

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
2020 - November - Edition XI

## Upcoming Events

### A note from the Editor

I have noted on this schedule the events that have notified me, that their event is canceled. If you are interested in any event on this schedule, I suggest **you contact the event** or the contact person listed to determine if the event is canceled or not canceled.

### Civil War Sponsored

None at this time

### Sanctioned

None at this time

## Other Events recommended by WVRA members

**Guyandotte** -- Nov 5-8, 2020 (tentative)  
contact Roger House for more information -  
CANCELED

### Other Events

**Fredericksburg, Dec. 11-13, 2020,**  
Fredericksburg, Va.

2021

**Chancellorsville May 1-2, 2021** - NPS  
Event

## Other Time Periods

**Timeline** – November 7-8, Troops and  
Trains. RR Museum of Pennsylvania,  
Strasburg,

PA. <https://rrmuseumpa.org/events/>

## No Annual Meeting

No meeting is scheduled at this time. Because of concerns over Covid-19, the meeting is postponed until further notice. Any questions can be directed to the Executive Committee.

## -- IMPORTANT NEWS -- Executive Committee Action

The following two proposals were approved by the five voting members of the Executive Committee in an email vote the last week of October.

PROPOSAL #1 "In light of the current pandemic and its effects on the hobby, the Executive Committee postpones the election of new officers of the WVRA until such time that the Committee determines that it is prudent to hold the 'annual meeting' in accordance with procedures described in the by laws."

PROPOSAL #2 "The President shall have the authority to temporarily appoint, until the next duly conducted Association election, members to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee."

If any member has a concern or question about this action, please contact President Jim Barnes or myself. These actions were simply in response to how the pandemic is affecting group meetings at the moment. Executive committee members are listed near the end of every newsletter. Members are encouraged to work through your Unit Representative. If you currently do not have a Unit Rep., work through an officer. Reminder to General Members, the WVRA President serves as your Unit Representative.

## Membership

It is time to renew your membership in the WVRA for 2021. To be a member you must pay dues. To be eligible for the group insurance you must be a member. A membership form is included with this newsletter. Return the membership form and dues to : C. L. Critchfield, 608 Skyview Drive, Clarksburg WV 26301

1. Dues are \$15 per year per person and \$25 per year for a family. If you wish to receive a paper copy of the newsletter there is an additional \$15 fee. The Email version of the newsletter is included in the membership. Family memberships are limited to family members college age or younger residing within the household.

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- 2. Minors:** All members under the age of 18 need the signature of a guardian to join. Those under 16 will not be allowed to carry a firearm. Those under 14 may not participate in reenactment battles. In addition the WVRA complies with the particular rules at specific events regarding age.

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## Liability Certificate

A PDF copy of the WVRA's liability or insurance certificate was emailed to members with an email address on April 6. That email also contained the April newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact me at ccritch608@yahoo.com

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## Treasurer's Report

October 1 through 31, 2020	
Beginning balance	\$2,814.08
Credits	\$0.00
Debits	\$0.00
Ending Balance	\$2,814.08

Submitted by Jack Rush, Treasurer, WVRA

## Upcoming Events

### Civil War Roundtables

#### The Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable

The SJCWRT has meetings scheduled for Tuesday, November 10 at 7 pm at the Progressive Women's Association behind the Harrison County Courthouse in Clarksburg. Parking is available in the adjacent lot. Anyone attending is required to wear a mask.

## Event Reviews

### Joseph Thoburn



Figure My favorite portrait of the Colonel.

The October meeting of the Stonewall Jackson Civil War Round Table featured Scott C. Patchan, author and Civil War historian, who spoke about Joseph Thoburn.

Scott talked about Thoburn's career in the war, starting with his initial assignment as surgeon of the 90-day 1st Virginia (Loyal) Infantry and finishing as division commander at Cedar Creek, where he was killed by a Confederate cavalryman dressed in blue. Scott presented a thorough program on Colonel Thoburn's record in the Civil War, the units he commanded and also discussed what is known about his personal life.

Scott and I had talked many years ago about his desire to do a biography on Thoburn, the physician turned division commander. He had bits and pieces of Thoburn's life through a portion of his journal and official documents. Not enough for a book-length study. He revealed during his talk that he had met a direct descendant of Thoburn who had Thoburn's journal and some letters. Now Scott is researching the possibility of publishing Thoburn's journal.

