

The Camp Olden Gazette

News from the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table

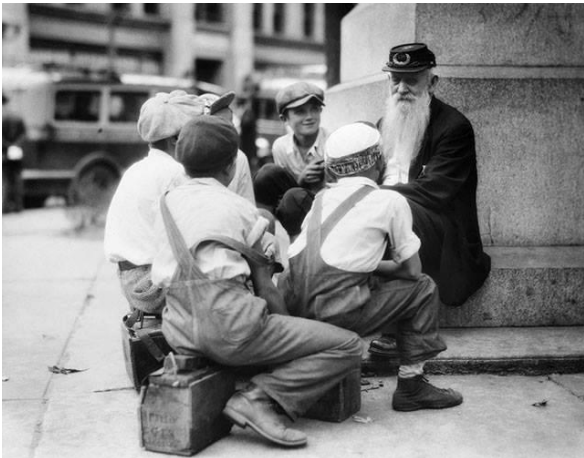
Spring 2016

President's Gavel.

Recently I was reading a book by American Heritage called "My Brush with History" and came across this story you may enjoy reading by John Clack Alberts, Lt Col., US Air Force (Ret) of North Barrington, Illinois.

My mother loved parades and early on imbued me with love of same. An incident at one sticks in my mind. I believe it was in 1926 or 1927. I can't be sure as I was only a small boy. While standing on the curb in Newark, New Jersey, watching a Decoration Day parade pass by, I found myself near a group of seven or eight ancient Civil War veterans. I looked over their beards, their blue Grand Army of the Republic coats and broad brimmed campaign hats, and I wished I could grow a beard like one of theirs. One old soldier called, "Sonny come over here," and I obediently did. He said "Shake my hand, "and I did "Now", he said, "you're only two handshakes from the Revolution." When he was about my age, six or seven, he had shaken hands with a veteran of that war.

I fully intend someday to pass on this membership in an exclusive club to another young hand. He'll be three shakes from the great event. We certainly are a young country.



Shoeshine boys talk with a Civil War Veteran in 1935

Our next speaker at our **March 3rd** meeting will be Dr. Joseph Wroblewski speaking about *BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL JOSEPH KARGÉ*

The **April 7th** speaker will be Dr. Anthony Waskie on the *Founding of the Grand Army of the Republic*.

Remember hospitality for this meeting is a **covered dish**. Bring your favorite last taste of winter or first taste of spring food to share. **Special start time is 5:45.**

The **May 5th** meeting will bring Paula Gidjanis discussing the *128th PA - a 9 month regiment from Bucks County*.

See you in March!

"Spring is on the way"!

Your obedient servant,

Bruce ♦

Hospitality:

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

March - John Maleski

April - Covered Dish – **(5:45 start)**

May - Connie Davis

June – *Need Volunteer*

July - Susan Slowik & Don Cooper

Aug - No Meeting

Sept – *Need Volunteer*

Oct - Covered Dish – **(5:45 start)**

Nov – *Need Volunteer*

Dec – Board ♦



Museum Anniversary

This May marks the 20th anniversary of the opening of the **Camp Olden Civil War and Native American Museum**. Following is an article about the event from *The Trenton Times* and excerpts from the day's program. (Contributed by Bruce Smith)

Museum on Civil War now open

Artifacts on display in small Hamilton house

By MIRTA D'AMATO
Staff Writer

HAMILTON — For 12-year-old Simon Makuchowski, learning about the Civil War became more interesting yesterday, thanks to a new Hamilton museum.

About 150 visitors toured the small house, home to the Civil War artifacts and shared by the American Indian Museum yesterday during the museum's dedication and inauguration at Veterans Park.

"The museum is very educational," said Simon, who said he saw firsthand "what they used for weapons and clothing. Instead of sitting around and listening to a teacher, you get to actually see the things."

Before the opening of the building, a ribbon-cutting ceremony, with a color guard dressed in Civil War-era garb, set the tone of the event. We are "paying homage to the unique American aspects of this war," said Vincent Mercandetti, president of the Civil War Round Table, who gave the keynote address.

