



Circular Memorandum #521

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December 2020

Announcing Our 551th Meeting

**"Seceding from Succession: The Civil War,
Politics, and the Creation of West Virginia"
Will be Presented by Eric Wittenberg**

DATE: Saturday, December 5

PROGRAM: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Your Home

Meet Our Speaker - Eric Wittenberg



Eric J. Wittenberg is a native of southeastern Pennsylvania. He was educated at Dickinson College and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. He manages the litigation practice at Cook, Sladoje & Wittenberg Co., L.P.A. He is the author of 21 published books on the Civil War and has won several awards for his work. His specialty is cavalry operations with a particular emphasis on mounted operations in the Gettysburg Campaign. He frequently works with the Civil War Trust on various preservation projects, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and the Little Big Horn Associates, serves as the program coordinator for the Chambersburg Civil War Seminars, and is a past president of the Central Ohio Civil War Roundtable. He, his wife Susan, and their four golden retrievers live in Columbus, Ohio.

Seceding from Succession: The Creation of West Virginia

West Virginia was the child of the storm," concluded early Mountaineer historian and Civil War veteran, Maj. Theodore F. Lang. The northwestern third of the Commonwealth of Virginia finally broke away in 1863 to form the Union's 35th state. In *Seceding from Secession: The Civil War, Politics, and the Creation of West Virginia*, Eric J. Wittenberg chronicles those events in an unprecedented study of the social, legal, military, and political factors that converged to bring about the birth of the West Virginia.

The December Meeting Will Be a Zoom Meeting

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the December meeting will be a Zoom meeting. Big Spring Country Club, our meeting place, has informed us that they will be closed in December and we are going to hold this meeting as a Zoom meeting on the scheduled date as planned. The ongoing situation that continues to develop and continues to change with the virus will dictate how soon we can meet in person. This situation is not just here but is affecting Round Tables and other groups that hold meeting all over the country. Zoom is a technology that is now being widely used by groups and businesses across the country to conduct meetings.

November Zoom Meeting a Big Success!

Our November 14 meeting with historian Gary Ecelbarger went very well. Members were able to click on a link sent to them in an email and like magic, they were in our meeting. Of course, there was no talking with fellow members and sadly no fried chicken. Precisely at 7:00, President Dave Hoffmann welcomed members to the meeting and made a few announcements and then introduced our speaker, Gary Ecelbarger. Gary gave a great presentation on the July 22 Battle of Atlanta using slides and maps to illustrate his talk. We had 40 participants sign in and many of these were couples, so the actual attendance exceeded 50. Attendees were able to ask the speaker questions at the end of his talk by typing in their questions using the chat feature of Zoom. We received a lot of positive feedback about the meeting and Gary's presentation.

If you tried to log on to the meeting and experienced difficulties, please email John Davis at johnd.davis@twc.com and we will try and help you solve your problem so that you can attend the meetings.

How Does Zoom Work?

This is basically how Zoom would work for a meeting. First, you will need to download the Zoom app to your computer, tablet, or cellphone. You can do this by going to zoom.us and clicking on "Resources" and "Download Zoom Client for Meetings". You will receive an email before the meeting with a **link** that you will click on and that will take you directly into the meeting. You will not need to enter a passcode or password as the link will take you directly into the meeting. We encourage you to log in ahead of the start time so that you will be ready when the meeting starts. At 7:00 you will see our President, Dave Hoffmann, who will host the meeting, introduce the speaker and then you will be able to see and hear the speaker give his talk. At the end of the talk you will be able to ask questions just as if you were at a meeting at Big Spring by using the chat function. The meeting will last about one hour and of course you can drink your favorite beverages and munch on snacks while you watch, and you do not have to dress "up"!

Email Addresses - Very Important for Webinars

To connect to our Zoom Webinar activities, we need a current and active email for you. We have email addresses for most of our members. For the ones we do not have email addresses for, you will receive a request in your mailed newsletter to email me. I will need to have your email address before December 5 meeting. You can send me your email at johnd.davis@twc.com. As a reminder, we do not share your email address with any outside group. If you receive the newsletter by email, you obviously do not need to send your email address to me unless you have a new email address.

