



Circular Memorandum #554

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Announcing Our 580th Meeting

March 2024

"July 3rd, 1863 at Gettysburg: What Was Robert E. Lee Thinking?"
Will be Presented by James Hessler

DATE: Saturday, March 9

Location: Big Spring Country Club

COCKTAILS: 6:00 P.M.

DINNER (\$35.00): 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: 8:00 P.M.

Meet Our Speaker - James Hessler

We welcome James Hessler to the Round Table. James was our guide on our recent field trip to Gettysburg and he did an outstanding job for us. James Hessler has worked as a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg National Military Park for two decades. Jim has authored or co-authored three full-length books on the Gettysburg campaign: *Sickles at Gettysburg* (2009), *Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg* (2015), and *Gettysburg's Peach Orchard* (2019). His books received several distinguished book awards.



Jim currently co-hosts the popular *Battle of Gettysburg Podcast*. His other media appearances include Travel Channel, C-SPAN, NPR, PCN-TV, and other outlets. He also authored articles in *Gettysburg Magazine*, *America's Civil War*, and *Hallowed Ground Magazine*. He was one of the primary content designers for the American Battlefield Trust's mobile Gettysburg application. Jim is a frequent speaker for Civil War Round Tables and other historical groups nationwide. In addition to Gettysburg, he leads tours

at several other battlefields and historic sites across the country. He currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Little Bighorn Associates and formerly on the Executive Council for the Association of Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guides.

Follow Jim's Facebook page at *James Hessler's Gettysburg History* to receive updates on Jim's current and future projects.

"July 3, 1863 at Gettysburg: What Was Robert E. Lee Thinking?"

One officer wrote, "No aspect of the Battle of Gettysburg has been more criticized and less understood" than Robert E. Lee's decision to launch the doomed assault known as Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863. Why did General Lee think it could succeed? What were his objectives? Who did he really blame for the failure? What part did

the Yankees play in the outcome? Join Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide, co-author of "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," and Battle of Gettysburg Podcast co-host James Hessler as we review the decision-making process behind one of the most commonly asked questions that Gettysburg Battlefield Guides receive, "What was Robert E. Lee thinking when he ordered Pickett's Charge?"

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Books, Books Books!

We will have all three of James Hessler's books for sale at the meeting: *Sickles at Gettysburg* (2009), *Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg* (2015), and *Gettysburg's Peach Orchard* (2019).

Please Note the Price of the Buffet is now \$35!

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED!

If you do not make a reservation, you may not get fed!

The Round Table must give Big Spring an accurate count of reservations no later than the Wednesday before a Saturday Meeting, or the Thursday before a Sunday Meeting. Reservations can be made by emailing Bryan Winslow at bryanw@macconstruction.com or by calling Doug Krawczyk at 502-592-6864.

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not receive a return email from Bryan Winslow confirming your reservation, ***YOU DO NOT HAVE A RESERVATION! You must call Doug to make your reservation.***

When making a reservation for more than yourself, please list the names of everyone for which you are making a reservation. If you are calling Doug, and get his voicemail, please spell your name so he can properly identify the reservation.

If you wish to join us for just the program, you must still make a reservation so we can assure you have space and a seat. If you are attending just the program, you can call Doug anytime up to 4:00PM the day of the Meeting.

Reminder for Table Reservations: Tables for parties of eight (8) can be reserved. When making a Table Reservation, please list the names of everyone in your party. That will ensure everyone in your party will be at the same table and enable us to manage our meeting space in a more efficient manner.

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2023 - 2024 Schedule

Saturday March 9	Jim Hessler	"July 3 at Gettysburg: What Was Robert E. Lee_Thinking?"
Saturday April 13	Tim Smith	"The Iron Dice of Battle: Albert Sidney Johnston and the War in the West"
Saturday May 11	Scott Hartwig	"Antietam: The Soldiers' Experience"

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Online Options Are Here!

Reservations, Payments, and Membership Renewals

Members of the Round Table now have new options for making dinner reservations, Bourbon & BBQ reservations, field trip reservations, and membership renewals. To use these new options, first go to our website, <https://louisvillecwrtyolasite.com> by clicking on this link or by googling "Louisville Civil War Round Table" which will bring up a link to our website.

