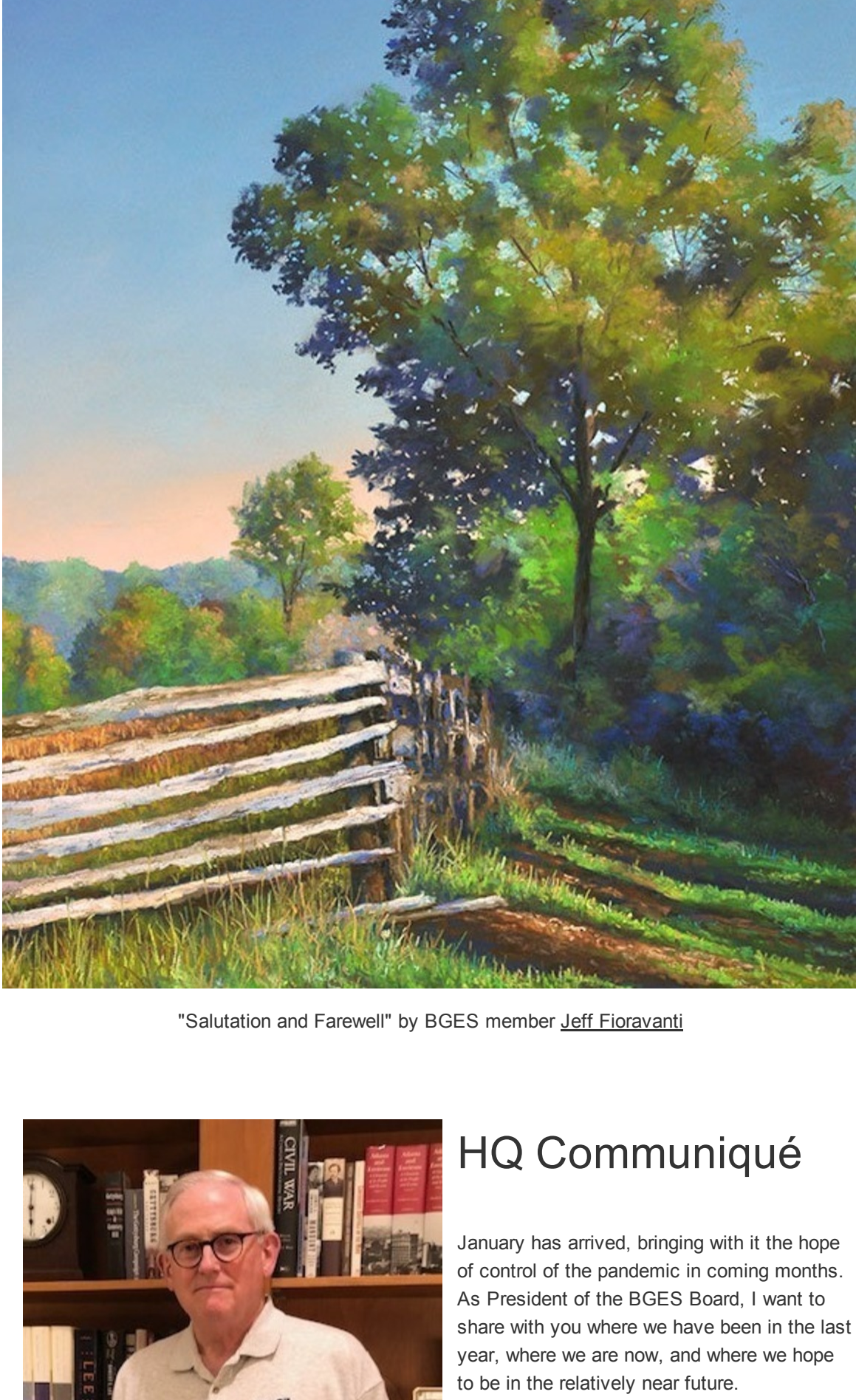
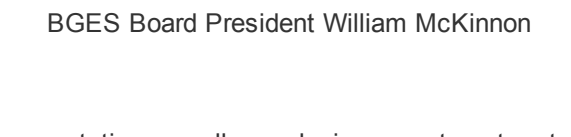




January 2021



"Salutation and Farewell" by BGES member [Jeff Fioravanti](#)



BGES Board President William McKinnon

HQ Communiqué

January has arrived, bringing with it the hope of control of the pandemic in coming months.

As President of the BGES Board, I want to share with you where we have been in the last year, where we are now, and where we hope to be in the relatively near future.

With the realization across the globe of the ease of transmission of the virus and the increased risk for certain groups, we had to make difficult choices in the early spring about continuing our usual operations. We have always centered our educational activities around the Field University—

learning that is best done by "getting out in the weeds" to visualize battlefields or other Civil War sites. This of course requires

transportation, usually employing vans to get us to places inaccessible to buses. This is always enjoyable, riding in vans with seats occupied by old friends and new acquaintances who share a common interest.