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2020 - 2021 Schedule

Saturday December 5	Eric Wittenberg	"Seceding from Secession: The Civil War, Politics, and the Creation of West Virginia"
Saturday January 16	Kent Masterson Brown	"Lee's Retreat From Gettysburg"
Saturday February 13	Robert Lee Hodge	"TBA"
Saturday March 13	Gordon Rhea	"TBA"
Saturday April 10	Tim Smith	"TBA"
Saturday May 8	Thomas Flagel	"War, Memory and the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion"

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Signup Information for Field Trip to Gettysburg

Here is some good news, we are scheduled to go to Gettysburg next spring **April 21-25, 2021!** Yes, we know that the Covid situation will call for us to take special precautions and we will do that, but we believe the situation may allow us to make this exciting trip. We are now ready to take your reservations. If the trip is canceled, and at this time we can't predict what the Covid situation will be at that time, you will receive a full refund of any fees you have paid including the \$200 non-refundable deposit. You can now make your \$200 non-refundable deposit that will guarantee you a reservation. This deposit needs to be made by the February 13 meeting. The balance will be due in March. We anticipate this will be about \$200. You will also be responsible for your hotel room and for some of your meals. Once you make your \$200 non-refundable deposit and the trip goes off as planned, that deposit cannot be refunded for any reason. This is necessary so that we can insure we have enough funds to finance the trip. Again, if the trip is canceled, you will receive a refund of all money you would have paid including the \$200 deposit. You can mail your deposit off \$200 non-refundable check made out to LCWRT directly to Louisville Civil War Round Table, 9462 Brownsboro Road - #142, Louisville, Ky., 40241.

So, mark your calendars and keep studying and reading. Our guide will be **James Hessler**, a veteran of 20 plus years of giving tours at Gettysburg as a licensed guide. He recently conducted tours at Gettysburg for the Lincoln Forum and has an impressive resume. James is currently conducting tours and he is excited about our group coming to Gettysburg next April.

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Mill Springs Battlefield Becomes a National Monument

"Now the whole world will know about Mill Springs, Ky., and they'll come here."

Congressman Hal Rogers has put a lot of work into introducing the Mill Springs Battlefield site to the rest of the nation. On Wednesday, he had the privilege of saying the words above in establishing and unveiling the National Monument signifying the site as the 421st unit of the National Park Service.

Rogers joined Sen. Mitch McConnell and a host of other local dignitaries under beautiful skies outside the Mill Springs Battlefield Museum in Nancy, right along Ky. 80. Only a short distance away is the battlefield itself, where one of the defining battles of the Civil War took place in January of 1862.

Last month in Washington, D.C., Rogers, McConnell, and others took part in a signing ceremony at the U.S. Capitol officially establishing the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument as the the newest part of the National Park System.



Rogers introduced legislation in January of 2013 to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of bringing the Mill Springs Battlefield site and its museum located on Ky. 80 into the nation's National Park System. Rogers and McConnell both worked for years to try and make this a reality, securing federal funding for land preservation, establishing the museum and visitor's center, and more recently, working directly with Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt to establish the battlefield as a National Monument, an area protected by the federal government.

Among other features, the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument preserves Zollicoffer Park, the

centerpiece of the core battlefield area, which was conveyed by Pulaski County to the NPS.

It was a significant battle to be won, as in 1991, the National Park Service identified the Mill Springs Battlefield as one of the 25 most endangered such sites in the country. Since then, the Mill Springs Battlefield Association (MSBA) has fought hard to preserve 900 acres of land between Pulaski and Wayne Counties relevant to the unique history there.

Rogers recalled when he first "fell in love with this project," upon coming out to see "what little was preserved of the battlefield" in the late '60s for the first time with well-known former County Judge Roscoe C. Tartar.

"I came out here with him ... and he took us to what's now called the Zollie Tree, which is where (General Felix Zollicoffer) died," said Rogers. "... He took me to see the Confederate mound, the mass grave of the Confederate soldiers killed in this battle. You had to tread lightly to stay clear of beer cans and trash and waste and all sorts of weeds and trees and the like. It was a shame."

The visit inspired Rogers' interest in the site and wanting to see it taken care of and given the proper historical weight and respect it deserves. "It has so much history to it, it has so much love of land and love of Kentucky that it appeals to everyone," added Rogers.

The other monumental figure in this endeavor was past MSBA president and still a dedicated party Bill Neikirk. Rogers recalled Neikirk's role in bringing the battlefield preservation group to Mill Springs in the early '90s, and how indispensable he's been in the effort to bring the battlefield under federal protection today, ultimately making "much easier" the jobs of Rogers and McConnell.

"Bill orchestrated the first major land purchase with that preservation group," said Rogers. "It was across the road — 15 acres, \$50,000. Fast forward to 2006. We were able to secure a million dollars for this visitor's center and museum, and the association raised another \$300,000 locally, which is an impressive event by itself. ... Today we're reaping the harvest of many works that he worked in the field. While there are a lot of people to thank for this monumental day, one man led the charge, and it was Bill Neikirk."

Rogers presented Neikirk with a copy of the tribute he made on the House of Representatives floor to the local MSBA figure, and also presented the museum with the pen that President Trump used to sign into law the designation for Mill Springs Battlefield to become a national monument, along with a copy of the legislation. This article is from [the Somerset Commonwealth Journal](#).

