

BENNETT PLACE COURIER

Editor: *Ryan Reed*

Official Newsletter of the Bennett Place Support Fund, Inc.

Spring 2017

Bennett Place Support Fund, Inc.

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March is Women's History Month

**Bennett Place will highlight the women of the
Civil War with a lecture series entitled:**

“ The Civilian's War”

Lectures Start at 1 P.M

Cost: \$5.00

March 4– Angela Marritt

“ Women working during Reconstruction”

March 11- Michelle Lanier

*“Their eyes had seen the Glory: African American
Women of North Carolina & the Civil War Era:”*

March 18– Linda Humphries

*“ Mourning Etiquette & Rituals during the Civil
War”*

March 25– Brenda McKean

*“ Shortages on the Homefront during the Civil
War”*



Site Manager's Corner



The winter months are waning and spring is almost here, even though we really didn't have much of a winter to speak of. However, this did provide us the opportunity to complete some much needed work around the site. We were able to tear down and rebuild the kitchen garden fence as well as fix the fencing around the historic area. We also took advantage of the good weather to clear away the vines and other brush that was encroaching on the farm and to beautify that area in preparation for the busy season.

Speaking of which, we kick off our spring season with a lecture series similar to what we did last year, only this year we are concentrating on the women who lived during the time of the Civil War. March is, after all, women's history month and we want to highlight the contributions and sacrifices made by these great women. Our guest speakers will cover a broad range of subject matter which should prove to be very exciting and interesting.

Following on the heels of our March lecture series, we move into our anniversary month. We are really excited to announce that we have acquired one of the original copies of the April 26th surrender document for a short loan. Many thanks goes to Jim McKee for assisting us in securing this important document! We hope that we can build a good relationship with the owner of the document and have it here again in the future.

We also are hosting our annual Civil War School Days program in April, which has turned out to be a really great opportunity for school children, as well as adults, to learn about all the different aspects of the war which they wouldn't normally get to see on a regular basis. We are grateful to the historic sites who are providing their staff and/or volunteers to assist us with this program. It has grown in popularity to the point that we are now fully booked for this program. We may have to expand the number of days we offer in the future.

Well, we are off to a great start to a busy year for us here. Here's wishing you and yours a very happy spring.



152nd Anniversary of the Surrender at Bennett Place
“Civil War School Days”

April 25-27, 2017

Bennett Place State Historic Site
Durham, North Carolina



Visit life as it was during the American Civil War!

- *Civilians on the Home front and Refugees from the War*
- *Cooking, Woodworking, Chores, Weaving, 19th Century Games*
- *Life of an Infantry Soldier*
- *Join the Cavalry! Life of the Cavalry Trooper*
- *Caring for the Wounded and Sick– Civil War Field Medicine*
- *Getting Correspondence to the Troops– The Postal Service*
- *Calling on the Troops! Music and its role on the Battlefield*

For Reservations please contact us at:

919-383-4345 or bennett@ncdcr.gov

www.bennettplacehistoricsite.com

Bennett Place State Historic Site

4409 Bennett Memorial Road

Durham, North Carolina 27705

Sponsored by the Bennett Place Support Fund, Inc.



Work around the Farm

We have been making good headway on our plans to rebuild the fence around the garden and also to replace some of the fencing around the Bennett Property. During the winter we had worked with a service organization, the Questers of Durham, who helped in the process of tearing down the old fence posts. Our site assistant, Matthew Gregg, has been overseeing the project, using both his labor and that of volunteers to help dig and place new post holes in order to make



our kitchen garden a more manageable area. The wooden boards around the historic property needed to be replaced and specially cut to make them historically accurate. We have managed to get a good portion of the fence up, but will eventually need more boards to continue to replace all the fencing around the historic property. This warm weather is making us all eager to finish our garden fence in time for spring planting!





Bennett Place 152nd Anniversary



April 22nd, 2017

Join us as we commemorate the events that occurred inside the home of James and Nancy Bennett 152 years ago.