Van travel is only possible with close proximity to one's fellow travelers. A fair portion of our tour participants are in groups at increased risk should they become infected with the coronavirus—age over 65 and possibly underlying medical conditions. We formed a medical advisory group of BGES members in early spring 2020, both physicians and nurses, who recommended that we stop touring immediately and go month by month to determine when our usual routine for travel would be safe for all our members. Unfortunately, as the months crawled by, we were forced to cancel or reschedule many of our tours. With the vaccine becoming available, we are now hoping to resume touring as early as April. The Board will make the call on when it is safe to travel together.

Despite not touring we have remained busy with projects—refurbishing a cannon from Pamplin Park, designing and installing interpretive signage at Fort Branch in North Carolina, and publishing our 20th BGES monograph, an outstanding work by Brig. Gen. J. Parker Hills just sent to members. The BGES Dispatches and the Medford collection articles we have continued to produce every week remain very popular and are helpful in recruiting, allowing more individuals to share in the educational benefits of the Society.

Over the past year many small businesses have been forced to close due to the financial impact of the virus. Representing the Board, I am pleased to report that despite challenges, BGES is alive and well. We had determined that we would need \$65,000 to get us to the end of 2020. We have met and exceeded that figure, and at year's end we are financially stable. The success of our being able to survive cancelling all our tours is in large part due to the efforts of our outstanding Executive Director Len Riedel. Len is the founder and public face of BGES, and through book sales, Facebook challenges, Giving Tuesday, membership dues, and direct member gifts, his personal connection to every member helped provide the funds needed to make it to 2021. He often says that in the 27 years of our existence, the membership has never let us down when a need was identified. Your support currently is allowing us to begin posting lectures from some of the nation's best historians for your review, and we hope to also present tour videos in the future. The tour schedule for 2021 has just gone out, and I'm making my choices now to be ready when registration opens—I hope to share a van with you.

Your BGES Board consists of nine members with different backgrounds from across the country. We have different occupations, talents, and philosophies, but we all agree on one thing—there is no other group in the country that does what BGES does so well. As a nonprofit, the sole purpose for our existence is education. We fear that with the lack of teaching about the Civil War in our schools and colleges that eventually the War will fade from the country's collective memory. To help us remember our overall goal, we have adopted the motto "Saving America's Civil War History."

The Board members all agree that BGES is currently well positioned to continue pursuing its educational mission. With the resumption of touring historic sites in the company of outstanding historians we will quickly be able to get back on track. That will be fine for the present, but looking toward the future BGES needs to increase its outreach and educational efforts. Len has done an excellent job for 27 years essentially single-handedly, but the Society now must enlarge the staff to be able to handle the needs of increased programs and membership. Enlarging our membership will allow more students of history to benefit from our programs, and will provide increased financial support for new staff and infrastructure. As always, our existence depends on the generosity of our members.

The Board firmly believes that with increased membership and expansion of our staff, we will be able to continue to provide high quality programs and educational experiences for many years in the future. The Board is committed to identification of our future needs and to taking appropriate measures to provide for them. We are actively seeking ways to increase our membership to take our outstanding programs to Civil War history enthusiasts that are as yet unknown to us. Identification of prospective new BGES members in our Roundtables and other groups by our members is becoming increasingly important, as we have many good things to share with them once we make a connection. Let's all give it some thought.

We sincerely appreciate the support of the membership in helping us weather the storm in 2020. We look forward to seeing many of you when we are back on the roads this spring. Until then, please stay safe and well.

—William M. McKinnon M.D.

BGES Board President

December Happenings: The Winter Campaign

Welcome to the January 2021 issue of *Holding the Line*! We anticipate a brand-new year with a look at the challenges that we have faced over this past year and the announcement of several exciting programs. We caught up with BGES Executive Director Len Riedel to fill us in on some of the details. Among the announcements is the grand opening of our Video Archives, a huge project that finally is coming to fruition after a lot of dedicated work, largely thanks to old friend Karen Needles. BGES is also going online with a series of Zoom programs showcasing some of 2021's historians—we'll include a listing of upcoming programs in each newsletter's News section. For those of us who can't wait to get out there with the promise of a vaccine, we offer a listing of the stars of Civil War sites to visit in 2021—and an invitation to join BGES to tour some of them. And last but not never least, we asked Dr. Gary Wilson for the hard facts about the vaccine and what to expect. Does he have good news? Will it be safe? Read on to find out. Enjoy!



Video Archives Kickoff

BGES is excited to announce the opening of the BGES Archives, which showcases a thousand hours of vintage video. Be among the very first to relive lectures and field tours of the past!

