



# HARDSCRABBLE

Civil War Round Table of the Mid-Ohio Valley Newsletter

May 2021 – Vol 10

## Notes from Nancy Arthur

Our upcoming May presentation will feature Eric Wittenberg, author of a number of books on the American Civil War; Mr. Wittenberg has been here before to present to us.

One Continuous Fight – The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, July 4 – 14, 1863 is co-written with J. David Petruzzi and Michael F. Nugent.

After Gettysburg, Lee was on the run and much discussion has been had and volumes written over Meade letting him go. But it doesn’t seem as if he did. Both armies were beaten down, suffering heavy losses and many injuries. In spite of that, over the next ten days, nearly two dozen skirmishes and some major fighting took place in Monterey Pass, Hagerstown, Williamsport and more.

It’s an interesting read and I’m just getting into it. Tune in for our May program to hear Eric himself present his viewpoint on this journey of the two armies. We were to have taken a bus ride along some of this route but the pandemic stepped in the way ...maybe someday?

And speaking of bus trips: watch for updates on the November 4 day Southern journey to many interesting places, including Charleston, SC, a plantation (to be announced), Cowpens Battlefield, and some surprises.

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An article about specifically Libby Custer, as in Mrs. George, and generally about war widows, tells me Libby wrote three memoirs of her life with the general. Libby lived 57 years after George’s death and always wore her widow’s garb. The first written was Boots and Saddles, describing their life in the Dakota Territory. Libby wrote in glowing terms of the general, leading critics of Custer to say she “smoothed the edges off a prickly subject”.

Other war widows were Sally Pickett, Mary Anna Jackson, and others.

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Lincoln's Informer – Charles A. Dana and the Inside Story of the Union War by Carl J. Guarneri, tells us about Dana and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and the war time relationship they built. Stanton came to trust the managing editor of the New York Tribune as he sent him to watch Grant in the western fields of battle. “Report to me every day on what you see” were the instructions Dana was given. This started during the Vicksburg campaign, when rumors were rampant of Grant's sometimes public drunkenness.

What he saw and reported to Lincoln gave reason for Lincoln to trust Grant as the war moved on. Dana reported honestly as he infiltrated the camps with Grant.

I'm looking forward to finding this volume in a library soon.

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Tell us what you are reading or what topics you would like to learn about in more detail. And happy reading

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[New Podcast](#)

# **New Podcast “Seizing Freedom” Brings Black Americans’ Civil War Stories To Life**

by [Detroit Today](#) | Feb. 4, 2021



In recent months, the issue of social justice and [its connection to systemic racism and oppression](#) have led to significant shifts in our collective thinking about the ways white supremacy persists in so many aspects of American life. These important conversations have been long in the making. In addition to having frank discussions about biased policies and uprooting unconscious racism, this moment is also bringing to light the importance of narrative equity and having the kind of balance in storytelling that make audiences feel more connected to the media they consume.

*“Freedom isn’t something that’s given to African Americans. They have to seize it during the Civil War. And once they gain legal freedom, they have to work to make it real.” - -Dr. Kidada Williams, Wayne State University*

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Stories by Bill Teegarden

**March 14, 2021**

By the time most of you will read this it will be March 15, which is too important a day to ignore. As the man who taught me to use a chainsaw said, it is immortalized by Shakespeare's famous warning: "Cedar! Beware the adze of March!"

He put it that way because the importance of March 15 is, of course, that it is the day in 1820 that Maine, the Pine Tree State, joined the Union.

Maine statehood had national repercussions. The inhabitants of this northern part of Massachusetts had asked for statehood in 1819, but their petition was stopped dead by southerners who refused to permit a free state—one that did not permit slavery—to enter the Union without a corresponding "slave state." The explosive growth of the northern states had already given free states control of the House of Representatives, but the South held its own in the Senate, where each state got two votes. The admission of Maine would give the North the advantage, and southerners insisted that Maine's admission be balanced with the admission of a southern slave state, lest those opposed to slavery use their power in the federal government to restrict enslavement in the South.

They demanded the admission of Missouri to counteract Maine's two "free" Senate votes.

But this "Missouri Compromise" infuriated northerners, especially those who lived in Maine. They swamped Congress with petitions against admitting Missouri as a slave state, resenting that slave owners in the Senate could hold the state of Maine hostage until they got their way. Tempers rose high enough that Thomas Jefferson wrote to Massachusetts—and later Maine—Senator John Holmes that he had for a long time been content with the direction of the country, but that the Missouri question "like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union It is hushed indeed for the moment, but this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence."

