Galena*

*Continued from Last Issue - November*

*by the  
Reverend James L. Crane  
Civil War Times  
July 1979*



**Ulysses S. Grant**

"That appears reasonable, colonel, but we are not near an enemy; besides, the boys are in a new position, and know not exactly what is expected of them, and had no idea what they were bringing on themselves."

"But we should so prepare when the enemy is at a distance that we may be ready when he is near at hand."

"That is true, sir; yet I still think a milder punishment for unwitting offenders would as effectually work the same result."

The colonel stroked his beard with his left hand, a habit to which he is accustomed when there is the slightest interruption to the current of his thought, and he puffed his smoke with renewed vigor, and reflecting, a moment, called out: "Orderly go and tell the guard to release those boys tied to the trees; they have been punished long enough."

His honesty is above suspicion. I regard him as one of the most incorruptible men in the nation. He allowed no man to take, unlawfully, a single cent from the government if he had the power to prevent it. Therefore he never was a great favorite with the contractors and cotton speculators. He had no patience or time to stop and parley with any one who was trying to make a nice thing off of the miseries of the country, and the hardships of the soldiery.

In the early part of the war it was too common for some colonels and generals to detail favorites to go away on government business and at government expense, while in reality they were going on a visit home, or to some rendezvous of pleasure purely for their own gratification. No doubt in this way the government has been defrauded of thousands of dollars. None of this would Grant ever permit. He claimed that his faith to his country in this respect should be kept as sacred as his faith to a partner in business. It was refreshing to an honest man's soul to see how coolly he could refuse all such applications. And when they attempted to argue that their double dealing was justifiable to hear him dryly reply, "I wish no further conversation on that point," and turn from them with as much for their perplexity as a school-boy manifests for flying kites. No amount of talent, or personal influence, or influence of friends in high life could for a moment swerve him from his conscientious integrity. He is "Formed on the good old man."

A true and brave, and downright honest man."

In the afternoon of a very hot day in July, 1861, while the regiment was stationed in the town of Mexico, Mo., I had gone to the cars as they went passing, and procured the Daily Missouri Democrat, and seated myself in the shadow of my tent to read the news. In the telegraphic column I soon came to the

announcement that Grant, with several others, was made brigadier-general. In a few minutes he came walking that way, and I called to him:

"Colonel. I have some news here that will interest you."

"What have you, Chaplain?"

"I see that you are made brigadier-general."

He seated himself by my side, and remarked:

"Well, sir, I had no suspicion of it. It never came from any request of mine. That's some of Washburn's work. I knew Washburn in Galena. He was a strong Republican, and I was a Democrat, and I thought from that he never liked me very well. Hence, we never had more than a business or street acquaintance. But when the war broke out, I found that he had induced Gov. Yates to appoint me mustering officer of the Illinois volunteers and after that





*Grant's Home in Galena*

had something to do in having me commissioned Colonel of the Twenty-first Regiment, and I suppose this is more of his work." And he very leisurely rose up and pulled his black felt hat a little nearer his eyes and made a few extra passes at his whiskers, and walked away about his business with as much apparent unconcern as if some one had apparently told him that his new suit of clothes was finished.

Grant belonged to no church organization; yet he entertained and expressed the highest esteem for all the enterprises that tend to promote religion. When at home he generally attended the Methodist Episcopal church with which some of the members of his family were connected. While he was colonel of the Twenty-first Regiment he gave every encouragement and facility for securing prompt and uniform observance of religious services, and was

generally found in the audience listening to the preaching.

## **"Old Baldy Receives Marketing Award from Namesake"**

*by Rich Jankowski  
OBCWRT Member  
Past President*

As you will recall from the Summer, our round table was told we received the **Matthew Borowick Marketing Award** from the **CWRT Congress**. At the November meeting. Matt Borowick came to present the award in person. The award "recognizes a local CWRT for presenting itself to members, enthusiasts, community partners, potential supporters, and others by using a variety of methods and channels. It requires thought, planning, and logistical support." The key characteristics judged were strategy, results, vision, and leadership. The award was a culmination of the work that has been done over the years to spread the OB message to people in different pockets of our local and, more recently, the national Civil War community.



