## The Camp Olden Gazette

## News from the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table

July - August - September, 2006

## President's Gavel -- by Bruce L. Sirak

Veterans' Day is a special day set aside to honor all who have served, living and dead. I would like to honor one of New Jersey's own by reprinting an article that was in a local Trenton paper many years ago. This article came to me by my eldest brother, George who was connected through his wife's family to the veteran. Here is the story of Corporal Brown.

### Trenton Civil War Veteran Recounts Colorful Conflict

#### At 89, Corporal Brown Is One of Trenton's 14 Surviving Members of G.A.R. - Twice Served with Boys in Blue. By Convery Egan

Benjamin S. Brown of 511 Farragut Avenue, one of Trenton's 14 surviving members of the Grand Army of the Republic, celebrated his birthday last Monday.

Eighty-nine years ago Mr. Brown was born in the sparsely settled community of Pemberton. And during the intervening years eventful happenings, including two enlistments in the Union Army, have quickened the flight of time. Years have dealt kindly with him, and today he is still enjoying good health.

Keenly interested in current events, the old gentleman was perusing the evening paper when I called at his residence.

"Sit down; sit down," cordially invited my host, as his great-grandson, aged three, tugged playfully at his slipper-encased foot. I sat down and in the manner of the "Ancient Mariner's" wedding guest, listened fixedly as he wave his interesting tale decades back, mentioning President Lincoln, whom he referred to as "Uncle Abe." Jefferson Davis and General Grant as though they were figures of the present day.

Running his thick hands thought his silvered hair, the erstwhile Boy in Blue related how at the age of 18 he slipped off his father's farm at Hightstown to come to Trenton to enlist in the Army of the North.

A twinkle lighted his eye, and emphasized the laughter lines of

his ruddy face as he continued.

"Twice before I had asked the old gent if I could enlist, and he told me 'no.' but this particular morning in September, 1862, I felt unusually bold, and I hazarded another try. Something had gone wrong with the water wheel he was building that morning and when I approached him, he sensed my mission and in a fit of anger said' Go anywhere you please; I don't care where you go.' "

"I made a bee line for the depot. Came to Trenton, enlisted in Company E  $2^{nd}$  Infantry and returned home a proud boy."

What did your father say to that? I interposed.

"He didn't say anything. He was flabbergasted. His chin just dropped and it seemed to me I could hear it hit his shoes."

#### **Marched to Washington**

"Then shortly after, we were ordered to Camp Perrine, where the Wilson and Stokes Lumber Company now stands. From there we marched to Washington, 35 miles a day, with packs that were all of 150 pounds. Never will I forget that march, and most of us boys were green as could be."

I had struck a responsive chord with mention of the Civil War, and the veteran recited dates with facility that would make a professional historian envious.

Thumbs in his suspenders, rocking back and forth in his favorite chair by the window, Mr. Brown was far removed from the dashing bayonet carrying youth who received his baptism of fire at the first battle of Fredericksburg.

"We were licked at Fredericksburg," somewhat dismally admitted the former corporal. "That was one of the times I saw "Uncle Abe;" he was standing there on a high knoll, with his plug hat capping his towering stature, watching us retreat. He looked crestfallen."

"Look at that picture above your head," said the speaker, pointing pridefully to a watercolor of a hand to hand combat. "That was Chancellorsville. We were beaten there too. But that's the way fighting was done then: you could see who you were battling."

#### **Lived on Horse Meat**

Another painting across the room depicting the horrors of Andersonville Stockade brought to mind how his regiment, hemmed

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## Civil War Round Table & Museum Hamilton, New Jersey

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If you would like to submit an article to the Camp Olden Gazette, you can e-mail it to:

campolden.news@verizon.net

or mail your article to:

Barry Leilich 7 Wolfpack Road Hamilton, NJ 08619

#### President's Gavel Continued

in at Memphis, lived on raw corn for almost two weeks when food failed to arrive from Washington. The thought of how he used to eat horse and mule meat and tell himself that it was the best beef he ever tasted burned clearly in his mind.

