

## Newsletter of The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table

Welcome to our fellowship forum where we discuss our past, emphasizing remembrance, education & preservation.

Meetings held at Central Penn College Conference Center and virtually on Zoom

*Friday, January 23 — John S. Heiser*

### *Neglected & Forlorn: The Legend of the Army Mule*

Join us on Friday, January 23 as John S. Heiser recounts the long-neglected story of the critical role mules played in providing logistical support for the warring armies during the Civil War and subsequent conflicts.

As in any war, there are heroes and villains, the brave and the cowardly, the stalwart leader and those who follow. Of all the living beings who took part in the American Civil War, there was one animal that embodied all of these characteristics that neither army could do without—the mule. We'll take a closer look at this invaluable animal whose legendary service did not end in 1865.

John S. Heiser served as a park ranger at Gettysburg National Military Park for over 40 years. He worked his way up through the ranks to the Historian's position in the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. His battle walks each July on the anniversary of the battle attracted hundreds of loyal followers. His riveting presentation on the Army mule, the last lecture he gave before his retirement, was delivered to a packed house during Gettysburg's Winter Lecture Series in January 2020. He has kindly agreed to come out of retirement and give us an encore performance.



Those who are unable to attend this engagement in person are invited to tune in to the lecture and Q&A session via Zoom. Click on the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86161843708>. No password is required. To dial in by phone, call 1-301-715-8592 or click: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/86161843708?signature=plhLDZrsgpjvMZf4qiVFm6WhCFqcmYZUx-iIBAOG3XA>. The meeting ID # is 861 6184 3708.

*Zoom participants should join the meeting by 7:00 pm.*

5:30 pm—Doors Open  
6:00 pm—Call to Order  
6:15 pm—Dinner

7:15 pm—Presentation  
8:30 pm—Square Table

#### *Buffet Dinner Selections*

Grilled Chicken Provencal, Lemon Cod Fish Filet, Jasmine Rice Pilaf, Green Bean, Yellow Bean & Carrot Medley, Mixed Field Greens, House Made Soup du Jour, Assorted Cookies

Cost: \$35 per person

pay at the door or on our website: [harrisburgcwr.org/events](https://harrisburgcwr.org/events)

**Dinner reservations must be made no later than noon on Sunday, January 11**

Email: Michael Margolius at:  
[membership@harrisburgcwr.org](mailto:membership@harrisburgcwr.org)

#### Executive Officers

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**Vice President**, Mark Blanchard  
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**Acting Treasurer**, Mo Becker  
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**Secretary**, Rebecca Myers  
[revmyers2013@gmail.com](mailto:revmyers2013@gmail.com)

#### Web Links (CTRL + click)

[harrisburgcwr.org](https://harrisburgcwr.org)

#### Register For:

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NOTE

## President's Pen

"Fast away the old year passes..."  
—Traditional Welsh Christmas Carol



**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!** We are fast approaching the halfway point of our 67<sup>th</sup> campaign year and are looking forward to our first engagement of 2026. We have been treated to an extraordinary slate of speakers this campaign, with more to come!

I encourage each member to mark their calendars for the engagements this winter and spring. The dates can be found in the *Meeting Schedule-Campaign 67* portion of this newsletter. We've recruited a superb group of speakers, culminating with our annual Nye-Sommers lecture in May and our annual business meeting in June. And we're looking forward to another stimulating field trip this spring [see the related article on page 3]. The state of our Round Table is sound!

I encourage you to attend our January engagement where you will hear an extraordinary speaker, John S. Heiser. Many of you will remember the Veterans Day talk he gave us a few years ago on the Great Reunion of 1913 at Gettysburg. In January he will give another excellent presentation on a much overlooked subject—mules in the Civil War and how their contributions were vital to the success of military operations.

Signing up to attend our January 23, 2026 engagement is easy. **By noon on January 11**, contact Michael Margolius, our dedicated membership chair, via email (reply to the email sending you *The Dispatch*) to confirm your attendance and that you will pay at the door. Alternatively, visit our website **no later than January 11**, under the *Events* tab, click on the *More Info* tab on our January announcement, scroll to the bottom of the announcement, select *January* as the month for dinner, then sign in (for security reasons), confirm your attendance, and conveniently pay via PayPal. Please remember, if you confirm your attendance, it entails an obligation to pay, as we're committed to covering the cost of the dinner.

Most of all, we look forward to the fellowship we enjoy with our members at our monthly meetings. Make a New Year's resolution to attend as many of our meetings as possible in 2026, and bring a friend! Remember, **every member is a recruiter**, and if each of us only recruited one new member in the coming year, we would double our membership and ensure the future success of what we so proudly refer to as **"our Round Table."**



Dan Vermilya gave an inspiring presentation on December 5 on President Eisenhower and the Civil War.