*Matthew Borowick  
Marketing Award*

This was a team effort over the last six years from many contributors. It demonstrates that ours is a proud, thriving history nonprofit with a very fine organizational culture. The contributions included **Bob Russo** and **Dave Gilson** with our display setup; **Don Wiles'** outstanding newsletter; the flyers, rack cards, articles in local newspapers, and on the websites of other organizations. Our connections to the CCHA, LHSNJ, CW Trails, ECW, SWCW,

CWRT-Congress, ABT, and round tables like IE, NJ, Brunswick, Cape Fear, Jersey Shore, Del Val, Harrisburg, Pasadena, Scottsdale, and Salt Creek all expanded our reach. Our marketing built up the organization and spread our membership across the nation. Our recent accomplishments include applying for a CHPP grant, earning the 2025 Gold Seal on Candid, qualifying as a certified nonprofit to use Canva Pro, being listed on the South Jersey Nonprofit Directory, and the Impala database.

*Past President Jankowski  
and Matt Borowick with the  
award and Flat Old Baldy  
with a better background*



*Past President  
Jankowski's  
acceptance speech*



*President Calvin Kinsel,  
Matt Borowick, and Past  
President Jankowski*



This is the third Congress award OB CWRT has earned in the last four years, as we continue to learn and grow while pursuing our mission of education and preservation of the Civil War Era. The Board thanks the CWRT Congress for recognizing the work OB CWRT has done in promoting itself and setting an example for other CWRTs and history groups to emulate, learn from, and adapt to promote their organizations in their communities. The other Awards were the first winner



of the Wallace L. Rueckel Innovation Award (2022) and the first CWRT in the nation to complete the Sustainability Challenge (2023). We are also a two-time winner of the Kevin M. Hale award (2017, 2022) from LHSNJ for best historical newsletter in New Jersey.

The pillars of our round table continue to be our award-winning newsletter, the variety of quality programs offered, and our welcoming culture as we continue moving forward. We look forward to the programs Kevin Sekula has scheduled for us next year. Thanks to Ted Leventhal, Jim Heenehan, and the Canva Pro software, we will continue to publish our newsletter. As we transition to changes in some key positions and prepare for our 50th anniversary, we gain momentum and strengthen our round table. The current leaders need your assistance in moving the round table forward. It is time to step up and do your part to maintain, grow, and advance our awareness campaign. Remember, "this is the OB CWRT, and we can do anything we set our mind to do!"

Look forward to working with you next year.

## **"French General Found American Soldier Clean and Self-Reliant"**

by  
**Francois Adolphe de Chanal**  
**General, French Army**  
**Civil War Times**  
**June 1962**

Cor En. Francois Adolphe Victor de Chanal, was sent by the French government in March, 1864 as an observer with the Army of the Potomac, with which he remained until the end of the war. His lengthy and detailed official report was published in France in 1872 under the title *L'Armée Américaine*. A portion of it was translated by Lt. M. J. O'Brien, 5th Infantry (George Spooner, Leavenworth: 1894). Few copies of this valuable reference work are to be found today. CIVIL WAR TIMES Illustrated gained access to a copy through the courtesy of the Army War College Library, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pa. De Chanal's book deals mostly with the organization and equipment of the U. S. Army, and the functions of the several arms and services. But one chapter of special interest concerns the American officer and soldier, excerpts from which we give here. De Chanal observed the Federal Army only during General Grant's chieftainship; he might not have been so fulsome in his praise of the senior commanders had he observed such notable failures as Burnside and Hooker.

