



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Notes from the President 2/2018

BCWRT Community:

Hopefully, by the time we meet, there'll be a break in that long string of sub-freezing weather we have been experiencing which you get you outdoors and lower those high heating bills. On February 27, historian and reenactor Anita Henderson will introduce you to Maria Lewis, a unit a unique Civil War woman who did more than just disguise herself as a calvaryman. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Abraham Lincoln described him as his "particular friend". Author, historian and civil war podcast host Bob O'Connor will have a "first person" presentation on Ward Hill Lamon, Lincoln's law partner, emissary and self-appointed bodyguard, on March 27.

April 24 is the date of the BCWRT Annual Banquet. National Park Service Historian Emeritus, Ed Bearss will continue his presentation on Reconstruction begun at last year's event. Our new venue for the banquet is Columbus Gardens, 4301 Klosterman Ave., Baltimore, MD. 21236. The facility is on off US Route 1 (Belair Rd) about a mile north of Rossville Blvd. The cocktail hour begins at 6 p.m. with dinner being served at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$35.00. Please see the flyer located on the website.

On May 22, author Scott L. Mingus Sr. will speak on his book, *The Second Battle of Winchester: The Confederate Victory That Opened the Door to Gettysburg June 13-15, 1863*.

History Interpreter Darlene Colon will appear as the important, but, not well known Civil War figure Lydia Hamilton Smith at our meeting on June 26.

Since this past summer, we have been featuring meeting pictures in our newsletter. There are not pictures from January's meeting with Lester Brooks because I forgot to take some. A way to alleviate the problem of remember to take pictures while chairing our meetings, I'm seeking a volunteer to take pictures during BCWRT meeting. Cell phone pictures are fine. Internet access is a must.

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

IMPORTANT REMINDER: *Remember, it's time to renew your membership for 2018. Yearly dues are \$25.00 for an individual membership, \$35.00 for a family membership. If you have already paid, Ray Atkins will have your membership card at our next meeting. We are always looking for new members. Invite a friend to our meetings. The BCWRT has many good things happening. Please spread the word.*

Robert L. Ford,

President

### Civil War Trust News

By Jim Campi, Clint Schemmer

**December 6, 2017**

**(Upperville, Va.)** – Gov. Terry McAuliffe, the Civil War Trust and NOVA Parks today heralded a preservation victory creating a Northern Virginia park that spotlights one of Virginia's architectural treasures and the Gettysburg Campaign's lesser-known stories.

The governor announced that the two land conservation groups, in concert with the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club and the Virginia Department of Transportation, saved 20 acres at the heart of the Upperville battlefield, around and including historic Goose Creek Bridge in Loudoun County.

Built about 1802 when Thomas Jefferson was serving his first term as U.S. president, the 212-foot-long span is one of the last four stone-arch bridges left in Virginia. It figured prominently in the artillery and cavalry duel that began the Battle of Upperville on June 21, 1863, early in the Gettysburg Campaign.

“Goose Creek Bridge is among the more than 1,000 significant sites that have been protected under my administration's Virginia Treasures initiative,” McAuliffe said. “Focused on a ‘quality over quantity’ approach to land preservation, we have protected 1,337 natural, cultural,

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

---

recreational and conservation-centered treasures across the Commonwealth — far exceeding our goal of 1,000 sites during my tenure. This includes 36 treasures in Loudoun County and 33 in Fauquier County.”

McAuliffe spoke at a news conference overlooking the picturesque bridge. He was joined by Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward, Civil War Trust President James Lighthizer, NOVA Parks Board Member Cate Magennis Wyatt and Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis J. Randall. The event was hosted by the national nonprofit Trust and NOVA Parks, which has protected 12,000 acres in six Northern Virginia counties and cities.

Speakers thanked former U.S. Sen. John Warner, who donated 12 acres beside the bridge to the Garden Club years ago, local preservation advocate Ann MacLeod of Upperville, and the Garden Club for their steadfast efforts to protect the Goose Creek Bridge site. Warner had grazed cattle in the creekside meadow at today's bridge overlook.

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---







## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Middleburg Montessori School students join Civil War re-enactors and (from center left) NOVA Parks Board Member Cate Magennis Wyatt, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward, Gov. Terry McAuliffe, first lady Dorothy McAuliffe, Civil War Trust President James Lighthizer and Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis Randall for a ceremonial ribbon cutting to recognize the preservation of the Goose Creek Bridge area on the Upperville Battlefield as part of the NOVA Parks system.  
Lindsey Morrison / Civil War Trust

“By preserving the land where these Civil War battles occurred, we are not only protecting Virginia’s unique history, but we are also conserving environmental features that millions of Virginians value immensely,” Ward said. “Moreover, nearly all the battlefield preservation work conducted in the Commonwealth has the additional benefit of protecting the vital Chesapeake Bay watershed.

“Virginia and the Civil War Trust enjoy a strong partnership to preserve precious battlefield lands across the Commonwealth that tell vivid stories of America’s deadliest conflict, as only such places can,” Ward said. “Befitting the state where the greatest number of Civil War battles occurred, the Trust and Virginia have saved 24,700 acres of hallowed ground in the Old Dominion.”

“The Civil War Trust, NOVA Parks, the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club and the Virginia Department of Transportation have joined together to ensure that this beautiful and evocative landscape is preserved for generations to come,” Lighthizer said. “Together, we are creating a new, publicly accessible park here, building on the success that created a park at the Middleburg battlefield in 2012. In this way, we are protecting key pieces of an important struggle during the momentous Gettysburg Campaign.”

The Civil War Trust intends to convey Goose Creek Bridge’s former Garden Club site and an adjoining VDOT parcel to NOVA Parks, the regional agency that will be their public steward. The land straddles the Loudoun-Fauquier line. Until 1957, when it was abandoned, the site’s venerable Ashby’s Gap Turnpike was U.S. 50, now a busy east-west thoroughfare.

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

---

“Great things happen through partnership,” said Magennis Wyatt. “We at NOVA Parks have been honored to work with the Civil War Trust, the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club, and the Commonwealth of Virginia to make this new park a reality. It has taken the cooperation and common vision of many to make this possible, and we thank all those who have helped these efforts.”

“Goose Creek Bridge has a rich history. It’s been an important part of Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club’s history as well,” said Aline Day, president of the club. “For over four decades, our members have worked hard to preserve it, by securing its ownership, by raising funds through grants, donations and ongoing fundraisers, and supervising its upkeep. We are delighted to be turning over stewardship to such a qualified new owner.”



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---



During the Battle of Upperville, war correspondent Alfred R. Waud (1828-1891) sketched Union cavalry attacking Confederate Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's troops, who were screened by a square of hedges (left) on Vineyard Hill near the Loudoun County village. Ashby's Gap is in the distance. Originally published in Harper's Weekly on July 11, 1863. Print available online in Civil War Drawings file 1863 at the Library of Congress.  
Alfred Waud / Library of Congress

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Renowned men and units — such as Col. Strong Vincent and the 20th Maine Infantry, later heroes of Little Round Top — faced Confederate cavalry at Goose Creek Bridge, whose job was to delay the Union army and prevent it from crossing into the Shenandoah Valley. Federal forces attacked down the steep bank to cross Goose Creek and forced Confederate Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's horse soldiers to retire to the next high ground to the west. Ten days later, many of the same players struggled in the war's deadliest battle, at Gettysburg, Pa.

"This historic battlefield will add to the network of historic sites that makes our region a great place to live and visit," said Randall. "American history was made in Loudoun County, and continues to be made. I thank the Governor, Civil War Trust, and NOVA Parks for making this happen."

