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## THE LIGHT POST

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**MN NICE MEETS SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY** 1

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:** 2

**WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER?**

**LITTLE VALLEY CW MEMORIAL** 4

**PARTNERSHIPS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE** 7

**BOARDING THE EVENING TRAIN** 9

**USCT SERVICE HONORED** 11

**STEVEN RAUSCHKOLB** 12

**2026 CWRTC AWARDS** 13

**DATA CENTERS** 14

**GRANT INITIATIVES UPDATES** 15

By Carol VanOrnum  
and David Hamon

Sister Round Tables are an excellent way to draw on each other to improve and grow your organization. Building mutual support, sharing best practices, and developing camaraderie create an experience that can bolster an organization and its membership.

But you don't need to live in the next county to reap the benefits of a sister relationship. Two years in the making, the [Twin Cities CWRT](#) (TCCWRT) and the [CWRT of Fredericksburg](#) (CWRTF) recently launched our sister relationship when Fredericksburg invited the TCCWRT to travel 1,150 miles east for a few days of social engagement and brainstorming. This is not the first long-distance sister collaboration – Inland Empire CWRT of Redlands, CA,

and Old Baldy CWRT of Philadelphia have been sisters for many years.

The initial attraction began when David Hamon and I met at a conference in Winchester. We discovered similarities in our organizations – we both employ a dinner/presentation format, our membership size (150+) is similar, as well as our governance and committee assignments.

So, for this visit, our purpose was twofold. First, to bring leaders together to discuss successes and challenges, and second, to determine next steps in developing the relationship. The first night's "leadership" dinner covered a wide range of topics, from how to attract new and younger members to finding ways to deepen member engagement in governance of our organizations. Fredericksburg named the challenge "STP" – the *Same Ten People*. We talked about creating an "elevator pitch" and other recruitment tools. Both organizations' leaders came away feeling encouraged and committed to this partnership.

Fredericksburg also invited the TCCWRT delegation of seven to attend their final meeting of the

(Continued on Page 3)

**You don't need to live in the next county to reap the benefits of a sister relationship.**



### PLEASE HELP ME FIND MY LOST LETTERS!

*These are family treasures, and I would greatly appreciate their return. Letters handwritten by Miles Taylor Squires, Confederate soldier, to his wife Eliza Otis Fry, collected in a binder. Last seen in Southern Pines, North Carolina. Please contact Ann Peterson [anniepandmark@yahoo.com](mailto:anniepandmark@yahoo.com). Many thanks, Ann Peterson*



## WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER?

By Mike Movius, President

Among some of the crazier things we hear in America's culture is about superpower. There are plenty of sci-fi movies depicting Superman, Wonder Woman, and other-earthly beings that can do fantastical feats of strength, projections, etc. When asked, "What is your superpower?" (No one has ever asked me that) I wonder how you might answer.

Let's break that down by posing some intermediate questions.

**You notice a fellow CWRT member seems to have a tough day. Do you seek to comfort, invite him/her to talk, or give them space?**

I'd like you to consider that your approach to others not only affects them and opens opportunities for yourself but also affects your organization. Think of it this way. If you are compassionate and seek to help others, they will have a deeper reason to stay connected with your CWRT.

**How big is your social circle? Do you seek a larger, smaller, or the same size circle?**

If your friendliness extends to those you may not know, it will not be forgotten. Friendliness can be contagious. When other members catch it, the perception of your organization as a place of welcome will reap the benefits.

**When you are working on a group project, what role do you typically play? Are you the cheerleader, the researcher, the planner, or the morale-builder?**

Taking a familiar role in a project can meet everyone's expectations. It can also become a barrier for another who wishes to step forward to take on that role. Be mindful that taking on a less familiar role can free you while expanding the capacity of the CWRT.

**When you make a mistake, what do you do? Do you let it pass and hope others won't notice, try to figure out what went wrong, or do you tell those affected and rectify it?**

Everyone makes a mistake now and again. How you respond is important. By making it a teachable moment, your organization can more easily recover, and it can become a positive influence on your CWRT's culture.

**When someone suggests a change, do you absolutely hate it, ignore it completely, or see it as a chance to learn and grow?**

Not all change is good and conversely not all change is bad. If you can become the role model who discusses all aspects of a proposal, the impact it will have on your peers and the organizational culture can be life altering.

Superpowers need not mean you are faster than a speeding bullet nor more powerful than a locomotive. For you and me, it can simply be a gateway to sustainability because others want to continue the discussion in an environment we create.



## IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

Consider we are all doing the best we can with the circumstance we find ourselves.



Photo by Robert M. Linn, [www.LOC.gov](http://www.LOC.gov)  
General Ulysses S. Grant on Lookout Mountain,

## MINNESOTA NICE MEETS SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

(Continued from Page 1)

season. TCCWRT felt a warm welcome from the members, and as a gesture of gratitude, we brought packets of Minnesota-grown wild rice as table favors for all.

Touring filled our days with all that the city of Fredericksburg has to offer – two four-hour tours of the battlefields of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, the Chatham House, the Fredericksburg Area Museum (FAM), and the Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge, also known as Washington's Lodge.

TCCWRT President John-Erich Mantius summed up his experience, "We left having formed meaningful friendships



and a deep appreciation for Fredericksburg's extraordinary Civil War and Revolutionary War history. Most importantly, we returned united in enthusiasm and commitment to building a strong sister Round Table partnership that will strengthen both organizations."

In accord, CWRTF President Jerre Wilson responded, "It

was an absolute joy meeting with you. Your Round Table is in great shape with the dedicated members of your team. Our groups have much in common, and I look forward to sharing experiences and

lessons learned."

As we move forward in our collaboration, we encourage all Civil War Round Tables to look for a partner/sister who shares your Round Table's interests, goals, and passion for history.



The CWRTF meets at University of Mary Washington Jepson Alumni Executive Center (JAEC).