Guests who toured the facility were able to see guns, artillery shells, clothing, a Civil War flag, and a pictorial view of the



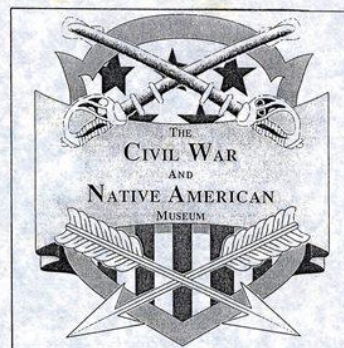
restoration of the "Swamp Angel," a Civil War cannon in Cadwalader Park in Trenton.

"It's very educational," said Janet Makuchowski. "I didn't know a cannon ball could go so far," referring to a brief history posted with the Swamp Angel display.

The Civil War Museum had its grand opening yesterday.

The facility has guns, artillery shells, clothing, a Civil War flag, and a pictorial view of the restoration of the "Swamp Angel," a Civil War cannon.

ALSO ON DISPLAY are Indian artifacts, dating back as far as 8,000 B.C. They included arrow heads, broken clay pottery, and other tools.



DEDICATION and INAUGURATION

Saturday, May 11, 1996

12:00 noon

Veterans Park (South Entrance)
Hamilton, NJ

- Civil War Encampments
- Native American Displays
- Pomp & Ceremony
- History & Fun

Sponsored by:

CAMP OLDEN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
(609) 275-0143



Valiant Spirit Still Lives

CAMP OLDEN

Civil War Round Table

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Come and visit the museum located in Veterans Memorial Park at 2202 Kuser Rd. Hamilton, NJ, open the 2nd and 3rd full weekends of each month (except Jan. and Feb.) from 1 PM to 4 PM. ♦

Meet Your Fellow Members.

Warren M. Spengler

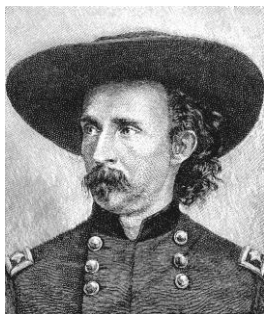


How I Discovered the Civil War!

When I was eight years old, my foster parents rented a restaurant for a year. Pappy (Nelson Swisher) and Granny (Ruth Swisher) had always wanted to try their hand at running a business, now they would get their chance. Pappy didn't quit his day job (at a chemical plant) so he basically worked two jobs for the next year. The restaurant was really a diner/ice cream parlor. They had no intention of selling ice cream, so in that section they soaped up the windows and installed a TV set. This is where I would spend most of my time. The perfect place for an eight year old boy, away from paying customers.

However, when Granny was working alone, I had to stay in the diner in case she needed help. Not that I was much help. So it was one night and there I was. Totally bored. To ease my boredom, I headed toward the front door. Just to the right of it were four gumball machines. I put in a coin, turned the handle and out popped a shiny yellow gumball. I paused to study the figure etched upon it.

"General Custer. Who was General Custer?"



Instead of hearing all about the Battle of the Little Bighorn, she would utter the words that would change my life.

"He was in the Civil War."

"Oh," I said innocently as I popped the gumball into my mouth. "What was that?"

She promptly launched into the history of the war. I'm sure she felt my interest wouldn't last. At that age I had no hobbies or interests and a fleetingly short attention span. But something clicked. I was fascinated. Maybe it was the way she talked about places and events. But I think it was the way she talked about the people. At that age I thought of people from the past as alien creatures whom were nothing like me. But she made them sound like regular folks. People just like me. I started asking questions, I wanted to know everything.

Even at home the questions keep coming. She patiently answered every one. She soon found she could use this to her advantage. I started to become a lot more useful at that restaurant. I would do whatever she wanted, as long as she agreed to talk about the war. Talk she did. She considered it a priceless part of her heritage and she was happy to pass it on. Granny had family in Waynesboro Pennsylvania. To get there we had to pass right through Gettysburg. She continued the indoctrination.

"This was all battlefield." She said. "As far as you can see in every direction was battlefield. It was the biggest battle of the war."

I peered out the car window in the dead of night and tried to imagine this great big battle. Was it more interesting because it happened here instead of someplace else?

Two years later, at a garage sale, they bought me a book on the war. It was a thin volume with a page missing. But that book went everywhere with me, even to bed. Finding the first real interest in my life, I began to develop some mighty possessive ideas about the war. The American Civil War has legions of followers, but that left me confused. Who were these people, didn't they know the Civil War was my war. They needed to go find their own war.