Congress passed the Missouri Compromise, but Jefferson was right to see it as nothing more than a reprieve.

The petition drive that had begun as an effort to keep the admission of Maine from being tied to the admission of Missouri continued as a movement to get Congress to whittle away at slavery where it could—by, for example, outlawing slave sales in the nation's capital—and would become a key point of friction between the North and the South.

There was also another powerful way in which the conditions of the state's entry into the Union would affect American history. Mainers were angry that their statehood had been tied to the demands of far distant slave owners, and that anger worked its way into the state's popular culture. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 meant that Maine men, who grew up steeped in that anger, could spread west.

And so they did.

In 1837, Elijah P. Lovejoy, who had moved to Alton, Illinois, from Albion, Maine, to begin a newspaper dedicated to the abolition of human enslavement, was murdered by a pro-slavery mob, who threw his printing press into the Mississippi River.

Elijah Lovejoy's younger brother, Owen, had also moved west from Maine. Owen saw Elijah shot and swore his allegiance to the cause of abolition. "I shall never forsake the cause that has been sprinkled with my brother's blood," he declared. He turned to politics, and in 1854, he was elected to the Illinois state legislature. His increasing prominence brought him political friends, including an up-and-coming lawyer who had arrived in Illinois from Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln.

Lovejoy and Lincoln were also friends with another Maine man gone to Illinois. Elihu Washburne had been born in Livermore, Maine, in 1816, when Maine was still part of Massachusetts. He was one of seven brothers, and one by one, his brothers had all left home, most of them to move west. Israel Washburn, Jr., the oldest, stayed in Maine, but Cadwallader moved to Wisconsin, and William Drew would follow, going to Minnesota. (Elihu was the only brother who spelled his last name with an e).

Israel and Elihu were both serving in Congress in 1854 when Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act overturning the Missouri Compromise and permitting the spread of slavery to the West. Furious, Israel called a

meeting of 30 congressmen in May to figure out how they could come together to stand against the Slave Power that had commandeered the government to spread the South's system of human enslavement. They met in the rooms of Representative Edward Dickinson, of Massachusetts-- whose talented daughter Emily was already writing poems-- and while they came to the meeting from all different political parties, they left with one sole principle: to stop the Slave Power that was turning the government into an oligarchy.

The men scattered for the summer back to their homes across the North, sharing their conviction that a new party must rise to stand against the Slave Power. In the fall, those calling themselves "anti-Nebraska" candidates were sweeping into office—Cadwallader Washburn would be elected from Wisconsin in 1854 and Owen Lovejoy from Illinois in 1856—and they would, indeed, create a new political party: the Republicans. The new party took deep root in Maine, flipping the state from Democratic to Republican in 1856, the first time it fielded a presidential candidate.

In 1859, Abraham Lincoln would articulate an ideology for the party, defining it as the party of ordinary Americans standing together against the oligarchs of slavery, and when he ran for president in 1860, he knew it was imperative that he get the momentum of Maine men on his side. In those days Maine voted for state and local offices in September, rather than November, so a party's win in Maine could start a wave. "As Maine goes, so goes the nation," the saying went.

So Lincoln turned to Hannibal Hamlin, who represented Maine in the Senate (and whose father had built the house in which the Washburns grew up). Lincoln won 62% of the vote in Maine in 1860, taking all 8 of the state's electoral votes, and went on to win the election. When he arrived in Washington quietly in late February to take office the following March, Elihu Washburne was at the railroad station to greet him.

I was not a great student in college. I liked learning, but not on someone else's timetable. It was this story that woke me up and made me a scholar. I found it fascinating that a group of ordinary people from country towns who shared a fear that they were losing their democracy could figure out how to work together to reclaim it.

Happy Birthday, Maine.