## HISTORY IN THE PARK—THE AMERICA250 VERSION!



By Nancy Arthur

The 3rd annual History in the Park was held July 11th in Marietta, Ohio. Live patriotic music, reenactors, exhibits by many local organizations, and people walking through the park, especially with their families, filled the Park. A little rain only held back the people a bit, but those attending enjoyed themselves. Tours of the Church of the Pioneers and a view of the Bridge of Heroes only made the day more special for America250!

Nancy Arthur is President of the CWRT of the Mid-Ohio Valley.



Pictured above: General Grant (aka Doug Ebert) and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hershberger

Pictured left: President Lincoln (aka John Cooper) and Nancy Arthur

# THE LITTLE VALLEY CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL

## THE STRUGGLE TO KEEP LOCAL HISTORY ALIVE

By Carol VanOrnum and  
Mark Dunkelman

In August 1908, forty-three years after the end of the Civil War, Cattaraugus County celebrated the centennial of its founding with a history-themed festival that drew thousands to Salamanca, New York. Some prominent men in attendance formed the Cattaraugus County Historical Society with plans to erect a building as a Civil War memorial and repository for the county's historical legacy. The 154<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry was the county's most representative regiment, but Cattaraugus men served in a wide variety of units and aboard several ships.

Plans were publicized in 1911, and that September, a large crowd of veterans and citizens gathered in Little Valley to witness the laying of the building's cornerstone. The Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building's dedication on September 7, 1914, was attended by more than two hundred veterans of various regiments. Attendees envisioned the Memorial standing forever as a revered shrine to the county's history. Sadly, it served its intended function for less than a

century before falling into serious trouble.

Its dome began leaking. Moisture penetrated the basement, damaging some artifacts. The county's neglect was in full view when the museum's curator and county historian invited members of the legislature to cross the street and examine it – but no one showed up. In 2004, the museum's board decided to move the imperiled collections to a county-owned building in Machias. The Memorial sat vacant and deteriorated for another nine years. In October 2013, the county legislators voted to use \$125,000 in casino funds to demolish the Memorial and Historical Building. A flurry of opposition caused them to put the plan on hold.

### CAMP is Created

Supporters of the memorial needed a grassroots organization centered in Cattaraugus County. The fledgling group called themselves the Citizens Advocating Memorial Preservation – CAMP. And in 2015, they began a flurry of activity, from soliciting grants from preservation foundations and endorsements from organizations such as the current American Battlefield Trust,

American Legion, and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. CAMP wanted to purchase the memorial and went through a legal process to do so until the Cattaraugus County Supreme Court cleared the way to purchase the property. In the summer of 2017, CAMP was able to place the sole bid of \$1,079 and became the official owner.

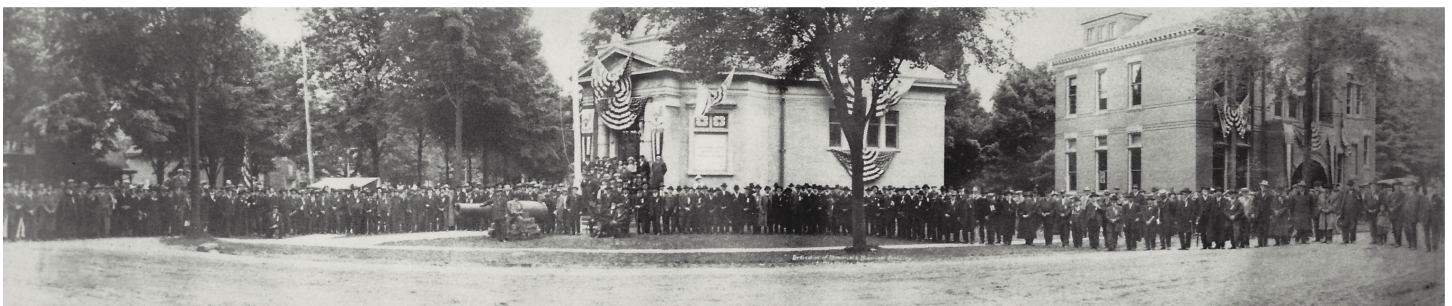
CAMP wanted to place the memorial on the National Register of Historic Places and that process was challenging to say the least. In 2023, the Cattaraugus County Legislature voted to award \$10,000 to CAMP for this process. Things began to open for CAMP. In March 2025, the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building was listed on the New York State Register of Historic Places. Two months later, in May 2025, the Memorial was listed on the *National* Register of Historic Places. By the end of 2025 they had received grants from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, the Preservation League of New

York State, and the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation's Community Fund.

CAMP is working with the Clinton Brown Company Architecture to establish the steps needed to rehabilitate the property. Phase One is removing the asbestos from the building. CAMP has also hired a fundraising consultant to obtain continuing funds.

While the process of registering, procuring funds, and planning has been arduous, the CAMP team remains focused on preserving their history. Bill Parke shared, "I personally have ancestors who fought in the War. Family, and its history, is one of the most important parts of my life. The story of the 154<sup>th</sup> New York is very inspiring – they are family! This is one way to give back to your ancestors."

(Continued on Page 5)



## THE LITTLE VALLEY CIVIL WAR MONUMENT (CONTINUED)

(Continued from Page 4)

Tom Stetz feels that “if this community can see the work that is being done, can see inside and see the potential, it will keep the momentum alive. We welcome all assistance and partnerships to our cause.”

For further information, contact Thomas W. Stetz, CAMP President, [twstetz@verizon.net](mailto:twstetz@verizon.net) or Bill Parke, CAMP Board Chairman, [bill.parke.mac@gmail.com](mailto:bill.parke.mac@gmail.com). Contributions are welcome, please visit: <https://cattcomemorial.org/donate/>



Mark H. Dunkelman is an artist, musician, and historian in Providence, RI, who has written and lectured extensively about the history of the 154th New York. He is currently serving as CAMP's secretary.

Fifty years after they fought in Virginia and Georgia, proud Civil War veterans stand in front of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building on its dedication day, September 7, 1914.