Another section of De Chanal's report, not given here, is of special interest in its comparison of the French and American soldier with respect to personal hygiene and sanitation in bivouacs, camps, and barracks. The French general was greatly impressed with the fact that the American soldier washed and bathed himself so frequently. He also praised the cleanliness and order in latrines both in the fields and in garrison, and the sanitation in hospitals. He noted with surprise that various installations, especially large camps, had scarcely any odor, whereas in France they were exceedingly malodorous. While De Chanal witnessed only the Union army at first hand and was extremely pro-Union, many of his observations apply to the Confederates as well.

By Francois Adolphe de Chanal General, French Army

It is difficult to compare the American soldier with any of the soldiers of Europe. He possesses the good qualities of some, together with the most opposite faults of others. He is tireless on the march, is contented even amidst great hardships, and is resolute in the attack, although dispassionate. He does not require the urging of drum-beat or bugle call; his battles have a somewhat sombre and sinister character. If he thinks his efforts useless, he halts and neither orders nor exhortations can induce him to advance. Once engaged, he is tenacious even to rashness and disobedience; he neither wishes nor knows how to retire, and thousands of lives have been lost when a quietly executed order for retreat would have limited the loss to several hundred. Neither complaints nor groans are heard in the long columns of ambulances bearing the mangled and as yet unbandaged wounded from the field of battle. The death of

the American soldier is always stoical; he may ask you to give him a little water or to place him in a more comfortable position, but he will wait patiently. And yet, though apparently indifferent, he is susceptible to enthusiasm. At the battle of Chancellorsville, General Humphreys, a major of "Topographical



Engineers, who had become a general of Volunteers, wished to lead his division again to the attack, after it had been several times repulsed. 'The division consisted of Pennsylvania troops, whose three months of service would end on the next day. The poor fellows, depressed by their

The identity of the Union company in the above photograph is unknown. (It has been identified as the "Boys of Gettysburg" A company of men from Gettysburg in the 30th Pennsylvania Regiment)

It was chosen for its remarkable clarity. Note that many of the men wear the long-frocked coats issued early in the war. The well scrubbed appearance of these men bear out General de Chanal's observation on the cleanliness of the American soldier generally..

previous failures and perhaps thinking of their coming freedom, would not get up and were deaf to the threats and supplications of their commander. The latter thereupon dismounted and, accompanied by his son, a lad but 16 years old, moved rapidly towards the enemy. The Pennsylvanians were ashamed at the sight and, rushing forward, captured the position.

During the attack on Jackson's position at Fredericksburg, General Meade, another officer of Topographical Engineers, who commanded a division of the left wing, had pierced both of the enemy's lines and nearly his trains. At this point his soldiers, perceiving that they were alone and that the center and left had been repulsed, took to their heels and fled in disorder. General Meade made vain efforts to reform them between the first and second lines, and, furious at their conduct, charged upon them and broke his sword over their heads. One month later a deputation of these very soldiers presented itself at the general's tent and begged him to accept, in exchange for the weapon which he had lost through their disobedience, a magnificent sword which they had obtained by a subscription of no less than eighteen hundred dollars. Upon the guard was engraved the date and place of the battle.

At the core, and in all that is essential, the discipline of the American army is as good as, if not better than, that of European armies; but it has not the external marks, and an observer who merely passes through the American Army may thus be deceived. The very fact that these immense levies have either elected their officers or obtained them by appointment made by the local authorities, had transferred the social hierarchy to the Army and made it also the military hierarchy. There has therefore been no need for surrounding it with all those pre-cautions which are necessary for the preservation of a hierarchy which has no other foundation than the severity of the regulations. Few troops are as obedient to their commanders, and during the entire war, although more than two million soldiers entered the ranks, there were relatively few military executions.

Although the severity of the system of examinations has corrected the errors arising from a system of election of officers, it was greatly aided by the presence, in all the walks of civil life, of a great number of former cadets and graduates of West Point.