Thankfully, I quickly outgrew such thinking. But I never out grew my interest in the war. That continues unabated to this day. All because of a little yellow gumball! ♦

Civil War Visits.

Our members did some traveling over the past few months. Following are “field reports”.

Wreaths Across America and Finns Point National Cemetery

Contributed by Mike Lawrence

Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a non-profit organization formed in 2007 as an extension of the Arlington Wreath Project, with over 700 participating locations in all 50 states and 24 national veteran cemeteries on foreign soil. Through private donations, Christmas wreaths are purchased to cover every veteran's grave. Every second Saturday in December, veterans and the general public gather to honor veterans and lay wreaths on each of their graves.



Mike Lawrence (2nd from l.) and the 7th VA

On December 12, 2015, at Finns Point National Cemetery, an estimated crowd of about 500 participants took part in a ceremony honoring our veterans. There was a flag raising and then the Star Spangled Banner was performed by the Woodstown High School Choir. Girl Scouts of Penns Neck and Ashwood recited the Pledge of Allegiance. After opening remarks, veterans representing all branches of the military laid wreaths around the flag pole. After a selection of military songs – performed by the Woodstown High School Choir – everyone present laid 750 wreaths on graves throughout the cemetery. The 7th VA Reenacting group held a special ceremony at the Confederate Monument. Company Chaplain

(and Camp Olden Member) Mike Lawrence led the 7th VA in prayer over the Confederate graves.

Finns Point National Cemetery

Finns Point National Cemetery is located six miles northwest of Salem, NJ. Originally, the United States purchased this land for the construction of the Finns Point Battery to protect the port of Philadelphia. By 1863 however, the grounds served as a burial site for Confederate prisoners of war who died while imprisoned at Fort Delaware. Fort Delaware was on Pea Patch Island in the Delaware River. This fort was the largest coastal defense fort in the nation surpassing Fort Sumter in size. It was built to protect the ports of Wilmington, DE and Philadelphia, PA. In April 1862, Fort Delaware received its first POWs, Confederate soldiers from the battle of Kernstown, VA.

An estimated 2,502 men died while imprisoned at the fort. The remains of the POWs and of Union soldiers as well were transported to Finns Point across the river for burial. On October 3, 1875, Finns Point was declared a national cemetery.

A union monument was installed in 1879 in memory of the 135 Federal guards who died while on duty at Fort Delaware and were interred at the cemetery.



Union Monument

A Confederate monument was erected by the US government in 1910 to memorialize Confederate soldiers buried there. The 85 foot tall concrete and granite obelisk features bronze tablets listing the names of 2,436 Confederate POWs who died at Fort Delaware during the Civil War.



Confederate Monument

Finns Point National Cemetery is also the final resting place of 13 soldiers who fought for the German Army and died while being held as prisoners of war at Fort Dix, NJ. Many of the older graves are marked with a distinctive white marble headstone, while the post-World War II graves lie flush with the ground. Finns Point National Cemetery is still an active cemetery. ♦

For further information see the Finns Point website:
<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/finnspoint.asp>

A Monument in a Park

Contributed by Kim Daley

The baby, Kurt, now 29 was about to finish his one-year cruise on the USS George Washington. Preparing for this his wife found a rental home in Portsmouth, VA (just outside Norfolk) and we moved her and the granddaughter, Deanna (remember the Charlie Zahm concert -“ bumb, bumb”) down early in October. Not knowing anything about the area I asked some neighbors for any nice parks to take Deanna to and City Park was high on the list. Tim and I took her over for some grandparent time our last day there. Of course when we saw 3 monuments across the

drive at the park we had to wander over to “check them out”. The largest, a pointed obelisk was dedicated on three sides to Confederate Civil War Soldiers and titled “Roll in S.C. Service 1861-1865” then soldiers names were listed filling three sides. At the bottom of each was a battle- 2nd Manassas, Sharpsburg & Malvern Hill. On the 4th side was written “Dedicated to soldiers in 1810 who defended Craney Island” (from those pesky British again.)



