



June 2021



"...Of Their Greatest Sacrifice" by BGES member [Jeff Fioravanti](#)



BGES Executive Director Len Riedel

HQ Communiqué

The sun is coming out from behind the clouds, and June looks bright. Our first two returns to the field were both unqualified successes punctuated by great historians and very cooperative and friendly cohorts. A dozen folks on each trip, old faithfuls and new travelers. June brings us three more programs: Saratoga, Custer, and Streight's Raid. We have a half dozen for Saratoga, seven for Custer, and so far 13 for Streight. July promises even better. The governments are responding to the protections afforded by immunizations, and thus far 100% of our attendees have been immunized. Daily temperature checks are unintrusive, and with recent CDC

guidance, the trips have become maskless. We stand prepared to adapt to local restrictions, especially at mealtimes, but again to date, not a problem. I cannot guarantee there will not be a few "ooops" moments this summer, but things are looking good. I am optimistic that our international members will soon gain access to our programs when international travel is normalized again.

The key to all this is the security afforded by immunizations. The data show this is the only reliable way to resume life as we knew it before COVID. By getting immunized, you have all the options that go with being reliably protected. The side effects seem to be minor and rare. Conversely, those who do not elect to get immunized face the continuing restrictions; but, from our perspective, how they protect themselves is not a threat to our operations. Insurance-wise, we have to enforce the existing restrictions and protections in place by CDC or the individual jurisdictions, but that doesn't present a threat to those who are immunized. So far we haven't had to isolate individuals from the cohort, and social distancing for those folks is not difficult outside. Undoubtedly some folks who are not immunized will register and will be asked to follow the guidelines for their safety, but if you are immunized, we have no reason to restrict you at the indoor or outdoor activities.

I remember the movie Apollo 13 when the command module had to be powered down to conserve energy. I remember the precise processes that were followed to power back up for the reentry and landing on earth. We have operated on reserve power since March 2020, and now we are restarting the primary power plant of our operations. That is our seminar and tour program. Historically, it has produced more than 50% of our annual operating revenue, and once the tours are conducted, we have usually had as much as a 20% net that has supplemented our overhead expenses. During the shutdown, we challenged our donor base, and it responded strongly. If that continues, and we continue to grow, we will be in a good place going forward in this, our 28th year. We also found that book sales can play a significant role in our financial profile, and we encourage you to join in and get your copies of our publications and others that we offer. We offered one new book last year and sold over 100 autographed copies—it netted us nearly \$2,000. Look for those opportunities and support them—everyone wins!

We are in a good place to complete our video archives series this summer. With nearly 350 lectures and introductions, this is a resource every one of our members can enjoy for their \$75 or higher annual membership. Look for the bulk emails we send that give you the hot links to set up—nearly 200 members are already signed up, but there are nearly 300 of you who are not. It is a perk of membership. If you are a past-due member, you can gain access by rejoining. If you are not a member, you can become one and gain access within 48 hours. Another feature that comes directly to your desktop is our interview series. We started in January and will continue it throughout the year. The interview is free to all and, if you miss it, they are on our free YouTube site. You need merely to subscribe—that is free as well.

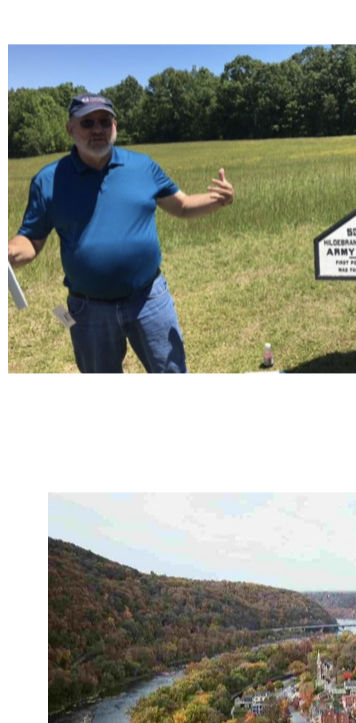
Administratively, I need to catch up especially with the tour registration forms. We are getting there. We changed our webmaster after more than 20 years, and there is a learning curve along with some changes we want to make. Contractors are taking over some functions that recur. Burford Smith is now in charge of conducting our tour program. I will be at a limited number of tours in the future—not because I don't love doing them, but because there is much to do here to keep the organization running effectively. We are also looking to the next generation BGES. How will we run as my 30-year career winds down? It is all very exciting.