The Corps of Engineers, the most scientific body in the Army, alone furnished more than twenty general officers, among whom were Humphreys, Pope, Warren, Hooker, and Meade. A colonel of Engineers, Meigs, became Quartermaster General and during the entire war directed the operations of his department with a skill that could hardly be surpassed.

Patriotism, devotion, and discipline could not entirely atone for lack of military knowledge, which the American soldier had to acquire on the field of battle, sometimes, at great cost. He learned only such military knowledge as was needed in the kind of war he was making; little versed in those great movements of parade which make of troops the mobile and docile instruments of the tactician, he exhibited a certain unwieldiness which would be disastrous to him if operating against European troops in a European theatre of war. But one would seek in vain in America for plains like that of the camp at Chalons, where so many armies have clashed as if in an arena prepared in advance.



A forest, then clearings, scarcely large enough for the deployment of a few divisions, then again the forest; such is the nature of the usual terrain of the battlefields of the war. At the Wilderness the two armies fought for three days amidst an almost impenetrable forest; only once was the clearing large enough to permit the use of cannon. An aide-de-camp of General Meade, who, during these three days, was continually engaged, never once saw an entire regiment assembled.

Such a war necessarily develops the intelligence of the soldier. At the beginning of hostilities, it was with great difficulty that the soldier could be made to use the pick and shovel, a kind of labor for which he had not enlisted; but he soon saw the necessity for it, and with customary American intelligence in all kinds of skilled labor, he soon became master of the art of using cover. Hardly has the army halted, with its bivouac not yet completed, before it is intrenched without waiting for

*'The discipline of the American army is as good as, if not better than, that of European armies . . .'*

the engineer officer; and when the latter arrives he finds few things that need rectifying; the lines are defiladed, the traverses are well placed, abattis is prepared, the vedettes are placed in small trenches which furnish them perfect cover; the army is secure against surprise, and all this often without any other tool than the settlers' axe which the American is rarely without and which he uses with great skill, and without anything to use as a shovel except the wrought-iron cup, which hangs alongside the canteen. If the position has to be held, all these rough works are perfected and lines and redoubts are built which are quite as artistic as the best of military constructions, All arms are equally skillful and the cavalry rivals the sappers of the Engineers.

The battle of Gettysburg was perhaps the only battle in which the Federal army had to resist the shock of the Confederates, without being intrenched; it showed on this occasion great solidity. The attacks of the Confederates were so furious that those who were not crushed by the artillery fire fell exhausted in the midst of the Union ranks. This was also the only battle which can be compared to those of European wars; the cause of secession never recovered from this defeat which really saved the Union.

The attack is usually made in lines, rarely in column, although this formation gives both spirit and solidity to the assailant. At Spotsylvania there was an attack in column which succeeded; but several days afterwards, General Smith tried to repeat the manoeuvre on the Chickahominy, but he was struck on both flanks and defeated; the column formation was not again employed. Moreover, the success at Spotsylvania was somewhat the result of a surprise; when the lines are well defended they are very strong and their capture by assault costs a great many men.

Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and Petersburg were very bloody battles without decisive result. It was necessary therefore to manoeuvre so as to find the enemy unprepared, in other words to turn the positions. The whole of the first part of Sherman's campaign as far as Atlanta is a masterpiece of this kind of manoeuvre. He was opposed by Johnston, the best general of the Confederates and an opponent worthy of him.

In such a war, to possess accurate information is a matter of utmost necessity, and the Signal Corps has therefore acquired great importance. Its errors have had the most terrible results. Owing to the splendid manoeuvre by which Grant left Lee on the left bank of the James while Grant was crossing his whole army over the river, General Smith was enabled to capture the first lines of Petersburg. The Signal Corps announced the arrival of Beauregard. He [Smith] halted, hesitated, and remained inactive for 48 hours, not withstanding the arrival of reinforcements sent by Hancock; and when Meade with the whole army, three days afterward, renewed the attack it was too late and 10,000 men were uselessly lost in three days. 'The Signal Corps had made a mistake; actually the Confederate reinforcements had arrived only a few hours before Meade.