***We are proud to announce that we will have an Original copy of the April 26th, 1865 Surrender agreement here on site for that one day only!** We will also be holding a reenactment of the Surrender at 1pm and 3pm. The Generals and their staff will be on site participating in Living History activities throughout the day. Come join us for this once in a lifetime Event!*

Program is Saturday 10am-4pm



BENNETT PLACE STATE HISTORIC SITE

Durham, North Carolina

MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE

The American Soldier Through the Ages



Memorial Day was founded after the American Civil War. Flowers and tokens were placed on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers in respect and remembrance. Join American soldiers spanning from the American Revolution to Iraqi Freedom and learn more about their duty, honor, and sacrifice.

MAY 27-28, 2017

Saturday, 10am-4pm & Sunday, 10am-3pm

For More Information:

Bennett Place State Historic Site

919-383-4345 or bennett@ncdcr.gov

www.bennettplacehistoricsite.com





April 1865: The Month That Saved America:

Book Review

By: Kevin Washington

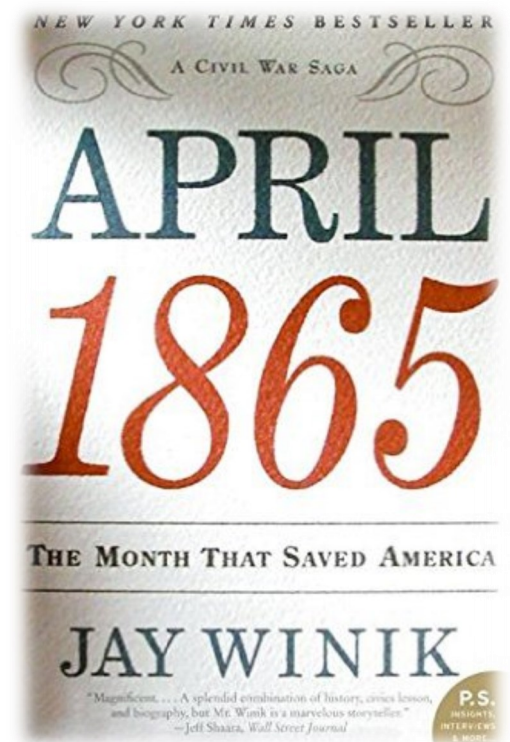
My first reading of *April 1865: The Month That Saved America* (Harper Collins: 2006) was in my infancy as a Civil War historian in the early 2000s. A spectacular read, it in essence, gave a real sense of closure to the Civil War through describing the complex series of events in April 1865.

Before I read the book, as a person of color from the North, I really had little sense of closure to the war. Southerners seemed to live the essence of the war in real-time when it **IS** discussed, while African Americans could easily be identified through caste status based on the pre-Civil War conditions.

But Jay Winik details how things could have gone very wrong at the end of a devastating and bloody war with so many self-inflicted wounds, tells readers just what was at stake and most of all what we reap from the four years of violence.

Praised highly by critics and historians when published in 2001, it has become a favorite of Civil War historians having earned praise for its marvelous analytical depth.

The book really is more a graduate seminar on the end of the war and what it means to be an American. One can pick up the book and enjoy it without having much knowledge of the Civil War beforehand. I think that it helps to know a little bit more about the course of the war and general American history in order to truly appreciate Winik's insights on creation of a national identity.





For example, while ***April 1865*** covers the general themes of the end of the war, it doesn't go into detail of the individual surrenders after Appomattox Courthouse and Bennett Place, and he only briefly mentions the violent dishevel in the post-war period. It never ceases to amaze me how little has been written about post-Civil War African-American slavery in books like Winik's as part of the legacy of how the war ended. In all fairness, the post-Bennett Place surrenders take place in May and June, and hence may not seem to be fair game for April 1865.