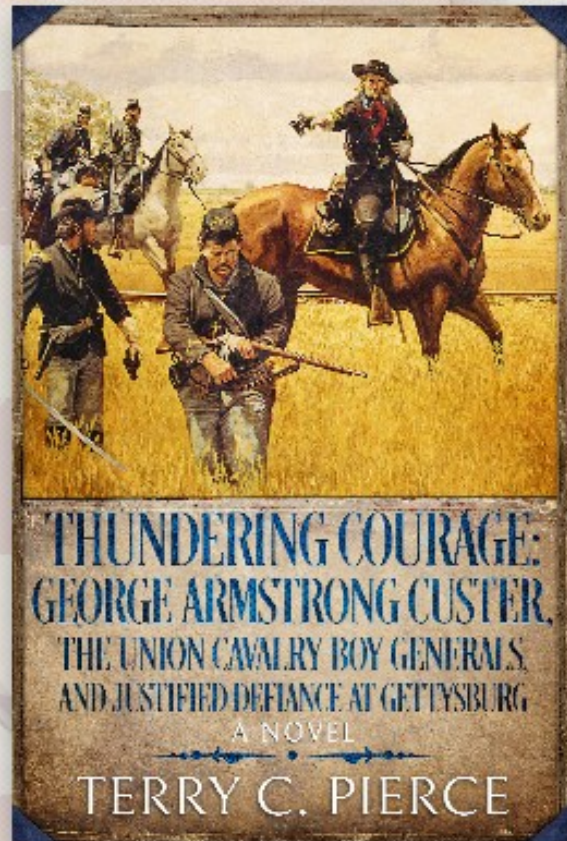
Photo: Cattaraugus County Museum



### *A Hell of a Regiment: How the Twentieth Maine Created their Gettysburg Story*

On July 2 at Seminary Ridge Lutheran Seminary Chapel, Dr. Jared Peatman introduced his book *A Hell of a Regiment: How the Twentieth Maine Created Their Gettysburg Story* as part of the Sacred Trust 2026 series with Gettysburg Foundation and Gettysburg National Military Park. Left to right: Cheryl McAuley and Jared Peatman

**Why is "character" the heart & soul of leadership?**  
**How do you respond to a "Without Warning" moment?**  
**Can a battlefield order ever be "Justifably Defied?"**



To learn the answer to these thought-provoking questions, read the first two novels of Dr. Terry C. Pierce's (Captain USN, retired) Gettysburg Trilogy. Both meticulously researched works examines the battle through the lens of the character and leadership displayed by the key Union soldiers and officers during this pivotal battle.

To reach Terry Pierce or arrange for him to speak at your CWRT email him at: [PierceTerryC@gmail.com](mailto:PierceTerryC@gmail.com) or at:

**[www.terrycpierce.com](http://www.terrycpierce.com)**

## PARTNERSHIPS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

By Ken Patton

On June 1, 2026, the Cumberland Mountain Civil War Round Table co-sponsored an America250 program in Crossville, Tennessee. The event became a powerful example of how partnerships can leverage resources and achieve results that would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish alone.

The story began in the summer of 2025. During a conversation with Mark Pfaffenroth, president of the Military Memorial Museum in Crossville, we realized that both of our organizations wanted to host an America250-related program. However, neither group had the resources or energy to undertake a significant event independently. In addition, our program calendars for early 2026 were already crowded, making it difficult to add another major project.

Together, we attended a day-long seminar presented by the Tennessee Association of Museums that focused on helping small museums—and, by extension, local historical organizations—prepare for America250. While we did not leave with a specific program idea, we gained valuable information about managing and strengthening our organizations.

Mark suggested that the Round Table and the museum jointly

Sponsor and underwrite a program featuring Dr. Curt Fields portraying Ulysses S. Grant. Although Grant was not directly connected to the events of 1776, he was President of the United States during the nation's centennial celebration in 1876. Fields is also extremely popular in our region, making the program an attractive option.

To accommodate a larger audience, I approached the Executive Director of the Cumberland County Playhouse in the fall of 2025. The Playhouse, a locally based professional theater company, has a magnificent mainstage theater and was immediately enthusiastic about participating. Like us, they wanted to be involved in America250 but had not settled on a topic and had a busy schedule. Their participation also provided access to professional lighting and sound technicians, whose expertise significantly enhanced the quality of the final presentation.

Finally, Mark approached the Cumberland County Mayor, who agreed to provide modest funding to help cover incidental expenses.

Admission to the event was free, but we also offered attendees the opportunity to contribute through a free-will offering—a fine Southern tradition. The donations raised almost enough money to cover all program expenses. Attendance

approached 400 people, far exceeding anything our organizations had previously hosted. We welcomed many first-time attendees, and audience feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The event also provided an excellent opportunity to promote the Military Memorial Museum, upcoming productions at the Cumberland County Playhouse, our Clara Barton program in July, and the community's July 4th parade.

Several important lessons emerged from this experience.

First, partnerships are essential if small organizations are to thrive. Every group has both needs and resources. The key is simply reaching out and exploring how organizations can work together for mutual benefit.

Second, organizing a program among multiple organizations is very different from organizing one within a single group. Successful collaboration requires higher levels of communication, coordination, and planning.

Third, events that are larger in scale than an organization's typical programs present additional logistical and operational challenges that must be anticipated early in the planning process.

Finally, do not be afraid to think outside the box when seeking partners. Some of the most successful collaborations come from organizations that may not

**When organizations combine their strengths, they can achieve far more than they could alone.**

appear to have obvious connections but share common goals.

Our America250 program demonstrated that when organizations combine their strengths, they can achieve far more than they could alone.

*Ken Patton is president of the [Cumberland Mountain CWRT](#).*



# Ulysses S. Grant

Portrayed by  
E.C. Fields, Jr., Ph.D.