1. To make dinner reservations and pay for your meal, on the home page of the website, click on "**Meetings**" on the left-hand side of the page and then scroll down to the current meeting. Click on "**Dinner and Program Reservations**" and enter the required fields to make your reservation and pay with a credit card. You will receive a confirmation email. You can still make your reservations by calling Doug Krawczyk or emailing Bryan Winslow.
2. To make membership renewals. On the home page under "**Membership**", then click on the appropriate level of membership and follow the instructions. Again, you can still pay your membership renewals by mail or by paying at the meetings.
3. You can now make reservations for the Spring field trip to the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, and you can pay the non-refundable \$200 deposit and the \$275 final payment using the website. Click on the "**Field Trip**" option and follow the instructions. You can also sign up for the field trip at the meetings.
4. You will now have the capability to pay for your meals at the meetings with a **credit card**. Of course, you will still be able to pay with a check or cash at the meetings as before.

Please note that **you can still make reservations and payments as you have always done** by using emails, phone calls, checks and cash. We are implementing these new options to give you another way and hopefully an easier way to do these things.

THE 12th ANNUAL LOUISVILLE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE BOURBON & BBQ FUNDRAISER



AN AFTERNOON of "EDUCATION", "FOOD", CONVIVIALITY and "LIBATION TASTING"

Suggested Reading List for the Wilderness - Spotsylvania

There is no better place to start than the books by our guide, Gordon Rhea. These are easily the best studies of these two battles ever written. "The Battle of the Wilderness May 5-6, 1864" and "The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern May 7-12, 1864" cannot be topped. Bradley Gottfried has written two detailed map studies of the battles that give a map-by-map detailed explanation of these battles. "The Maps of the Wilderness" and "The Maps of Spotsylvania Through Cold Harbor" are highly recommended. For briefer and more recent books, I recommend Chris Mackowski's "Hell Itself: The Battle of the Wilderness" and his book "A Season of Slaughter: The Battle of Spotsylvania Court House". Both of these books are from the Emerging Civil War Series.

April 17-21, 2024, Field Trip to the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Battle of Giants: Lee vs Grant with Gordon Rhea \$275 Final Payment is now Due!

We are going to Virginia to cover the beginning of the Overland Campaign, the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. The dates are April 17-21, 2024. **The signup sheet will be at the March meeting.** We are



now collecting the **\$275 final payment**. You can mail your \$275 final payment check made out to LCWRT directly to Louisville Civil War Round Table, 9462 Brownsboro Road - #142, Louisville, Ky., 40241. You can also use our website to make your final payment with a credit card. Our guide will be renowned Civil War historian and author Gordon Rhea. He has written seven award-winning books about the American Civil War, including *The Battle of the Wilderness*, *The Battles at Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern*, *To the North Anna River*, *Cold Harbor*, *On To Petersburg*, *Carrying the Flag*, and *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee*. He has conducted numerous tours of these battlefields and has been involved in their preservation. These two

battles which occurred over May 5 - May 12, 1864 marked the beginning of the titanic confrontation of the war's two greatest generals, Robert E. Lee and U.S. Grant and would to a large extent determine the outcome of the Civil War. When the Army of the Potomac numbering some 120,000 men crossed the Rapidan River on May 4 and entered the tangled undergrowth of the Wilderness, Robert E. Lee responded by having his 55,000 Army of Northern Virginia break camp and march directly towards Grant's army. What followed was some of the war's most savage and dramatic fighting resulting in enormous casualties on each side. We will walk this hallowed ground and cover in detail what unfolded. You can **sign up** now by emailing John Davis at johnd.davis@twc.com or you can **sign up** at the meeting.

The Emerging Civil War

Chris Mackowski, is the managing editor of the Emerging Civil War Series which serves as a public history-oriented platform for sharing original scholarship related to the American Civil War.

The primary audience is the general public, so scholarship is defined broadly: historical research, memory studies, travelogues, personal narratives, essays, book reviews, and photography. Journalistic-style coverage of current Civil War-related events and the Civil War in pop culture are also included. Furthermore, ECW encourages respectful discussion about that material. ECW does not publish fiction or poetry.

Our Mission

ECW seeks to encourage a diversity of perspectives in the scholarship it presents. We do that, in part, by identifying and spotlighting the next generation of Civil War historians and the fresh ideas they bring to the historical conversation.

As a collective, the individuals who comprise ECW are encouraged to share their own unique interests and approaches. The combined collection of material—and the respectful discussions that surround it—forward ECW's overall effort to promote a general awareness of the Civil War as America's defining event. This is a link to their website emergingcivilwar.com. You can subscribe and receive daily emails that will contain a variety of articles by historians that will be of interest to you.