After his first term expired Mr. Brown returned to Trenton. But as he put it "I didn't yet feel I had done my duty," so a short time after he enlisted in the cavalry.

With considerable coaxing my host told of being wounded in a skirmish along the Mississippi. And the old soldier to this day has an undying respect for the marksmanship of his then southern enemies. Sticking his head a little more than an inch around the corner of a log cabin he was picked off by an alert Confederate. The wound was only slight however, and left no scar.

#### **Disliked Having to Retire**

Nineteen years ago Mr. Brown having completed more than 47 years of continuous service with the Pennsylvania Railroad was forced to retire on a pension. The idea of retiring did not just meet with his approval, but railroad physicians advised his quitting. He has been well since thought, and often longs to get back into the active swing of events.

He started in the service of the road two weeks after he returned from war as what he termed a "Patty on the track." Diligent and efficient work, however, soon won him promotion and when he retired he was assistant master at the local railroad yards. During his rise he held the positions of brakeman and conductor.

His wife died four years ago last July and with three sons lies buried in Riverview Cemetery. Mr. Brown has two sons and a daughter living. He is a member of Aaron Wilkes Post, No 23, G.A.R.

I salute you Corp. Brown Veterans Day 2006 "Duty well done"

Your obedient servant,

Bruce

## A Trip to Richmond

By John Moleski

Hello again everyone! I hope all had a great summer full of life, wisdom, and journeys. My very good friend and fellow Civil War enthusiast, Jeff and I went on our yearly trip of touring Southern Civil War Sites and historic cities. This year's trip was to Richmond Virginia. As always we started our journey by traveling south on Interstate 95 and as has been the case over the past few years we found I 95 was jammed through Washington DC's Woodrow Wilson bridge project. It took us almost two hours to get past the project. Due to Jeff's quick thinking we did use the HOV lanes, which saved us a good onehour. (In some states and Washington DC. vehicles with only two passengers qualify to be in the HOV lanes, perhaps had New Jersey used two passengers like most of the nation, the HOV lanes in New Jersey would not have been a failure) We arrived at the OMNI Hotel in the heart of downtown Richmond. Jeff and I highly recommended this hotel because of their quick check-ins, exercise room, and cocktails lounge, especially after a six- hour ride. We ate at our favorite steakhouse, the Ruth's Criss that is located outside of town. I had made reservations early in the day. While at the steakhouse we learned that the building originally belonged to a Dr. Friend who was a doctor in Richmond during the Civil War. He is credited with saved many lives during the battle of Richmond. The building was his plantation house, and over time it fell in disrepair. The property was to be bought by developers who plan to demolish the plantation house, but Ruth's Criss Restaurants saved it. I tell you we will be hard pressed to not eat there whenever were in town.



George Pickett Monument

The next day it was up and about to the Hollywood Cemetery located on a small bluff overlooking the James River. This is Richmond's most famous graveyard and it is not-for-profit unlike most graveyards. The cemetery holds the final resting place for presidents John Tyler, James Monroe, and Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Also there are George Picket, and many of the soldiers from his Gettysburg charge. JEB Stewart is

also buried there. Stewart was 31 when he was mortally shot at Yellow Tavern in 1865. Just being at the cemetery and seeing how well the landscaping is maintained and seeing the James River from the overlooks was enough to take any novice historian to gasp. I learned an interesting fact about President John Tyler who died in 1862. Since President Tyler sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War, he was not given the courtesy of having the federal government wreath placed on his gravesite for his birthday. It wasn't until many years later that the government started sending a wreath to his gravesite. A long-standing rule in Washington DC. is that you cannot take sides against the federal government as a former president.