Ron Britain



Round Table member Ron Britain, age 86, passed away on Sunday, October 25, 2020. Born Ronald Lawrence Magel, August 25, 1934 in Louisville, KY. Ron Britain was a radio personality with a long and celebrated career in Kentucky, West Virginia, Ohio and Illinois, best known as "the psychedelic DJ" at WCFL in Chicago. Ron began his career at the age of 15 on "High Varieties" in Louisville and later went on to become one of the top radio personalities in the 1960s, capturing 72% of the listening audience in Cincinnati, OH, where he also opened the first teen night club, Club Tulu, and hosted huge concerts drawing crowds of up to 10,000 at Castle Farm. In 1964, Ron moved on to WHK in Cleveland and then in 1965 to WCFL in Chicago where his evening raucous "theatre of the mind" radio program and his Sunday "Subterranean Circus" introduced listeners to new music on a 50-watt station which could widely reach an audience throughout the midwest from Canada down to Tennessee, where listeners drove to mountain-tops to tune in. Ron

worked with musical groups of the time including The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, the band Chicago and countless others. He went on to be the first "top jock" to make the move to FM and later to syndicated and satellite radio in the 1970s and 1980s. Off the air, Ron was a painter, an inveterate Anglophile, and clothes hound and designed many of his own bespoke suits among the hundreds in his collection. He shared an adventurous life travelling the world and collecting with his wife of 61 years, Peach Britain. Despondent from the unexpected death of Peach on October 19, Ron expressed a desire to be with Peach as soon as possible and tragically took his own life six days later, the night before her funeral. He is survived by his son, Mark Magel (wife Nina Romanoff) of Croton-on-Hudson, NY. Ron was laid to rest in a private ceremony next to his wife Peach two days after her burial. His career is best appreciated by the many articles, recordings and videos which can be found online. Few of us in the Round Table knew that Ron had been a media celebrity in Chicago in the 60's and 70's. You can read about his remarkable career by following this link: <https://www.robertfeder.com/2020/10/26/ron-britain-1934-2020/>. Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Ron and Peach. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

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Perryville Battlefield Adds 384 Acres

While public health concerns make large gathering inadvisable in 2020, by the time history lovers are next able to gather for anniversary events, **Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site will be substantially bigger, thanks to the pending transfer of 384 acres from the American Battlefield Trust to the Commonwealth of Kentucky through the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF).**

The Battle of Perryville on October 8, 1862, was fought between the Union Army of the Ohio, commanded by Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell, and the Confederate Army of Mississippi, commanded by Gen. Braxton Bragg. Lasting five hours, the battle was among the most ferocious of the Civil War with over 7,000 total casualties. The battle was a tactical victory for the Confederacy, though Bragg left Kentucky shortly afterwards. The 384 acres to be transferred by the Trust represent six properties valued at \$2.5 million. A preliminary agreement was reached last year when the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund approved a \$400,000 grant to acquire this acreage from the Trust.

Areas included in the transfer: The location of the Widow Reynolds cabin and "Squire" Henry P. Bottom's barn, where many wounded men seeking shelter from the battle died in the flames; The "Slaughter Pen," where ferocious fighting erupted late in the day as the Union recaptured and held the Dixville Crossroads; The north face of Parsons' Hill, known as the "Open Knob;" and the site of the John C. Russell house, which served as the headquarters of General McCook.

This effort will represent the largest addition to the park since it was created in 1936. It is no exaggeration to say that work done by the Trust — alongside partners at the federal, state and local levels — has made Perryville one of the most "complete" and pristine Civil War battlefields. In all, the Trust has protected 1,150 acres at Perryville — 113 of which have previously been transferred to the park. That's roughly half of all work we have done in Kentucky.

We couldn't have played this role in transferring the land at Perryville if it wasn't for your generous support. Thank you for everything you do.

American Battlefield Trust

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NOVEMBER 2020 QUIZ:

1. What was Confederate General W.E. Jones' nickname?
He was known as Grumble Jones.
2. On which side did poet Sidney Lanier serve?
He served in the Confederacy, part of the time with the 2nd Georgia Battalion.
3. Who wrote "The Bivouac of the Dead"?
Theodore O'Hara wrote it to honor the Americans killed during the Mexican War.
4. What Union general had the honor of receiving the surrender of General Lee's army?
That honor was given to Brigadier General Joshua L. Chamberlain.
5. What Confederate general escaped from the Ohio State Penitentiary?
Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan and six of his officers escaped on November 27, 1863.

DECEMBER 2020 QUIZ:

1. Why was each Union army enrollee's teeth closely examined by surgeons?
2. What was Union General Ambrose Burnside's second attempt to cross the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg, Virginia called?
3. Which side won the Battle of Missionary Ridge?
4. Who stabbed Secretary of State William Seward?
5. How many brothers-in-law did President Lincoln have serving in the Confederate Army?

The Quiz is prepared by Harriette Weatherbee

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Attest:

**John Davis
Adjutant**

By Order of:

**Dave Hoffmann
President**