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An example of the excellent content of the Emerging Civil War is the following email sent on February 22 and authored by Kevin Pawlak.

John Mosby's Retaliatory War

By Kevin Pawlak February 22, 2024 from the Emerging Civil War

The Civil War was ugly by 1864. It had been an ugly, destructive war long before then, but the conflict took a decidedly dark turn in the war's fourth year.

Few places witnessed this than the Shenandoah Valley and John Mosby's Confederacy that summer and fall. A tit-for-tat of brutal acts waged back and forth between Mosby's Rangers and Philip Sheridan's Federal army, particularly the Yankee cavalry.

On August 13, 1864, Mosby's men struck the wagon train of Sheridan's horsemen outside Berryville. The raid netted over 500 horses and mules, 200 cattle, and 200 prisoners.

Six days later, after a strike against a picket post left one of George Custer's cavalrymen dead, Custer ratcheted up the stakes of the game. He ordered his troopers to burn four nearby homes to send a message to the locals that aiding the Rangers would no longer be tolerated. They burned two; Mosby's men caught up to them in the process of torching the third. "No quarter! No quarter!" yelled Captain William Chapman as they charged the home-burners. Fifteen of Custer's men were killed or mortally wounded in the close-quarters melee. Bad blood festered between the two sides.

They met again on September 23 outside Front Royal. Mosby's men pounced on what they thought was a vulnerable Federal ambulance train. They failed to detect a large Federal cavalry force accompanying the train. It was too late. The Confederates pitched into the train before quickly deciding to withdraw. Federals became incensed when one of their men, Lieutenant Charles McMaster claimed to have been shot while in the act of surrendering. The Yankees, under orders likely from General Alfred Torbert, executed the six Rangers they managed to capture in the fight. Less than a month later, one more Ranger became the victim of a Federal noose.

Mosby was not present during these executions, but he was surely aware of them. He sought to put an end to this back-and-forth brutality. After seeking permission from his superiors and contemplating the legality of his proposed action (Mosby was a prewar lawyer), Mosby proposed to hang seven of Custer's men (he believed for the rest of his life that Custer was at fault).

Custer's prisoners in Mosby's possession drew straws to see who the unlucky seven would be. Then, Mosby's men led them to Berryville to be hanged. Ultimately, three were hanged, two were shot, and two escaped. That was enough for Mosby. He informed Sheridan of his reasoning for ordering these retaliatory actions.

"Hereafter, any prisoners falling into my hands will be treated with the kindness due to their condition, unless some new act of barbarity shall compel me, reluctantly to adopt a line of policy repugnant to humanity." Sheridan responded (though no modern eye has seen the reply), but the senseless retaliation stopped. The killing did not. Both sides continued to face one another in many skirmishes until the war's close in 1865.

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Wanted: Books for the Door Prize Drawing

If you have Civil War books you would like to donate for our door prize drawings, please bring them to one of our meetings and give them to Lowell Griffin.

FEBRUARY 2024 QUIZ:

1. What was Abraham Lincoln's salary during his first term as president?
It was \$25,000.
2. When Lincoln was assassinated, what was found in his brown leather wallet?
He had a pencil, a Confederate five-dollar bill, and eight newspapers clippings including clippings of unrest in the Confederate army, emancipation in Missouri, the Union party platform of 1864, and an article on the presidency by John Bright.
3. In the Lincoln White House were "Bob", "Jack", and "Jib". Who were they?
"Bob" was a cat; "Jack" was a turkey; and "Jib" was a dog.
4. What kind of legal will did Lincoln have?
Strangely enough for a lawyer, Lincoln died without drawing up a will. When he was killed, his son Robert asked family friend and Supreme Court Justice David Davis to take charge of the estate.
5. Lincoln was the only American president to have what?
He received a patent, No.6469, for his invention of a device to lift boats over shoals without having to unload their cargoes. The patent was granted on May 22, 1849, but was never manufactured. His scale model is at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

MARCH 2024 QUIZ:

1. Who was the senior Confederate general at the beginning of the Civil War?
2. Through how many states did President Lincoln's funeral train travel before reaching its destination?
3. During the Civil War how many times did Harpers Ferry change hands?
4. What were the main anesthetics used by doctors during the Civil War?
5. Who made the official announcement to a joint session of Congress that Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin had been elected president and vice-president of the United States?

(The Quiz is prepared by Harriette Weatherbee)

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Attest:

**John Davis
Adjutant**

By Order of:

**Julie Bartlett
President**