First, I tried to find out about these S.C. soldiers but google did not help. We all know Malvern Hill, Sharpsburg and 2nd Manassas but I wanted a unit. We met up with a guy dressed as a Confederate at a local Halloween “Trunk or Treat” so I asked him if he was a reenactor. His answer... “No, I’m a skirmisher”. Ooooooookkkkkay. Anyway, I asked about the monument and he had no idea what I was referring to. Nothing on google either. He did say that the soldiers from the Portsmouth area mostly joined the 3rd VA. Back on Google and found this tidbit “On 20 April, the companies mustered at the Portsmouth courthouse and were ordered the following morning to take

control of the Gosport Navy Yard (where the USS Merrimack was captured, refitted and eventually rechristened as the CSS ironclad Virginia) that the evacuating Federals had set afire the previous evening and save as much of the remaining equipment and supplies as possible." The Merrimack had been built in Boston in 1855 and had been burnt by the evacuating Federal troops so the Confederates actually raised the burned out hull and built the Virginia.

Gosport Navy Yard? Back to Google. "Early in the CW, the important Gosport Shipyard upstream from Craney Island on the Elizabeth River at Portsmouth fell into Confederate hands and the first Confederate ironclad warship CSS *Virginia* was built there. This ship fought the first Union ironclad USS *Monitor* during the famous Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862, which was inconclusive as neither armored ship could defeat the other." Now we're getting somewhere. But where is this shipyard and Craney Island? (By the way it was named by the early colonist because of all the cranes (really Herons) nesting there.) "Craney Island is a point of land in the independent city of Portsmouth in the South Hampton Roads region of eastern Virginia." As I stood at the monument and looked out to the water and bay I realized I was looking at it. It now looks like part of the land and has some naval buildings on it but you would never know that at one time the only way onto the Island was at low tide.

Now, we have all heard about the Virginia and the Monitor. But did you know that the Merrimack had actually been decommissioned in February of 1860 but was still usable and the day before the firing on Fort Sumter Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles prepared her for sea, planning to move her to Philadelphia. "He directed that "great vigilance is exercised in guarding and protecting" Norfolk Navy Yard and her ships." On April 17, the day VA succeeded, Engineer in Chief B. F. Isherwood managed to get the frigate's engines lit; but the previous night secessionists had sunk light boats in the channel between Craney Island and Sewell's Point, blocking the Merrimack. On April 20, the U.S. Navy burned the Merrimack to the waterline and sank her to preclude capture.

Only two months later, as recapture of Norfolk

and Portsmouth by Union forces was imminent, on the morning of May 11, 1862, the Virginia was deliberately run aground near Craney Island and burned by the crew to avoid capture.

So where is ***The Virginia*** now? (4/30/2003)

"PORTSMOUTH, Va. -- An underwater survey found what might be remnants of the Confederate ironclad warship Virginia." It would be a stroke of incredible luck to discover it after all these years," said Dick Hoffeditz, curator of the Virginia War Museum in Newport News.

The underwater survey, for the proposed construction of a marine terminal on the Elizabeth River, describes two shipwrecks in the area and says there is "a distinct possibility" that they might be parts of the Virginia and of a schooner that hit the submerged wreck and sank next to it.

On May 11, 1862, the Virginia ran aground near Craney Island. After the crew was evacuated, the ship was set afire, detonating the 16,000 pounds of black powder in the ship's magazine. Documents show that salvage companies later removed two boilers and parts of the wooden hull.

What was left of the ship was again blown up, and some sections were dragged to the Navy Yard in Portsmouth. Several parts of the Virginia survive in museums, including dented armor and the ship's wheel at the Mariners' Museum, and an anchor and part of a propeller shaft at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has called for a follow-up investigation to decide if the wreck spotted in the survey is the Virginia. If it is, federal and state laws require that the ship's remains be removed before any dredging can take place.

The Virginia's thirteen-star Stars and Bars battle ensign was saved from destruction and today resides in the collection of the Chicago History Museum, minus three of its original stars."

Here is one final note of interest on Craney Island and the Shipyard.

At the start of the CW, Lincoln made clear that the primary war aim was to maintain the union, not to end slavery. When three escaped slaves arrived at Fort Monroe and sought protection, General Benjamin Butler refused to return them to their

owner. Butler could not declare the escaped slaves to be free, but he was unwilling to return them. Butler categorized the men as "contraband of war," and kept them at the fort after which hundreds more then arrived there. Hampton became a nucleus for contrabands, where they lived in small huts, were employed as military laborers, and survived off food from the military and donations from Northern sympathizers. Butler's replacement, General John A. Dix, tried to move contrabands away from the fort and put them to work on plantations abandoned by Confederate owners. By the start of 1863, over 1,600 freed slaves were living in a refugee camp on Craney Island. The island was small (contemporary accounts describe it as having shrunk by half to 20 acres in size), and the camp was closed in September, 1863.