# Decades Before the Civil War, Black Activists Organized for Racial Equality

**Though they were just a small percentage of the state’s population, African Americans petitioned the state of Ohio to repeal racist laws**

By [Kate Masur](#)

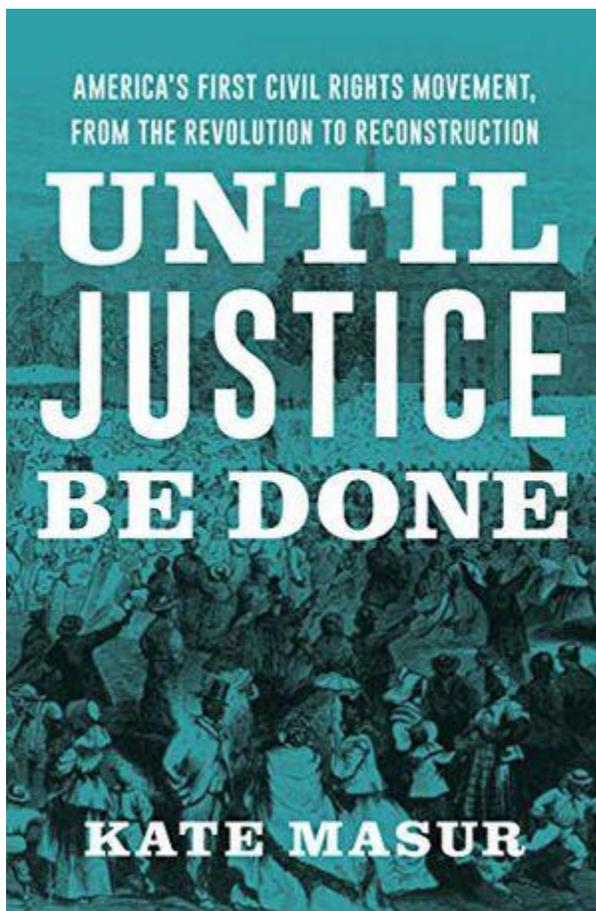
SMITHSONIANMAG.COM

MARCH 24, 2021

In summer 1836, white residents of Cincinnati rioted, not for the first time, against their black neighbors. On this occasion, the Ohioans rallied first against the city’s newly established abolitionist newspaper, *The Philanthropist*, destroying editor James Birney’s printing press and throwing the pieces into the Ohio River. From there they rampaged through black neighborhoods, attacking businesses and looting private homes.

Ohio was a free state, but African Americans living there were subject not only to periodic white lawlessness but also to explicitly racist laws. The so-called “black laws,” which the state legislature began passing in 1804, required black residents to register with county officials (which included showing proof that they were legally free, getting landowners to post bonds on their behalf, and paying a fee), forbade African Americans from testifying in court cases involving whites, and reserved public education for white children only. Separately, the state constitution declared that only white men were entitled to vote.

Despite such strictures, Ohio and other destinations north of the Ohio River looked promising to free and enslaved black people hoping to leave the states where slavery was legal. According to U.S. Census figures, the black population of Ohio grew steadily in the first half of the 19th century, climbing from 9,568 to 17,342 between 1830 and 1840, for example. While this population only amounted to one percent of the state's total population, the activism of black Ohioans, both in its success and failures, offer a window into this country's first civil rights movement.



On arriving in southern towns and hamlets, black Ohioans immediately began building institutions and working to educate their children. The state's first independent Black church was founded in Cincinnati in 1815; by 1833, the state was home to more than 20 AME churches with a total membership of around 700 people. In 1834, African Americans in Chillicothe formed the Chillicothe Colored Anti-Slavery Society and announced it in a local newspaper. Black Ohioans were active in

Freemasonry and organized myriad self-help societies. Wherever they could, Black men and women helped fugitives from slavery make their way to safety, sometimes risking their own lives in the process.

Still, direct protest against racist state laws was risky. As a new phase of anti-slavery organizing began in the 1830s, white abolitionist lecturers often faced violent mobs seeking to silence them and run them out of town. For black Ohioans, the danger was even greater. Vulnerable to being fired from work, mobbed and driven off their own properties, African Americans' precarity was heightened by the fact that the law prohibited them from testifying in court cases involving whites.

Those circumstances make it all the more remarkable that in 1837, more than three decades after statehood, African Americans mobilized to petition the general assembly to repeal the black laws and support schools for their children. The movement began in Cleveland.

Located on the banks of Lake Erie, the city had begun to grow in earnest when the Ohio and Erie Canal, completed in 1832, connected the Great Lakes to the state's interior. Cleveland was newer and smaller than Cincinnati, but it was also a safer place for African Americans to begin organizing a statewide movement. One of the leading figures in Cleveland's tiny Black community was John Malvin, a Virginia native who had migrated to Ohio in 1827. Starting around 1832, he began the work of establishing private schools for the city's black children. Malvin was an ordained Baptist minister who sometimes preached in the city's white-led First Baptist Church, where he waged a struggle for racially equal seating.

