

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

2018 – Edition X - September

Upcoming Civil War Events

Sponsored Events

None at this time

Events Recommended by WVRA members

2018

Cedar Creek - Cancelled

Remembrance Day - November

Other Events

Jackson's Mill - Labor Day weekend,

j_rstudenwalt@yahoo.com

Lincoln and W. Va. Statehood - Harold Holzer, WVU Mountainlair, Sept. 24, 7:30

Dennis Frye - speaking in Clarksburg Oct. 9

Bulltown - October 12 -14, 2018 contact Sam Krafft (cwarcapt@yahoo.com)

Droop Mountain - October 12-14, 2018, (battleofdroopmountain.com).

Other Time Periods

Nothing at this time

Editor's note - if you plan to attend events, please work with your Unit Rep.

Droop Mountain (The First)

There are two Droop Mountain events being held this year. The first event will be held October 12-14, 2018 at Droop Mountain State Park. The second is the Averill's Advance event in November and is a campaigner event.

There seems to be interest within the WVRA to attend the first event in October so I contacted the organizers. But to date I have no response that I can find. However, I found a nice website for BOTH the Dry Creek and Droop events at the web address of

battleofdroopmountain.com. Registration, schedule and other details for BOTH reenactments can be found at this site. There does not appear to be any on-line registration.

Jim and Linda Barnes are scheduled to make a presentation on the Civil War to a Bridgeport Boy Scout troop on September 17.

There is an event at Jackson's Mill Labor Day weekend. I have no further details. Contact Jason Studenwalt at j_studenwalt@yahoo.com for further details.

Announcement About a Film

Cries from the Ground

My name is Jordan Hunt and I am a filmmaker currently located in Lynchburg, Virginia. I want to make you aware of an upcoming production my team will be filming this November entitled Cries from the Ground.

Cries from the Ground follows two soldiers in the Civil War. Both are courageous and brave. Both leave behind families and loved ones. Both fight for the right reasons. But one wears blue, the other gray.

You may be familiar with the several made-for-television documentaries that the History Channel has produced and the few feature-length Civil War films such as Glory and Gettysburg. Cries From the Ground is different because of its target audience: young people who have little interest in the Civil War, and who have no idea what it was like to experience it.

Because of this, this film will be primarily released on the internet for free, and its runtime will be much shorter and easier to watch. We producing Cries from the Ground not to make money, but to bring the story of the Civil War into the homes and lives of the American public.

Here's how you can get involved:

Next Meeting

Sunday, September 9, at 1 pm at the Weston Steer (the normal place) at exit 99 on I-79. Order lunch and join the meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Reenactment Event is Cancelled

This was posted on the Cedar Creek Website

New circumstances beyond the control of the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, and our paramount concern for the safety of our reenactors and visitors, have forced us to cancel this year's reenactment. We do not take this matter, the community of supporters, or the public interest lightly, and we have made this decision with the best of intentions.

(Editor's Note: Although rumors regarding the reason for the cancellation are rampant, I have heard nothing official other than the above statement. I have had no update since publishing this in the July edition of the Dispatch)

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- We need to raise over \$45,000 to make this project a reality. Through generous donations, gifts-in-kind and other contributions, we have already raised \$35,000 of this total. In fact, myself and my entire crew have decided to work for free because we truly believe in the power of this project. However, we still need to raise another \$10,000 before we can begin production. This will pay for costumes, props and locations that will enable us to portray the highest level of historical accuracy. Simply visit [PayPal.me/criesfromtheground](https://www.paypal.com/criesfromtheground) or contact me directly. We cannot do without your help!

- We are searching for reenactment groups to join us on set. If you are within driving distance of our set in Lynchburg, Virginia, please reach out to me. We need large groups of Civil War soldiers to accurately portray the scope of the battlefield. You might even qualify for a leading role!

- We are always looking for qualified historians to serve in an advisory role. If you have received this letter, that means we hold each one of you in the highest regard when it comes to knowledge and passion for historical accuracy. My team has spent the last several months researching all aspects of the Civil War by visiting historical sites and museums, reading and studying academic sources, and attending reenactments up and down the East coast. If any of your team has suggestions for our productions, please send them my way.

Thank you for all that you do, and please continue to support and preserve history. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to us using contact information below.