Gov. McAuliffe capped the event by firing a mountain howitzer with NOVA Parks' black-powder gun crew, dressed in Civil War period uniforms, and greeting students from Middleburg Montessori School. Afterward, author and cavalry historian Robert O'Neill led a public tour of the site. In the bottomland and hilly terrain along Goose Creek, history and nature mix, drawing walkers, cyclists, bird lovers, motorists and heritage tourists.

The Civil War Trust has preserved 3,500 acres from early Gettysburg Campaign sites at Brandy Station, Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville — all in Virginia.

The Civil War Trust is a national nonprofit land preservation organization devoted to the protection of America's hallowed battlegrounds. It saves the battlefields of the Civil War, the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, and educates the public about their importance in forging the nation we are today. To date, the Trust has preserved more than 47,000 acres of battlefield land in 24 states. Learn more at [Civilwar.org](http://Civilwar.org).

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

# Captured on a Wet Plate: Photography during the Civil War

[www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org/captured-on-a-wet-plate-photography-during-the-civil-war-2/](http://www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org/captured-on-a-wet-plate-photography-during-the-civil-war-2/)

Posted on January 2, 2018 by [Trini Nye](#)

Exhibit opens January 18, 2018 and will be on display through December 31, 2018. This exhibit will examine the motivation behind the great Civil War photographers; Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner and Timothy H. O'Sullivan to name a few. For the first time in history, war was documented for all to see and the faces of soldiers frozen in time at home and in the field. At first, soldiers would have their portraits taken for the folks back home, clutching their weapons to show that they were true men of war, young and destined for glory. Soon the glory would fade and images created on the battle field would show the dreadful cost of that glory. The public wanted to see their heroes and in many family photograph albums, alongside of their sons in uniform, would be found the likeness of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis and the great military leaders of their nation's cause. History was being made and now there was a way to capture it for generations to come. The iconic images of people and places that we know and revere from that terrible time, were captured on a wet plate.

The exhibit will feature many of the famous photographic prints that we are familiar with and many that we are not. We will see the stress of battle on an unknown soldier's face and the innocence of a young man untested by battle. We will see a last portrait with loved ones before making the ultimate sacrifice on the battle field and images of young men in uniform, far younger than we could imagine sending off to war today. Sailors and soldiers of the North and South and loved ones left behind to wait and worry for word of their boys. The great politicians, war hawks and peacemakers will be represented, Heroes and scoundrels will all be there, just as they were more than one hundred and fifty years ago. Additionally, photographic equipment used to create these wonderful images will add to the wonder of this special exhibit.

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

# Removal of Robert E. Lee from church's name was just start of healing for Virginia congregation

October 18, 2017

[David Paulsen](#)



Grace Episcopal Church's new name is seen in a banner in front of the church in Lexington, Virginia, though a more official sign is still in the process of being replaced. Photo: Doug Cumming

[Episcopal News Service] Grace Episcopal Church in Lexington, Virginia, has begun growing into its new name. Its website [homepage is updated](#). The stationery is new. And perhaps more consequentially, the [annual stewardship appeal](#) has been sent to members under the new church name.

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

A month ago, the vestry voted to remove Robert E. Lee from the name of the church he once attended, [changing it from R.E. Memorial Church back to its previous Grace](#). That move ended two years of sometimes tense debate over the Confederate general's legacy, both as a prominent member of the congregation's past and a symbol of racial hatred in contemporary America.

At least one couple has formally left the congregation in protest of the name change. At the same time, the congregation faces a change in leadership: The Rev. Tom Crittenden announced this month he plans to step down as rector after Nov. 5.

Despite the recent upheaval, some parish leaders who had disagreed over whether to remain as R.E. Lee Memorial now express a mutual desire to move forward together as Grace Episcopal.

"There's still some hurt feelings, but [the congregation] seems to be pulling together," senior warden Woody Sadler told Episcopal News Service this week by phone.

Sadler had long opposed the name change and voted against it Sept. 18, partly because the vestry hadn't polled the full congregation.

The vestry's 7-5 vote adopted a change recommended in April by a Discovery and Discernment Committee of vestry members and parishioners. A more recent and direct catalyst for the Lexington vestry's decision was the Aug. 14 violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. Hate groups had gathered in Charlottesville to "unite the right" [in support of a Lee statue that the city had slated for removal](#). Clashes with anti-racism counter-protesters left one of the counter-protesters dead.

Doug Cumming, one of the Lexington vestry members who supported removal of Lee from the church's name, said he thinks resolving that issue last month has put the congregation on the path to spiritual renewal.

"We're coming back together. We're now in a period of real healing and reconciliation," Cumming said in an interview with ENS, and he already senses that people who had shied away from the church during the debate over the name have started returning to Sunday services.

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

The changes have been difficult, though, for those who felt the congregation's identity was closely tied to Lee.

"I think it just hurts some people so much to see the name changing and to see things happening so fast," Cumming said.

As fast as change is coming, it is hardly complete. The website that advertises services at Grace Episcopal Church is still hosted on the domain releechurch.org. A new domain is in the works, Cumming said.



The sign in front of R.E. Lee Memorial Church in Lexington, Virginia. Photo: Doug Cumming

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Grace is the name on the outdoor sign listing worship times and on a banner advertising an upcoming bazaar. But the main sign out front has not yet been replaced and still welcomes passersby to "R.E. Lee Memorial Church." Cumming, as chair of the church's History Committee, presented the lowest bid on a replacement sign to the vestry at its most recent meeting, Oct. 16. The cost will be \$930.

Sadler said he signed off on that expense the following day. The new sign should be installed in a few weeks.

Deeper change in the congregation may take time and require more than a new name and sign. Crittenden is personally well liked, Cumming said, but his resignation reflected the congregation's desire for new leadership as it looks to the future. Its Discovery and Discernment Committee's report identified "a loss of confidence in the ability of the current rector to lead the parish forward."

Diocese of Southwest Virginia Bishop Mark Bourlakas met with the congregation, vestry and Crittenden in the months leading up to Crittenden's decision to resign, and Bourlakas plans to attend the November vestry meeting to discuss calling an interim rector while Grace recruits someone new to the role permanently.

The Discovery and Discernment Committee also singled out the vestry as part of the leadership "vacuum" in the congregation, including but not limited to its role in the debate over the church's name. The committee recommended the vestry focus on coordinating its vision, mission and long-range planning and communicate better with parishioners.

The vestry will have several new faces leading those efforts starting in January. The congregation on Oct. 15 elected five new vestry members to the 12-member body, out of 10 people who were interested in serving, an unusually high number, Cumming said. (He was one of the vestry members who chose not to return when their terms expire at the end of this year.)

The new vestry members appear to support the name change, Cumming said, but it is more difficult to gauge the change's effect on the larger congregation. Cumming sensed increased attendance since the name change, due to the return of families who had stopped attending. Sadler, on the other hand, said he hadn't noticed Sunday attendance swell in the past month.

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

The Oct. 15 service was well attended, but it also was unique: The congregation combined its 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services for a special joint service that will be repeated every three months.

“There’s a lot of reconciliation and healing that has to go on,” said Bourlakas, who had encouraged changing the church name. He told ENS he is pleased by the progress. “People seem to be trying to work together. I know it hasn’t pleased everybody but there seems to be some acceptance and voices for moving forward.”

Cumming, despite voting to remove Lee from the church name, doesn’t think the church is erasing history. His committee is discussing other ways of highlighting Lee’s historic role.

While serving in Lexington as president of Washington College, later renamed Washington and Lee University, the former Confederate general spent the last five years of his life, until his death in 1870, helping the struggling congregation survive. There is no record, however, of why the congregation chose to rename the church for Lee in 1903.