In January 1837, Malvin and other Cleveland black activists met to consider "the expediency of petitioning" the general assembly for repeal of the black laws. Petitioning government for redress had long been considered a right available to all people, not just to "citizens" or those who were white or male. The Cleveland group's efforts were part of a national trend in which northern black activists and their white allies turned to petitioning to demand changes that existing majorities in state legislatures, and in Congress, would likely never deliver if left to their own devices. Two years earlier, black activists from across the nation had met in Philadelphia and had recommended, among other things, that free people of color petition

Congress and their state legislatures “to be admitted to the rights and privileges of American citizens.”

Malvin urged the group in Cleveland to organize “irrespective of any of the great movements of the day,” suggesting that he and his colleagues saw their efforts as separate from those of white abolitionists. Having decided to move ahead with the petition, the group arrived at a longer-term strategy. They issued a call for a statewide meeting in Columbus that summer, and they decided to hire an agent to travel the state, soliciting signatures for the petition and gathering facts about African American life in Ohio. They appointed as their agent one of their number, Molliston Madison Clark, who had attended college in Pennsylvania and was then teaching in Cleveland and studying theology at Oberlin.

Clark’s tour through Ohio evidently helped generate petitions to the legislative session already underway in Columbus, and the results were modestly encouraging. The Ohio Senate formally received a petition from black residents of Hamilton County (home of Cincinnati) but tabled it, taking no further action. In the Ohio House, legislators received a repeal petition from black residents of Columbus and referred it to the judiciary committee, alongside numerous similar petitions from white residents.

The committee returned a report defending the black laws in terms that would have been familiar to anyone following the issue at the time. It argued that the free black population itself was a problem, that the black laws were not particularly harsh, and that abolitionists were a threat to public order. In a display that suggests that the committee didn’t even regard African American petitioners as legitimate, the report excluded black signatories from its tally of the number of petitions it had received. Still, some observers viewed these developments as a victory for those seeking repeal of the black laws. The *Cleveland Journal* commented that the petitions had been “received more favorably than was anticipated,” and the editors of *The Colored American* in New York reprinted the *Journal*’s story and praised black Ohioans for their “moral and intellectual strength.”

That summer, black Ohioans met in what is currently believed to be their first statewide convention, part of a broader movement now known as the Colored Conventions Movement and documented by the [Colored Conventions Project](#). As communities of free black people developed, particularly in the free states and the upper south, local leaders—often teachers, writers, ministers or skilled craftsmen—sought to connect and work with people who lived further away. Drawing on networks of friendship and tracing routes of migration, African Americans planned and held meetings where they discussed matters ranging from community well-being to religious faith to party politics.

At the 1837 Ohio convention, fighting the black laws was an important agenda item. Delegates created a constitution for a “school fund institution of the colored people” designed to receive funds from private donors and, they hoped, from the state government. They also resolved to continue petitioning for repeal of the state’s black laws. To facilitate action, the convention published two forms that could be cut out of the newspaper and pasted onto larger pages that black Ohioans could sign.

The twin petition forms asked for funding for black schools and to repeal the state’s black laws—more specifically the discriminatory law that “prevent[s] us from claiming our lawful rights when any wrong is practiced upon us,” and the racist residency law drew “a distinction” between black and white persons that was “not found in justice and equality.”

To reinforce their claims to financial solvency and independence—to insist that black Ohioans as a group they did not threaten the welfare of the state and its white population—the petition informed the legislature that they collectively owned property worth \$500,000 and paid state and local taxes amounting to \$2,500. The petition concluded with the hope that the legislature would see fit to recognize the taxpayer status of black Ohioans by appropriating public funds for their use. As “men[,] christians and republicans,” the petitioners promised to continue exercising their “inalienable right to freely expressing our opinions . . . till justice be done.”

Black Ohioans likely knew, when they pledged to continue raising their voices, that they could not take for granted that their petitions would even be received, much less acted upon. In the U.S. Congress, slaveholders and their allies were challenging the longstanding idea that petitioning was open to all people, regardless of status.

Faced with an onslaught of abolitionist petitions, southerners in Congress demanded that slavery-related petitions be rejected without printing them or referring them to committee, which were the conventional ways that legislative bodies dealt with petitions. Anti-abolitionist legislators rejected petitions from enslaved people and from women with the argument that petitioning was only for voters or those who were said to have a direct political stake in the community. The First Amendment to the US Constitution promised the “right of the people” to petition the government, but Congress disregarded it.