One of the few known photographs of Confederates in field uniform taken after the early part of the war. By an unidentified photographer, the picture is of Confederate prisoners guarded by what appear to be Union militiamen. Note the absence of very young faces among the Southerners. First published in 1956 by the Journal of the Company of Military Collectors and Historian'; the photograph was submitted by Stanley J. Olsen. This print was made available by courtesy of the West Point Museum,

Such errors are rare, however, and this case became celebrated because of its result, which perhaps prolonged the war a year. We have already related how, during the campaign in Virginia, a report was captured which was made by the Confederate Signal Corps with reference to the passage of an army corps which it was thought had moved without the enemy's knowledge; the report was found to be correct in every particular and the strength of the corps was given exactly.



**FACE-TO-FACE**—This drawing by Edwin Forbes, titled "Trading With the Enemy," illustrates differences of dress between Confederate soldiers on the left and Union, on the right.

The liking for adventurous expeditions, which would seem to indicate a certain impatience with the rules of war, is combined [by American generals] with rare tenacity and steadfastness. Grant's operations before Vicksburg and his persistence in remaining before Petersburg, notwithstanding the alarm of the government at the threat against Washington by Early's great raid, are the most memorable examples.

The nation has shown an unshaken firmness of desire to continue the war, equal to that of the generals in carrying out their military plans. Never has a people subjected to such a test shown greater power to resist discouragement. When the first army had been completely destroyed at Bull Run and its material ruined, the nation responded to the joyous shouts of the enemies of liberty in both hemispheres by the levy of more than 600,000 volunteers. And when at last fortune favored the Union forces, the Confederates, who are only a portion of the same nation devoting the same virtues to an evil cause, gave evidence of equal perseverance.

## ... a Note from Don

I have had two great loves in this life... working at and giving my skills to the Space program at the JFK Space Center... the Moon Landing and Learning about America's Civil War... I was able to find many ancestors who fought and learned their stories in that war... I could not have done it without help from Old Baldy...

I have been considering for several month ago of giving up doing the Newsletter and made a decision about 6 months ago to make the December 2025 the last one I would do... I am getting tired...

I have been doing the Newsletter for 20 years now... January 2004 to 2025... 20 sum years ago about 6 active remaining members of Old Baldy met in a Diner in Philadelphia to decide if there should be an Old Baldy... we had about six dollars in budget and our membership dropped from over a hundred to we six... we decided to try to keep it going in New Jersey and that decision paid off... with the hard work and ideas we are now known Internationally... and have over 100 members again...

I was glad I chose to stay and help and could share my skills from my occupation of which I have been doing since I was 17 years old and now 88...

I have made great friends in Old Baldy and elsewhere in the Civil War Community... I would list them but it would take the rest of the space and then some. The knowledge I gained about the Civil War I could have not gotten anywhere else... I wanted to share some of that knowledge and I tried to do that thru the Newsletter.

There was not to many tours of Civil War sites that Old Baldy was not brought up for our Organization/Newsletter and that was the many thanks I got knowing I was the one who help do it... I tried to put in new and old CW informative articles of course I cheated... I have a large collection of CW Books printed in the 1800s and early 1900s... and thru my many friendships in the Civil War community.

I am glad you had given me the gift of taking part in the Civil War Education of many people...

## 2026 Membership Dues

**Membership Dues** are now being collected. Dues remain the same, \$25.00 Individual Membership and \$35.00 Family Membership. Remember they can now be paid online. Just visit our Web Page, click on, "Membership" on the top bar, which will take you to the next page. Choose a payment method, visa, etc., and click "Buy Now". This will take you to the submission page, complete form and click on, "Pay Now". Done.