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E-Telegraph:  [curtfields@generalgrantbyhimself.com](mailto:curtfields@generalgrantbyhimself.com)

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Facebook:  [Facebook@Curt Fields](https://www.facebook.com/Facebook@CurtFields)



## BOARDING THE EVENING TRAIN

Forward by Bill Miller

*It's my honor to introduce the following letter penned by Cheryl McAuley, my friend and colleague of the CWRT Congress. Her letter reminds me of Bruce Catton's reverence for railroad trains and his utilization of a train ride as a metaphor of one's life. Cheryl and John have just made a move to a retirement community in a new area of America. Like many seniors, they are beginning to embark upon a new and final phase of their lives. And like all of us, Cheryl's enthusiasm for their future endeavors should serve as an inspiration to all of us.*

Dear Friends,

When you hear "Gettysburg" what comes to mind?

The three-day battle, the 1993 movie, the aftermath which the town had to clean up and recover from in the summer of 1863? No matter where your loyalties lie, you have to admit there were great leaders and followers in both Union and Confederate uniforms. Incredible heroes walked on what is now hallowed ground.

When you hear "retirement" what comes to mind?

My husband and I just moved to Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, from Huntsville, Alabama, to retire. Both locations are full of history important to the fabric of our nation. Fayetteville is between Gettysburg and Chambersburg on Route 30, the Confederate route

advancing to and retreating from Gettysburg, foraging all they could from the locals. The Huntsville area has been known for cotton fields and watercress, and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and the Space and Rocket Center.

This will be our last move, Lord willing. As we approach our new lifestyle in a 55+ neighborhood, we are meeting neighbors. Everyone assumes that we'll join a Civil War Round Table here. Truth be told, before we left the [Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table](#) in Huntsville, AL, I paid our dues for three years ahead. We can watch the TVCWRT meetings on DISCORD, an alternative to ZOOM. Over the years, we invested a lot of time and effort into making the TVCWRT a viable Civil War Round Table, and we made special friends through that organization. I will continue to advocate for them whenever I can.

We left a state with four Civil War Round Tables (two were 90 minutes from us) to a state with about 20 CWRTs. Six of them, Cumberland Valley CWRT, Gettysburg CWRT, Shippensburg Area CWRT, and Round Tables in York, Hershey and Harrisburg are in our immediate area of South-Central Pennsylvania. Also, within reach of us are many CWRTs in Maryland, D.C., and Northern Virginia.

I'll study each of the local CWRT websites and FaceBook pages, learn who the next speakers are for the coming months, and what their meeting schedules are. I want to see how the boards are



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structured and how the members are valued. That will be important to me when I consider returning on a more regular basis. I won't be volunteering to serve them any time soon. My night driving will be reduced, especially on these dark country roads, but if I can find some Zoom meetings, that would be great. Perhaps a daytime CWRT is out there awaiting my discovery.

I have no regrets and feel it's time to step back and pray that others will step forward to lead CWRTs. I will continue to serve on the Board of the Civil War Round Table Congress for as long as they want me there. It's an honor and privilege to be part of the distinguished team that exists to help other CWRTs with support and resources when they might need it. The annual CWRTC Conferences and Workshops

provide the resources for individual Round Tables' growth and sustainability.

We're truly blessed as we look forward to the opportunities ahead in this new and final phase of our lives.

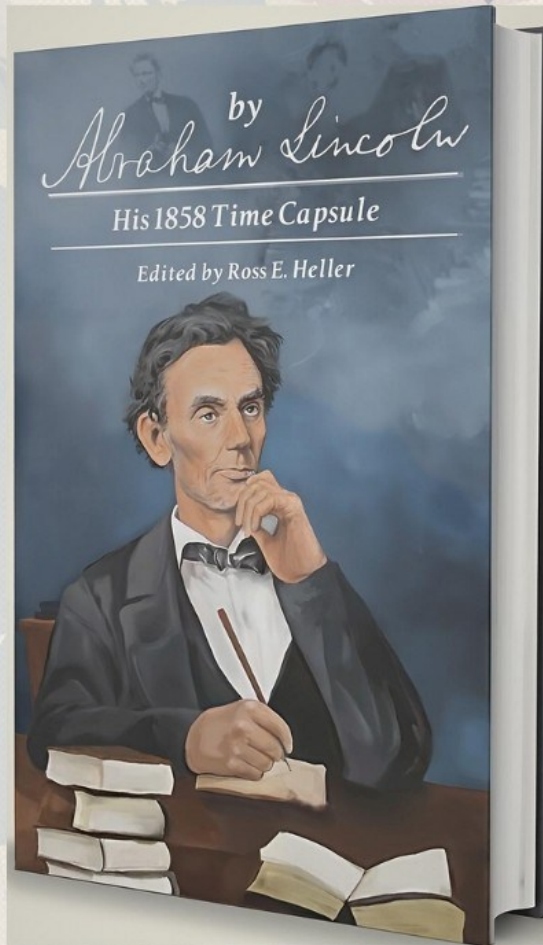
With kindest regards from the sunset side of South Mountain,

Cheryl

*Dr. McAuley is past president of the Tennessee Valley CWRT and a member of the Board of Directors of the CWRT Congress.*

## Discover Lincoln's 1858 Time Capsule

*by Abraham Lincoln: His 1858 Time Capsule*



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**Editor/Author Ross E. Heller is also available by Zoom or  
in-person to tell the book's story:**

**"Unearthing Abraham Lincoln's 1858 Time Capsules."**

**He can be reached at [info@byabrahamlincolnbook.com](mailto:info@byabrahamlincolnbook.com).**

## USCT SERVICE HONORED IN VIRGINIA

In May, Virginia's Civil War heritage received a long overdue and important contribution. The Civil War Study Group at Lake of the Woods Housing Community (CWSG-LoW) staged a special commemorative public ceremony to unveil a new interpretative sign marking the service and sacrifice of the USCT Regiments during the battle of The Wilderness and in the subsequent Overland Campaign.

The community is located along Route 3 between Fredericksburg and Culpeper, Virginia, and is built entirely on the historic battlefield of The Wilderness. The Wilderness battle (in part) took place literally in the front yards of the residents! The CWSG-LoW membership consists of the folks who reside in the Lake of the Woods gated community, but all were welcome to attend.