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I enjoyed Mr. Patchan's talk and look forward to his Thoburn book - if he finds somebody to publish it. The SJCWRT is now meeting at the Progressive Women's Association (former YMCA) building directly behind the Harrison County Courthouse -- just turn at the state of Stonewall Jackson. No meals any longer, just a meeting. Also no word on the Mason-Dixon Civil War Round Table in Morgantown.

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## Other Features

### Reading for 18<sup>th</sup> Century Reenactors

By Jim Barnes

Have you ever heard of Tobias Smollett? Probably not. However in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England and the colonies, he was as well-known as Henry Fielding or Daniel Defoe. He was especially known for his Picaresque novels, "The Adventures of Roderick Random", "The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle" and "The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker." These were important works which influenced later writers such as Charles Dickens.

Born in Scotland in 1721, into a well-to-do family, Smollett attended the University of Glasgow and qualified as a physician. Soon, however, Smollett found that he preferred to pursue a career in letters. In addition to the above and other novels, he also wrote plays and poetry and translated foreign literary works into English. He died in 1771.

Sometime ago, I picked up a copy of "Roderick Random" and it furnished a good bit of reading this summer. The title character goes through many varied adventures including the ups and downs of life in London of the mid-eighteenth century, a voyage on a Royal Navy Man-of-War and subsequent sea battles, shipwrecks and a tour of duty in the French army!

The novel is about 502 pages, which takes a while, but there is much information on the customs, clothing, food, laws and everyday life of the time. (It might be noted that in the 'Outlander' "The Fiery Cross" by Deanna Gabaldon, Jamie Fraser receives one of Smollett's works which arrives on a ship from the Mother Country.)

There is a good bit for a living historian of the period to absorb as well as a rousing good tale, so if you have a serious interest in this time period, you might check it out.

### Great American Outdoors Act

*Reprinted in part from Hallowed Ground  
American Battlefield Trust*

"The future of America's hallowed ground, the battlefields on which its formative conflicts were decided, grew secure this summer after the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law. This legislation to preserve and restore America's public lands received significant bipartisan support in both house of Congress and from a vast coalition of conservation and stewardship organizations, including the American Battlefield Trust, the nation's leading battlefield preservation organization, en route to its presidential signature.

"The measure benefits battlefield preservation in two parallel ways. First, it fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the \$900-level annually, via revenues from on-shore and off shore energy development -- both fossil and renewable energy operations -- not already allocated by law to other programs. This large pool in turn funds the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program, a matching grant program that has successfully save more than 32,000 acres of America's hallowed Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War battlefields. The Trust and its partner organizations leverage these targeted federal grants against individual donations to create public-private

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partnerships to protect portions of battlefields outside National Park Service Boundaries.

"Further, the bill allocations \$9 billion over five years to address the deferred maintenance backlog experienced by federal agencies, including the National Park Service, the Nation Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Battled parks are included in this critical maintenance backlog, with millions of dollars' worth of projects at dozens of battlefield parks, such as Antietam, Gettysburg, Shiloh, Vicksburg and Yorktown. Completion of these projects will materially enhance these outdoor classrooms and ensure they are accessible to the public."

The article at this point recognizes the members of Congress who "deserve recognition for their leading roles" including Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

## Virginia's Suit for the Recovery of these Counties

On Dec. 8, 1865, the Virginia Assembly, sitting at Richmond, repealed the act of 1863, by which the counties (Morgan, Berkeley, Jefferson) in question were transferred to West Virginia. Then the authorities of that State appealed to the 39th Congress, and March 2, 1866, that body passed an act declaring these counties to be subject to the jurisdiction of the new State the same as if they had been a part of it at the time of formation. Virginia then brought suit against West Virginia in the Supreme Court of the United States for recovery of the counties. The case was argued at the December term of that tribunal in 1866, but no decision was reached, and it was not again called until December 1870, when it was heard a second time and a decision rendered in favor of the defendant - West Virginia - three of the judges of the court dissenting. Thus was determined the area and boundaries of the new State as they have since existed.

--History and Government of West Virginia, Virgil Lewis, 1912 edition.

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**FREE!!!**

Two children's camp dresses, two teenage camp dresses, one adult camp dress (size 14). Contact Porter Stiles through Instant Messenger or Facebook for pictures and further information. FREE!!!!