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Selingrove, PA 17870
contact@jordanhuntfilms.com

Treasurer's Report

For the period July 1 through July 31, 2018

Beginning Balance \$3,613.26

Credits

Membership \$60.00

Ending Balance \$3,673.26

Submitted by Jack Rush August 6, 2018

OTHER FEATURES/NEWS

FOR SALE

Former member Rob Freeman is selling some of his Civil War period clothing that was worn by himself and his father. He is selling shirts, a military vest and civilian vest, a almost new Union frock coat, a Confederate sack coat with Virginia buttons and two pairs of sky blue pants. Contact Pam Nicholson jmpnicholson@aol.com or Rob at rffreeman1373@gmail.com for more information.

Jim Barnes reports that at the Clarksburg Gun Show, a National Guard recruiter stopped by and said he had a nice Civil War officer's desk he wants to sell if anyone is interested contact Jim Barnes.

James W. Custer - First Cousin to George Armstrong Custer

(Editor's note: Around the campfire a few times, the topic of George Armstrong Custer's ties to Clarksburg was discussed. Here is the connection.)

Born October 10, 1842, probably in Clarksburg, Harrison County, Virginia, James William Custer was a member of a large, extended family that originated in Germany, near the border with Holland. He was the son of Alexander S. and Elizabeth Logston Custer, both of whom were born in Maryland. After 1830, when the family patriarch, Alex's father John Custer died, Alex's family along with his brother, James C. Custer and his family, their sisters, Anne, Mary and Ellen Elizabeth, and their mother, Catherine Valentine Custer, moved to Harrison County, Virginia. The area they settled is still referred to as the Custer Addition of Clarksburg. Another of Alex's brothers, Emanuel Henry (George Armstrong's father), had earlier moved to join their Uncle Jacob Custer in New Rumley, Harrison County, Ohio.

James W. Custer joined the 3rd West Virginia Volunteer Cavalry which had been raised in western Virginia to support the Federal government while the politicians were going through the process of separating the western counties from old Virginia. In April of 1863, Confederate generals John D. Imboden and William E. "Grumble" Jones made a raid into the Federal-held counties of what was to become the

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

None

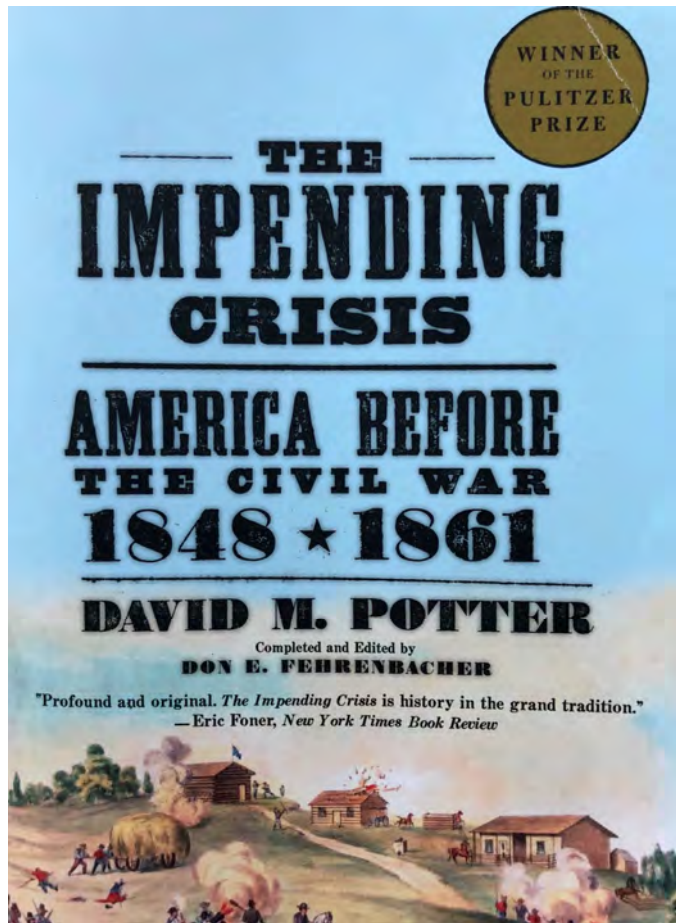
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state West Virginia. At Lambert's Run, near Lumberport, an engagement took place in April 1863, between the raiding Confederate forces and Union forces, including the 3rd W. Va. Cavalry. On April 30, private James W. Custer was mortally wounded. He died May 18. His father went to the battle area to claim the body and take it home to be buried in the family graveyard in Custer Addition. A month later, June 20, 1863, West Virginia received its statehood. Grand Army of the Republic Post No. 9 in Clarksburg was named the Custer Post in honor, not of his more famous first cousins from New Rumley, Ohio, George Armstrong & Thomas Ward Custer, but of James William Custer, the local cavalry private who gave his life for his country.