As always, I thank you for your support and look forward to seeing and hearing from you throughout this year and beyond.

Warmly yours,
—Len Riedel, BGES Executive Director

June Happenings: The Summer Campaign

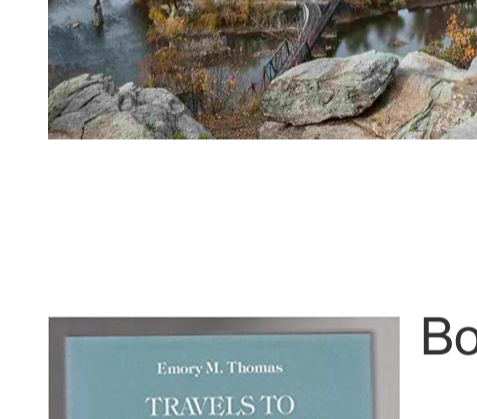
Welcome to the June 2021 issue of *Holding the Line*! This month we chat with Dennis Frye, a consummate expert in the history of Harpers Ferry and Antietam. Frye will be leading the upcoming BGES tour, "[A Weekend with Historian Dennis Frye, John Brown, and Stonewall Jackson](#)," on July 31– August 1, 2021. We also hear from Doug Smock, who was in the field on the recent BGES tour at Shiloh. How was it, as we ease out of the pandemic? He provides a day-by-day account. We travel to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, an exceedingly gorgeous spot with significant historic sites to visit. BGES Executive Director reviews Emory Thomas's *Travels to Hallowed Ground*. Was he pleased? And last but not least, we feature a BGES member who is devoted to historic preservation—and is leading his first BGES tour, in August. Enjoy!



Tour Talk: "A Weekend with Historian Dennis Frye, John Brown, and Stonewall Jackson"

"Not a single topic in our country's early history was untouched by Harpers Ferry," says historian Dennis Frye. We caught up with Frye to glean some insight into the BGES tour he is leading this summer.

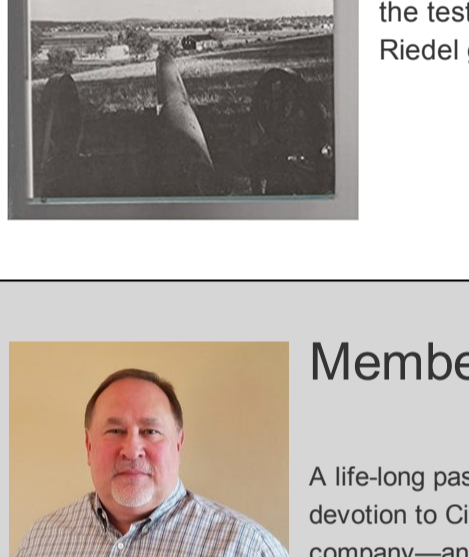
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Trip Report: Shiloh

We are back out in the field! Read about one cohort's experience on our recent Shiloh tour.

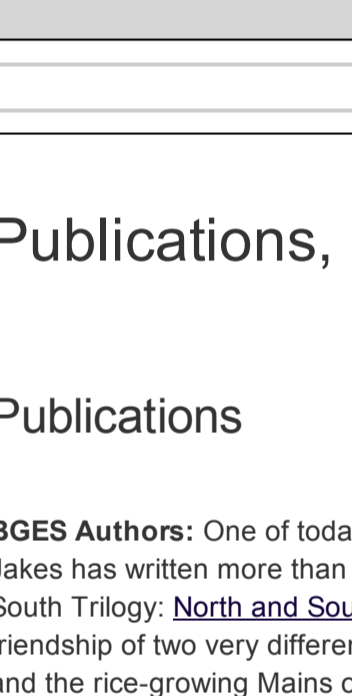
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Travel Guide: Civil War Harpers Ferry

This month's Tour Talk focuses on the Harpers Ferry region. Whether you go with or without BGES, here are some must-visit places to target in this beautiful place.

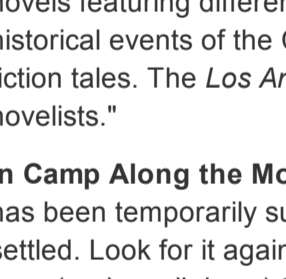
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Book Review

Revered academic Civil War historian Emory Thomas wrote this book 34 years ago. Does it stand the test of time? BGES Executive Director Len Riedel gives us his take.

