

The Camp Olden Gazette

News from the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table

Fall 2016

President's Gavel.

Even though it's almost Labor Day and we are just coming to the close of a long heat wave, it seems ridiculous to think of dressing for cold and snow at this time. But, winter will be here sooner than we think.

During the summer I visited the Swamp Angel in Cadwalader Park in Trenton. I was very much impressed with the lettering that Dana Osterman had done. I would like to thank Dana & Stan Saperstein for their involvement. (See article to the right.) I would also like mention the changes to the cannon in front of the Camp Olden museum. We now have a new sturdier base made of bluestone. The cannon will be put back in place very soon with a new commemoration plate.



New Cannon Base

Remember, we always need volunteers at the museum. If you can spare a couple of hours once or twice a year, it would be greatly appreciated. Contact Bruce Smith for information.

We will have some very interesting speakers visiting us this fall.

September 1st - Paul Kahan - *Simon Cameron, Admirable Scoundrel*

October 6th - Allen Meash - *Maj. Gen. C. F. Smith*

November 3rd - Joe Rose - *Grant Under Fire*

See you on September 1st

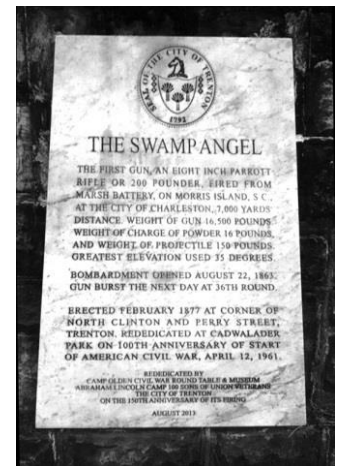
Your obedient servant,

Bruce. ♦

Swamp Angel Restoration

Contributed by Stan Saperstein & Dana Osterman

The restoration of the Swamp Angel mounted in Cadwalader Park, Trenton, is now complete. The Camp Olden CWRT arranged for the restoration in 1991. The cannon was rust proofed and painted. The base was repointed. Because the brass plaque was stolen, a marble sign was installed in 2013. This is a durable sign that is not valuable to metal thieves. Marble was suggested by Dana Osterman, owner of the Washington Crossing Forge, who Stan Saperstein recommended as a sign maker. The City of Trenton contributed \$800 for the sign and the club did the arrangements. Stan assisted in the process when Dana was ill by sealing the marble in preparation of painting the letters which was completed this spring. Below are images of the final painting of the letters. (For further information about the Swamp Angel restoration see the Fall 2013 issue of *The Camp Olden Gazette*.) ♦



Civil War Encampment

Contributed by Mike Mazzocchi

The ***Call to Duty: Civil War Encampment*** reenacting life during the Civil War was held on June 4th and June 5th at the Historic Village at Allaire in Wall, NJ.

Visitors were able to watch and participate in military drills, meet President Lincoln and influential military figures, as well as learn about the lives of soldiers and civilians. A skirmish between Confederate and Union Troops also took place on both days.



Confederate Troops Attacking Union Lines



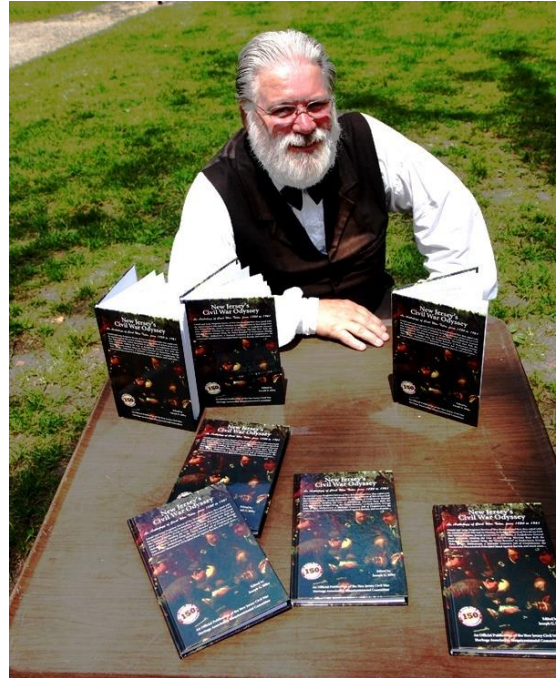
Union Troops Defending Against the Charge



Dress Parade in the Federal Camp

The evening session included a lantern tour. Other events included a dress parade in the Federal Camp, an Artillery demonstration, an vintage 1864 Baseball Game and a skirmish through the village.

Camp Olden CWRT President Bruce Sirak also attended representing NJ Governor Charles Olden. He is shown here manning the sales table for the New Jersey Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee and their publication *New Jersey's Civil War Odyssey*. ♦



Bruce Sirak, Pres. Camp Olden CWRT

Civil War Visits.

Our members did some traveling and visiting over the past few months. Following are "field reports".

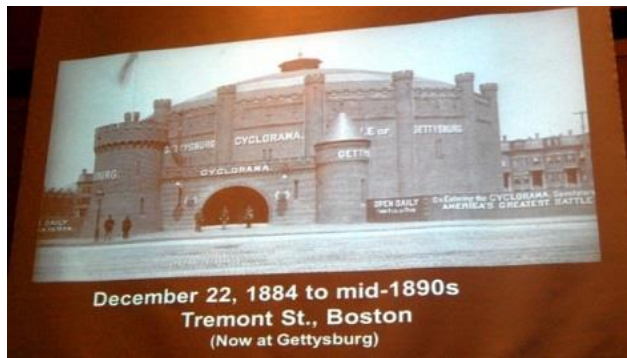
Behind the Scenes at the Gettysburg Cyclorama

Contributed by Tony Travaglione

I took a tour of the Cyclorama Painting at the Gettysburg Visitor Center entitled "An Evening with the Painting." The tour was given after normal visiting hours by Park Ranger Sue Boardman. It consisted of a brief lecture of the history of the painting followed by an up close tour.

The Gettysburg Cyclorama depicts the climax of

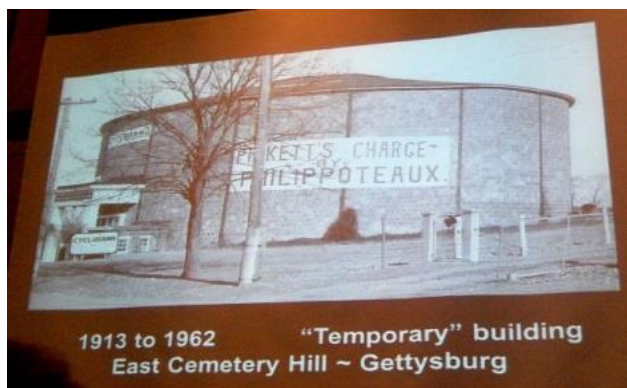
Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863. Several versions were painted in the 1880's by Paul Philippoteaux, a Frenchman, and his team of painters. The painting measures 42 feet high, 377 feet long, and weighs 12.5 tons! The version presently hanging in the Gettysburg Visitor Center was also exhibited in a rotunda in Boston in the late 1800's;



and in Hahne's Department Store in Newark, NJ in the early 1900's;



and in a temporary wooden building on Cemetery Hill in Gettysburg in 1913. Other versions were exhibited in other cities.



It was moved from the "temporary" building to a modern cyclorama building (now demolished) in 1962. In 2007 it was repaired, cleaned, and permanently hung in the present Gettysburg

Visitor Center. It was also closely examined for features not noticed before. One well known error is the portrayal of Confederate General Lewis Armistead on horseback. He was actually on foot for the entire charge.

The tour then moved to the present viewing platform used by the general public and Ranger Boardman pointed out some of the details she had mentioned in her lecture. The effect of being surrounded by the action depicted in the scene, and knowing it represents the real events of Pickett's Charge, is breathtaking.



Ranger Boardman then led us off the viewing platform, down some wooden steps, onto the concrete floor of the Cyclorama room, and through a covered passageway, where we ended up standing next to the bottom edge of the gigantic canvas. She explained the painting is hung from a circular steel pipe at the top.



It is stretched by heavy metal weights attached to the bottom of the canvas all the way around the bottom. This causes the center of the canvas to bulge in toward the center of the room, giving an illusion of depth.



The canvas ends about three feet above the floor, so Ms. Boardman encouraged us to bend over and get up behind the canvas. We did so and could see the back of the canvas material and the way it curved inward.



We moved back to the front side of the painting and did some close up examinations of the details near the bottom of the painting. Nearby was a platform that can be raised alongside the surface of the painting for maintenance.



We also could look up to the top of the room to the round structure above the viewing platform and the lights illuminating the painting.



To end the program, Ranger Boardman led us back up to the viewing platform and out of the building. There is an excellent book that tells the history of the Cyclorama and examines all sections of the painting using hundreds of color photographs with explanations. It is entitled *The Gettysburg Cyclorama: The Turning Point of the Civil War on Canvas*, by Chris Brennerman and Sue Boardman. I highly recommend it. ♦

Gettysburg Weekend

Contributed by Sue DeSiver

Gary and I decided on a last minute trip to Gettysburg for the 153rd anniversary of the battle, July 1st to 3rd this year. We had excellent weather, high 70s and low humidity, making it "the perfect storm" to attempt this very busy weekend. As one of the park rangers said "There's so much going on, you can't do it all, so you are encouraged to come back next year!" All of the activities we attended were at the National Military Park itself and did not include the battle re-enactment which took place outside the park at Pumping Station Road.

There were 3 battle walks daily at 10, 2:30, and 6. These programs were 2½ to 3 hours long, walk-and-talks on special topics, such as actions by Joseph Davis' Mississippi and North Carolina brigade on July 1st with ranger Matt Atkinson, and "Pickett's Charge - Was there a Second Wave?", a 4 mile walk out with ranger Troy Harman. Each of these walks were attended by well over 200 people and the rangers wore microphones.

On a walk with ranger John Hoptak about the 12th New Hampshire, John gave out 206 laminated sheets, one for every soldier in the battle. Each sheet contained an individual soldier's photo, identification, and other information including whether he survived the battle. When we noticed about 40 of us didn't get an "identity", we realized how big the crowd was!

We did the 10 AM programs every day, and then moved on to the *Real Time Programs*. These were held at the actual time and location on the day the action took place, such as The First Shots, 9 AM on July 1st at McPherson's Ridge, and then the 6th Wisconsin at the Railroad Cut at 10:30 AM. Each program was 30-45 minutes in duration. Then we would drive to a new location for the next event happening that day in real time. There was also walking at each location, and perhaps 50-75 participants.



Monument to 6th Wisconsin at the Railroad Cut

A highlight of this part of the weekend was "Night Fighting on East Cemetery Hill", with ranger Jarrad Fuoss. After quite a hike up, down, and

back up the hill to get a feel for the terrain, we were "attacked" at sunset by a group of about 50 Confederate re-enactors who had been lying hidden in the swale of the field on the back of the hill. We were very surprised as they charged up the hill with their flag giving the rebel yell! It was a great illustration of how different visibility can be depending on where you stand on the field.

Another choice of activity was the Sacred Trust author talks and book signings in a tent outside the Visitor Center - we attended 2 of these on such topics as "Slaveholding Women, Ritual, and Authority in Civil War Richmond" and "Did George McClellan Out-think Robert E. Lee During the First Invasion?" These were held Saturday and Sunday and were said to be available on YouTube for future viewing.

We also visited the Confederation of Union Generals speakers' tent in town at Unity Park across from Mr. G's Ice Cream, where re-enactors portraying such generals as Winfield Scott Hancock, George Armstrong Custer, and Daniel Sickles held forth for 30 - 45 minute talks and Q&A. At the Rupp House, also on Baltimore Street, women re-enactors were speaking - among them were Dr. Mary Walker, Louisa May Alcott on her time as a nurse, and Mrs. Letterman on the significance of railroads.



Rupp House

For "night owls" there were campfire talks at Pitzer Woods every night at 8:30 PM, which continue through the summer.

So, as we were told the first day, "you can't do it all", and that was accurate! But it was fun trying, and there was a great variety of programming from which to choose - all free - packed into those 3 anniversary days July, 1-3. ♦

Monument image Courtesy of stonesentinels.com

National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

Contributed by Mike Mazzocchi. Photos by Quinn Ciommo

On a recent spring day, my great-nephew Quinn and I visited the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey located within the grounds of the National Guard Training Center on Camp Drive and Sea Girt Avenue in Sea Girt, New Jersey.



National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

The museum displays original and reproduction uniforms, weapons, photographs, artifacts and art from colonization to the present day. Of particular note is an outdoor military vehicle and aircraft collection. The indoor displays include the only Civil War cannon mounted on a carriage on museum display in New Jersey, a 19th & 20th century small arms collection, and a Civil War era submarine named *The Intelligent Whale* (to see the submarine and have a look inside, ask the docent to open the back room where it is on display).



Revolutionary War Display



Civil War Display

According to a recent article in *The Coast Star*, there are now a number of new features including new Desert Storm artifacts to commemorate the operation's 25th anniversary. The staff has also implemented "Museum Go" which places 12 Pokémon cards throughout the museum. Whoever finds all 12 at the end of their tour wins a prize.



Browning Automatic Rifle in D-Day Display



Self-Propelled Howitzer



Sherman Tank



The Intelligent Whale

The museum is well worth a visit and is open seven days a week from 10:00AM - 3:00PM and is closed on state holidays. For further information visit their website:

<http://www.nj.gov/military/museum/>. ♦

Who Am I?



I was a Civil War Union Major General. I graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1825, placing 19th out of 37 (my classmates included future Fort Sumter commander Robert Anderson, and Brig. Gen. William R. Montgomery). I served on the faculty at West Point from 1829 to 1842 and was assigned to the 3rd United States Infantry at the outbreak of the Mexican War. I served with distinction first in Zachary Taylor's forces in Northern Mexico and then with Winfield Scott's army from Vera Cruz to Mexico. I received brevets of Major, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel in recognition of my gallantry in the conflict. Promoted to full rank Major in 1848, and to Lieutenant Colonel in 1854, I participated in the Mormon Campaign, and commanded the Department of Utah on the eve of the Civil War. I was Promoted to Brigadier General, US Volunteers on August 31, 1861, and served under Ulysses S. Grant (one of my former students at West Point) in the Union capture of Forts Henry and Donelson. At Fort Donelson, while in command of a division, I personally led the Federal charge that forced the fort's surrender. Promoted to Major General, US Volunteers on March 22, 1862 I was named to command the Union Army pressing Confederates on the Tennessee River (General Grant was placed under me by Army Chief Henry W. Halleck). Just prior to the Battle of Shiloh I slipped while boarding a rowboat, scraping my shin. The seemingly minor wound developed into an infection that would cause my death on April 25. Had I not been injured, I would have been in command of the Union forces at the Battle of Shiloh, instead of General Grant. I am buried at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. ♦

(Source <http://www.findagrave.com>, and Russ Dodge)

Answer to "*Who Am I*" is on page 10.

Cemetery Corner

Continuing our feature where readers can submit one or two paragraphs and a photo of a Civil War veteran's headstone. It's an easy way to get your work in print and give tribute to a CW veteran.

John F. Schenk, Jr.

Contributed by John F. Allen, Jr.



The son of a physician, John F. Schenk, Jr. stood 5'-7" tall, and is described as having blue eyes, brown hair and a dark complexion. He was a printer in Hunterdon County and enlisted for three months in the 3rd New Jersey Regiment Militia Infantry on April 27, 1861, at age 19. On July 16, 425 men of the 3rd were detailed as an escort to a provision train enroute to the main body of the army. John was apparently among this number, and was mustered out of the service July 31, 1861, without "seeing the elephant" when the army fought the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861.

John mustered in for another nine months' service in the 31st New Jersey Volunteer Infantry on September 17, 1862. According to "The Union Army" by Federal Publishing Company, 1908 - Volume 3, "... the regiment was thoroughly tested at the battle of Chancellorsville and although it

escaped with slight loss it performed its duty courageously. The term of service soon expiring, the labors of the 31st as an organization came to an end and it was mustered out of service at Flemington, June 24, 1863.” Stephen W. Sears’ book, “Chancellorsville”, indicates the First Corps formed part of the extreme left flank during that battle and during its service the regiment lost 39 men to disease. So it’s possible John still hadn’t “seen the elephant” after two tours of duty.

On August 11, 1864, he enlisted in the Navy for a year where he was assigned as a Landsman to the USS Pontoosuc serving on the South Atlantic Blockade Squadron. The ship was involved in chasing the raider, CSS Tallahassee, but failed to catch her in port in Halifax, Nova Scotia, or at sea. Following this unsuccessful chase, the ship resumed blockade duties, but was later involved in supporting the Union assaults along the North Carolina coast at Forts Fisher and Anderson. John completed his service when the ship was decommissioned on July 5, 1865, towards the end of the Civil War.

John returned to Flemington where he rejoined the printing trade, married and started a family. Tragically, where almost four years of war on land and sea failed, the “White Plague” succeeded. John died on May 30, 1880, of consumption (tuberculosis) at the age of 39, leaving a wife and five children, the oldest being 11 years old. He is buried in the Flemington Presbyterian Churchyard in Hunterdon County.

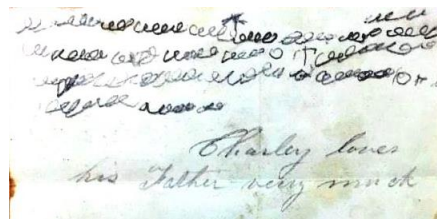
References: ancestry.com - Kuhl, John “Hunterdon County in the Civil War”: Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission (2014).

How a 4-year-old's Letter to His Father Survived the Civil War. Scribbles from Home, Kept Safe on the Battlefield.

By Ella Morton

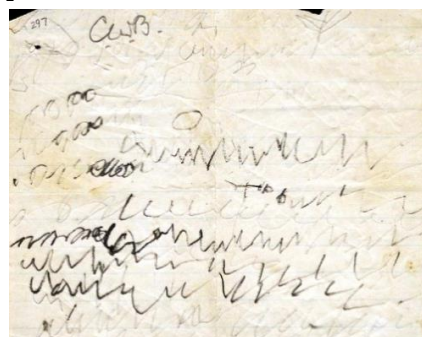
At first glance, it’s hard to see why New York’s Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History would hold the below letter in its collection. The yellowed paper holds a few lines of loops that look to have been lazily scribbled in pencil—the kind of thing you might doodle out of boredom

when a call center operator places you on hold. The catalog entry lists its contents as “Mostly illegible scribbles.” Beneath these scribbles, though, is a clue: the phrase “Charley loves his Father very much,” written with the same pencil, but in a legible, even elegant, hand.



Precious Scrawls and Squiggles

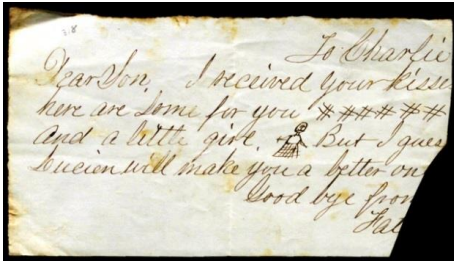
The Charley in question was Charley Burpee, who was about four years old in 1864—the year he scrawled those loops and scribbles. He was writing to his father, Thomas, a soldier from Connecticut who began serving in the Civil War as a Union Army captain on July 12, 1862. Within a few months of receiving his son's letter, Thomas was wounded at Cold Harbor, Virginia. He died two days later. Charley's scribbles were among the personal effects given to the family when his body was shipped home.



More Scribbles from Charley

Charley’s letter is a rarity. While many letters written by Civil War soldiers have survived, there are few remaining letters that were written by soldiers’ families and delivered to the battlefield. “In general, letters from home don’t survive,” says Sandy Trenholm, Curator and Director of the Gilder Lehrman Collection. Soldiers had to carry every possession in their haversacks, and non-essential items, even ones with sentimental value, tended to be jettisoned.

For Thomas Burpee to have held onto Charley’s letter, “it must have really meant something to him,” says Trenholm. “I think it survived because he missed his children and he wanted to feel close to them. He was holding onto it.”



Letter from Thomas Burpee to His Youngest Son

The Gilder Lehrman Institute, which maintains an extensive collection of Civil War documents, has over 500 items relating to Thomas Burpee, his wife, Adeline, and their two children. From these papers, it's been possible to get a sense of the soldier's life and his relationship with his family. "You feel like you know them," says Trenholm, "like they're a friend of yours."

Captain Burpee kept another letter from Lucien, his elder son. Written in February 1864 when Lucien was about eight, it's a stream-of-consciousness insight into life back home in Connecticut: "I go to school every day. Mother says that she will get me a present if I will learn well. We have had two snow storms. Did you get that Valentine I sent you."

Knowing Lucien penned those words within months of his father's death is sobering, especially when you discover that Thomas Burpee's story had a gruesome final twist. "This is a little disturbing," says Trenholm, "but one of the letters we have, it's from a chaplain in his regiment, and it sounds like they forgot to embalm him before they sent the body home. The chaplain was trying to explain that it wasn't his fault—that he thought everything was taken care of."

The delivery of Thomas' unpreserved body seems to have had a significant effect on the Burpee family. Adeline, says Trenholm, was "horried at what happened," and expressed this in a letter to the army chaplain.

Though Charley would have had scant memories of his father, both sons became advocates for the memory of Thomas Burpee. "There's a lot in the collection where they've written, talking about their father, or doing things in their father's memory," Trenholm says. "It was very, very strong in them, that they needed to keep his memory alive." ♦

Article contributed by John F. Allen, Jr; Photographs courtesy of David Plotz and The Gilder Lehrman Institute.

Laurel Hill Civil War Tour

Lincoln Camp 100 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will be taking a Civil War tour of Laurel Hill Cemetery (3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia) on Saturday, September 24, 2016, at 11AM followed by lunch at a local restaurant. For information about the cemetery visit their website at <https://thelaurelhillcemetery.org/>

Camp Olden Members are invited to attend. The cost of the tour is \$15 per person. Please let Gary DeSiver (webmaster@CampOlden.org) know if you would like to attend.



The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) was founded on November 12, 1881 to honor their ancestors' service. New Jersey camps were first organized in 1882. Membership is open descendants of union veterans as well as those who are not descended from Union veterans. Several members of Camp Olden are also members of Lincoln Camp 100 including David Martin, Bill Moore, Bruce Sirak, Mike Mazzocchi and Ted Evan. Although women are not eligible to be members, a number of women frequently attend our meetings as guests.

Lincoln Camp 100 meets 4 times a year (including one field trip). Speakers at recent meetings have included David Martin (New Jersey's Civil War Flags), Gary DeSiver (the Evolution of the Monitors), and a first person impression of Abraham Lincoln by Bob Costello. The meetings always include lunch or dinner. We all enjoy the speaker, camaraderie and the meal together. We would love to have you become members (Civil War descendent or not). For information contact. Gary DeSiver, Commander, Lincoln Camp 100, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. ♦



Grave of Maj. Gen. George Meade at Laurel Hill

Civil War Tours

Camp Olden member Jane Peters Estes in conjunction with Starr Tours has organized a number of history-themed tours. Jane will be the assigned tour director for these itineraries.

Land of Lincoln - Springfield IL and St. Louis MO - October 1-7 - Itinerary includes the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, Lincoln Home NPS Site, Lincoln's Tomb, New Salem Historic Site, a full day cruise on a paddlewheel riverboat, St. Louis Gateway Arch photo op, tour (and free samples) at Anheuser-Busch Brewery and the Missouri Civil War Museum. Note: *This tour will not be offered in 2017; last chance!*

Civil War Trails - Rochester, Auburn & Seneca Falls, NY - October 13-16 - Itinerary includes the Seward House Museum, Harriet Tubman Home, Women's Rights National Historical Park, Susan B. Anthony House, Mt. Hope Cemetery, cruise on the Genesee River and sightseeing tour of Elmira NY (location of Confederate POW camp).

Gettysburg Christmas - Gettysburg, PA - December 9-10 - Itinerary includes the Jennie Wade House, Shriver House, Eisenhower Farm, dinner at the Farnsworth House and for entertainment, the Tuba Carol Fest and "A Christmas Carol" at the Majestic Theater. This tour is about the town and its residents which is different from most Gettysburg trips.

For additional information on these or other tours or to make a reservation, visit www.starrtours.com or call 800-782-7703. ♦

Hospitality:

Thanks to all members who help with Hospitality! Following is the list of volunteers for the future.

Sept – Martin Mosho

Oct - Covered Dish – 5:45 Start Time

Nov – Need Volunteer

December – The Board ♦

Reminder – Bring A Dish!

Remember hospitality for the **Oct. 6th meeting** is a covered dish. Bring your favorite last taste of summer or first taste of fall food to share.

Special start time is 5:45 PM. ♦

Be a Gazette Contributor!

We hope you have enjoyed the many member contributions in this issue. Please submit some yourself. Explored a battlefield? Seen an interesting museum exhibit? Read a new Civil War book or reread a favorite one? Share your experiences with round table members. **Also, for our new *Where am I?* feature, submit a couple of your own photographs of a favorite Civil War site for other members to try to identify.**

Don't forget the ***Meet Your Fellow Members*** series. Send a brief biography relating how you became interested in the Civil War and became a member of Camp Olden. Please send a photograph so other members will know who you are.

A reminder to all members and associates - A visit to the ***Civil War and Native American Museum*** sponsored by the Camp Olden CWRT is an informative way for Civil War buffs to spend an afternoon. The museum contains a specialized collection of Civil War medical equipment, including amputation and surgical kits as well as various muskets, rifles and artillery. Several displays offer soldier documents and artifacts specific to New Jersey. Also of interest is a diorama of the Swamp Angel, an 8 in. parrot used in the siege of Charleston, SC, in August, 1863. The original is now mounted in Cadwalader Park, Trenton. The museum is located at 2202 Kuser Road at the south entrance to Hamilton Veterans Park and is open the 2nd and 3rd full weekends of each month (except January and February), 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. For more history, visit the John Abbott House, built 1730-1840, just across the parking lot.

Jot down a couple of lines and send your photos and your thoughts to the Gazette email address: oldennewsletter@optonline.net. The mailing address is C&M Mazzocchi, 1430 18th Ave. Wall, NJ 07719.

For meeting and other information visit us on the Web: www.campolden.org. ♦

Answer to "Who Am I?" - Major General Charles Ferguson Smith Apr. 24, 1807 - Apr. 25, 1862. ♦