Craney Island was then occupied by the 10th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry. That regiment was raised in Hampton Roads after the Union decided to recruit and arm black soldiers. The 10th Regiment camped on Craney Island only briefly, until moving to the Eastern Shore in January 1864.

So that's how one monument turns into a scavenger hunt of information. If you are in the Norfolk/Portsmouth area, stop over at City Park in Portsmouth. Nice spot and a beautiful view of Craney Island. ♦

Cemetery Corner

Continuing a new monthly feature suggested by member John Allen. Readers can submit a one or two paragraphs, one photo feature 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.

Paul Kuhl

Contributed by John F. Allen, Jr.

The 15th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry regiment saw most of its actions in the VI Corps of the Union Army of The Potomac. While the regiment suffered significant losses in several of its battles, it was in the assault on General Robert E. Lee's defenses at the "Bloody Angle" near Spotsylvania Court House, VA, where the unit experienced its greatest losses. Of the 429 officers and men

engaged, 116 were killed, 153 wounded and 30 were missing in action. Fox's study of regimental losses states that "... the percentage of killed in the Fifteenth New Jersey [at Spotsylvania Court House was] equaled in only one other instance in the whole war."



Among those killed was 22 year-old First Sergeant Paul Kuhl of Company A, who fell - with many others - on May 12, 1864. Initially buried at the Brown Farm on the battlefield, his remains were eventually relocated in 1877 to the National Military Cemetery in Fredericksburg, VA. With no body to mourn, his family dedicated a cenotaph to his memory in the Flemington Presbyterian Churchyard Cemetery. The original cenotaph was destroyed when a tree fell on it during a storm, and it was replaced by the cenotaph shown in the photo. ♦

References:

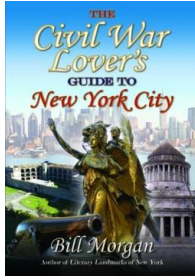
Bilby, Joseph G. *"Three Rousing Cheers": Longstreet House* (2001).

Fox, William H. *"Regimental losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865": Albany Publishing Company* (1889).

Kuhl, John W. *"Hunterdon County in the Civil War": Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, and personal communication* (2014).

Book Review

Following is a book review submitted by Camp Olden CWRT member Nelson Ames:



The Civil War Lover's Guide to New York City

By Bill Morgan

When I think of New York City in relation to the Civil War I think about the draft riots, the Confederate “raid” to burn buildings down or maybe Grant’s Tomb, but this book is full of much more information about the places and people of the time.

There are articles about many buildings and manufacturers there that provided equipment for the war, many well-known, some still in business, such as Brooks Brothers and Macy’s, who provided uniforms, and Tiffany’s, who made swords and medals. Other buildings/companies may not be as well-known but nonetheless interesting, such as E. V. Haughwout & Co. in Manhattan, a department store where Mary Lincoln did much of her (legendary) spending, including 2 sets of presidential dining ware. The building is also where Elijah Otis installed the 1st passenger elevator in 1857. While many of the structures addressed in the book are gone, this building still stands; there is a picture of it in the book and it’s a beautiful, ornate cast-iron structure styled as a Venetian palace.

Some of the more notable buildings also still there include the Sanitary Commission, Matthew Brady’s studio and, most importantly (I think) the Cooper Union, where Lincoln gave his “Right makes Might” speech which he later said won the presidency for him.

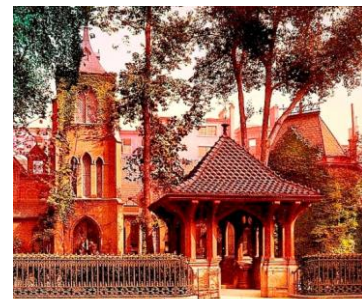
There are numerous hotels mentioned, where many dignitaries of the day including generals, authors and politicians stayed when in New York; among the generals were Grant, Hancock,

McClellan and Lee (yes, Robert E.); also Varina Davis (Mrs. Jefferson).