[Read More](#)



Members Making A Difference

A life-long passion for history has fueled this member's devotion to Civil War preservation. He founded a walking tour company—and he's leading his first BGES tour in August 2021.

[Read More](#)

Publications, Upcoming Tours, & News

Publications

BGES Authors: One of today's most eminent writers of historical fiction, John Jakes has written more than a dozen novels, including the formidable North and South Trilogy: [North and South](#), [Love and War](#), and [Heaven and Hell](#). Following the friendship of two very different families—the ironworking Hazards of Pennsylvania and the rice-growing Mains of South Carolina—before, during, and after the Civil War, the series, which has sold more than five million copies, inspired the TV miniseries "North and South." And while that may be his most famous oeuvre, Jakes also has earned widespread fame for his American Bicentennial Series, eight novels featuring different members of the Kent family and their connections to historical events of the Civil War; as well as his pulp Western novels and science fiction tales. The *Los Angeles Times* called Jakes "the godfather of historical novelists."

In Camp Along the Monocacy: The "In Camp Along the Monocacy" newsletter has been temporarily suspended while Len gets the Dispatches and Video Archives settled. Look for it again by the summer. To see what you are missing, click [here](#) (and scroll down) to visit the archives of the past newsletters.

Upcoming Tours

See the latest schedule [here](#).

June 2–6, 2021: "[Not Welcome Here: Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne Invades New York](#)," with Scott Patchan, a Gentleman, New York

June 20–29, 2021: "[Custer's Trail](#)," with Neil Mangum, from Bismarck, North Dakota

June 25–27, 2021: "[All's Fair in War, Streight's Raid & Forrest's Bluff](#)," with Brian Steel Willits and Norm Dasinger, Jr.

July 9–11, 2021: "[A Historian's Reflection on the First Day at Gettysburg](#)," with Scott Hartwig

July 11–15, 2021: "[The Retreat from Gettysburg](#)," with Parker Hills

July 31–August 1, 2021: "[A Weekend with Historian Dennis Frye, John Brown, and Stonewall Jackson](#)," with Dennis Frye

Upcoming Zoom Presentations

Get to know the historians we have selected for our 2021 programs via lively Q&A or lecture every Wednesday at 8 p.m. 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.

June 10: Len Riedel, *The Battles for New Orleans*

June 16: Gary Ecelbarger and Scott Patchan, *Washington's Desperate Gamble—Trenton and Princeton*

June 20: Darryl Smith, *Civil War in Northern Kentucky*

June 28: Neil Mangum, *War on the Central Plains*

BGES Video Archives

BGES has been busy posting our video archives—BGES Field University lectures from the past—on the BGES website as well as YouTube. To date, 165 lectures are posted online, with 20 additional on the YouTube channel, including 15 from 2021 tour leaders talking about their upcoming tours. You don't want to miss these vintage and contemporary lectures celebrating the best moments of BGES and the most revered historians through the years.

Sign up to view the archives [here](#) (BGES members only), and sign in [here](#) to view the YouTube channel.

AmazonSmile

When you order goods from Amazon, you can benefit BGES in the process. One-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon—if you sign up at [smile.amazon.com](#). On your first visit, you will be prompted to choose BGES as your charitable organization.

BGES also has a charity list on Amazon for needed items. Go [here](#) for the prompt.

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](#).

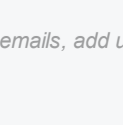
Already a member? Don't let your membership slip. [Renew here](#).

DuBose's Rangers

We would also like you to consider joining the [DeBose's Rangers](#) (formerly the Quarter Guard Program), which supports BGES on a monthly or quarterly basis. The program is named in honor of the late David DuBose, who passed on February 17, 2021. He donated to BGES over 400 times in his life including every month from June 1996, and he has made provisions to continue donating every month in perpetuity.

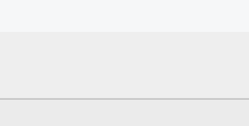
BGES Major Gift and Legacy Program

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.



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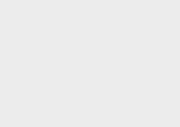
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