

Pete Miele – “W.W. Keen’s and the Advancement of Civil War Medicine”

William Williams Keen was a young medical student at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia when the Civil War erupted. He was thrown into treating suffering soldiers at the First Battle of Bull Run. Four years later, he emerged from the crucible of war as a pioneer in treating injuries of the nervous system. Dr. Keen was a surgeon for the Fifth Massachusetts Militia Regiment and then for the Union Army. He built a reputation working with patients who had neurological wounds; most surgeons refrained from treating such wounds. After the war, Dr. Keen was a world-renowned surgeon. He led a team of surgeons that removed a cancerous tumor from President Grover Cleveland's jaw, and in the 1920s he diagnosed Franklin Delano Roosevelt with polio. He died in 1932 at the age of 95, having witnessed enormous advancements in medicine over the course of his lifetime.



About our Speaker:

Peter is the Executive Director of Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center, and President of the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation. He holds a B.A. in History from Ramapo College of New Jersey and an M.A. in Applied History from Shippensburg University. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in American Studies at Penn State, Harrisburg. Peter is Vice-President of the Civil War Round Table of Gettysburg. A frequent lecturer, he has presented at national conferences of the Society of Civil War Historians, the American Association of State and Local History, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the American Battlefield Trust.