The residences of many generals, such as Sickles, Dix, Scott and Fitz John Porter are mentioned and are still standing; all the places have photos and their addresses listed.

The book also cites the many statues and monuments to soldiers, generals, politicians, etc., that abound throughout the city; many are by such notable artists such as Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Daniel Chester French of Lincoln Memorial fame, and Gutzon Borglum, sculptor of Mt. Rushmore.

Also in the book are several churches, including Trinity Cathedral, St. Patrick’s (old and new), and St. John’s Episcopal in Brooklyn, which is especially interesting. Lee was a vestryman here when he was stationed at nearby Fort Hancock and planted a tree there which has been replaced/renewed a few times; there is a plaque marking it that was presented by the Daughters of the Confederacy; St. John’s is also notable as the church where Stonewall Jackson was baptized. Another interesting church in the book is the Church of the Transfiguration, also known as “The Little Church around the Corner” (another story...); during the riots of 1863 the pastor of the church gave sanctuary to about 300 Blacks being terrorized by a mob. According to the book he held them off wielding a large cross and diffused their anger, leaving the people inside alone.



Church of the Transfiguration

The book also notes Green-Wood Cemetery, which is probably well known to most Civil War buffs, as it is the resting place of several generals and many famous people of the time. It shows a few of the more interesting monuments and memorials there.

I think this book would be an interesting and entertaining addition to anyone’s Civil War library. I enjoyed it immensely. ♦

Who Am I?



I may have been small in stature, but my Civil War legend looms large. Standing only 5-feet-8-inches and weighing in at barely 100 pounds, my military career was nearly over before it started.

Following my graduation from Alexandria's Episcopal High School, I traveled to Mississippi and was teaching Latin there when the sectarian tensions boiled over into full-fledged war. I immediately returned to my native Virginia, eager to join the fight. I was summarily turned down by multiple units, including the Little Fork Rangers, the Madison County Troop, the Goochland County Dragons and the Prince William County Troop.

I soon proved that what I lacked in size, I more than made up for in brainpower and bravery. I decided to prove my potential value by scouting out a Confederate encampment and capturing three guards whom I marched to their commanding officer and presented as his prisoners. My plan worked. I was accepted into the Confederate States of America Army, and my exploits and talents soon caught the attention of J.E.B. Stuart, who asked me to be his personal scout.

I would return to Alexandria using clever ruses that ranged from posing as a dentist's assistant and, legend has it, even as a woman, and my narrow escapes are also the stuff of legend. I treasured those visits for enabling my clandestine meetings with my beloved fiancée Emma Green, who would sometimes assist me in gathering and passing along intelligence about Union troop movements and strategies.

By the war's end, there was a \$10,000 reward out for my capture, and I escaped to Canada for a time before returning to the States, marrying Emma in 1867 and trading my spy's cloak for a minister's collar by entering the Virginia Seminary. I was

ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1876, enlisting as a chaplain in the Spanish-American War at the age of 57. I died of a heart attack in 1913 in Alexandria. My tombstone there, in the tradition of all Confederate soldiers' graves, is pointed at the top to prevent union soldiers and sympathizers from sitting on it. **Who am I? ♦ (Hint: See Article about Mercy Street on page 10) - (Answer on page 12)**
Source: pbs.org.

Camp Olden Winter Soiree



The Camp Olden Civil War Round Table, Hamilton, NJ, held its 2nd annual "Winter Soiree Fest" on Saturday, January 9th. The *Soiree* was held at the American Legion in Hamilton, NJ. In attendance were 25 COCWRT members, sundry guests, and friends. We began with a pre-dinner cocktail hour, complete with long guest stories of related interest to all. Members consumed a wonderful dinner catered by, "Fred and Pete's", Hamilton, NJ. Victuals consisted of: assorted meat dishes, fresh garden vegetables, green salad, and excellent side potatoes. Dessert included: a custom sheet cake, made especially for COCWRT members, complete with coffee. Post dinner, we had a "Super Trivia Contest" for all attendees. Subjects were everything from A to Z, soup to nuts; a prize went to all the correct answers.