Legislators in the Pennsylvania statehouse in summer 1837 also debated whether African Americans residing in the state were entitled to have their petitions received. The claim that race or sex could preclude a person from petitioning contradicted decades of practice; it was another way of trying to silence African Americans and women of all kinds who wanted a voice in public life, but for the most part did not have the right to vote.

As a new Ohio legislative session began in December 1837, white abolitionists and black activists felt hopeful. A correspondent in Columbus informed *The Philanthropist* that the movement to repeal the black laws appealed not just to abolitionists but to “all lovers of justice” in the general assembly. The general assembly was inundated with abolitionist petitions that touched on all manner of concerns. In addition to calling on the legislature to repeal the black laws, petitioners also asked for protection against violent mobs, the end of race-based disenfranchisement, and new protections for alleged fugitive slaves. In the state senate, Leicester King, who was president of the white-led Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, introduced many such petitions, including one “from sundry colored inhabitants,” calling for repeal of “all laws which impose disabilities upon them on account of their color.”

Having served as chair of the special committee in charge of reviewing petitions related to the repeal of the black laws, King delivered the committee’s findings in a report on March 3, 1838. A remarkable document that resonates with today’s debates about race, rights and reparations, the report lambasted those who claimed that because Ohio had never legalized slavery, its white residents were exempt “from all moral obligation to the colored race.” Against those who insisted that the state’s founders had envisioned Ohio as a white republic, King argued that racially discriminatory laws violated both the spirit and the letter of the state

constitution. He pointed out that Ohio lagged behind the many other states where African Americans already enjoyed all the “rights and privileges of citizens.”

But it was the rights of persons, rather than citizenship, that King emphasized when he called for repeal of the black laws. He described the injustice of the existing legal order, pointing out that Ohio’s African Americans were “deprived of the protection of law, and denied the means of obtaining justice in our courts, or a redress for ‘injuries done in their lands, goods, and persons,’ contrary to the provisions of the constitution, declaring they should be secured to ‘every person.’” He insisted that laws barring black children from public schools violated the state constitution and argued that the state must pass a law guaranteeing jury trials for persons arrested as fugitive slaves.

The report offered several concrete proposals, including repeal of the racist testimony law, affirmation of the state constitution’s promises of universal individual rights, and a pledge that, “in the administration of justice, and in the protection of these natural and constitutional rights, the same rules and principles of law should be extended to all persons, irrespective of color, rank or condition.”

King’s report was unlike any other that Ohio’s general assembly had produced, a grand departure from the usual warnings about disruptive black migrants. Yet the session was ending, and there was no time—and probably little inclination among legislators—to press the Senate to act. In the House, a committee again responded to repeal petitions with a report insisting that the black laws must remain, but a fulsome minority report condemned the laws and called for their repeal. The legislature ordered publication of a thousand copies of King’s report, making it widely available to the public.

Ohio abolitionists were thrilled. Gathering in May, the white-led Ohio Anti-Slavery Society praised King, state senator Benjamin Wade, who had advocated for the rights of black petitioners, and U.S. senator Thomas Morris for “the fearless manner in which they have vindicated the rights of *all* men, and for the eloquence and fixed determination with which they have asserted and maintained the rights of petition.”

Special praise was reserved for King's report, which had "excited profound interest in the Assembly." "The tide of injustice, we rejoice to believe, is at length arrested," the society crowed. "The legislature begins to feel the pressure of a public opinion, to which it has not been accustomed; hereafter, whatsoever changes may be made in our policy towards the colored people will, no doubt, be dictated and regulated by a regard to the sacred doctrine of equal rights, and the fundamental principles of civil liberty."

Spring of 1838 was a thrilling moment for the black and white Ohioans who sought repeal of the state's racist laws, but the fight was a long one. Eleven years later, in winter 1849, the state legislature finally repealed most of the black laws—the result of years of pressure and lobbying, as well as instability in the two-party system that had defined state and national politics since the 1830s. Even then, however, the state constitution's mandate that only white men could vote remained; it would not be nullified until the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1870.

Ohio politics was a proving ground for men who went on to become leaders on the national stage. Several politicians who came of age during the struggle against the Ohio black laws became Republican leaders in Congress and in presidential administrations of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras. They brought into that period of crisis their commitment to racial equality before the law. Among them were Salmon Chase, Lincoln's secretary of treasury and later chief justice of the United States, and John Bingham, leading author of Section 1 of the 14th Amendment, which declared that no state could deny to any citizen the "privileges or immunities" of citizenship, or deny any person "due process of law" or "equal protection of the laws."