## Upcoming Events

- ♦ **Sunday, January 4, 2:00 pm:** Naval historian Craig L. Symonds, who spoke to us last March on the Battle of Mobile Bay, will discuss his latest book, *Annapolis Goes to War: The Naval Academy Class of 1940*, on the Gilder Lehrman Book Breaks program. Register to hear this free book talk over Zoom at: <https://marketing.gilderlehrman.org/l/941553/2024-06-18/x3h3m>
- ♦ **Saturday, January 10, 1:30 pm:** The Winter Lecture Series at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center begins, with lectures every Saturday and Sunday through March 8. Admission is free. For a complete listing of speakers and topics, go to: <https://www.nps.gov/thingstodo/gettysburg-winter-programs.htm>
- ♦ **Sunday, January 11, 2:00 to 4:00 pm:** Free Civil War dance class at the National Civil War Museum, to prepare for the Civil War Preservation Ball on March 21. To register, email [Preservation-Ball@civilwardance.org](mailto:Preservation-Ball@civilwardance.org). Additional rehearsal classes will take place on February 8 and March 8. Wear modern clothing. For more information, visit: [www.civilwardance.org](http://www.civilwardance.org)
- ♦ **Thursday, January 15, 7:30 pm:** Hershey CWRT hosts author William White discussing *Let's Die as Men: The Battle of Franklin, Tennessee* via Zoom only. Passcode is 628861. Here's the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82234887393?pwd=a281bG5nTGcyVkw5WEVZTTBOSmYxZz09#success>
- ♦ **Thursday, January 22, 7:00 pm:** Gettysburg CWRT hosts author Scott L. Mingus, Sr., discussing *Railroads in the Gettysburg Campaign* at the Adams County Historical Society (live and livestreamed).

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## Searching for a New Treasurer

Any member who is interested in assuming the duties of Treasurer for the Harrisburg CWRT should contact our Past President, John West, who heads our Nominating Committee, at 412-217-1234 or [john@johnfwest.com](mailto:john@johnfwest.com). Whoever steps into this role will inherit a well-oiled machine, and can turn to other members who have served in the Treasurer position for advice and assistance. The continued financial health of our organization depends on filling this critical position. If you can balance a checkbook, you can do this job. Please volunteer!

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## Update on Our Spring Field Trip

Our spring field trip, entitled *Lee's First Defeat: The Battle(s) of South Mountain*, will take place on Saturday, May 2, 2026. We will visit Crampton's Gap, Turner's Gap, and Fox's Gap. Lunch will be at the Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown, WV. Dennis E. Frye, who has been our guide on five previous trips, is also back by popular demand. Cost per person is only \$95.00.

As this newsletter went to press, the trip remains sold out and we have five people on the waiting list. Anyone interested in adding their name to the waiting list should contact our Field Trip Reservationist, Steve Williamson, at 717-580-0443 or by email at: [steve.williamson.WCCS@outlook.com](mailto:steve.williamson.WCCS@outlook.com). A lot can happen between now and May, and some who are currently registered for the trip will undoubtedly fall out in the months ahead for one reason or another. In the past, we have been able to accommodate most who were on our waiting lists. The only way to get on the waiting list is to contact Steve Williamson directly.

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## Meeting Schedule—Campaign 67

**02/20/26**

*Sherman's March: A Journey Toward Freedom*  
Bennett Parten

**03/13/26**

*A Sight Never to be Forgotten: Union Chaplains at Gettysburg*  
Rev. Dr. Nancy Jill Hale

**04/10/26**

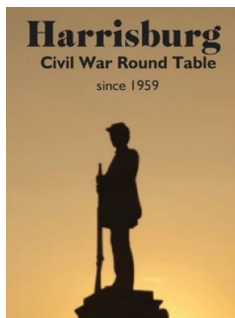
*From Frederick to Sharpsburg: The Maryland Campaign before Antietam*  
Steven Stotelmyer

**05/15/25** — Nye-Sommers Lecture

*Across the James: Grant's Missed Opportunity at Petersburg*  
A. Wilson Greene

**06/05/26**

Annual Business Meeting



130th PA Monument  
Antietam National  
Battlefield

*The Dispatch*

Harrisburg Civil War Round Table  
P.O. Box 115  
Dillsburg, PA 17019-0115

January 2026

## The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table

Where we discuss our past, emphasizing remembrance, education & preservation. **All Are Welcome.**  
Meetings are held at Central Penn College Conference Center, 600 Valley Road, Summerdale, PA



Follow the Harrisburg Civil War Round Table on Facebook



## Harrisburg Civil War Round Table Enlistment Form

### Annual Dues

- ☐ Individual \$30
- ☐ Family \$45
- ☐ Full Time Student \$5

### Donations\*

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

Individual or Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Contacts:

For questions email: Michael Margolius, Membership Chair, [membership@harrisburgcwr.org](mailto:membership@harrisburgcwr.org)

Mail checks to: Harrisburg Civil War Round Table, P.O. Box 115, Dillsburg, PA 17019-0115

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