One suggestion received by the History Committee was to rename the parish hall after Lee, but Cumming said the committee also is looking for ways to highlight other historical figures’ ties to the church.

An interpretative historical marker might include info on Lee, but also on [Jonathan Daniels](#), a civil rights worker who was killed in 1965 while saving the life of a black teenage girl. Daniels attended R.E. Lee Memorial Church while a student at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. He was class valedictorian when he graduated in 1961.

– *David Paulsen is an editor and reporter for the Episcopal News Service. He can be reached at [dpaulsen@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:dpaulsen@episcopalchurch.org)*

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Civil War Trust News

#### Spotsylvania Court House: Day 5

By : [Chris Mackowski](#)

Emerging Civil War

It was a "panoply of horror." A "pandemonium of terror." A "literal saturnalia of blood." One Federal soldier described the scene as "a Golgotha" — a place of skulls.

Union and Confederate soldiers had endured years of privations and pitched battles, yet nothing had prepared them for the fighting in the Mule Shoe Salient at Spotsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864. "I have, as you know, been in a good many hard fights, but I never saw anything like the contest," wrote one Louisiana soldier.

At 4:35 a.m., some 20,000 Federal soldiers launched a furious attack on the center of Gen. Robert E. Lee's defenses. They shattered the Confederate line and captured more than 3,000 prisoners, along with 22 cannons, two general officers and 30 stands of colors. "Men in crowds with bleeding limbs, and pale, pain-stricken faces, were hurrying to the rear," a Virginia artillerist said.

On the Confederate right, the Federal IX Corps attacked in force to provide additional pressure. In the center, Federal soldiers flooded into the breach in the Confederate line.

As the Army of Northern Virginia teetered on the brink of destruction, Lee rode toward his embattled center. "Not a word did he say," noted one observer, "but simply took off his hat, and as he sat on his charger I never saw a man look so noble, or a spectacle so impressive."

Lee watched as his army crumbled around him.



**THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

---







## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Photograph by Timothy O'Sullivan  
Library of Congress

The collapse of the Mule Shoe Salient was of Lee's own making. The Confederate line at Spotsylvania ran for nearly five miles, laid out as troops rushed on to the field — often at a moment of crisis — to resist Federal assaults. "Run for our rail piles; the Federal infantry will reach them first, if you don't run!" implored Confederate cavalymen as foot soldiers arrived on the scene. In response, one Southern soldier said, "Our men sprang forward as if by magic," while another described them "rushing pell-mell at full speed around there just as the enemy came up."

Lee's army unwound along ridgelines that gave his men strong defensible positions and effective fields of fire. And as soon as they staked out a position, they began to fortify it. "The rebel works were constructed as follows," a New Yorker later explained:

A layer of stout logs close together & breast high was made and banked on the front side with earth. Above this with space to fire between was laced another log larger than the others protecting the heads of the defenders. For several rods in front the trees had been felled to fall outward and form by their entangled branches a dense abattis. Sometimes these branches of these trees had been sharpened so as to impale assailants.... Behind such works Lee's veteran army lay and was virtually unassailable.

The left flank of the Confederate line was the strongest, anchored on the Po River and along the low crest at the southern edge of a field on the Sarah Spindle Farm — an area also known as Laurel Hill. The right flank of the line terminated southeast of the village of Spotsylvania Court House itself. While it lacked the topographical advantages of the left flank, the Confederate right was relatively secure, given that the bulk of the Federal army was massed along the Confederate left and left center.

The weakest point on the rebel line was its center. In following the natural contours of the land, the chief topographical engineer of Lee's army, 44-year-old Maj. Gen. Martin Luther Smith, had laid out a giant bubble known as a salient. Such protrusions are an inherent weakness; a



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

breakthrough at any point along the line lets the enemy suddenly command a position behind the entire salient and makes the entire position untenable. The concentrated firepower of converging artillery and small-arms also make a salient vulnerable, which Confederate infantrymen nestled in the tip of the salient recognized almost immediately. "After throwing up breastworks, we found that the Yanks had a cross fire on our regiment," one of them wrote in a letter published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch. "We then went to work and built pens, each holding eight or ten men." Also called traverses, these pens were breastworks built inside the line, perpendicular to the main works, that offered soldiers a degree of additional cover.

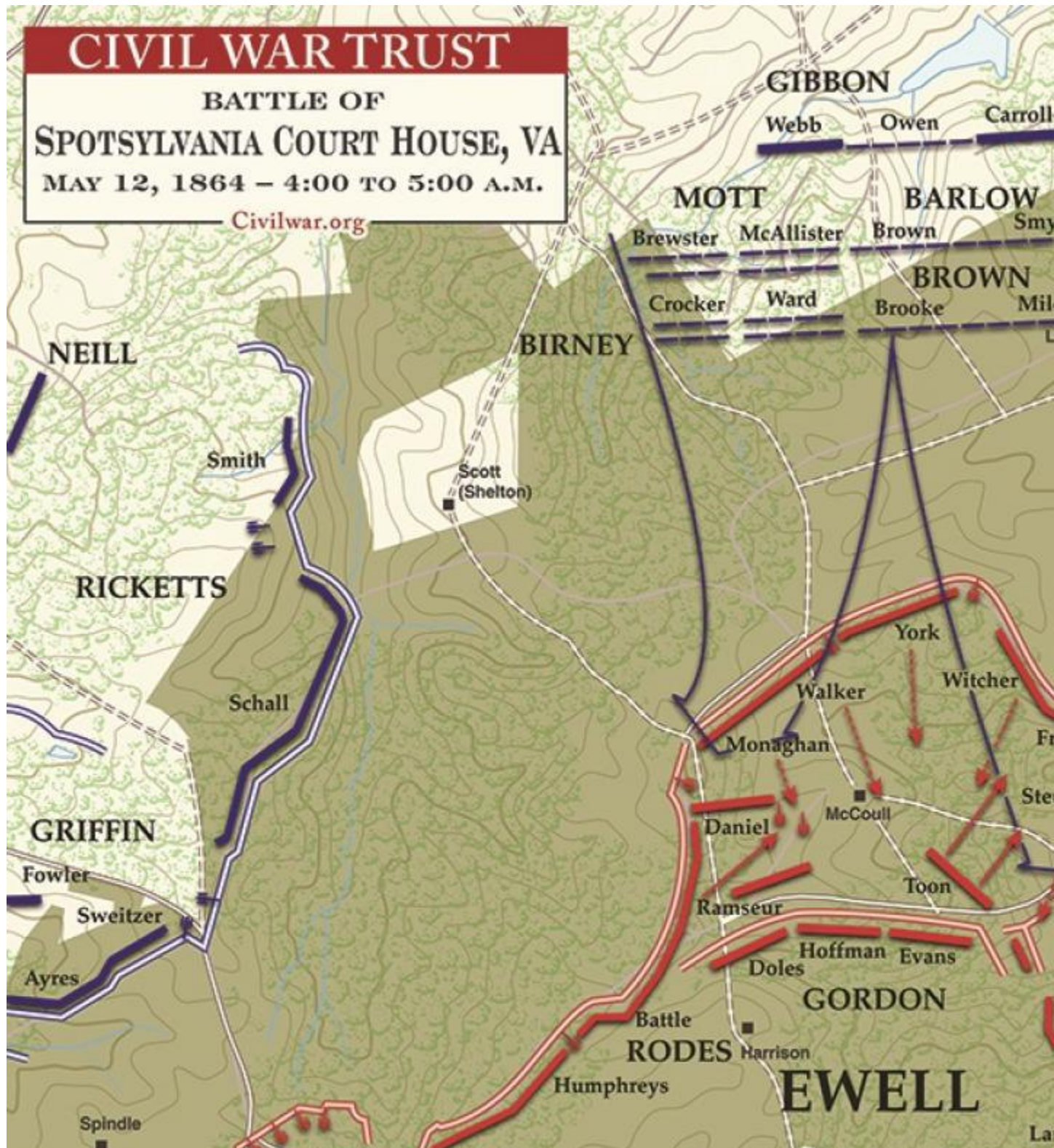
The protrusion, a mile across at its base, curved in a large arc that conferred a name on the position through undeniable resemblance: the Mule Shoe Salient.