John Malvin, for his part, remained a leader in Cleveland's black community, becoming chair of the Cleveland Colored Republican Club in 1870. In his autobiography, published in 1879 when he was 84 years old, Malvin declared that racial discrimination was a malignant human invitation that violated the laws of God and nature. Such distinctions, he wrote hopefully, "cannot be lasting, and must sooner or later succumb to the dictates of reason and humanity."

*Excerpted from UNTIL JUSTICE BE DONE: America's First Civil Rights Movement, from the Revolution to Reconstruction. Copyright (c) 2021 by Kate Masur. Used with permission of the publisher, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.*

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## Virtual History Trivia 2021

This year's online trivia contest is dedicated to Charlie Pankenier, a beloved docent and historian, and KTM&HC's Quizmaster. This year's trivia questions are about Ridgefield and Connecticut's involvement in the American Civil War, one of Charlie's particular interests. Trivia questions will be sent out daily from April 1st to April 30th.

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### QUESTION 10: The Enemy Within

- a. Belle Boyd
- b. Elizabeth Van Law
- c. Rose Greenhow
- d. Pauline Cushman

Which female Confederate sympathizer-turned-spy did President Jefferson Davis credit with his success at the First Battle of Bull Run?



Stonewall Jackson at the First Battle of Bull Run.

*From the Library of Congress.*

[Click Here to Check Your Answer](#)

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# Gettysburg Foundation Names New President

April 19, 2021



Wayne E. Motts

The Board of Directors of the [Gettysburg Foundation](#) has appointed Wayne E. Motts as the Foundation's new president to lead the operations of the national preservation and education organization.

The Gettysburg Foundation owns and operates the LEED Gold-certified Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center in partnership with Gettysburg National Military Park and Eisenhower National Historic Site. The Foundation has a robust preservation and education mission that includes land and artifact preservation, educational events and programs. It also owns and operates the Rupp House History Center, the George Spangler Farm & Field Hospital and the Gettysburg Lincoln Railroad Station™.

Motts most recently served as CEO of The National Civil War Museum located in Harrisburg, Pa., successfully leading the institution for nine years. Previously, Motts served as Executive Director of the Adams County Historical Society, located in Gettysburg, Pa., and was named its Director Emeritus in 2019.

“I am honored to be named the next president of the Gettysburg Foundation,” said Motts. “I look forward to working with the Foundation’s board, staff, volunteers and key partners— especially Gettysburg National Military Park and the Eisenhower National Historic Site—in advancing the Foundation’s mission. As a small boy dreaming of one day living and working in Gettysburg, my life now comes full circle with this wonderful opportunity.”

A long-time resident of Adams County, Pa., Motts has been a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg National Military Park for 33 years and now holds the title of Guide Emeritus.

“We are proud to have Wayne lead our operations into the future,” said Barbara Finfrock, co-chair of the Foundation’s Board of Directors. “Wayne has been a champion of Gettysburg for many years, and we are confident in his vast knowledge of history, leadership experience and talents as our new president.”

Motts received his Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Military History from The Ohio State University and holds a Master of Arts in American History from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. He is an accomplished author, publishing books and articles about the Civil War including, *Trust in God and Fear Nothing: General Lewis A. Armistead* and *Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg: A Guide to the Most Famous Attack in American History*, which he co-authored.

An expert in the field, Motts has appeared on numerous television documentaries and videos produced by the History Channel, American Heroes Channel, TNT Network and A&E Channel.

“We are thrilled to welcome Wayne to our team, especially during this critical time as we emerge from the impact of the pandemic,” said Craig Bashein, co-chair of the Foundation’s Board of Directors. “His enthusiasm and passion for sharing the importance of the Battle of Gettysburg in the greater context of the American Civil War and our country’s history, combined with his keen understanding of museum and nonprofit operations makes him an ideal candidate to join us as our new president.”

Motts will assume the responsibilities as the Foundation’s new president May 24, 2021.

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Books by Bill Teegarden

[Kanawha River Gold](#)

[Mercer County, PA](#)

[The Good Man](#)

[Barricades](#)

[Sally Author](#)

[Diary of a Contraband](#)

[The Better Angels](#)

[The False Cause](#)

[Lincoln Author](#)

[The Saddest Words](#)