

SVBF 2020 Valley Conference  
BORN OF FIRE: WEST VIRGINIA AND THE CIVIL WAR  
*August 1, 2020 • Martinsburg, West Virginia*

Speakers

**D**ENNIS FRYE recently retired after 20 years as the Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. For his more than 3 decades of service with the National Park Service, Dennis earned the “Distinguished Service Award,” the highest honor of the Department of Interior. Dennis also received the American Battlefield Trust’s highest honor, the “Shelby Foote Award,” and was recognized with the “Nevins-Freeman Award” for his years of scholarship and his national leadership role in battlefield preservation. Dennis is a prominent Civil War historian as a writer, lecturer, preservationist and battlefield guide. Dennis has numerous appearances on PBS, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, C-SPAN, Fox News, A&E, and Voice of America as a guest historian. He helped produce Emmy award-winning television features on the Battle of Antietam, abolitionist John Brown, and Maryland during the Civil War. Dennis is one of the nation’s leading Civil War battlefield preservationists. He is co-founder and first president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and he is co-founder and a former president of today’s Civil War Trust, from whom he received the Trust’s highest honor - the Shelby Foote Award. Dennis is a tour guide in demand, leading tours for organizations such as the Smithsonian, National Geographic, numerous colleges and universities, and Civil War Round Tables. Dennis also is a well-known author, with 101 articles and 11 books. He just completed *Confluence: Harpers Ferry as Destiny*, scheduled for release this June. His most recent book is *Antietam Shadows: Mystery, Myth & Machination*. His book *Harpers Ferry Under Fire* received the national book of the year award from the Association of Partners for Public Lands; and *September Suspense: Lincoln’s Union in Peril*, was awarded the 2012 Laney Book Prize for distinguished scholarship and writing on the military and political history of the war. Dennis has written for prestigious Civil War magazines such as *Civil War Times Illustrated*, *America’s Civil War*, *Blue & Gray Magazine*, *North and South Magazine*, and *Hallowed Ground*, and as a guest contributor to the *Washington Post*. Dennis resides near the Antietam Battlefield in Maryland, and he and his wife Sylvia have restored the home that was used by General Burnside as his post-Antietam headquarters.

**J**OE GEIGER has worked for West Virginia Archives and History since 1998, serving as historian, webmaster, and assistant director before being named director in 2007. Geiger serves as West Virginia’s State Archivist and State Historian and is responsible for preserving West Virginia’s history. He formerly served as an adjunct instructor in the history departments at Marshall University and West Virginia State University and has published a number of articles and two books, including *Civil War in Cabell County, West Virginia 1861-1865* and *Holding the Line: The Battle of Allegheny Mountain*, published in 2012. His new book, *Disorder on the Border: Civil Warfare in Cabell and Wayne Counties, West Virginia, 1856-1870*, will be published in 2020.

**H**UNTER LESSER is an author, interpreter and preservationist who enjoys sharing forgotten tales from history that offer lessons for the digital age. A member of the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission, his books include *Rebels at the Gate: Lee & McClellan on the Front Line of a Nation Divided* and he coauthored *The Cambridge History of the American Civil War*, just released by Cambridge University Press.

**T**ERRANCE (TERRY) D. LOWRY was born in 1949 in Charleston, West Virginia and is a 1967 graduate of South Charleston High School, where he worked on the school newspaper. He graduated in 1974 with a B.A. in History from West Virginia State College (now West Virginia State University) and later studied Civil War history at Marshall University Graduate School. He has been a professional musician since 1966 as well as contributing music editor for *The Charleston Gazette* (1970-75), music editor for *The Charleston Gazette* (1975-78), and was with the circulation department of the *Atlanta Journal* for two years.

Lowry published his first book, *The Battle of Scary Creek: Military Operations in the Kanawha Valley, April-July 1861* in July of 1982. He has since written and published *September Blood: The Battle of Carnifex Ferry* (1985); and two volumes in the Virginia Regimental Histories Series, *22nd Virginia Infantry* (1988) and *26th (Edgar's) Battalion Virginia Infantry* (1991). He has also written *Last Sleep: The Battle of Droop Mountain - November 6, 1863* (1996) and co-authored (with Stan Cohen) *Military Images of the Civil War in West Virginia* (2000). As a tribute to his father he released *Bastard Battalion: A History of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion in World War II* (2009), which went into its second printing in 2018. Lowry's most current work is *The Battle of Charleston: The 1862 Kanawha Valley Campaign* (2016).

In addition to books, Terry Lowry has had Civil War articles published in *North South Trader*, *Wonderful West Virginia*, and *Confederate Veteran* magazines, as well as the *West Virginia Hillbilly* newspaper. Additionally, he has contributed to the Time-Life series of Civil War books, appeared as an extra in the movie *Glory*, and remains an avid collector of Civil War and military memorabilia.

As noted above, Terry Lowry was employed for nearly 20 years with the circulation department of Charleston Newspapers, Inc., briefly worked for *The Atlanta Journal*, and then worked for three years as historian/curator at the historic Craik-Patton: House Museum in Charleston, and recently retired after nearly 20 years as Historian at the West Virginia State Archives and History Library.

**R**ICHARD WOLFE was born in Morgantown, West Virginia. He spent 26 years in the Marine Corps, retiring as a Major in 1998. He has been a long time student of the American Civil War especially as it relates to West Virginia. Rick is associated with the Clarksburg Civil War Roundtable, Morgantown Civil War Roundtable, and is President of Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation. Since retiring, from the Marine Corps, he has worked in the Information Technology field with The Department of Justice. In December 2013, he retired from Lockheed Martin.