Lee, a former engineer himself, became aware of the salient during an inspection of the line on May 9. However, rather than correct the flaw by repositioning his line, he deferred to the judgment of his de facto second-in-command, Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell, who oversaw the center of the overall Confederate position. The 47-year-old Second Corps commander was convinced he could hold the salient if supported by enough artillery. Smith was convinced, too. Even the artillerists themselves agreed: "The breastworks were built, we would be in place and, supported by infantry, absolutely impregnable against successful assault," one of them said.

Even after a near disaster along the line on May 10, when Col. Emory Upton attacked a protruding spot known as Dole's Salient, Lee let the Mule Shoe position stand.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER







## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Map of Spotsylvania Court House, May 12, 1864.  
Steve Stanley / Civil War Trust

Federal commander Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant recognized that the May 10 attack had ultimately failed because his forces had been unprepared to take advantage of Upton's surprising success. He decided to try again, and on May 11, began shifting Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock's II Corps to concentrate opposite the very tip of the Mule Shoe in preparation for a dawn attack.

Rain fell in torrents as the men marched, turning roads into quagmires and streams into raging rivers. Guides became lost as the Federals slogged into position. "The wind sobbed drearily over the meadows and through the trees, rain fell steadily, and the night was so dark men had to almost feel their way," wrote one Mainer.

"The movement was necessarily slow with frequent halts," another soldier recalled, "at which time the men, worn out by loss of sleep and the terrible nervous and physical strain they had endured during the past eight days, would drop down for a moment's rest, and be asleep almost as soon as they touched the ground."

Lee was acutely aware of the Federal movement, but he failed to understand its intent. He believed that, after a few days of stalemate, Grant had decided to give up the offensive and shift from his axis of advance — the Brock Road — over to the Fredericksburg Road, along which he would retreat. Yearning for the opportunity to take the offensive himself, Lee began preparations to pursue the fleeing Federals. To expedite this, he called on Ewell to "withdraw the artillery from the salient . . . to have it available for a countermove to the right." Moving these guns across muddy farm roads, Lee believed, would hamper their ability to link up with the rest of the Confederate army in a timely fashion. With a single stroke of his pen, Lee removed the 22 of the 30 cannons — whose presence was a prerequisite for holding the salient — from the Confederate center — the very point Grant was preparing to attack.

Compounding the problem, neither Lee nor Ewell bothered to tell the commander on the field — Maj. Gen. Edward "Allegheny" Johnson — that his division was losing its artillery support. Only when the complaints of subordinates reached his headquarters did Johnson become aware of the

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**





## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

---

dire situation Lee had placed his division in. Unconvinced that the Federals were retreating, Johnson seethed over the loss of his artillery and the slight against his chain of command. He went to Ewell in person to protest and to inform his superior that something was amiss to his front. Ewell relented and allowed the artillery to return, but it would take several hours before the guns could be rolled back into position.

In the meantime, Johnson ordered his brigades "to be on the alert, some brigades to be awake all night, and all to be up and in the trenches an hour or so before daylight." He expected trouble. And trouble was, indeed, coming.



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## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER



---

BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

The Bloody Angle. Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, Va.  
Buddy Secor

The night's rain had cooled the muggy May heat, and fog drifted up out of the bottomlands, forcing Hancock to delay his assault until visibility improved. When he finally sent the men forward, Hancock — worried about the desperate fight he knew lay ahead — lamented, "I know they will not come back! They will not come back!"

"Nobody knew exactly the position of the works or the nature of the ground, and so we had to take our chances, moving forward till we struck them," a Federal staff officer said. It took only minutes to reach the Confederate skirmish line, which, situated in a sunken farm lane resembling a deep trench, was mistaken for the main line. The Yankees gave out a "Huzzah!" as they stormed in. They quickly realized their mistake. Gazing through the gloom, "[W]e saw very plainly where we were at and we needed no orders, for the longer we were getting to them, the more ready they would be," said Stephen P. Chase of the 86th New York. Swiftly, the Federals swarmed out of the skirmish line and across the field toward the tip of the Mule Shoe.

"[T]hey came in seventeen lines, one line just behind the other, and we counted them," wrote Thomas Reed of the 9th Louisiana, "and some fellow said: 'Look out! boys! We will have blood for supper.'"

Johnson had anticipated a dawn attack, and officers had ordered the men to load their weapons and then stack their arms the night before. Normally, this would have been a wise move, but Mother Nature intervened, dumping an inordinate amount of rain from the heavens.

Rising in unison, the Confederate line took aim. Maj. Gen. James Walker noted how his Stonewall Brigade "leveled their trusty muskets deliberately . . . with a practiced aim which would have carried havoc" into the ranks of the advancing Federals. But when the command to fire came, "pop, pop, pop" rang out along the line, not "bang, bang, bang." Almost to a man, the guns failed to discharge because of wet powder.

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

The 26th Michigan and the 140th Pennsylvania came over the top, followed by scores of other Federal regiments. The attack became a free-for-all. Half-dressed Confederates tried to stand their ground as Yankees “poured in one irresistible mass upon them.” The Mule Shoe became a “boiling, bubbling and hissing caldron of death.”

The rebel artillery rolled back into the salient just as the Federal wave crested the works. “Most of this battalion reached the salient point just in time to be captured,” recalled artilleryman Thomas Carter. Only one of Carter’s four guns managed to unlimber and get into position, firing off a single round of canister, before it was overrun. “Don’t shoot my men,” Carter pleaded. While the Federals took Carter and his men prisoner, they could not haul away the guns; Confederate infantrymen shot the horses to thwart them.

The Federal wave opened a gap in the Confederate line at least a half-mile wide and a half-mile deep. Johnson fell prisoner, as did Brig. Gen. George “Maryland” Stuart and thousands of other butternut soldiers.

Despite the immediate and stunning Federal success, the attack force began to lose its cohesion, and reinforcements did not materialize to exploit the gap. The same weakness that had undercut the success of the May 10 attack seemed doomed to repeat.

Robert E. Lee — the man ultimately responsible for the initial flaw in the line and the man who’d weakened it further by withdrawing the artillery, and also the man who had woefully misread Federal intentions — arrived on the field with a monumental task before him. Somehow, he had to stem the flood of Federals into his center, rectify the weakness of his line and show leadership amidst chaos. He became the calm eye at the center of the hurricane.

The Mule Shoe, Lee now admitted, if somewhat belatedly, was untenable. He ordered his engineers to seal it off by laying out a new line one mile south of the tip of the salient. The survivors of Johnson’s division, already streaming to the rear, were rallied and set to work on construction.

Lee needed to buy time for the work to progress, and he bought that time with lives.





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Near the western base of the salient, the stout North Carolina brigade of Brig. Gen. Junius Daniel stemmed the Federal tide, although Daniel himself was mortally wounded in the effort. A few pieces of artillery wheeled around to provide backup. "[T]his combined fire of infantry and artillery was more than human flesh could stand and it was impossible for them to reach our lines," said Maj. Cyrus B. Watson of the 45th North Carolina.