Then it was off to the Tredegar Iron Works, which is still on the rebuild. The place has many of its original walls due to the owner standing at the front gates preventing the Confederates from burning down the factory like they did to almost all



Tredegar Iron Works

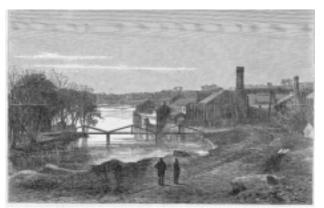
of the rest of the city in fear of the Union looting when they arrived. The visitor's center is located on the second floor. The artifacts on display included John Wilkes Booth's playing cards. We would have stayed there for 2 hours, had time permitted.

After the Ironworks we visited the Museum of the Confederacy and the Confederate Whitehouse. The whitehouse was sold it to the Confederates for \$43,000 by the doctor who owned it. President Davis moved there from his home in Mississippi, and it was there that the Confederate nation would conduct business. Davis was blind in one eye and he had problems with his good eye. Ammonia was used as a remedy. No wonder he always complained of headaches. He was in such pain that Mrs. Davis often signed some of his important papers. The place is restored to 1861 standards. Davis lived much better than Lincoln did in Washington. The Confederate Whitehouse is a must see if you are in Richmond.

Right next door to the Whitehouse is the museum of the Confederacy which housed so many artifacts, too many to mention here. The uniform that General Lee wore at Appomattox, his camp bed, gloves, hat, Jackson's handkerchief when he was shot, and many other artifacts are on

# Tredegar Ironworks Richmond Virginia

In the early 1830's Richmond, Virginia had many small foundries that were constantly merging to form new companies. The city's dependence on these copious industries made it unique from the rest of the south. Also, it was unlike the north in that these industries made use of slave labor. By the middle of the century the city was to walk a fine line between these two worlds.



Tredegar Iron Works

Although this was a prosperous time for 'Tredegar', competition from European and Northern markets were a problem not only for the ironworks but also Richmond and the South. The raw pig iron, required for manufactured products, was cheaper and of better quality in the North, and in an effort to reduce his costs Anderson began to import the basic material.

In 1833 an engineer from Tredegar, South Wales, was hired, along with a number of fellow workers, by a group of Richmond businessmen and industrialists. His name was Rhys Davies and his job was to construct the furnaces and rolling mills, which later became the Tredegar and Belle Isle works of Richmond. So great was the contribution to the construction of the ironworks, by Rhys Davies and his fellow workers, that the proprietors named the works "The Tredegar Ironworks".

Although the Tredegar works was chartered in 1836, the halt of the railway boom caused a panic in 1837 and a consequent drop in the price of iron.

The rolling mills were merged with the Virginia Foundry Company by Francis Dean and John and Edward Cunningham in 1837 creating what would become the largest foundry in the South and third largest in the USA. The newly formed company, however, failed to come up to expectations and continued to loose money. This decline continued until 1841 when the owners hired a twenty eight year old exarmy officer, Joseph R. Anderson, to take charge of the company. The Tredegar works was eventually saved by funds from the Virginia bank and individual contributions. Soon the first cannon was being cast for the US navy.

Along with the government work that 'Tredegar' acquired, the commissioning of nine hundred miles of rail track in Virginia between 1846 to 1853 offered a market in locomotives and rail stock. Also, after taking out a lease in November 1843, Anderson built a shipyard at Rockets in the port of Richmond. In 1847 the forerunner of the Confederacy's ironclad navy, the Treasury cutter *Palk*, was launched. The ship had watertight bulkheads and was constructed with half inch plate.

Anderson was already using slave labor at the plant. These were well paid and provided with clothing, housing and medical care. They were free to come and go virtually as they pleased and were able to earn extra money with overtime. The expansion of the foundry allowed many black workers to be promoted into important positions. His main problem was finding skilled and key workers, such as Puddlers and rollers, for his rolling mills and these did not come cheap. Their skills, acquired by long years of experience, were jealously guarded. By the 1840's six of the puddlers at the works were Welsh.

The situation came to a head in 1842, when during an economic depression Anderson contracted with his workers for five years "to instruct hired men, apprentices, or servants as may at any time be placed in the establishment". Any white workers who did not comply with the terms were fired. As the five years plan expired, Anderson began to move slaves into skilled positions at the furnace. It had the desired effect of reducing costs. Richmond, having no guidelines on the treatment of employed slaves, became the only industrialised city to utilise slaves successfully in factories. The precedent had been set by the head of the Tredegar Iron Works Joseph Anderson.

