

info@newbedfordcwr.org

December 2020

This issue of the Flagbearer

...December meeting is a Zoom meeting, Dec 15 at 7:00 p.m.

...We have had two successful Zoom meetings and December's meeting will be interesting as well. At the November Zoom meeting 30 participants were online.

...Paid your dues for the year? Dec 30 is the deadline to remain a member in good standing. Not sure if you are paid up? Email Marty Flinn, Treas, or myself. Bob Lytle

...We've booked our speakers for the balance of the season. We hope you find them to be interesting and well worth your time. Please encourage your friends to attend .

...Announcing the return of Kate Taylor of Mary Surratt fame

...Pete Rioux is back with yet another excellent essay

...Don't forget to "like" us on Facebook. Visit often for updates

...We are updating and revising our By-Laws

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Jack Richer—Board of Directors

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Web Design by Following Sea Design

Book Award—Peter Rioux

Bruce Baggarly—Board of Directors Emeritus

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Bob Lytle—Flagbearer ,Programs, and Zoom set up

Cell # 508-542-7630

bobbylee76@comcast.net

THE FLAGBEARER

Greater New Bedford Civil War Round Table

New Bedford, Massachusetts

December 15, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

ZOOM Meeting

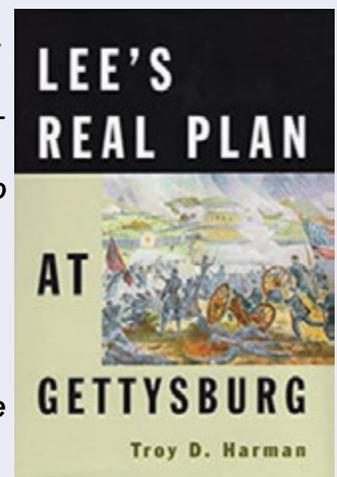
Troy D. Harman, Ph.D.

Gettysburg Battlefield National Park Ranger, Author, Historian, and Guide

Troy teaches courses in U.S. and European history at the university level. He has been at the Gettysburg National Military Park for many years and with the National Park Service for over 35 years. Dr. Harman has published two books and numerous articles and presented many televised lectures. You can find him on You Tube, definitely fun to watch. Troy guided Al and Dave Smith's Boston Round Table "Four Days in May" tour several years ago. Troy's "Battlefield Walks" and "Coffee with a Ranger" You Tube videos are fun to watch and educational. He delivers thoughtful and challenging material during his lectures. Troy has a passion for teaching.

Troy's career began as an Interpretive Park Ranger at Appomattox Court House National Military Park in Virginia in 1984. He has held similar posts at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky, Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, and at Independence National History Park, Philadelphia. He has been at the Gettysburg National Military Park since 1991. His B.A. Degree is from University of Lynchburg, his M.A. from Shippensburg University, and his Ph. D. from Lehigh University.

This will be a unique Zoom session. While Troy could present on any number of topics, we've decided that tonight's presentation will be an expanded Q & A. This will be especially interesting for those that have walked the Gettysburg Battlefield. As an example. Did Meade order a counteroffensive? Was Lee ill prepared? How was Gettysburg selected as a battlefield site? Was Chamberlain the hero of Gettysburg? Did Sickles disobey orders? Was Meade's reliance on a council of war wise? Was Longstreet late on the second day? Should Ewell have taken Cemetery Hill on the first day? What would Stonewall have done? Is Greene the real hero of Gettysburg? Where did Captain Johnson reconnoiter? Those are a few questions off the top that I can think of.
Bob



January 26, 2021 New Bedford Civil War Round Table Speaker

Matt Atkinson, Gettysburg NPS Ranger

Needs no introduction to our membership



Matt hasn't determined what topic to cover, but we will announce it in the next Flagbearer. We are pleased to have this opportunity to have him as a guest speaker to the New Bedford Civil War Round Table. Let your friends know that they are welcome to join us on January 26th....Bob