On the eastern side of the salient, the Federals had cleared most of the Confederate resistance, although the North Carolina brigade of James Lane still held.

Between those two extremes, Lee had a reserve division commanded by Brig. Gen. John B. Gordon, which was already trying to provide a rallying point for some of the retreating Confederates. "[T]hey were very hard to rally," admitted an artillerist who had retreated with the infantrymen. "[M]any of them were still running and looked as if they had no idea of stopping at all."

Lee prepared to lead Gordon's men in a counterattack. "The General's countenance showed that he had despaired and was ready to die rather than see the defeat of his army," a Confederate soldier said. Gordon and his men, however, convinced their commander to turn back: His life was far too valuable.

Rather than attack the center of the Federal mass, Lee and Gordon dispatched units to the edges of the bulge. Working their way inward, brigades of Georgians, Virginians, North Carolinians, Mississippians, Alabamians and South Carolinians traded their lives for time. Foot by foot and yard by yard, the Confederates wrestled back their abandoned works. "[T]he enemy came forward in immense numbers and made the most desperate attempt to recover their lost ground," wrote Lt. Josiah Favill, a staff officer in the II Corps. "They seemed determined to gain back at any cost what had been lost, and the most severe close fighting of the war ensued."



**THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

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## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, Va.  
Buddy Secor

Butternut soldiers managed to recapture all but 400 yards of their original line, but it came at a high cost: In addition to Daniel, brigade commanders Stephen Ramseur, Abner Perrin, Samuel McGowan, Robert Johnston and Thomas Garrett all fell either killed or wounded. Thousands more Confederate infantrymen fell dead or wounded “[l]ike the debris in the track of a storm.”

Along the salient’s western face, where the line turned toward the south, both sides poured men into action. Federal reinforcements finally swept into the fray, using the protective confines of a swale that funneled men toward the very spot Confederate forces were also converging. “I have heard that blood-drenched bullet swept angle, called ‘Hell’s Half-acre,’” Robert Robertson added. Many called it “the slaughter-pen of Spotsylvania.” Most remembered it as the Bloody Angle — “a seething, bubbling, roaring hell of hate and murder,” said John Haley of the 17th Maine.

By 9:30 a.m., the area around the west angle encompassed perhaps 150 yards of the works, but those few yards witnessed some of the most hellacious hand-to-hand combat of the American Civil War. “The fighting was horrible,” one Mississippian said. “The breastworks were slippery with blood and rain, dead bodies lying underneath half trampled out of sight.”

The 16th Mississippi’s flag bearer, Sgt. Alexander Mixon, was shot while leading his regiment into the dark heart of the fray. Only wounded, he picked up his flag, staggered forward, but was then shot through the head. The flag remained standing at the very apex of the west angle. Union soldiers charged forward to capture the colors, but Mississippi and Alabama men counterattacked with equal ferocity.

“At every assault and every repulse new bodies fell on the heaps of the slain, and over the filled ditches the living fought on the corpses of the fallen,” said a New Jersey officer. “The wounded were covered by the killed, and expired under piles of their comrades’ bodies.”

With Federals on one side of the blood- and rain-soaked trench, and Confederates on the other side, the fighting took on an intimate nature. Men reached over the works and blasted their foes

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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at point-blank range. Bayonet-tipped muskets thrust through and over the works into soft flesh. A Federal, after seeing one of his officers gunned down from atop the works, hurled his musket like a spear at the Confederate who had fired the shot. "The force with which he threw it," said a witness, "drove the bayonet entirely through his chest, burying at least four inches of the muzzle of the gun in the breast of the Confederate, who uttered the most unearthly yell I ever heard from human lips, as he fell over backward with the gun sticking in him."

Wounded men fell into trenches that were filled with at least a foot of bloody, muddy water. Some, unable to lift themselves back up, drowned as other wounded and dead men fell upon them. Corpses were stacked like cordwood and used as makeshift works. One dead Union soldier absorbed an estimated "five thousand" minie balls — enough to turn his body to "sponge."

As Brig. Gen. Samuel McGowan's brigade charged toward the West Angle, bullets shattered the staff of the 1st South Carolina's flag. As the assault began to falter, color bearer Charlie

Whilden snatched up the fallen banner and wrapped himself in it, pushing forward through the knee-deep mud with his regiment and the rest of the brigade in tow. Wilden planted his Palmetto flag, and his comrades rallied around it.





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**THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**



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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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"Bayonet Charge at the Battle of Spottsylvania". Chromolithograph by Three De Thulstrup.  
Library of Congress

For every wave Grant sent in, Lee countered by shifting more men into the fight from other parts of the Confederate line. Grant's failure to put significant pressure on the entire Confederate line gave Lee the flexibility to shift troops to his embattled center. Federals kept arriving at the front, but officers had no place to pack them in. The resulting bottleneck left Federals sprawled from the outer edge of the works in a blue carpet that led all the way back across the assault field.

In an attempt to break the impasse, Union II Corps commander Hancock rolled some 30 guns into line along the Landrum farm lane — roughly 400 yards from the Bloody Angle — and started pounding friend and foe alike. He then ordered up other ordnance, 24-pound Coehorn mortars, intended to lob shells into and over the works. Unfortunately, the green cannon crew was firing the guns for the first time in anger. Many of their shells fell short, hitting their own men lying in front of the Angle. Hancock's idea was a failure.

Then Lt. Richard Metcalf ran two cannon up close to the Bloody Angle and began belching canister at nearly point-blank range. Mississippians flooded out of the works in an attempt to take the guns, but loads of double canister quickly dissuaded them. Still, Metcalf's section suffered a fearful toll in its advanced position. He lost all of his horses, and all but two of his men were killed or wounded. The guns, mired in mud, had to be abandoned. One had discharged nine rounds, the other 14.

Small-arms fire flew around the Angle so intensely that a 22-inch oak was "hacked through by the awful avalanche of bullets packing against it." The oak, located in the fourth traverse from the Angle, toppled onto members of the 1st South Carolina, injuring several of them. Musketry fire also mowed down an 18-inch red oak and an eight-inch hickory in the same traverse. In all, some three acres of woods were nearly destroyed. "The north side of the trees which stood in the rear of our works there was not a vestige of bark left," said Thomas T. Roche of the 16th Mississippi. "Every small branch had been cut away and the large limbs were hanging frayed, frazzled and twisted." It looked like an army of locusts had swarmed through, said another eyewitness. After the war, as a testament to the ferocity of the fighting, soldiers returned to the

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**



## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

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battlefield and retrieved the stump of the 22-inch oak. It eventually made its way to the Smithsonian Institution, where it remains today.

For the next 17 hours, the two sides settled into a routine of firing, then shifting units from the front line to the rear and back. Grant's men could not regain the momentum that had carried them so far earlier in the day. For Lee, the stalemate meant that his men could construct their new defensive line unmolested.

By 2:00 a.m. on May 13, Confederate troops were finally ordered to slip away from the front line, their Herculean task accomplished. The new line was ready.





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**THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**



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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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The Bloody Angle. Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, Va.  
Buddy Secor

By the time dawn lightened the drizzling sky, Federals were mounting a cautious pursuit. They crept forward through what was left of the tree line to their front and emerged into the open fields of Neil McCoull's and Edgar Harrison's farms. Ahead, they saw a frowning line of freshly churned dirt, abatis 100 yards deep and fortified batteries. Lee had not abandoned the field. All of the fighting they had done the day before was for naught.

In all, the fight for the Mule Shoe cost some 17,000 victims, most of whom carpeted the area around and within the salient. Lee lost about 8,000 men killed, wounded or missing, including 3,000 captured from Allegheny Johnson's division alone. Grant lost as many as 9,000. "The one exclamation of every man who looks on the spectacle," said one soldier, "is, 'God forbid that I should ever gaze on such a sight again.'"