Charles Brewer, Secretary of the Group, designed the panel, and the membership raised the funds necessary to construct and mount the panel within the community's property. Part of the panel calls attention to USCT service of several local Orange County, Virginia, residents.

"There's a lot to learn," Brewer said. "These men, mostly from the North, and many born in the North, did not have to put their lives at risk. But they saw the bigger picture and said, 'I'm going to do my part.' You learn a

little bit about the people and appreciate their sacrifice."

Steward Henderson, a USCT reenactor and historian, dressed in a period-accurate Black Union soldier uniform, gave a synopsis of the USCT history. With the help of a National Park Service representative, they unveiled the new sign. Henderson said he has his uncle to thank for guiding him into interest in the Civil War. "I've known about the USCT for a long time. My uncle formed the organization of Afro-American culture in the 1960s, and I was a member of it. I was always a Civil War buff, but he showed me the first pictures. He was an artist too and painted a picture of the U.S. Colored Troops. The first Black officers I saw were in those troops. So that's what started me on it."

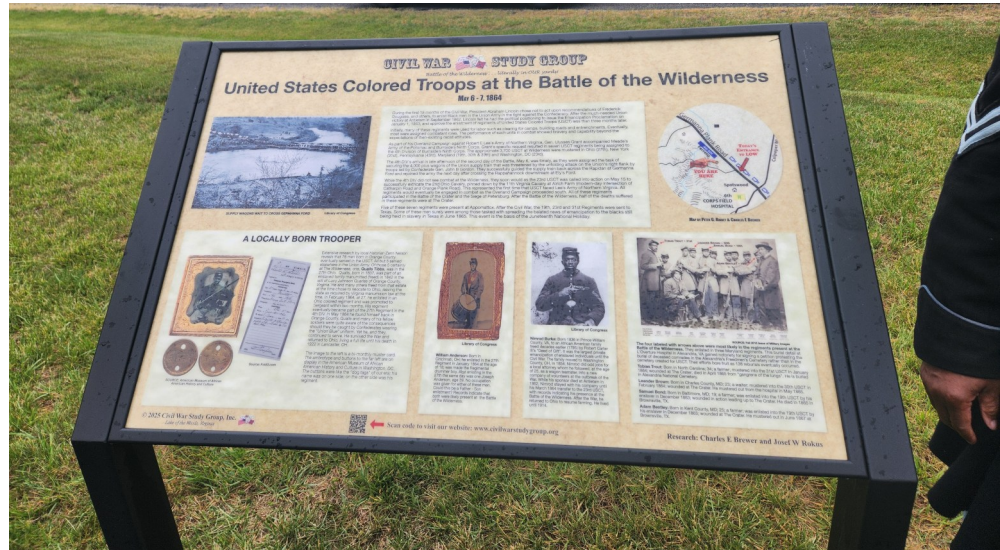
Ranger Beth Parnicza from The Fredericksburg and

Spotsylvania National Military Park spoke, noting "(f)or many of these soldiers, this campaign is their first test against the famed Army of Northern Virginia. I'm sure that it carried a lot of weight for them and brought a lot of fear and anxiety but also brought out their courage. Their actions proved their worth to themselves and to the nation that questioned it." Quoting Carter G Woodson, an American historian, author, journalist, and educator known as the Father of Black History, Parnicza stated, "If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated."

The CWSG-LoW invites all visitors wishing to see this and many other Civil War interpretive panels erected by the group across and around the gated community to reach out to the

membership officials (who will aid in clearing you past the security gate) by going to <https://civilwarstudygroup.org>. They would love for out-of-state visitors to take the auto tour of their CW sites!

*Reprinted in part with permission from Davis, Pilar. (13 May 2026). "Panel honors Black troops." The Free Lance-Star [Virginia], p. A10. Photo: Peter Cihelka Photos, The Free Lance-Star*



## SPOTLIGHT ON A CWRT BOARD MEMBER STEVEN RAUSCHKOLB

By CWRT Congress

*"There are painters who transform the sun to a yellow spot, but there are others who with the help of their art and their intelligence, transform a yellow spot into sun"*

— **Pablo Picasso**

Picasso mused that there are some who see the potential and can manifest a vision. Steve Rauschkolb, as Marketing Director and Vice President for the CWRT Congress, has created those opportunities throughout his life.

Born in Ossining, New York, Steve grew up a few blocks from the infamous Sing Sing prison. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Management from Alliance College and a master's degree in strategic communications and leadership from Seton Hall University, where he later worked as an adjunct professor. He began his career in the 1970s office automation industry before transitioning to the pharmaceutical, biotech,

and life sciences arena, where he worked for 35 years. His career focused on leading the learning and development / organizational development, and global corporate university functions for Merck (Schering-Plough), Pfizer, and Sanofi. In these roles he was responsible for training sales forces, leaders, and medical professionals to improve leadership and communication skills—all of which requires having a vision, seeing potential in people and possibilities.

Steve's interest in the Civil War began at the age of seven. While other kids were playing with WWII soldiers, "I asked Santa for the 'Blue and Gray' battle set." In the 1980s he read *Killer Angels* by Michael Schaara, then *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* by Stephen W. Sears. "From then on, I was hooked." Steve is a current member of the [Cape Fear CWRT](#) based in Wilmington, North Carolina.