- based on information found on a genealogy website and posted by Bill McAfee

Book Review



Not a book for the faint of heart.

But my unflinching interest in the origins of the American Civil War led me to this book. Finally, let me add that while listening to that esteemed Civil War historian David Blight at Yale lecture on YouTube about the origins of the war, I decided to track down a copy of this book and read it. After all, Professor Blight references this book many times. Nine months later, and with much satisfaction, I can pronounce this academic work as conquered!

This is 600 pages by David M. Potter about "America before the Civil War 1848-1861. Although I should add that Potter died before the work was fully completed and edited. That duty went to Don E. Fehrenbacher. The result was a Pulitzer Prize-winning study of America between the Mexican and Civil Wars. My chief concern was this book would be written in that impenetrable academic-ese that bogs down some books --like Road to Disunion by William Freehling. But this book reads well and easily, although the subject is complicated and immense and required concentration and some notes.

Any attempt to summarize this book in a couple paragraphs would fail to grasp the vast complexities of this period. But the author walks us through the national politics, state politics and the country at large during this period. The forces that pulled us apart are many and varied, but at the heart of those forces is almost always slavery. Starting with the Mexican War he describes the period that ends with Fort Sumter.

I would not recommend this book to anyone except to those with a serious interest in the subject. And to those people, I would strongly recommend.

-- C. L. Critchfield

Craik-Patton House

From Nathan Jones via Mason Dixon Civil War Roundtables

I wanted to announce that I am currently serving as the executive director of the historic Craik-Patton House in Charleston, West Virginia.

Among the notable families that made this house their home was none other than the civil war commander, Col. George S. Patton. I have an incredible time learning about Patton's life and it is

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with great pleasure that I get to teach others about his legacy and life in the Kanawha Valley during the 1800s.

As I get settled in, I hope to craft many educational programs and activities, I invite you to follow the Craik-Patton House on Facebook or periodically review our website, www.craikpattonhouse.org

Also, if anybody decides to make the trip to Charleston I hope that they mention that they are a member of MDCWR so that I know I'm not going to bore them when I really start to spill details about Patton and the civil war throughout the valley (sometimes I can spot it in somebody's eyes when they aren't quite as enthusiastic about history as me.

155 Years Ago

September, 1863

The 1st West Virginia

September of 1863 was an eventful month for the boys in the 1st.

The First was on duty watching the rear in the South Branch Valley, escorting supply trains (wagons) and guarding against raids by John Imboden or McNeil's Rangers or partisans of no affiliation. Early in the month, five companies (B, E, E, F and H) in command of Major E. W. Stephens, were sent to Moorefield from Petersburg. The five remaining companies stayed at Petersburg.

On September 5, Major Stephen's detachment repulsed an attack by Imboden's cavalry. Neither Rawling or Winters makes mention of this attack. But on the night of the 11th, in an effort to find McNeil's men and capture or disperse, Captain James Morrow took 100 men in search of the raider. Rumors placed McNeil's men just a few miles distant. But McNeil's men were closer than that and later that night, crawling on their hands and knees, "stole into camp of the four companies remaining before daylight of the 12th..." The majority of the men (150 to 230) were taken prisoner. Rawling states the pickets were facing the expected direction of any attack and came "in by the rear...past the lone picket at that point, who, it is stated, was asleep."

Rawling further wrote: "This was a terrible blow to the regiment...Being now reduced to a small battalion..."

Joshua Winters, being in Company G, was not part of the fiasco at Moorefield and makes just a passing mention. His diary describes a September spent escorting trains, garrison duty and occasional skirmishes. During the first 10 days of the month, the Confederates were particularly active in the area.