And the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House was yet far from over.

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## William H. Carney: The first black soldier to earn the Medal of Honor

By: Thomas M. Hammond 5 days ago

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



**THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

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## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Army Sgt. William H. Carney (Army)

Of all the men who wore blue uniforms in the Civil War, none felt more keenly the purpose of his mission than the African American soldier. Every marching step, every swing of a pick and every round fired at Confederate enemies gave him a chance to strike a blow against slavery and prove himself equal to his white comrades.

U.S. Colored Troops were consistently good fighters, performing well in every engagement in which they fought. Even their enemies had to grudgingly admit that fact. One USCT member, William H. Carney, transcended good to become great, and was the [first black U.S. soldier to earn the Medal of Honor](#).

On February 17, 1863, at age 23, Carney heeded the call for African Americans to join a local militia unit, the Morgan Guards, with 45 other volunteers from his hometown of New Bedford, Mass. That unit would later become Company C of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment.

There was something unique about the new regiment, commanded by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw; it was an all-black unit with the exception of senior officers and a few senior non-commissioned sergeants. The 54th Massachusetts was created to prove that black men could be good soldiers.

Carney was born a slave on February 29, 1840, at Norfolk, Va. His father, also named William, escaped slavery, reaching freedom through the [underground railroad](#). William Sr. then worked hard to buy the freedom of the rest of his family. The free and reunited family settled in New Bedford in the second half of the 1850s. Young William learned to read and write, and by age 15 he was interested in becoming a minister.

He gave up his pursuit of the ministry, however, to join the Army. In an 1863 edition of the Abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, Carney stated: "Previous to the formation of colored troops, I had a strong inclination to prepare myself for the ministry; but when the country called for all persons, I could best serve my God serving my country and my oppressed brothers. The sequel in short — I enlisted for the war."

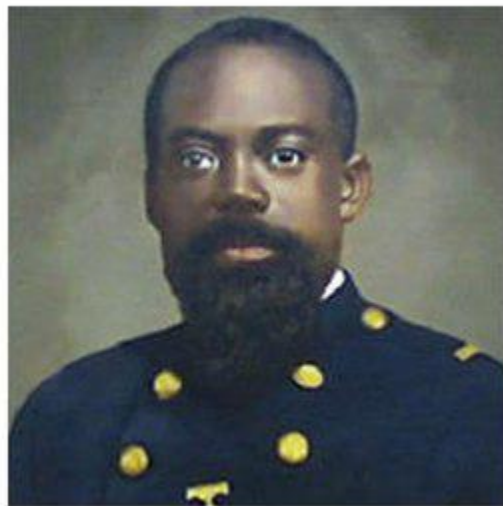


## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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That career change had momentous impact on Carney's life, as the 54th Massachusetts had a chance to prove its mettle in the July 18, 1863, Battle of Fort Wagner outside of Charleston, S.C. During the fight, the 54th made heroic attacks on the garrison, and Carney's bravery earned him a promotion to sergeant and the U.S. military's most prestigious award.

Fort Wagner on Morris Island guarded the entrance to the harbor of Charleston. Shaw and the 600 men of the 54th Massachusetts would spearhead the federal assault from a slim strip of sand on the east side of the fort, which faced the Atlantic Ocean.



William H. Carney's valor at Fort Wagner was honored on May 23, 1900, when he was awarded the Medal of Honor. That was almost 40 years after he so proudly served with the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. He was the first black soldier to receive the award. When asked about his heroic actions, he simply said, "I only did my duty." (Army)

The 54th burrowed into a sand dune about 1,000 yards from Fort Wagner. Behind it was the 6th Connecticut. Federal land and sea artillery bombarded the fort all day long. By nightfall, orders

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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were passed down and the 54th stood up, dressed ranks and attacked in two wings of five companies each.

As the men advanced they were immediately hit by a barrage of canister, musketry and shelling from the fort. A bullet struck the 54th's color sergeant, and as the wounded man faltered, Carney threw down his gun, seized the flag and moved to the front of the 54th's assaulting ranks. He soon found himself alone, on the fort's wall, with bodies of dead and wounded comrades all around him. He knelt down to gather himself for action, still firmly holding the flag while bullets and shell fragments peppered the sand around him.

Carney surveyed the battlefield and noticed that other Union regiments had attacked to his right, drawing away the focal point of the Rebel resistance. To his left he saw a large force of soldiers advancing down the ramparts of the fort. At first he thought they might be Union forces. Flashes of musketry soon doomed his hopes. The oncoming troops were Confederates.

He wound the colors around the flagpole, made his way to a low protective wall and moved along it to a ditch. When Carney had passed over the ditch on his way to the fort, it was dry. But now it was waist deep with water.

He seemed to be alone, surrounded by the wreckage of his regiment. Carney wanted to help the wounded, but enemy fire pinned him down. Crouching in the water, he figured his best chance was to plot a course back to Federal lines and make a break for it.

Carney rose to get a better look. It was a fateful move. As he later wrote: "The bullet I now carry in my body came whizzing like a mosquito, and I was shot. Not being prostrated by the shot, I continued my course, yet had not gone far before I was struck by a second shot."

Despite carrying two slugs in his body, Carney kept moving. Shortly after being hit the second time he saw another Union soldier coming in his direction. When they were within earshot, Carney hailed him, asking who he was. The Yank replied he was with the 100th New York, and asked if Carney was wounded. Carney said he had indeed been shot, and then flinched as a third shot grazed his arm.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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The 100th soldier came to his aid and helped him move farther to the rear. "Now then," said the New York soldier, "let me take the colors and carry them for you." Carney, though, would not consent to that, no matter how battered he was. He explained that he would not be willing to give the colors to anyone who was not a member of the 54th Massachusetts.

The pair struggled on. They did not get far before yet another bullet hit Carney, grazing him in the head. The two men finally managed to stumble to their own lines. Carney was taken to the rear and turned over to medical personnel. Throughout his ordeal, he held on to the colors.

Cheers greeted him when Carney finally staggered into the ranks of the 54th. Before collapsing, he said, "Boys, the old flag never touched the ground!"

During the battle, Company C of the 54th Massachusetts was able to, for a short time, capture a small section of Fort Wagner. The 54th suffered 272 killed, wounded or missing out of the 600 in the battle. Colonel Shaw was among the dead. Total Union casualties were 1,515 out of about 5,000 in the assault force, while the Confederates had 174 casualties out of about 1,800 defenders.

Although the Union forces were repulsed and had to lay siege to Fort Wagner, which the Confederates abandoned two months later, the 54th was widely hailed for its bravery. Like a pebble dropped into a puddle, the regiment's heroism had a ripple effect, spurring thousands of other black men to join the Union Army. Even Abraham Lincoln noted that the 54th's bravery at Wagner was a key development that helped secure final victory for the North.

"The bullet I now carry in my body came whizzing like a mosquito, and I was shot. Not being prostrated by the shot, I continued my course, yet had not gone far before I was struck by a second shot."

William Carney recovered from the four wounds he received at Fort Wagner, and word soon spread of his unselfish actions. When Carney's commanders heard about his conduct, he was promoted to sergeant. Later in the war, the 54th fought a rear-guard action covering a retreat at the Battle of Olustee, but Sergeant Carney could not participate in that engagement due to the lingering effects of his wounds. Because of his injuries he was discharged from the Army a little more than a year after the battle, on June 30, 1864.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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Carney subsequently married Susannah Williams, also of New Bedford, on October 11, 1865. They had one child who later became an accomplished music teacher of the New Bedford area.