As always, if you prefer to pay by check, bring it to any meeting or send to:  
142 Mimosa Drive Sewell, NJ,  
08080 Should you have any questions, please contact me at  
609-2973

or  
francal@comcast.net.



## ***“John Burns at Gettysburg - July 4, 1865”***

As the sounds of battle erupted on the fields west of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on the morning of July 1, 1863, John Burns, a 70-year-old veteran of the War of 1812, shouldered his flintlock musket and trudged down the Chambersburg Pike to the scene of the fighting. He offered his services to Colonel Langhorne Wister of the 150th Pennsylvania Regiment and when that unit retired, he fought with Michigan’s “Iron Brigade” until disabled by three wounds. He thus gained the distinction of being the only civilian of the town to participate in the battle.

Burns, seated left (white coat), poses with officers of the 50th Pennsylvania Regiment on July 4, 1865, at the second dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

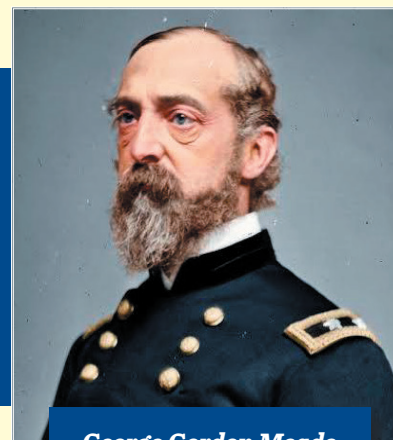


### ***Events***

#### **December Old Baldy General Meeting and Social Gathering**

It has been a great year for OB CWRT! On Thursday December 11th enjoy a social evening with friends. The meeting starts at 7:15 PM at the William G. Rohrer Center located at 1889 Marlton Pike East, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08003 or on Zoom. Share with the leadership your feedback on our Round Table, and suggestions for improving and expanding the organization. Then relax and enjoy your fellow members in celebration of our year and the future. Round Table members, family, and friends are all invited to our General Membership Meeting to celebrate the end of the year and take a break from the holiday frenzy. Round Table members, family, and friends are invited to discuss the past year and nibble on delicious treats. Thanks to everyone who offered to bring food or drink for our social gathering. Looking forward to seeing everyone for cheer, fun, food, and fellowship. Bring a companion to enjoy the evening.

***Old Baldy to visit  
General George Gordon Meade's  
Birthday Wreath Laying  
at Noon,  
December 31, Laurel Hill Cemetery***