February 23, 2021, New Bedford Civil War Round Table Speaker—Via Zoom

Ben Kemp—Operations Director, Friends of U.S. Grant Cottage,
Mt. McGregor, NY



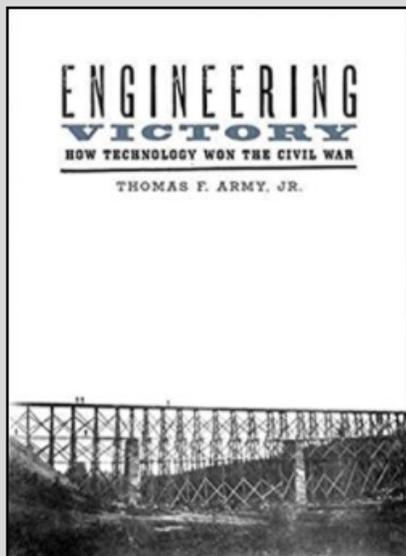
Join U.S. Grant Cottage Historical Site Operations Manager Ben Kemp as he shares the compelling story of how famed Civil War General and two-term U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant ended up spending

his final days in the foothills of New York's Adirondack Mountains.. His story is an inspirational tale of family devotion and a true character study of a man known for his triumph over adversity. Learn how the amazingly preserved Cottage atop Mt. McGregor, with the sweeping views of the Hudson Valley and Green Mountains, became a historic site that has welcomed visitors for the last 135 years.



Ben Kemp was born and raised in the Saratoga region of New York. He is a living historian, speaker, and researcher who has been featured on C-Span, PBS, and the 2020 History Channel documentary, Grant. Kemp has been a staff member with the Friends of U.S. Grant Cottage since 2014.

Coming in April at The New Bedford Civil War Round Table



On **April 27, 2021** our featured speaker, via Zoom, will be Civil War Historian **Professor Tom F. Army Jr. Ph.D.** from Quinnipiac University. He is also known for his You Tube series, History of the United States. Some of the best You Tube videos on history that I have seen are from Dr. Army, I urge you to check out his videos. His presentation style you will find easy to understand and informative.

April 26, 2021 Zoom meeting of the New Bedford Civil War Round Table



Tom F. Army Jr, Ph.D.

Speaker for May 18, 2021 is announced. This meeting will be either Zoom or in-person. It is too early to say but our speaker will do either format.

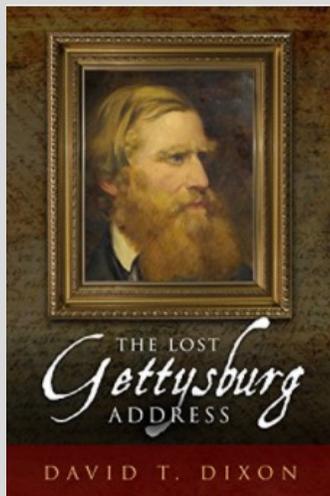
May 18, 2021 7:00 p.m.

David Dixon presents : *The Lost Gettysburg Address: Charles Anderson's Civil War Odyssey.*

David explains how Anderson, a slave owner, ended up sharing the spotlight with Lincoln November 1863. David Dixon earned his M.A. in History at the University of Massachusetts in 2003. He has been on tour visiting Round Tables from coast-to-coast. As with many of our speakers, it is worthwhile to find them on You Tube and listen to their presentation work. In this case David's talk at the Gettysburg Foundation Sacred Trust symposium in 2016 is a good start to understanding this interesting piece of history. The Charles Anderson speech was never published and was forgotten for 150 years. David Dixon brings it to life in a most interesting way.



David T. Dixon



...More speaker information

March 23, 2021 7:00 p.m. Speaker

New Bedford Civil War Round Table President, Mark Mello



MARK MELLO, President, NBCWRT

Mark's subject is to be determined

Special June 22, 2021 Program Announcement

Living historian, Kate Taylor of Mary Surratt fame will return to the New Bedford Civil War Round Table, via Zoom, on June 22, 2021. Most of you remember Kate's wonderful performance at the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park as Mary Surratt, Guilty, or Not Guilty as a Co-conspirator in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

On June 22, 2021, Kate Taylor returns as "Lizzie Borden took an axe....or did she?"

This performance will be open to all—tell your friends about this great opportunity to become familiar with the New Bedford Civil War Round Table



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, MARK MELLO

Dear Friends,

As we move into the holiday season, I hope we can all find some much needed joy and happiness. Although it will be a difficult time for many, may we remember that this is a time to spend with friends and family. So although we might have to "be distant" from them physically, we can still be "with them" to celebrate and give thanks for all that we do have.

I, for one, am thankful for this great group of Civil War enthusiasts. This past year has been a trying one for our organization: the loss of our long-time President Joe Langlois, the COVID-19 pandemic preventing us from our normal meetings as a group, and the growing polarization and racial tension in our nation, have certainly made this a difficult year for us all.