In 1866 William Carney was appointed superintendent of streetlights for the city of New Bedford. He then went to California to seek his fortune but returned to New Bedford in 1869 and took a job as a letter carrier for the Postal Service. He worked at that job for 32 years before retiring. After retirement he was employed as a messenger at the Massachusetts State House, where in 1908 he would be fatally injured in an accident that trapped his leg in an elevator.

William H. Carney's valor at Fort Wagner was honored on May 23, 1900, when he was awarded the Medal of Honor. That was almost 40 years after he so proudly served with the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. He was the first black soldier to receive the award. When asked about his heroic actions, he simply said, "I only did my duty."

*This article [originally appeared](#) in the February 2012 issue of Civil War Times Magazine, a Military Times sister publication. For more information on Civil War Times Magazine and all of the HistoryNet publications, visit [HistoryNet.com](http://HistoryNet.com).*

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## Phoebe Couzins

Posted on 08/08/2017 by [Maggie MacLean](#), Civil War Women's Blog

### Phoebe Couzins: Pioneer Lawyer and Suffragist

In the 1870s, Phoebe Couzins (1842-1913) became the third or fourth female lawyer in the United States and a popular public speaker in support of women's rights. After her father died in 1887, the U.S. government appointed her as the first female in the U.S. Marshal Service, and she

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

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finished her father's term of service.

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**BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE**





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Early Years

Phoebe Wilson Couzins was born September 8, 1842 in St. Louis, Missouri to John E.D. Couzins and [Adaline Weston Couzins](#), both of whom were tireless public servants. John Couzins was the chief of police in St. Louis and acting provost marshal of Missouri during the Civil War. After the onset of the American Civil War, Adaline joined the St. Louis Ladies' Union Aid Society, which partnered with the Western Sanitary Commission in providing medical services and supplies to Union soldiers from Missouri. She worked as a nurse on the battlefield and in hospitals. At the Battle of Vicksburg (Mississippi) in July 1863, she received a wound to her knee.

### Blazing a Trail for Future Women Lawyers

In 1869, at age 27, Phoebe Couzins began her studies at Washington University Law School in St. Louis and earned a Bachelor of Laws Degree (LL.B.) in 1871, becoming the first female graduate of Washington University School of Law. She was also recognized as one of the first few women in the United States to graduate from law school. After passing the bar exam, she was licensed to practice in the federal courts, Missouri, Arkansas, Utah, and Kansas.

### A Career in Women's Rights

Phoebe Couzins had discovered the philosophy of the women's rights movement through connections she made during the Civil War. By 1869 both Phoebe and her mother had joined the St. Louis Woman Suffrage Association, and Phoebe served as a delegate to the American Equal Rights Association convention held in St. Louis in October 1869.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER



Phoebe Cousins' Bachelor

## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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of Laws Degree  
From Washington University Law School  
St. Louis, Missouri

After graduating from Washington University Law School in 1871 and establishing a legal practice in St. Louis, Couzins began writing articles for *The Revolution*, a women's rights paper published by nationally known feminists [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](#) and Susan B. Anthony.

Phoebe Couzins practiced law for barely two months before devoting herself to the women's suffrage movement, fighting for American women's right to vote. She began traveling across the United States giving speeches in favor of women's rights. She became a powerful and popular public speaker. Described as a riveting orator, Couzins captivated audiences of 3,000 or more and became particularly well-known in the West. She stood beside [Susan B. Anthony](#) as she presented her famous speech - 'Declaration of Rights of Women of the United States,' at the country's centennial celebration in Philadelphia in July 1876.

### **First Woman United States Marshal**

In 1884, President Chester Arthur appointed Phoebe's father, John E.D. Couzins, U.S. Marshal of the Eastern District of Missouri. Created by the Judiciary Act of 1789 during the presidency of George Washington, the United States Marshals Service (USMS) is a federal law enforcement agency. It is the enforcement arm of the federal courts and the primary agency for fugitive situations, responsible for prisoner transport, and the protection of officers of the court.

Phoebe began working as one of her father's deputies in 1884. When John Couzins died September 1, 1887, President Cleveland named Couzins interim marshal, making her the country's first female U.S. Marshal. The job did not last, however - after only two months she was replaced by a man. Couzins then moved to Washington, DC, where she made a modest living as a writer.

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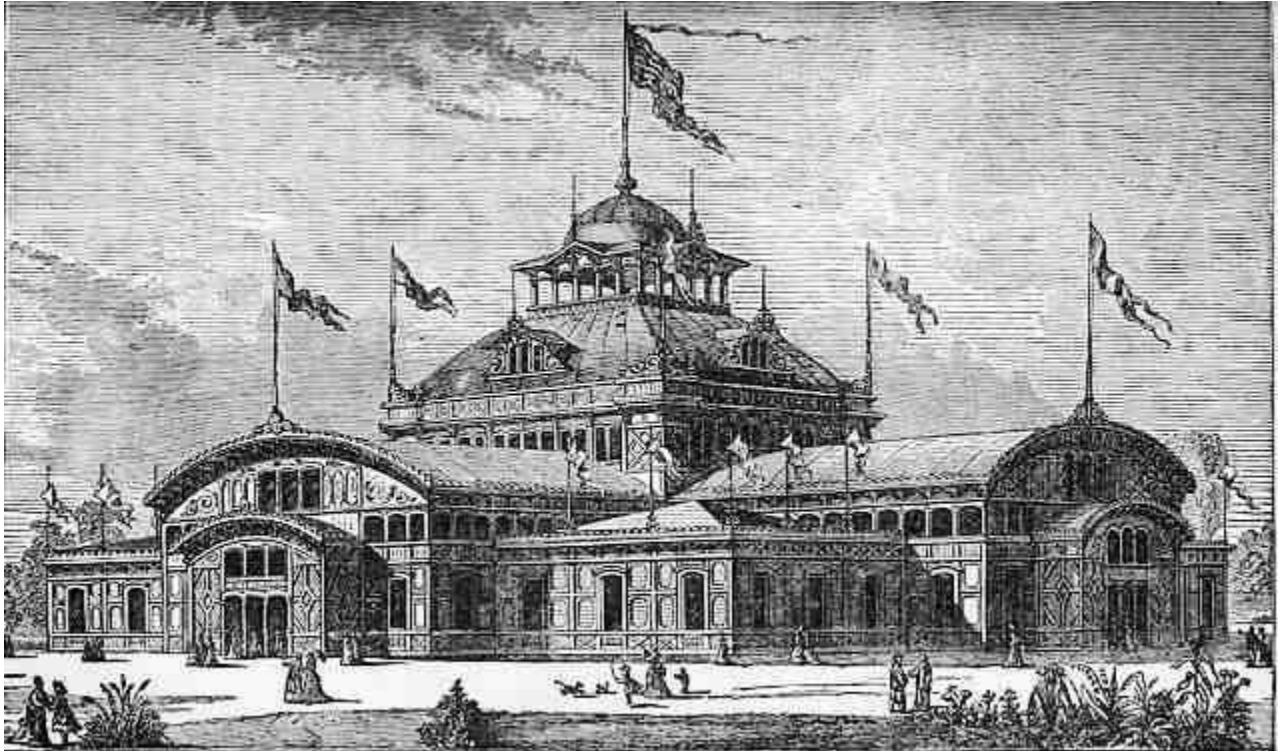
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## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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WOMEN'S PAVILION, INTERNATIONAL CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

Women's Pavilion at the 1876 International Centennial Exhibition  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### Chicago World's Fair

In 1890, Couzins was appointed a Missouri representative on the Board of Lady Managers for the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, and she was elected secretary of the board - a paid position she desperately needed. However, the group's executive committee did not particularly like Couzins; they disapproved of her outspoken and persistent nature. A Chicago Tribune article reported of her tenacity toward the men on the Committee:

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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If Col. Couzins could almost scare them to death by her apparition on their threshold, what will become of them if she once gets her clutches on a seat in their midst and proceeds to run things in her wild St. Louis way?