**George Gordon Meade**

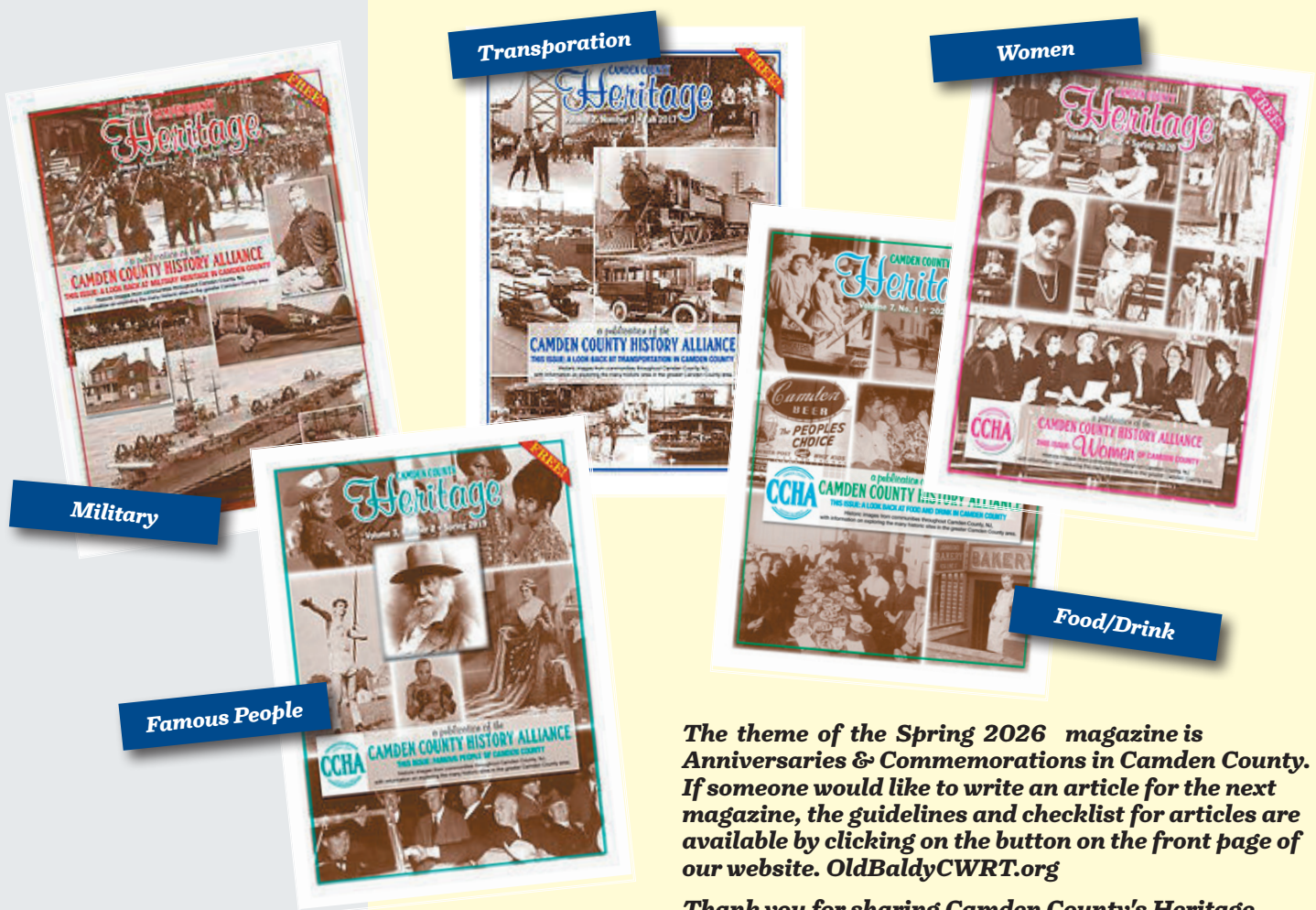
# Camden County History Alliance

The Camden County History Alliance is a partnership of over 50 Camden County history organizations, historic assets, and support agencies. It was established in 2016 to promote appreciation for the wealth of historical resources throughout Camden County.

One joint project is to produce a historical heritage magazine which will be offered FREE and distributed county-wide to local businesses, libraries, historical societies, meeting spaces, and public events. The copies are full color with a finished size of 8.125" x 10.125."

Each edition follows a theme of Camden County's Heritage with vintage photographs, images, maps, and information on life in Camden County. The theme of the Spring 2026 magazine is Anniversaries & Commemorations in Camden County. Past themes include education, women, lost places, food, military history, entertainment, industry, transportation, famous people and first responders.

Each organization in the CCHA is expected to sell advertisements and/or patron donations to fund the production and printing of the magazines. To fulfill our obligation, the form has been made available for download on our website ([OldBaldycwrt.org](http://OldBaldycwrt.org)). Click on the page-wide button on the front page of the website to access the form to print and fill out. Please share with potential vendors and patrons to assist CCHA in meeting its goal. Instructions for payment and artwork are at the bottom of the form. The deadline for submission is in February. *Thank you for your support on this matter.*



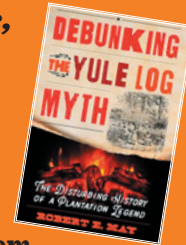
**The theme of the Spring 2026 magazine is Anniversaries & Commemorations in Camden County. If someone would like to write an article for the next magazine, the guidelines and checklist for articles are available by clicking on the button on the front page of our website. [OldBaldyCWRT.org](http://OldBaldyCWRT.org)**