On the other hand, Winik writes a discursive history of the fall of Richmond that is rich in detail. And it is fun to read. Winik's goal is not to provide a minute by minute end to the war, but to capture the overarching theme of the creation of a nation. He makes note of my favorite fact, that before the Civil War, the use of the words "United States" is as a plural noun: the "United States are," as if we were a jumble of sovereign entities. After the war, the United States "is" becomes the fashion.

In the epilogue, for example, Winik surgically writes of the creation of a nation, something that may not have been on the table until the devastation of the war and the unity afterward come to pass. The overall question is why doesn't the United States of America become a banana republic, with serial civil wars, like many of the South American nation's in the wake of the demise of Spanish rule. He reminds us all that the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution do not use the word "nation." A "nation" in the 18th century was thought of as a tiny geographic area without regional competition to tear itself apart. Even George Washington spoke of the American nation in tentative terms.

Surely, no expectation of nationhood was on the table after the Civil War. As Winik writes, Civil Wars end "quite badly."

In the latest edition of the book, the publishers have included a neat little essay on Winik and a second on what it was like to write the book, both of which are worth reading.

Kevin E. Washington is a volunteer at Bennett Place. He is a retired journalist and Civil War reenactor and Living Historian. He marched with the 54th Massachusetts, made famous in the movie Glory. He now does living history as a Buffalo Soldier and as a member of the 761st Tank Battalion. He lives in Durham, N.C.



Volunteer Spotlight:

Rondy Elliott



My entire work life was spent in the medical profession. I earned an undergraduate degree in Nursing, and my graduate degree is from Duke. I worked in various departments but later settled into the role of Admissions Director in a private psychiatric hospital in Raleigh, then opened a private practice as a therapist there. My last 15 years were spent working exclusively with students at Duke.

But-- I have always been a closet historian! The Civil War interest began when, while living in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, with my West Point grad husband, we toured the Virginia battlefields using his military history books and maps which showed everything in fascinating detail.

I Have always thought, during tours, "Hey, I could do that!" So after retirement I beat a path to the Bennett Place door and began as a volunteer in the fall of 2015, arriving just in time to help with the 150th Anniversary celebration. What a way to begin!

I love my work here. I delight in telling folks from all over the country the engaging story of the family who lived in this modest 19th century farmhouse, the compelling story of the militarily significant talks that took place there, -and that of the broader picture of the Civil War in North Carolina in March and April of 1865.

Other activities are dancing and playing music, writing, and remaining active in the Animal Rights Movement, a passion for the past almost-thirty years. I am lucky to have two wonderful daughters and two cool grandchildren, all living in the Triangle area.



CONTRIBUTION BENEFITS

All Levels:

- *Newsletter (issued quarterly)*
- *Invitation to Special Events*
- *10% Discount at Gift Shop*

Major to President Level:

- *Permanent Recognition at Site*

President & Governor Level:

- *Framed Certificate*
- *Special Gift*

Name: (Individual, Family, Group, or Company)

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Signature:

Date:

Help Support Bennett Place!

Please note our membership levels have expanded to include businesses and larger donors!



Bennett Place Support Fund, Inc.
4409 Bennett Memorial Road
Durham, North Carolina 27705

Contributions are Tax Deductible!



Amount:\$ _____

Thank you for your support!!!



Friends of Bennett Place

Bennett Place State Historic Site Mission Statement:

To preserve and interpret the history of the largest surrender of the Civil War and the lives of 19th century yeoman farmers such as the Bennetts.

Friends of Bennett Place Mission Statement:

The Friends of Bennett Place, is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing financial assistance to the Bennett Place State Historic Site. Monies from the Fund are to be used for educating the general public about the site's role in the Civil War, assisting staff in its research and interpretation of 19th century farm life, and encouraging volunteer participation and community involvement.

We wish to help in preserving and developing this North Carolina Historic Site and need your assistance. Please consider making a contribution to the Support Fund today!

Friends of Bennett Place

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