From "History of the First Regiment West Virginia Infantry" by C. J. Rawling and "Civil War Letters and Diary of Joshua Winter - A Private in the Union Army Company G, First Western Virginia Volunteer Infantry" edited by WVRA member Elizabeth Davis Swiger. Supplemented with information from the West Virginia Division of Culture, Arts and History website.

The 12th West Virginia

The 12th, like the First, was left behind by the war in the east which had moved further south. The battle of Winchester in June had destroyed the brigade and division to which the 12th belonged. The 12th being one of the few organizations to escape. After wandering around in the wake of Gettysburg the regiment landed in Martinsburg where it would spend the month of August and September, 1863 recovering from the disaster at Winchester.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Northcutt having been captured, command had devolved to Captain William D. Curtis of Company D. Curtis was promoted to Major and assumed command of the regiment.

Hewitt writes that on the 25th of that month, the XI and XII passed through on the railroad, bound for General Grant's troops in the west. Part of the 12th was detailed to "cook rations" for those troops. When General Oliver Otis Howard's train passed through a "salute was fire" in his honor. But Hewitt further writes "...there was little, if anything of importance in a military way" that took place in September.

Thomas Jefferson Orr's diary entries bespeak of routine and the coming and going of his comrades. "Not anything of importance occurred today." "I went out on picket this morning." And, "Will Carson & W. D. Maxwell came back to the Co. today." His one letter to his sister Ruth is full of personal requests to folks back home and updates on boys from the neighborhood. But does contain the story of Jim McCoy who left the regiment to get his knapsack in Winchester, left there in July when the regiment had to run for its life. McCoy left his

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knapsack in a house, when the rest of the 12th piled their knapsacks in the woods. "He got everything just as he left it." McCoy also retrieved Capt. Curtis's sword. Lastly, there is a cryptic passage: "Tell Sallie if she don't make Billie Stile quit spanking her I will have to shoot at him the next time I retreat home."

"From "History of the 12th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry" by William Hewitt and "A Company of BOYS IN BLUE" by Mark E. Paul and Thomas Jefferson Orr. (Donated by Orr's descendant Mark E. Paul) Even though we don't portray the 12th, I continue to study it because it was raised from our area and I have so many cousins in the unit.

The 1st Virginia Cavalry, Co. A

The 1st Virginia Cavalry completed its organization at Winchester, Virginia, in July 1861, under the command of Colonel James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.) Stuart at the command of General Thomas Jackson. Unlike most regiments, the First contained twelve companies. The men were from Amelia, Augusta, Berkeley, Clarke, Frederick, Gloucester, Jefferson, Loudoun, Rockbridge, Rockingham, and Washington counties.

25th Virginia Infantry

The 25th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment was an infantry regiment raised in Virginia for service in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War. It fought mostly with the Army of the Northwest and Army of Northern Virginia. Its brave soldiers saw action from the first battle (Philippi) until the last (Appomattox).

The 25th Virginia was organized during the early summer of 1861. Its members were raised in Upshur, Augusta, Highland, Bath, Pendleton, and Rockbridge counties.

Lurty's Battery

Lurty's Battery was organized in October 1863, with transfers from other artillery companies. The unit served in western Virginia, fought at Lewisburg, and in November contained 5 officers and 43 men. Later it was assigned to W. J. Jackson's Cavalry Brigade, Department of Western Virginia, and in February 1864, totaled 66 effectives. The battery then participated in Early's operations in the Shenandoah Valley as part of the Horse Artillery. During the spring of 1865 it disbanded. Captain Warren S. Lurty was its commander.

As always, I welcome any similar information on the activities of the actual 25th Virginia or 1st Virginia Cavalry.

They Said It (or didn't)

The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world. - Robert Penn Warren

"The moment for action has arrived...I am to watch over you as a parent over his children; and you know that your General loves you from the depths of his heart...I shall demand of you great, heroic exertions, rapid and long marches, desperate combats, privations, perhaps. We will share all these together; and when this sad war is over we will all return to our homes, and feel that we can ask no higher honor than the proud consciousness that we belonged to the ARMY OF THE POTOMAC."
- George B. McClellan, March 1862

"Congress possesses many means of preserving (the Union) by conciliation, but the sword has not placed in their hand to preserve it by force."
- President James Buchanan

"I believe that to have interfered as I have done -- as I have always freely admitted I have done -- in behalf of His despised people, was not wrong, but right."
- John Brown at his trial.