Fearful for their jobs, the puddlers, led by a twenty nine year old Welsh puddler named Henry Thomas, went on strike on May 23, 1847 demanding the removal of all black workers. Anderson responded by paying them off, stating that they had "discharged themselves" and would lose their company housing. The incidents are historic, in being the only open opposition to industrialised slavery, by white workers of the old South, up to that time.

## Education Highlights -- by Kim Daly

## **Education Report**

Not much happening on the Education home front. Flyers went out to Boy Scout and Girl Scout Councils in all of New Jersey and neighboring PA. So far only one call to ask about the program has been received. We need to get the information out to individual leaders. If you know a Scout leader please get them a copy of our Scout Flyer or give them Kim's Email <a href="kdaly14@aol.com">kdaly14@aol.com</a> and I can get them the information. It's a great program and it can be customized for each group.

You can also help by posting or getting copies of our Scout Flyer out to your local Library. Parents often pick up the information posted at libraries so it's a great spot for our flyers.

Tentative date for our Jr. Camp Olden at the Museum will be June 10<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of June 11<sup>th</sup>. Mark it on your calendar.

## **Scholarship Committee**

It's that time of the year. The Committee has met and reviewed the criteria. A copy of the application and the criteria is in this newsletter. Please share it with any High School Senior or College Student you feel may qualify for the award. The Committee will do a mailing to many NJ High Schools but if you would like to get one to your local school let Kim know and we will check that school off our list. Again, drop a copy off at your local library too.

## **Hospitality**

Thank you Joe M. for the October holiday treats and Terri and Leslie for the delicious November spread. The Board hosted December's refreshments and Mario will start the New Year with the refreshment coverage for January. A couple of our members hosted 2-3 times last year. There are 6 open slots for 2006 please help the club by taking a turn at hosting the refreshments on month. Just check the month before to see if any more supplies are needed. Buy the treats for the month you signed up for. Show up about 15 minutes before the meeting starts and plug in the coffee maker and set up the table. The Club will reimburse you for your expenses, just hand in the receipts.

Mark March 2006 on your calendar for our Bring-A-Dish to share covered dish. Dinner will be 1<sup>st</sup> at this meeting starting at 6:30 pm followed by our meeting at 7pm and the program.

## **Sunshine**

New Year Happy Birthday wishes to Kathy Conte-Jan. 6, Audrey Sperling Jan. 13, Dick Booz –Jan. 15, Nadeen Brunini, Don Grover and Tom Milacki – Jan. 23, Janice Ford – Feb. 6, Bruce Smith – Feb. 8, Leslie – Feb. 22 and Jerrie Glass – March 26. If your name did not appear on the birthday wish list last year or you did not receive a Happy Birthday card please email Kim at <a href="daydreaming513@aol.com">daydreaming513@aol.com</a> so we can add you to our list.

Get Well wishes were sent to Donna Sirack in November following her surgery. October Wedding Congratulations were extended to Bruce and MaryAnn's daughter Georgette and her new hubby Tom. Congratulations were sent to Kim's son Jared and his wife Shannon on the birth of Owen Patrick on October 21st.

Call or Email Connie Davis at 587-0584, or conniemdavis@verizon.net or Kim Daly at 581-3549, or daydreaming513@aol.com with the name of someone you know needs a missive from our Club.



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A Trip to Richmond, Continued from Page 3.

display. Upstairs contains the Confederate Navy artifacts, wooden torpedoes, flags, and fake flags used by the blockade-runners, leave you in awe if you're a navy person. The solder's display, in the basement contains notes, letters, and camp life artifacts. It is unbelievable how well they kept them over the years. A good four hours are needed for both museums.

All in all Richmond is a super city full of plenty of history, food and fun for all ages. I would love to return to see more of the city, maybe in the spring of 07?..