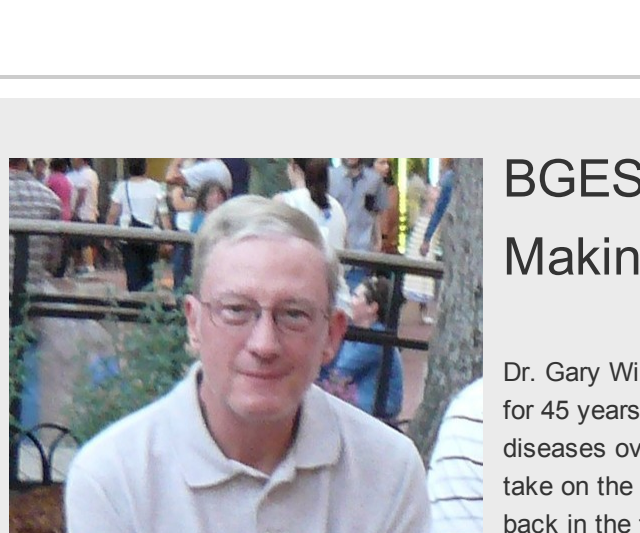
[Read More](#)



BGES Goes Zoom

One good thing that may have come out of the pandemic is the ability to bring the field to us, via Zoom. BGES will be presenting a series of online programs with our 2021 historians that promises to be riveting.

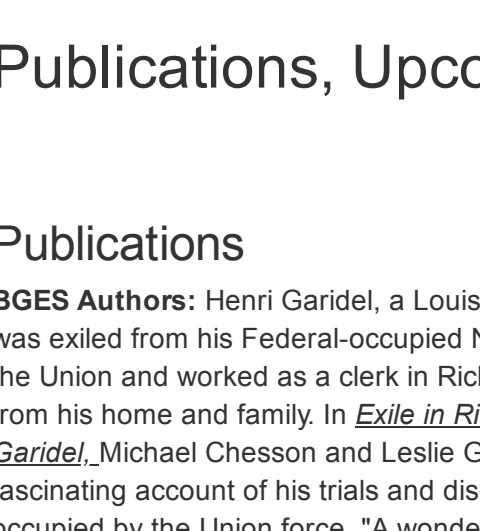
[Read More](#)



Civil War Bucket List 2021

The new year should bring travel back—so why not make big plans and visit the Civil War's biggest and brightest? Even better, join a BGES tour.

[Read More](#)



BGES Members Making a Difference

Dr. Gary Wilson has been in the medical field for 45 years, with a focus on infectious diseases over the past 13 years. What is his take on the vaccine? Is it safe? Will we be back in the field in 2021?

[Read More](#)

Publications, Upcoming Tours, & News

Publications

BGES Authors: Henri Garidel, a Louisiana Creole, kept a detailed diary when he was exiled from his Federal-occupied New Orleans home for refusing allegiance to the Union and worked as a clerk in Richmond, Virginia, a complete outsider away from his home and family. In *Exile in Richmond: The Confederate Journal of Henri Garidel*, Michael Chesson and Leslie Gene Roberts have edited his diary in a fascinating account of his trials and discomforts as Richmond eventually becomes occupied by the Union force. "A wonderful description of his Civil War days in Richmond," according to one reviewer. "If you have a desire to know more about Confederate Richmond during the last two years of the war, this book will put you right in the middle of things," says another.

In Camp Along the Monocacy: Look for the next newsletter in mid-February! If you are a BGES member and you are not getting this bi-monthly electronic newsletter, email BGES Communications at communications@blueandgrayeducation.org and ask to be added to the list. You can review archived copies about six months after they are released to the membership.

Upcoming Tours

Suspended through early 2021. See latest schedule [here](#).

Upcoming Zoom Presentations

Each program will be announced the day after the previous interview was conducted and will require registration to receive the sign-in credentials and the instructions.

January 6, 2021: Greg Mertz, Shiloh Interview

January 13, 2021: Tim Smith, Grierson's Raid Interview

January 20, 2021: Paul Severance, Seven Days Campaign Interview

January 27, 2021: Bob Jenkins, Dalton/Resaca Interview

Investors' Reports

Detailed reports for donors and prospective donors are available for download from our website on [Our Mission](#) page.

BGES Recruiting Station

Membership

As a member of BGES, you will be part of a community devoted to saving our Civil War. You will receive our e-newsletter, updated info on upcoming tours, and access to some of our greatest historians. [Join here](#).

Already a member? Don't let your membership slip. [Renew here](#).

Quarter Guard Program

We would also like you to consider joining the [Quarter Guard Program](#), which supports BGES on a monthly or quarterly basis.

BGES Major Gift and Legacy Program

What Will You Be Remembered For? Be part of BGES's future by making an endowment or legacy gift. [Contact us](#) if you would like to make an endowment or legacy gift.