Sites of Interest

Beverlyheritagecenter.org – Beverly Heritage Center
WVRA.org – our website
<http://www.wvmasondixoncwrt.org/> -- W. Va. Mason Dixon Civil War Round Table (Morgantown)
Civil War Trust – civilwar.org

WVRA Officers 2018 (executive board)

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Vice President – Ken Connell
Treasurer /Secretary – Jack Rush
Newsletter editor - Chuck "Pathfinder" Critchfield*
Website – Peter Baxter*
1st W. Va. Rep – Mark "Not Burned Biscuits" Tennant
25th Va. Rep – Bill "Beal" Brisendine
1st Va. Cavalry – John Brasuk
Artillery – Stormy Brasuk
TASAS – Diane Tennant
Union Rep - Debbie Rush **
Confederate Rep - Sherri Skidmore Goff **
20th Century Rep - Linda Barnes **

* Non-voting member of executive board

** Not members of executive board

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Editor's Corner

The Editor's chance to speak

LET ME REMIND the readers of this fine publication that the opinions expressed in this newsletter **are not necessarily** the opinions of the WVRA. And believe you me, we have members who are 180 degrees apart on a few subjects

THE EDITOR WELCOMES articles and pictures from time periods other than the American Civil War as the WVRA has opened its ranks to historical reenactors of all time periods of AMERICAN history.

DROOP MOUNTAIN registration information is now available on line. The WVRA is not sponsoring this event. I have seen information on Bulltown on line also. There seems to be interest from WVRA to return to the Droop reenactment.

THANK YOU to everyone who made contributions to this issue. A special thanks as always for Peter Baxter's able help.

THE LOCAL CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLES have scheduled two nationally-known speakers. The Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable is sponsoring Dennis Frye on the evening October 9, at the Waldomore in Clarksburg. The Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable, in conjunction with WVU, is sponsoring Lincoln expert Harold Holzer on Sept. 24 at the Mountainlair Ballroom at 7:30 pm. Of course both organizations have great programs each month. The SJCWR is based in Clarksburg and the MDCWR is based in Morgantown.

OLD WAR MOVIES have been a hobby of mine this summer. Finding them and watching them on YouTube that is. Here are a few I have watched: *The Trench* starring Daniel Craig. Made in 1999 about a British platoon in the days leading up to the Somme offensive in 1916. Graphic, with good production values. I'd give it a B. *The Flemish Farm*, a 1943 (war time) British film about a Belgium Air Force unit's flag. An unusual little film. I'd give it a C-. *Too Late the Hero* directed by Robert Altman starring Michael Caine and Cliff Robertson from about 1970. A bit unrealistic story about a raid into the jungles of southeast Asia. Despite all the big names, I'd only give it a C+. *First Light*, a recent film about a Spitfire pilot in the early war, including the Battle of Britain.

A good picture about the stress of being fighter pilot. I'd give it a B. *Beachhead* (1954) about a raid into the jungles of southeast Asia starring Tony Curtis. Standard war movie fare. I'd give it a D+. *Target for Tonight* made in 1941 (before we entered the war!!) by the Brits. This film uses real pilots, real personnel and real planes, so the production value has something to say for itself, but not the acting. Realistic if not terribly dramatic. B-. These films are a great way to entertain while exercising.

PERSONAL - Jack and Tonya Daft ask that you keep their family in your prayers. Has anyone seen or heard from Bill Snyder? It was good to see Ed ChapdeLaine at Beverly, still not fully recovered though, from his car accident. The West Virginia University Alumni Association magazine recently did a feature story on Robert Shreve, twin brother to famous Roy Shreve, former WVRA president. As I recall brother Robert was known to fall in with us a time or two. Our prayers go out to Bill Brisendine as well.

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 of record.

There are two Facebook pages currently in use as avenues of communication by WVRA members. One is the WVRA-The Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society group page. 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 (by far) over the past 3 years.

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The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA

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