But in the midst of all this, we have made great strides as an organization. We have successfully hosted 3 online meetings, have begun work on new bylaws, and have maintained most of our members. We continue to host a fantastic group of top-notch speakers (thanks to the hard work of Bob Lytle), and continue to hold important discussions about our nation's past. None of this would be possible without your love and passion. I am truly thankful for your dedication to this organization, and our continued attempts to keep the memory of those who gave "the last full measure of devotion" alive.

This month, we will be joined by noted historian Dr. Troy Harman. Troy has worked for National Park Service for several decades, and has been at Gettysburg National Military Park since the early 1990s. His passion, dedication, and knowledge are sure to impress. We would love for this meeting to draw a large crowd! So tell friends and family who might be interested. I can guarantee that you will leave this meeting with a new perspective on one of the most pivotal battles of the American Civil War.

May all of you have a blessed and joyful holiday season!

Your obedient servant,

Mark Mello

President

New Bedford Civil War Round Table



We're Updating our Bylaws.

In an effort to ensure that our By laws are consistent with our existing policies and procedures, the Board has recently completed a review of this document in order to include appropriate updates , corrections, and additions . These modifications pertain to the responsibilities of the officers and the Board of Directors, a more complete listing of our current activities, and our membership and meeting procedures. This draft can be viewed on our Roundtable website. Please contact Pete Rioux (peterr.rioux@gmail.com) should you have any comments or suggestions so that we can ultimately finalize this document

How do I join in to the Zoom call ?

If you were with us on the Zoom meeting in November, you do not need to do anything. I will be using the November email list for the Dec Zoom meeting.

If you were not with us in November, then you will need to send me your name and email address. I will then be able to send you a Zoom invite.

We understand that there are many digital Zoom meetings or Facebook live streams , or You Tube videos on the internet that feature Civil War themes. We are working to bring you the best speakers available. We do not want to waste your evenings with boring presentations. So far, this season, the feedback has been positive. I hope you will consider joining our Zoom sessions , and also consider joining the New Bedford Civil War Round Table.

Bob Lytle bobbylee76@comcast.net 508-542-7630

**New Bedford Civil War Round Table
2020-2021 Membership Form**

Program Year July 1, 2020 to June 30,2021

Please fill out this form and make check payable to "New Bedford CWRT"

Mail to:

New Bedford Civil War Round Table

C/O Martin Flinn, Treas.

39 Little Oak Road, New Bedford, MA 02745

Name (s) _____

Type of Membership _____ **Individual (\$15.00)** _____ **Family (\$20.00)**

Address: _____

City, State, & Zip: _____

Cell or Home Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Date: _____

The Irish Brigade, by Peter Rioux New Bedford Civil War Round Table

They were vilified, excluded, and rejected upon their arrival and during their living experience in their new land in America. Yet, when called upon, they exhibited supreme and sacrificial loyalty and a valiant and continuing effort to preserve their chosen home as a united one. In doing so, these Irish Americans formed an effective and cohesive fighting unit as a vivid demonstration of their patriotic loyalty. They did so as they coalesced into the renowned Irish Brigade.



During the 1840's and 1850's, the United States experienced a dramatic influx of Irish immigrants having experienced a severe potato famine, extensive starvation, and a failed rebellion to achieve Ireland's independence from England.



Upon their arrival and establishing their homes largely in major eastern seaboard cities, such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, they were met with resistance and prejudice primarily advanced by Know-Nothings and other anti-immigrant and Catholic factions. As a result, while living in squalid conditions and being employed in menial low wage physically back breaking jobs, the Irish formed urban enclaves and militia groups to establish their solidarity and create a strong sense of ethnic belonging.

The earliest leader of one of the Irish militias was Thomas Meagher (pronounced Marr). Son of a wealthy merchant, he had actively participated in the “Young Ireland” movement during the Irish Rebellion of 1848, and having been captured by the British, was initially sentenced to death. This sentence was then commuted to life in prison in Australia. However, after serving three years, he was able to escape to the United States, finally arriving in New York where he was greeted as a celebrated Irish patriot while advancing the cause of Irish independence on the lecture circuit.

Shortly after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, Meagher and Michael Corcoran led the effort to form a fighting Irish brigade out of smaller regiments. With Meagher serving as Brigadier General, the core unit was the 69th NY Infantry and was expanded to include the 63rd NY, 88th NY, 29th Massachusetts, and the 116th Pennsylvania. The Brigade was formally established by the authorization of Secretary of War Simon Cameron in September 1861. Marching out of New York, the 69th was cheered with shouts of “Remember your country, boys, keep up the credit.”

Several motivations combined to influence the forming of the Brigade despite the treatment that they had received from so many in their new country. Among them was the desire to prove and demonstrate loyalty to the Union in order to gain greater social acceptance and, in the process, achieve support for the Irish independence effort in their native Ireland.

Some of the major military engagements in which the Irish Brigade actively participated include:

The Brigade's reputation was first established during the Peninsula Campaign. The Brigade participated in the Seven Days Campaign and fiercely fought Confederates in hand to hand combat. They later pursued General Lee after he had taken the military initiative into Maryland.

In September 1862, the Brigade's reputation was further established at Antietam. The Brigade relentlessly attacked the strongly held Confederate position at the Sunken Road. When they ultimately exhausted their ammunition supply and being stopped within thirty yards by heavy Confederate fire, the Brigade resorted to throwing rocks at the Confederates. The Brigade suffered a sixty percent casualty rate. Their deceased flagbearer was later found protecting the Regiment flag (green silk and gold with a harp sunburst and with the motto, “who never retreated from the clash of spears.”) wrapped around him.



At Fredericksburg in December 1862, the Brigade repeatedly launched six major and eleven minor frontal attacks at Confederate positions at the stonewalled ridge of Mary's Heights. Wearing identification of boxwood in their caps and shouting, "Faugh a Ballaugh" ("Clear the way"), they forcefully charged and were met by hails of Confederate fire causing them to cease their attack and retreat, after having achieved the furthest advancement of any Union regiment. General Pickett wrote of the Brigade admiringly, "My heart stood still as I watched those Sons of Erin fearlessly rush to their death. Their assault was beyond description."



Chaplains of the Irish Brigade, Fr. Corby front row, right

The Regiment suffered a fifty percent casualty rate and sixteen of the officers were killed or wounded. Father Corby, the Regiment chaplain and who would later become the President of the University of Notre Dame, had offered the Right of Conditional Absolution before the battle. He later referred to the assault as, "Not a battle but a slaughter pen." One of the Irish troops described their condition after the battle as, "completely used up."

At Gettysburg, despite being severely undermanned and suffering three hundred casualties, the Brigade was responsible for successfully holding the Confederates in position at the Wheatfield, allowing additional Union units to join the effort to withstand the Confederate assault.

Throughout their active engagement during the Civil War, the Brigade suffered four thousand killed or wounded, which ranked them as the regiment suffering the third highest Union casualty rate. Five commanders were killed, while two were wounded. Of the twelve hundred troops who originally joined the Brigade, only two hundred forty survived.

After Gettysburg, with a dramatically reduced regiment size, weaknesses in the recruitment effort developed due to the heavy casualty rate suffered and the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation. For many Irish, the Proclamation represented a change in the war objective of the Union, opposed by many Irish. The imposition of the draft related to the Emancipation objective was viewed as representing a threat to Irish labor opportunities. However, at a reduced size, they continued to battle during the Overland Campaign in 1864.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Irish Brigade was given the honor of marching in victory parades held in Washington and New York City. A twenty-foot monument with a granite base honoring the heroism of the Brigade was dedicated at Gettysburg in 1888. Their chaplain, Father Corby, blessed it by saying, "It is an emblem of Ireland, typical of faith and devotion, and the most appropriate that could be raised to hand down to the posterity by the bravery of our role in the great cause of American liberty." However, their commander, Thomas Meagher, did not survive long enough to attend and share in the honor. While serving as a military governor in Montana after the war, and while traveling to Fort Benton, Montana, to receive a shipment of guns and ammunition sent by General Sherman, Meagher mysteriously fell from a steamboat into the deep and rushing water of the Missouri River. His body was never recovered.



Brigade Monument at the Gettysburg battleground

Five months before his final trip to Dallas, President Kennedy journeyed to the beloved land of his ancestors. While there, he honored the Irish Brigade by presenting one of the few remaining original Irish battle flags of the 69th NY Regiment to the Irish Parliament. He quoted General Lee as praising, "The brilliant assault which this bold Brigade made at the Heights of Fredericksburg that excited the hardy applause of all our officers and soldiers. Through their splendid gallantry, never were men so brave."

President Kennedy concluded his remarks by saying, "They bore a proud heritage and a special courage, given to those who had long fought for the cause of freedom."