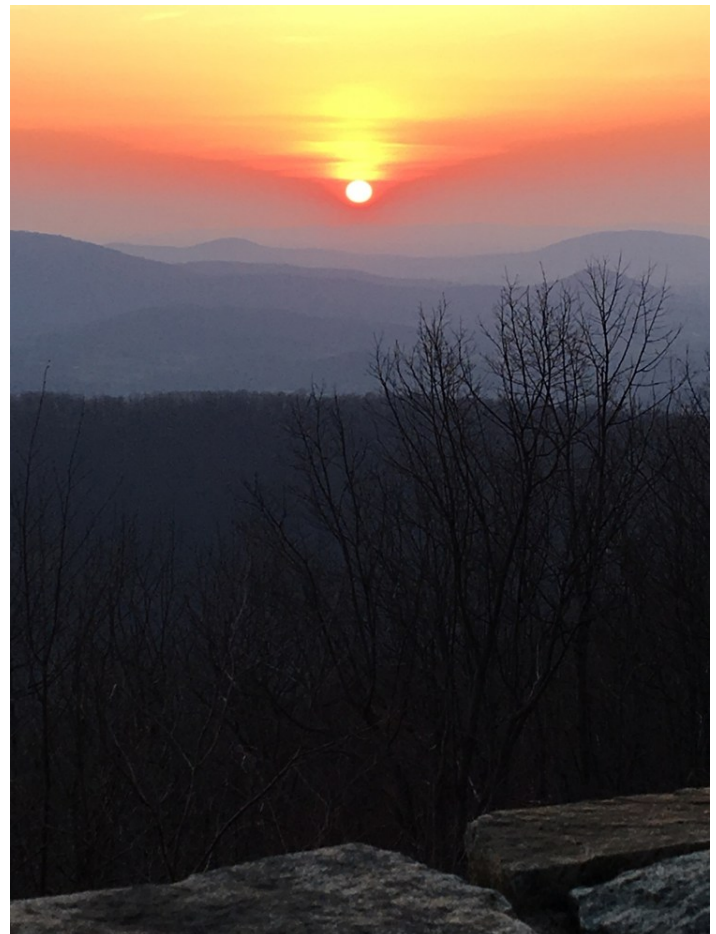
Not one to ignore his creative side, Steve has appeared in several television series as an extra playing roles as varied as a Boston police officer, newspaper reporter, and prisoner. He is currently very active in Southport, North Carolina's, Brunswick Little Theater, serving a term as president and currently as a member of the board of directors.

Steve and his wife, Toni, love to

travel and have traveled extensively though Southern Germany/Austria and Tuscany. Most recently they traveled to Rome, throughout Sicily, from which Toni's ancestors originated, and then to Malta. He is also an avid golfer and landscaper.

Steve applies his creative side to the marketing efforts of the Congress. He has fun creating the talking historical figures who pitch fundraising efforts.

"I feel like it gives me the opportunity to give back to the people and institutions that are interested in studying and preserving the history of the Civil War."



Shenandoah Valley. Photo: Matthew Holzman, Civil Warscapes  
<https://www.facebook.com/CivilWarscapes>

## KENTUCKY, FREDERICKSBURG, AND ROANOKE CWRTS RECEIVE 2026 CWRT CONGRESS AWARDS

Three local Civil War Round Tables are recognized by the CWRT Congress for their inspirational efforts to adapt, adopt, and establish strategies for sustainability.



The Roanoke CWRT will receive the 2026 *Dr. John Bamberl Phoenix Award*. The *Phoenix Award* recognizes a Round Table for its restoration after a period of stagnation or extinction. Two years ago, the RCWRT faced extinction due to low attendance, inadequate paid memberships, and scanty finances. Due to the united efforts of the 24 members, membership has grown to 61 – a 154% increase! Vice President Kevin Donovan shared that a new and aggressive marketing campaign as well as efforts to partner with community groups resulted in creating a greater presence in the area. Additionally, they raised membership dues and began charging \$5 for non-member attendees, both increasing their coffers. CWRT Congress Board Director David Hamon will present the *Phoenix Award* to Round Table President Alicia Pryor on September 8, 2026.



The CWRT of Fredericksburg will receive the 2026 *Wallace L. Rueckel Innovation Award* for their multiple innovative efforts. The *Innovation Award* recognizes a Round Table for creative, effective, and inventive programs that provide value to the members. The CWRTF recognized that they needed to create comprehensive administrative procedures that would address the full-time functions of planning organizational issues surrounding effective management of all the Round Table's activities, including finances and day-to-day functions. This included defining their mission, vision, and goals. An executive committee "EXCOM" was formed to carry out all the functions written in the Administration procedures. One of the outcomes was professionalization of Board meetings by giving Board members timesaving preparatory materials ahead of the meetings. Among several attempts to welcome visitors and new members is the decision to assign a tablespace with a current Board member to make them feel welcome and create a memorable experience. According to President Jerre Wilson, "Members have seen

a more efficient and responsive organization. Albeit hard to quantify, there is a certain buzz at the meetings that is hard to deny, and we believe this had led to the recent uptick in new members." CWRT Congress President Mike Movius will present the *Innovation Award* to Round Table President Jerre Wilson on September 23, 2026.



The Kentucky CWRT will receive the 2026 *Matthew Borowick Marketing Award* for their successful marketing of their Round Table. The *Marketing Award* recognizes a Round Table for presenting itself to members, enthusiasts, community partners, potential supporters, and others by using a variety of methods and channels.

The KCWRT expanded their newsletter, making it digital-friendly with links to sources and additional reading, as well as posting it – and past issues – on their website. The newsletters are also available to non-members, which they

hope will entice membership. In addition, the KCWRT began recording their meetings and posting them on their website with the same hope of enticing membership. Internally, they added an expanded Membership Dues Sponsorship Structure with rewards and recognition for participants. Mike Movius will present the *Marketing Award* to President Bill Farmer on September 21, 2026.

By the recognition of these three Round Tables for their successes at restoration, innovation, and marketing, the CWRT Congress encourages all local Round Tables to emulate these exemplary efforts to enhance their own growth and sustainability.

## THWARTING THE ENCROACHMENT OF DATA CENTERS

By Andrew Mizzak

On Thursday, July 3, 2026, QTS, the corporation proposing to develop the Prince William Digital Gateway, abandoned its Virginia Supreme Court appeal to overturn a lower court's ruling, halting the project from moving forward.

The abandonment of the appeal by QTS halted the plans for the construction of the world's largest data center campus adjacent to the Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Had the appeal before the Virginia Supreme Court succeeded by overturning the Virginia Court of Appeals' ruling, historic viewsheds would have been obliterated, and an excessive level of water and electrical consumption would have negatively impacted the region.