For entertainment we had music CD's of the Civil War era plus old Irish favorites. The room and tables were decorated in a holiday festive motif. After completion of (KP) Kitchen Police, by special squads of COCWRT members, we ended on a quiet note of not serious conversation and last call for after dinner drinks. Was a very nice event. A very hearty special thank you to Gov. Bruce Sirak for everything, Duke Sirak for extra special help, Bruce Smith for the generosity from his American Legion Post, Bill our excellent bar keep, and to all of the COCWRT crew, who made this a real special event.

"To all a good night, and a good night to all" - spoken by Tom Crachett in *A Christmas Carol*. ♦
Alfred J. Barbano, Jr. COCWRT

Mercy Street

For those who have been watching the new PBS series, the article below will provide some additional background.

Nurses, Spies and Soldiers: The Civil War at Carlyle House

By Sarah Coster

The Mansion House Hospital, which incorporated the 1753 home of John Carlyle and the large building in front of it, was a place of strife and suffering during the Civil War. Alexandria, the longest occupied Confederate city of the war, epitomized what it meant to pit brother against brother. It is a legacy of divisiveness that is still apparent today as we struggle to grapple with what the Civil War meant then and now. Inside the Union controlled hospital, one found struggles as well. Female nurses were verbally abused and criticized. Soldiers struggled against disease and illness, often serving only to find their pension claims denied. Everyone at the hospital missed home and peacetime.

But Carlyle House and the Mansion House Hospital were also places of hope and triumph. Female nurses here made great strides in earning recognition and respect, paving a way for future female medical practitioners. Soldiers made miraculous recoveries as medicine advanced.

These stories and more have recently been discovered as staff worked to research the Civil War story of our site. To commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War, exhibits and programs will highlight the fascinating lives of those living here 150 years ago.

James Green, a successful furniture maker, was living at Carlyle House with his father, mother, wife and child at the beginning of 1861. His father, also James Green, ran a large and successful hotel located where the front lawn of Carlyle House is today. It was known as the Mansion House Hotel.

Green purchased a diary in January to record a year that he believed in “all probability will see the end of this Union of States.” On May 24, 1861, Green awoke to guns firing as Union boats landed in Alexandria’s harbor. “The Confederate troops had barely time to leave town,” he noted.

They were quickly replaced by Union troops, many of whom boarded at the Mansion House Hotel. “Not much sleep,” Green complained, “with our new boarders overhead dancing...” The dancing stopped a few months later when the building became a hospital.

Shots rang out early in the morning of July 21, 1861, in nearby Manassas, Virginia. By the end of the day, over 2,000 soldiers had been wounded in the first major battle of the war, the First Battle of Bull Run. The Union Army scrambled to find space for the wounded.

James Green, the owner of the Mansion House Hotel, received a letter from the government in early November stating he had three days to vacate the premises. Even with the help of his furniture factory workers it took them over a week to remove everything.

As the war progressed, Alexandria’s hospitals quickly filled to capacity, including the 700-bed Mansion House Hospital. Mary Phinney, a nurse, described the over-crowding following the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862. Fairfax Street, she wrote, “was full of ambulances and the sick lay outside on the sidewalks from nine in the morning till five in the evening . . . and to-night were put back into ambulances and carted off again.” Even in a city full of hospitals, these sick and dying soldiers had nowhere to go.

During the four years of war, Union hospitals treated 6,000,000 cases of illness and 400,000 battle wounds and injuries. Two-thirds of Union deaths during the Civil War were a result of disease. Poor sanitation, hygiene and diet caused high amounts of dysentery, typhoid and other illnesses. Infections after surgery were common and often resulted in amputation. Doctors had no knowledge of germ theory or antiseptic practices, and many soldiers lost their lives to infection.

Despite their shortcomings, the doctors and nurses at the Mansion House Hospital made great strides in saving lives. Perhaps some of the greatest strides, however, were those made by the female nurses stationed here. At the time of the Civil War, the idea of a female nurse in a military hospital was a new and unpopular concept, piloted by Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War in Europe. The female nurses at Mansion House

Hospital overcame prejudice and harsh treatment in order to bring comfort and aide to wounded and dying men. One surgeon in Alexandria told Nurse Harriet Dada that “A lady ceases to be a lady when she becomes a nurse.” However, through their dedication and hard work, the female nurses won over many of the surgeons and doctors and opened the door for future American women to have medical careers.