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## "They Said It (or didn't)"

Quotes, misquotes and fabrications attributed to the famous, nearly famous, not famous and infamous.

**"Don't believe everything you read on the Internet just because there's a photo with, a quote next to it."**

-- Abraham Lincoln, February 31, 1866

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**Other Sites**

American Battlefield Trust - [www.battlefields.org](http://www.battlefields.org)  
Beverly Heritage Center -

[www.beverlyheritagecenter.org](http://www.beverlyheritagecenter.org)

Mason Dixon Civil War Roundtable -

[www.wvmasondixoncwrt.org/](http://www.wvmasondixoncwrt.org/)

Link to Clarksburg History Museum -

<https://clarksburgmuseum.wixsite.com/history>

Battle of Gettysburg Podcast -

Addressing Gettysburg podcast -

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**Current WVRA Officers**

Jim Barnes - President

Ken Connell - Vice President

Jack Rush - Secretary/Treasurer

Vacant - Unit Rep (TASAS)

Vacant - Unit Rep (1st W. Va. Infantry)

Bill Brisendine - Unit Rep (25th Virginia Infantry)

Dave Judy - Unit Rep (artillery)

Webmaster - Peter Baxter

Editor - Chuck Critchfield

Note - Webmaster and Editor are non-voting members of the Executive Committee.



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ATTENTION - Please do not send any correspondence to the PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the liability insurance policy purchased by the WVRA, you must be a member. The other group is labeled simply West Virginia Reenactors Association. Tonya Daft is the administrator on the West Virginia Reenactors Association page. Please address all questions to her about that page. I am not sure who is administrator to the WVRA-TASAS page. I continue to use the WVRA-TASAS page to post announcements as it has been the page getting the most use.

As newsletter editor, I encourage submissions from members or readers, that are related to American history. I retain the right as editor to make a final decision on the content of this publication. Abusive or political submissions will not be published.

## Editor's Corner

### The Editor's chance to speak

GETTYSBURG seems to be the focus of political protest this fall. Apparently on Saturdays, on the town square, small groups supporting Black Lives Matter. In response counter protesters have shown up - some of who are heavily armed.

All this just reflects some of the divisions in today's society. These are divisions that also trickle down into our hobby and to our interest in history. Especially the remembrance of the Civil War.

The Civil War reenacting community has been hit by the virus; by the aging community of reenactors, removal of Confederate monuments and the "racial unrest" of the past year. All have played a part in reducing reenactments in 2020 to about nothing. I have not put on the uniform since January.

It will be interesting to see what comes out of the other side of the Pandemic. Whenever that will be. Also of concern will be how the hobby emerges from the protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd. There is resentment towards any commemoration of the Confederacy among some people.

THANK YOU to Jim Barnes, Peter Baxter and Jack Rush for their contributions to this edition.

I PARTICIPATED IN Rick Wolfe's tour of Rich Mountain in October and was shocked by the vandalism done to the markers and interpretive signs at Camp Garnett and on top of the mountain. In

talking with members of the Foundation, apparently this crime has no political motivation but is probably a disgruntled hunter unable to hunt on property owned by the Foundation and others on top of the mountain. Nevertheless, it was very disheartening to see the destruction.

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS I have seen discussion on line and elsewhere about African American participation at the battle of Gettysburg. This discussion has been sparked by an unofficial campaign to memorialize the participation of African Americans in the battle.

There were no US Colored Troops or organized black military units on the Confederate side. But by one estimate, the Army of Northern Virginia had 10's of thousand slaves with the army. A recent Smithsonian article estimates 6,000 to 10,000 slaves accompanied Lee's army into Pennsylvania serving as cooks, blacksmiths, bakers, butchers, hospital attendants and other support roles. And of course many officers had servants. The article does not discuss the Northern side.

The article tells of loyal slaves who took the mortal remains of their masters back south after the battle. It also relates that many slaves disappeared taking advantage of being in free territory for an easier escape from slavery.

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$10 per year fee. The views expressed here are not necessarily The views of the WVRA.

WVRA website - [wvra.org](http://wvra.org)

Chuck Critchfield - Editor

608 Skyview Drive

Clarksburg, WV 26301

ccritch608@yahoo.com

"We tend to create stories that appeal to us. Then we impose those stories on the past."

- A Wallace Collection video produced on the 500th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt - found on You Tube

"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world."

- Robert Penn Warren