## **Hollywood Cemetery**

By

David L. Gilliam, General Manager

Hollywood Cemetery is one of the major tourist attractions of the Richmond Virginia area. Being the final resting place of Presidents James Monroe and John Tyler, as well as several major figures from our Civil War history, the Cemetery draws many visitors each year. The Cemetery is located on the north end of the Robert E. Lee Bridge or just off the Belvidere Street Exit of 1-195, in Richmond, Virginia.

Hollywood Cemetery was designed in 1847 in the "rural" style to escape grid-like monotony of older cemeteries. Once inside the cemetery gates, one quickly notices that Hollywood's natural setting is designed to encourage families and other visitors to explore and take time to reflect and remember. Its paths wind through valleys, over hills and beneath stately trees with natural tranquility as if they were unplanned. Skillful planning, careful maintenance and nature's blessings make Hollywood perhaps America's most beautiful "garden" cemetery.

While Hollywood is a place of major historical importance, it is an active cemetery where space for burial or entombment in the Chapel Mausolum may still purchased. Most people do not know that Hollywood Cemetery is a not-for-profit, non-stock corporation that is actually owned by its lot owners. Hollywood's Board of Directors - comprised of lot owners, is responsible for the operation of the cemetery. Under their direction, Hollywood has amassed the one of the largest perpetual care fund of any cemetery in the country. The Board of Directors have made sure that the cemetery investments will provide for the general maintenance and capital improvements of the cemetery grounds for many years to come.

As the economy began to recover, Anderson purchased the Tredegar works for \$125,000 on April 4, 1848.

An explosion of a cannon, aboard the battleship *Princetown*, which killed the Secretary of State, spurred Congress to raise standards for guns to a degree that few foundries could meet. Guns manufactured at Tredegar came out better in tests than any other in America and the casting of cannon became one of its prime products. No Tredegar gun was ever known to have burst.

In 1859, new government methods were introduced in respect of casting cannon. Anderson refused to adopt them and lost federal ordinance contracts. Angered by this, Anderson redirected his attention Southward. He believed that the political and economic future lay in an independent South, although he did not advocate war. The last cannon was cast for the United States on 29 August 1860 and the first for the State of Georgia on 27 December 1860.

One of the positive outcomes of John Brown and the incident at Harper's Ferry, from Tredegar's view, was that the raid caused the Virginia General Assembly to appropriate \$500.000 to equip Richmond State Armoury. It was Tredegar that eventually got the bid for the work.

At the outset of war in 1861, the importance of the facilities at Tredegar was one of the most compelling reasons for making Richmond the Capital of the Confederacy.

Although plagued by material and labor shortages, Tredegar operated day and night. Their efforts, however, could not stem the 'Northern tide' and when defeat was inevitable, Anderson asked that the iron works not be burnt. He positioned his "Tredegar Battalion" around the works, which drove off looters who were setting fire to unburned buildings. This act, by Anderson and his men, saved Tredegar, but the property was seized by Federal troops on entering Richmond.

In September 1865, Anderson secured a pardon for Tredegar from President Johnson and the works resumed production in November of that year. Anderson retained many the ironwork's former slaves workers, paying them the same wages as his white workers, along with the same opportunities for advancement. However, he adamantly refused to hire any Northern workers. Tredegar now went back to producing railway parts and iron fronts for new buildings, after the Federal Government forbid arms manufacture.

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By 1873 the Tredegar works was employing 1,200 workers and was a profitable business when Anderson's died in 1892. Joseph Anderson was succeeded by his son Colonel Archer Anderson. The Tredegar ironworks continued to be a successful enterprise for another hundred years, producing munitions for two world wars and becoming the oldest surviving iron works south of the Potomac river. In 1957 the now Ethyl Corporation acquired the site for land and building and the 1868 rolling mill and furnace were relocated.

## **Scholarship Winners**



**Caitlyn Mossbrucker of Turnersville, NJ.** Caitlyn is a charter member of the Elizabeth Thorn Auxiliary #14, SUVCWNJ and Co. D, 12<sup>th</sup> NJ Reenactors. She has been a reenactor for about 7 years. Caitlyn plans on attending Gloucester County College and majoring in Accounting.

**Paul Egbert of Forked River, NJ** Paul received the Al Jarvis Memorial Award . Paul is a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> NJ Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> NJ Infantry Field Hospital. Paul has also been in "the hobby" for about 7 years. He has been accepted at Montclair and Misericordia College as a History/Secondary Education Major. Hopefully we will meet both of our winners at the June General Meeting.

### John Tyler

John Tyler was born March 29, 1790, in Charles City County, Virginia, at the Greenway Family estates.

On March 29, 1813, he married Letitia Christian. Together, they had eight children.

A popular politician in the



John Tyler

1830s with the nickname "Honest John," Tyler was 50 when General William Henry Harrison, then 67, asked him to run as his Vice-Presidential candidate. Harrison, the hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, used the campaign slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too." Both were Whigs — the only two Whig Party Presidents.

When Harrison died in office on April 4, 1841, Tyler became the first Vice President to ascend to the Presidency. Shortly thereafter, Tyler was presented with his first bill to sign, over the title "Acting President." He crossed out the word "Acting," single-handedly creating the American tradition of Vice-Presidential succession.

Tyler served his term without a Vice President, since the 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution providing for the new President to appoint a Vice-President was not passed until 1967. During Tyler's term, slavery and states' rights continued to be burning issues nationwide, and Florida became the 27th state to join the Union, but Tyler's term was more marked by personal events. His first wife, Letitia, died while Tyler was President, and on June 26, 1844, Tyler married Julia Gardiner, becoming the first President to marry in office. Together, they had another seven children.

After his term in office ended in 1845, Tyler tried his best to prevent a Civil War between northern and southern states. In 1861, when his efforts did not succeed, Tyler sided with the South, the Confederacy. After the Civil War began, he was elected to the Confederate House of Representatives, becoming the only President to be voted into office by another government, but he died before he could serve in the Confederate government.



# Attention Scouts

- Interested in learning about the Civil War period of our American History?
- Like to hear from a Union Soldier, Confederate Soldier, lady of the 1860's or music from the period?

Camp Olden Civil War Round Table and Museum of Hamilton Township, New Jersey offers evening programs at their museum at 2202 Kuser Road in Hamilton's Veteran's Park

Visits are customized to group needs and can include – raising the colors to the call of the fife, four-20 minute mini talks by a Union soldier, Confederate soldier, 1860's lady and a music or medical person. Retiring the colors and a visit to the museum can be included.

Approximate time for the program is 2-hours.

Prices are \$3.00 per person – scouts and adults.

Minimum group size is 15 people.

All proceeds support our Education, Preservation,

Scholarship and Museum programs.

For more information contact: Kim Daly at
kdaly14@aol.com or call (609) 581-3549 and leave a message.

Camp Olden Civil War Round Table and Museum Membership Application	
Name:	
Address:	
Birthdays:	
Telephone No.	(
E-Mail Address:	
Memebership: \$	Single (\$25) Senior Single (\$20) Student (\$15)
F	Family (\$35) Sr. Husband & Wife (\$25)

## **Attention Camp Olden Members**

We are still looking for old clothing, not just any old clothing but period Civil War style clothing. We are planning a dress up box to be used as part of our outreach. So if you want to find a new place for that old uniform that does not fit any longer, that dress that does not fit into the character that you have evolved into, or just want some new duds, drop it off at the Museum on any weekend that it is open.



No passion on Earth, neither love nor hate, is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft.

-H. G. Wells

December 7, 2006 – General Meeting and Holiday Party January 4, 2007 – General Meeting January 13, 2007 – Camp Olden Civil War Round Table's Installation Dinner

## Up and Coming Events

Camp Olden Civil War Round Table and Museum 2202 Kuser Road Hamilton, New Jersey 08690



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