The American Battlefield Trust was a central party to the case, working with several allied organizations to halt the construction of the Prince William Digital Gateway.

Yet, this is not the only place where historic lands are being encroached upon in order to build behemoth data centers... and that trend should concern all of us.

The Virginia case relative to the Prince William Digital Gateway was argued upon state statutes to challenge a procedural error committed by the Prince William County Board of Supervisors relative to the hearing notice

necessary for public hearing and comment.

On its face, had the Virginia case relative to the data center and its construction gone forward, the overall development would have had the potential to harm the viewsheds from the Manassas National Battlefield Park.

This is not the only historic or cultural property facing a situation where a data center is being built in close proximity.

In Nashville, a proposed data center is planned to be built adjacent to the Nashville Zoo. This effort has drawn criticism from country music singer Brad Paisley and a WWE wrestling celebrity Bella. Bella (real name unknown to this author) also shared her concern relative to the extreme draw upon water necessary to cool data centers, and the amount of electricity necessary to power these facilities.

Throughout the Great Plains region of the U.S., data centers are being planned or built on property near lands that are either home or sacred to Native Americans.

Back in Virginia, in another area of Prince William County, a different one-million-square-foot data center has been proposed on private property adjacent to public lands. The Potomac Technology Park would have an impact upon Prince William Forest Park, a unit of the National



Photo:  
nps.gov

Park Service with historical and natural significance. This park, which includes structures built and trees planted by President Franklin Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps, was the home to the US Army's Office of Special Services during World War II. The Office of Special Services is the forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency. While the Potomac Technology Park would impact less than 60 acres of park land, including pristine forest, it would impact the viewshed, nonetheless.

Further south in Virginia, in Orange County, a 2500+ acre development is proposed near the Wilderness Battlefield.

In the Western United States, data centers are being proposed to be located in the New Mexico desert, near Grand Canyon National Park (500 acres near Horseshoe Bend), and near Federal grazing lands managed by the US Bureau of Land Management in Nevada.

Over the past several months, however, local governments throughout the nation have begun to push back on the growth of data centers near communities and public lands. In Ohio, numerous local governments

have passed moratoriums on the construction of data centers in their communities. Citing noise pollution, the large consumption upon public utilities, and other infrastructure issues, these communities have asserted that data centers are more of a detriment to their communities than a benefit.

As organizations that are committed to the preservation of a key piece of the American story, Round Tables and allied groups can leverage their voices, and we, as a community of historians, can advocate to protect the places and spaces that are important to the story of the Civil War. Our motivation should be that which allows the story of the Civil War to be preserved unencumbered for future generations and we can come together to inform key stakeholders and decision makers of our position.

Andrew Mizzak is Commander of the [James A. Garfield CWRT](#) (Ohio) and a member of the Board of Directors of the CWRT Congress.

## GRANT INITIATIVES PROJECT UPDATES

By CWRT Congress

In 2025, the CWRT Congress awarded six \$250 grants to Civil War Round Tables which proposed initiatives in the areas of Fundraising, Marketing, and Historical Research. The recipients provided the following updates on their projects.

### Marketing Initiative

#### Quincy Gillmore CWRT

By Kelly Boyer Sagert

Thanks to the CWRT Congress marketing grant, we created attractive and colorful tri-fold brochures and engaging recruitment posters, along with business cards, using them at Taste of History. This event features reenactors across American history and field kitchen tasting opportunities—a perfect audience for us. Nine thousand people attended over a two-day period. We had steady engagement throughout the weekend, handing out materials and educating people on Quincy Gillmore (for whom our group is named) and sharing our fall programs while inviting people to attend. Thank you, CWRT Congress!



### Fundraising Initiative

#### Tennessee Valley CWRT

By Richard Caniglia

The CWRT Congress granted the Tennessee Valley CWRT \$250 to acquire printed material in support of recruitment efforts. This effort began on January 5, 2026, and concluded on June 30, 2026. Our goal was to recruit 20 new dues-payment members and do five-visits, public stories or interviews by influential people or organizations.

We believe that the rack cards we created were not effective as a stand-alone method. Instead, we found that repeated requests for help recruiting resulted in new members. Printed materials played a supporting role in these efforts.

We discovered that we needed to be strategic in where to place materials. The key is to put your “eye catcher” on the top quarter of the design. But we learned that smaller business cards given to members to distribute made more sense. Personal contact is key. During this experiment, we gained six new members and entertained 14 visitors.

The TVCWRT extends our thanks for your grant, which gave us an opportunity to explore the role of printed material in recruitment. Though we did not fully meet the criteria for success, we did learn and the lessons above will pay dividends.



#### Inland Empire CWRT

By Mike Hoover

I am happy to report on our grant award fundraising effort. As you know, this event benefits the Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association (WLMA), which administers the Lincoln Memorial Shrine and Research Center in Redlands, California. The funds raised will be used to acquire historical artifacts for the Shrine, the only museum west of the Mississippi dedicated solely to Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.

We are incredibly moved by the generosity shown so far. As of July 1st, total donations have exceeded \$3,200, thanks to those who have donated more than \$50.

- 19 of our own members who have contributed.
- Six of our previous presenters.
- Partner organizations, including the Old Baldy CWRT, North Jersey CWRT, and the Sons of Union Veterans - General Sedgwick - Granger Camp 17.

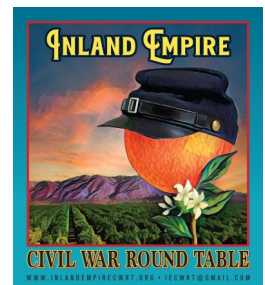
We have received 27 donations of over \$50 already, and it is truly gratifying to see such widespread support for preserving our history.

With six months remaining before we present these donations in

January 2027, we are looking to build on this momentum to reach our \$5,000 goal. If you haven't had a chance to contribute yet, we would love your support in helping us reach this milestone.

Donations can be made easily by visiting our homepage at [inlandempirecwr.org](http://inlandempirecwr.org).

The Inland Empire Civil War Round Table remains deeply grateful to the CWRT Congress for the grant seed money that jump-started this effort. Thank you to everyone who has helped us support the education of future generations.



### Historical Research Initiative

#### CWRT of Mid-Ohio Valley

By Leigh Murray

More than 170 guests attended the 2026 Annual Battle of Buffington Island Memorial Service and Marietta Militia Historical Marker Dedication on Saturday, July 18, 2026, at the Buffington Island State Memorial in Portland, Ohio.

(Continued on Page 16)

## GRANT INITIATIVES PROJECT UPDATES, CONTINUED

(continued from Page 15)



*This monument is a tribute to the residents of Portland whose lives were forever changed by the battle there on July 19, 1863. It stands at the front of the Buffington Island State Memorial, 56797 OH-124, Portland, OH 45770.*

The event was hosted by the Buffington Island Battlefield Preservation Foundation (BIBPF), Cadot-Blessing Camp #126 SUVCW, and the Civil War Round Table of the Mid-Ohio Valley to support the foundation's efforts to enhance interpretation, education, visitation, and preservation of the battlefield.

Last Saturday's event featured the annual memorial service conducted by Cadot-Blessing Camp #126 SUVCW, a presentation by David L. Mowery, author of "Morgan's Great Raid," a proclamation by Marietta Mayor Joshua D. Schlicher, unveiling of the historical marker, observations

from BIBPF President Darryl Smith, an artillery salute, period music performed by the 73<sup>rd</sup> OVI Regimental Band and a community picnic.

The event was funded by a CWRT Congress History Research grant, a grant secured from the America250 – Ohio Commission, and donations from American Legion Post #64 Marietta, Buffington Island Battlefield Preservation Foundation, Cadot-Blessing Camp #126 SUVCW, City of Marietta, CWRT of the Mid-Ohio Valley, Dan and Lisa Evangelista, Mid-Ohio Valley Veterans Outreach,

Military Order of the Purple Heart Marietta Chapter #743, Judy Phillips, VFW Post #5108 Marietta and the Warren Offenberger Family. It was attended by several CWRTs.

Lastly and most importantly, those present were honored by the presence of Mike Movious, President of the CWRT Congress. President Movious was recognized for his vision for the Marietta Militia historical marker after he toured the battlefield last year.

### Knoxville CWRT By Tim Vane

The city of Knoxville has been constrained by funding in developing its Battlefield Loop of which Armstrong Hill is a part in 2026. So, the Knoxville Civil War Roundtable has been in neutral in using the grant given to us by the CWRTC. Research has continued into understand-

ing the battlefield in order to interpret it correctly, but the summer months have necessarily slowed this work in detail on the ground due to excessive heat, dense foliage and thickets, as well as the steepness of the terrain.

However, we haven't been idle. We've started to put our team of volunteers together so that we might present the city the option of allowing us to start developing the site while they wait for funding to improve roads, create adequate drainage capabilities, and other site and safety improvements.

The KCWRT team includes other civic organizations that can tap into manpower resources to build rifle pits, clear site lines, construct paths to sites/signage, etc. We'll also tie in with area Civil War groups that have particular expertise with the tactics and techniques of the period to ensure what we do is as accurate as possible for a battle that occurred in November 1863.

This will only be done with the approval of the city, but maybe we can help them jumpstart the process by showing that the citizens of Knoxville and East Tennessee are willing to put in the time and sweat to bring this battlefield back. We'll see how it goes.



*Battery K, 1st Ohio Light Artillery posts the colors while Jim Oiler, Commander, Cadot-Blessing Camp #126 SUVCW and Master of Ceremony, salutes from the podium.*

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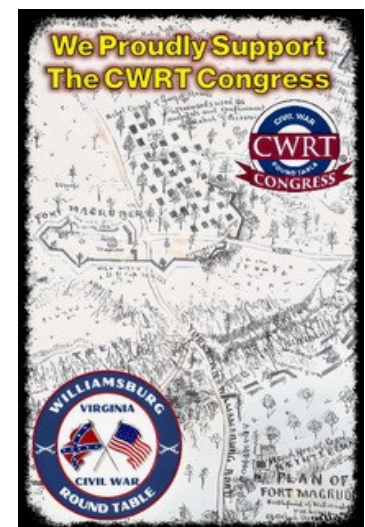
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The CWRT Congress thanks our sponsors—Georgia Battlefields Association, Williamsburg CWRT, Tennessee Valley CWRT, Bull Run CWRT, Scottsdale CWRT, Knoxville CWRT, Civil War Institute—Gettysburg College, Woodbury Historic Tours, and Central Virginia Battlefield Trust as well as Terry Pierce, Dr. Curt Fields, and Ross Heller.



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## INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER—DOUG RISHER

The CWRT Congress is pleased to introduce our newest board member, Doug Risher, who will serve as Treasurer. Doug was born and raised in suburban Pittsburgh, graduating from Penn State in 1971 with a B.S. Degree in Business Administration as an Accounting major. After working with several public accounting firms, Doug found that he most enjoyed working with manufacturing companies in different industries. He enjoyed seeing and understanding the production processes and learning how things are made. "I found that manufacturing accounting brought with it a distinct set of challenges such as, 'does it make sense to buy this machine that will improve our productivity?' Or 'do we need to hire additional workers?' etc."

Doug's interest in the Civil War started when he watched a 1961 television series, *The Americans*, during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conflict. He has since learned of his great-grandfather's service with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteers. He then discovered that *his* father and two brothers served with the 84th PA Volunteers.

Doug looks forward to getting involved with a local Round

Table in the near future. He recently celebrated his 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and has two grown daughters and a grand dog.

Doug shared, "I am honored and proud to join such a highly esteemed group of Civil War scholars, authors, and educators. I hope to be an asset to the group."

Welcome, Doug!



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