As time went on, Couzins attempted to dominate the meetings. With help from the men, the Lady Managers fired Couzins and locked her out of the building. She sued for reinstatement but lost.

### Turned on the Women's Rights Movement

As noted, Phoebe's confrontational style was not always popular. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) merged in 1890, and Phoebe was outspoken in her support of the NWSA leadership. This antagonized women in both organizations, locally and nationwide.

After years of fighting, Couzins became bitter and turned on the movement she had so ardently supported for most of her life. In 1897, she renounced her support for women's rights. The nation's newspapers and those who believed women did not deserve the right to vote were delighted with this turn of events, and she received more publicity than ever before.

She spent the next twenty years turning her gift for oratory toward renouncing her suffrage beliefs. Sadly, her lecturing career dwindled and a writing career never materialized. As a woman of working class origins, Phoebe Couzins had neither the money nor contacts to develop a law practice. By the age of fifty-one, she was destitute, and her health had begun to fail.

### Late Years

Hard up for money by the late 1890s, Phoebe Couzins took a job as a national lecturer for the United Brewers Association and actively protested prohibition in exchange for funds. As a lobbyist for the Brewers, Couzins spoke out against the temperance movement's determination to prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol. Her actions further alienated her acquaintances in the women's suffrage movement as temperance was a favorite cause of many women's rights activists.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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Couzins lost her job with the Brewers Association in 1908. She appealed to the federal government for a job, pleaded with the Brewers Association for financial aid, and solicited friends for help. At the age of sixty-six, Couzins was living in poverty with few friends, little support, and chronic arthritis pain. Penniless, she returned to St. Louis.

Phoebe Couzins died December 6, 1913 in St. Louis with her brother and a few close companions at her bedside. A friend she knew from childhood paid for her burial in Bellefontaine Cemetery, and she was interred with her U.S. Marshal badge pinned to her chest as she had requested.

Couzins' grave remained unmarked until 1950, when the Women's Bar Association of St. Louis paid to erect a headstone in honor of her achievements on behalf of the women lawyers who were inspired by her.

In 2000 Susan Frelich Appleton, J.D. (Juris Doctor of Law), was installed as the first Lemma Barkeloo and Phoebe Couzins Professor of Law at the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, Missouri.

### SOURCES

[Wikipedia: Phoebe Couzins](#)

[Phoebe Couzins: Blazing the Way for Women](#)

[Historic Missourians: Phoebe Couzins \(1842-1913\)](#)

## 200th birthday of Frederick Douglass celebrated by historians and other fans in Baltimore

By [Jacques Kelly](#) The Baltimore Sun 2/11/18

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BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

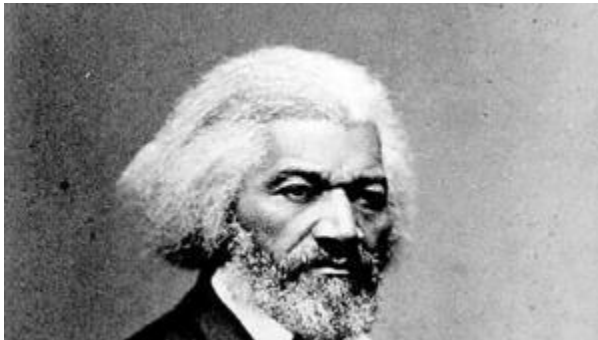
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The fame and esteem of orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass was so pervasive during his life, he became the most photographed individual in the 19th century.

“He sat for photographers more than Lincoln or Grant,” [Harvard University](#) professor and historian John Stauffer said at an event at the Reginald Lewis Museum marking the 200th anniversary of Douglass’ birth.

More than 500 people attended a series of celebratory events at the East Pratt Street institution to hear historians discuss the life of the man born into slavery on Maryland’s Eastern Shore who spent his youth in Fells Point. Douglass escaped slavery and later resided in Rochester, N.Y. and in the Anacostia section of Washington, D.C. He became a national leader in the abolitionist movement and became known for his soaring oratory and persuasive and insightful essays against slavery.

Professor Stauffer, a professor of English and of African and African-American studies, described Douglass as the “pre-eminent self-made man in American history who starts life as a slave and becomes a household name in the late 1840s.... As a public speaker, he was a rock star. People would travel hundreds of miles to hear him.”



Stauffer placed Douglass’ birth and origins in perspective. He said that if Douglass had a privilege, it was that he was born in Maryland and not in the deep South that he characterized as totalitarian and governed by white supremacists.

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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He quoted Douglass, "Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity."

The historian said Douglass learned to read while living as a slave in the Hugh Auld household in Fells Point and took cookies from his owners' kitchen to get other neighborhood children to help him with his spelling and vocabulary. "He would spell words in chalk on the streets of Baltimore," said Stauffer, who also described Baltimore "as perhaps the leading black metropolis of the 1830s."



Douglass also became interested in oratory while in Baltimore and memorized pages from the King James Bible to help improve his speaking skills. He also had a copy of *The Columbian Orator*, a 1797 publication widely studied by students of elocution and public speaking.

Douglass married a Denton woman, Anna Murray, a free black woman who helped him financially to flee slavery and get to New Bedford, Mass. where he became an in-demand speaker.

"He was the first former slave to speak for the American Abolitionist Society," said Stauffer, who said his audiences received Douglass as a "patriot of the human race." One woman, he said, wrote of Douglass oratory: "He was majestic in his wrath."

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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Frederick Douglass is portrayed by Michael E. Crutcher, Sr., pictured, from Kentucky. The 200th Anniversary Celebration of Frederick Douglass Day at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum includes history, lectures and children' activities to mark the birth of one of the country's first, and greatest, civil rights crusaders.

(Algerina Perna / Baltimore Sun)

He described Douglass as a savvy businessman who was “immensely shrewd as an innovator and critic,” and became a generous philanthropist in his later years in Anacostia.

“He realized the power of photography, too,” said Stauffer, who noted that Americans of the 1850s believed that photographs did not lie. Photographs helped spread Douglass’ renown and make him a household name.

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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Stauffer, author of a 2015 book, "Picturing Frederick Douglass," identified Douglass seated in a place of honor in a photograph outside the U.S. Capitol as Abraham Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address in March 1865. As he projected an enlarged copy of the photo on a screen at the museum, he pointed out another figure in a gallery overlooking the president. Stauffer identified that figure as Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth.

Stauffer ended his remarks by telling a story of a young man who sought Douglass' advice on a career choice. He replied in three words, "Agitate. Agitate. Agitate."

As part of the museum celebration, living historian Michael Crutcher, dressed as Douglass, did re-enactments of his speeches throughout the afternoon to a standing-room-only crowd.

Lawrence Jackson, a Johns Hopkins University professor, also spoke and traced Douglass' early life at Wye House Plantation near Easton in Talbot County, as well as the time he spent in Baltimore as a slave and young companion to Thomas Auld.

He described numerous African-Americans who were free people of color and lived in homes built in alleyways behind the main residences along Broadway, Ann, Caroline and Wolfe streets.

"The alleys were the boulevards of black life," said Lawrence. "Blacks lived basically out of sight. And it was in those spots where you had black worship and where you would ultimately have black revolt."

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## BALTIMORE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE