

*Newsletter of The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table*  
Welcome to our fellowship forum where we discuss our past, emphasizing  
remembrance, education & preservation.  
Meetings held virtually on Zoom  
Online: harrisburgcwr.org

*Friday, February 18 — Christopher Gwinn*  
*Gettysburg's Rebel Commissioner: The Life & Legacy of William Robbins*

William Robbins served within the ranks of the 4th Alabama Infantry and participated in the fighting at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. Over thirty years later he returned to the battlefield, this time as a commissioner of the newly created Gettysburg National Military Park. More than almost any other Confederate veteran, Robbins would shape how Americans remembered the battle, specifically the role of the Army of Northern Virginia.



Christopher Gwinn is a ten-year veteran of the National Park Service. He is a 2006 graduate of Gettysburg College and holds a Masters Degree in Public History. He has worked as an Interpretive Park Ranger at Antietam National Battlefield, Boston National Historical Park, and the National Mall and Memorial Parks, where he created some of the first public programming conducted at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

Currently the Chief of Interpretation and Education at Gettysburg National Military Park, he manages and oversees all aspects of the visitor experience, and has written numerous articles and journal entries on the Battle of Gettysburg and the Civil War era.

He will deliver his talk via Zoom. To join the meeting, click on this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82666492085>

Meeting ID: 826 6649 2085 [Password not required]

Or call 1-301-715-8592

(if you are not local, click link below for your call in number)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcs0nrYBop>

**Please join the meeting by 7:15 pm**

### *Attending Zoom Meetings*

To download the Zoom app (one time only):

1. Click on the Zoom link in the newsletter or Web site and then click *OK* to skip the prompt
2. At the bottom of the browser window click the link *download & run Zoom*
3. Type your name and select *Join Meeting*
4. Select *Join with Video* and *Join with Computer Audio*

To join a Zoom meeting—2 ways:

- ◆ Click on the invitation link—to see attendees and speaker
  - ◆ Dial in on the phone number—to only hear meeting
1. Either way you join, then key the *Meeting ID*
  2. At the end of the meeting, click *Leave Meeting* button at the bottom right of the screen

### **Executive Officers**

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## *President's Pen*

*"Now is the winter of our discontent..."*  
-- William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

As we endure our third winter of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be some light at the end of this tunnel. Only time will tell if it is daylight, or the headlight of the next wave of the coronavirus. This much is clear. We made the right call back in early December when we decided to switch back to holding our meetings virtually via Zoom. Since our last engagement, the death toll from this pandemic in the United States has surpassed 900,000. That far exceeds the number of Americans who were killed in the Civil War. Let that fact sink in for a moment.

Our virtual engagements via Zoom are drawing more and more participants. Fifty-nine tuned in to hear Scott Hartwig's brilliant presentation on "Writing About Antietam" on January 28. That's far more than we had a year ago at this time. What is even more remarkable is that 42 were still listening intently an hour and a half later, when we started our square table session. We even had two participants from Australia! I want to say a special word of thanks to Todd Little, Don Madar, and Greg Hillebrand who have utilized their Facebook groups to help advertise our engagements and broaden the reach of our Round Table.

I hope all our members are as excited as I am about our February speaker. Anyone who has ever attended the battle walks that take place in Gettysburg on the anniversary of the battle in July, or the winter lecture series, knows that Christopher Gwinn knows how to knock it out of the park. A master raconteur, he does more than just inform his listeners; he inspires them. I cannot wait to hear his talk on Gettysburg's Rebel Commissioner. I hope you will join us on Friday, February 18 at 7:15 pm to hear his presentation, stick around for the square table, and *come armed with some good questions!*

If you've never seen Chris Gwinn in action, you are in for a real treat. As he demonstrated last weekend, when he interviewed Brigadier General (Retired) Ty Seidule about his book, "Robert E. Lee and Me," Chris can handle the most controversial topics with dexterity and tact in front of a packed house. Below is a shot of Chris in action during a previous winter lecture series.

You will notice our program chair, Al Mackey, in his customary spot, front and center in the first row. You may also recognize the back of my head at the far right of the second row. People routinely drive long distances to hear Chris talk, but you can do it from the privacy of your own home next Friday night via Zoom. *Don't miss it!*

Steve Smith



## *Meeting Schedule—Campaign 63*

**3/18/22**

*Educational Programs at Gettysburg*  
Barbara Sanders

**4/15/22**

*Gen. Robert E. Lee, The Army of Northern Virginia and the 1865  
Guerrilla War Option Revisited*  
Dr. Barton Myers

**5/20/22**

*At the Cannon's Mouth: Battlefield Relics &  
the Making of Civil War Memory*  
Dr. James Broomall

**6/9/22 (Thursday) — Nye-Sommers Lecture**  
*Meade at Gettysburg: A Study in Command*  
Kent Masterson Brown

## *Gettysburg Winter Lecture Series Continues*

The park rangers at Gettysburg National Military Park are doing a spectacular job this year giving stimulating lectures every Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 pm through March 12. Seating in the auditorium is limited, so if you want to be sure to get a ticket, arrive early. They begin handing out free tickets at 9:00 am at the ticket desk. **Masks are required.**

The lectures are also being live streamed on the GNMP YouTube page, and can be viewed after the fact on the same YouTube page. For more information on upcoming lectures, click on this link:

<https://www.nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/interpretation.htm>

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## *Dr. David Blahna's Books to Be Sold*

As we mentioned in our last edition, Dave Blanha, who passed away in October, left his library to the Camp Curtin Historical Society. They will sponsor a book sale at the National Civil War Museum on Sunday, February 27.

The sale will take place following a talk by Codie Eash of the Seminar Ridge Museum on the role that the Lutheran Seminary played in the battle of Gettysburg. The talk begins at 2:00 pm and is free and open to the public. For more details, contact Jim Schmick at the Civil War & More bookstore in Mechanicsburg.

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**A donation to the Harrisburg CWRT has been made in memory of  
Kim Ledger**

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## *This Month in Civil War History*

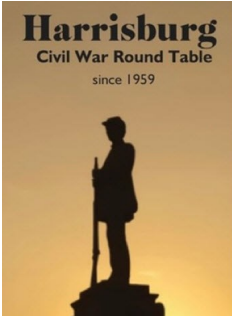
**February 18, 1861:** Jefferson Davis is appointed the first President of the Confederate States of America at Montgomery, Alabama, a position he will hold until elections can be arranged.

**February 16, 1862:** Fort Donelson surrendered. This primary southern fort on the Cumberland River left the river in Union hands. It was here that Union General Ulysses S. Grant gained his nickname "Unconditional Surrender."

**February 16, 1863:** The Senate passed the Conscription Act, as volunteers for the Union army were not forthcoming.

**February 17, 1864:** First Successful Submarine Attack of the Civil War. The CSS *H.L. Hunley*, a seven-man submergible craft, attacked the USS *Houstonic* outside of Charleston, South Carolina. Struck by the submarine's torpedo, the *Houstonic* broke apart and sank, taking all but five of her crew with her. Likewise, the *Hunley* was also lost and never heard from again until discovered in 1995 at the spot where it sank after the attack.

**February 18, 1865:** The mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, surrendered control of the city to Union Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfennig. With General [William T. Sherman's](#) arrival imminent, evacuation of the city began on February 17 and continued through the early morning hours of February 18. The city had been under siege since July 10, 1863.



## The Dispatch

The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table  
500 Bonnymead Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17111

February 2022

130th PA Monument  
Antietam National  
Battlefield

### The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table

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Online: [harrisburgcwr.org](http://harrisburgcwr.org)



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#### Current Member Renewal

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#### Donations\*

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

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Contacts:

For questions call: Don Madar, Membership, Phone: 814-397-0072, email [hcwrt.membership@gmail.com](mailto:hcwrt.membership@gmail.com)

Mail checks to: Norm Daniels, Treasurer, Phone 717-561-0613, 500 Bonnymead Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17111

If your donation is made in memory or in recognition of someone, please provide name(s) here: \_\_\_\_\_

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