**Thank you for sharing Camden County's Heritage.**



## Our Sister Round Table Inland Empire Upcoming events

**On Monday, Dec. 15th, 6:30 p.m. Pacific Time,  
Author and Historian Professor Robert May  
will speak on his book  
"Debunking The Yule Log Myth:  
The Disturbing History  
of A Plantation Legend."**



**Here is the Zoom Link—6:30 p.m. Pacific Time. The Zoom room  
will open at 6:15.**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87187864471?pwd=vOaWqi520lQdahnjbpSdBrp488bdq.1>**

**Meeting ID: 871 8786 4471 Passcode: Lincoln**



For the past 29 years, The Jersey Cares Coat Drive has mobilized the collection and distribution of thousands of "gently used" winter coats to men, women, children, and infants in need. Last year, Jersey Cares collected more than 18,000 coats throughout the state of New Jersey.



**Items Accepted: New or gently used Winter coats, all sizes**

The Volunteer Center of South Jersey is participating in the Jersey Cares Coat Drive as a collection site! Bring your donations to our office located at Rowan College of South Jersey or contact Rich Jankowski [856-904-5481 CWHHistory2@gmail.com] if you have coats to donate.

**Other Ways to Participate:**

Host your own collection at your school, office, church, etc.

Donate virtually

<https://yougivegoods.com/plp/6umac0lw15a0x2pudk21as3kc>

Host an online drive

Fundraise virtually

<https://www.classy.org/campaign/the-jersey-cares-coat-drive-2025-2026/c709065>

Volunteer to sort donations Cherry Hill January 18, 2026 @ 12 PM

Find more information at

[https://www.jerseycares.org/The\\_Jersey\\_Cares\\_Coat\\_Drive](https://www.jerseycares.org/The_Jersey_Cares_Coat_Drive)



**Wreaths Across America  
December 13, 10:30 AM  
Beverly National Cemetery**



**FOB Welcomes  
New Members, Award and  
Visits from afar...**



**Janet Whaley  
5 Year Pin**



**Rick Zarr  
Member  
Cedar Lake, IN**

**2026  
Membership  
Dues**

**See Page 12  
for  
Instructions**

## **Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2025 - 2026**

**January 8, 2026 - Thursday  
Ron Kirkwood**

**Tell Mother Not to Worry:  
Soldier Stories from Gettysburg's George Spangler Farm**

**February 12, 2026 - Thursday  
James Jewell**

**Waging War For Freedom with the 54th Massachusetts**

**March 12, 2026 - Thursday  
John Horn**

**Lee Besieged: Grant's Second Petersburg Offensive,  
June 18-July 1, 1864**

**April 9, 2026 - Thursday  
Elizabeth Varon**

**Longstreet - The Confederate General Who Defied the South**

**May 14, 2026 - Thursday  
Carolyn Ivanoff**

**We Fought at Gettysburg: Firsthand Accounts by the Survivors  
of the 17th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry**

**Questions to  
Dave Gilson - 856-323-6484 - dgilson404@gmail.com**

**Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia  
Camden County College  
William G. Rohrer Center  
1889 Marlton Pike East  
Cherry Hill, NJ  
oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net  
Founded January 1977**

**President - Calvin Kinsel  
Vice President - TBD  
Secretary - Anita Schwartz  
Treasurer - Calvin Kinsel  
Director - TBD  
Director - James Heenehan  
Director - Ted Leventhal  
Past President - Dr. Rich Jankowski, Jr.**

**Programs: Dave Gilson  
Membership: Amy and Dan Hummel**

**Editor: Don Wiles - cwwiles@comcast.net**

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

**<https://www.youtube.com/@oldbaldycivilwarroundtable86/videos>**