One female nurse that worked at the Mansion House Hospital defied gender roles in a particularly stunning manner. This soldier was a female disguised as a man. Sarah Emma Edmonds was already passing herself off as a man named Frank Thompson when the war began, working as a door- to-door salesman. When the Civil War called on men to enlist, Edmonds found the opportunity enticing. She joined the Union army, fought at Blackburn’s Ford and served as a nurse at the Mansion House Hospital. She also worked as a mail carrier and even, she claimed, spied for the Union.

It is believed some 300-500 women may have served as soldiers during the Civil War, though an exact number may never be known. Most of Edmonds’ campmates assumed she was one of the young boys who snuck into the army, except for one. Edmonds’ close friend and fellow soldier, Jerome Robbins, was suspicious. He wrote in his journal “a mystery appears to be connected with [Frank] which it is impossible for me to fathom.” When Edmonds did reveal her identity to him Robbins kept it a secret, telling only his diary. It is in this diary, now in the archives of the University of Michigan, that Robbins recorded Sarah Emma Edmonds working as a nurse at the Mansion House Hospital during the winter of 1861-1862.

After two months as a nurse, Edmonds moved on to become a mail carrier, which certainly gave her more freedom to come and go, and thus easier to hide her identity. In 1863, Edmonds contracted malaria and deserted, rather than risk discovery. She went on to write her memoirs and was even granted a pension, one of the few women soldiers to receive one.

In Edmonds’ memoirs, which she published immediately after the war, she claimed to have been a spy for Allan Pinkerton and the Union

Intelligence Service. While little evidence exists to support her claims, it was not uncommon for spies on both sides of the war to use disguise to cross enemy lines. One of these spies was in love with Carlyle House’s own Emma Green.

Known as “Lee’s beloved and trusted scout,” Benjamin Franklin Stringfellow attended Episcopal High School, near Alexandria. While there he met Emma Green, the daughter of Mansion House Hotel owner James Green. Frank and Emma fell in love, but their courtship was interrupted by the Civil War.

A skinny 21 year-old at the start of the war, Stringfellow used his cunning and bravery to gather intelligence for the Confederacy. He daringly crossed enemy lines multiple times, sneaking into both Alexandria and Washington.

Stringfellow’s adventures are the stuff of legends. Once, while spying in DC, he refused to drink to President Lincoln’s health, and instead toasted Confederate President Jefferson Davis. He also claimed to have hidden under an Alexandria woman’s petticoats to escape Union troops.

After the war, Stringfellow married Emma, but not before refusing to take the oath of loyalty to the Union and living in Canada. Frank and Emma are buried side-by-side in the Ivy Hill cemetery in Alexandria.



Mary Phinney



Emma Green

On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Confederate Army to General Ulysses S. Grant. He may have signed the terms of his surrender on a desk made at James Green’s Alexandria workshop. Carlyle House and the Mansion House Hospital were returned to the Green family and they soon reopened it as a hotel.

Alexandria and the hotel never returned to their former glory. The city fell into a slow decline and by the 1970s the buildings were crumbling into

decay. The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority stepped in to save Carlyle House from destruction, opening it as a museum on January 1, 1976.

During the restoration, the former Mansion House Hospital buildings was torn down, but not before artifacts from its days as a Civil War Hospital were recovered from underneath the floorboards and behind the walls. ♦

Source: *The Carlyle House Docent Dispatch* (March, 2011)

Camp Olden Coming Events -

The **Camp Olden Gettysburg Trip** is scheduled for **Saturday 4/30/2016 and Sunday 5/1/2016**. There will be three walking tours led by Licensed Battlefield guides. Two will be on Saturday (at 9:30 AM and 2 PM) and one on Sunday (at 10 AM). The Saturday afternoon tour will be “Art in the Park” led by Ralph Siegel. The details of the morning tours will be announced at the March meeting. The guides are being paid for by Camp Olden (another benefit of your membership). All tours will leave from the Gettysburg visitor center. Since the tours will include a lot of walking, participants will obtain a better understanding of the effects of the terrain on the battle. There will also be an optional group dinner (at additional cost) on Saturday at the Dobbin House Tavern.

There are many good hotels in Gettysburg. Feel free to book your favorite. Since the tours will leave from the visitors’ center, you can stay at your choice of hotel. It’s best to reserve a room soon because, as you know, hotels book up and prices go up as we get closer to the trip. Looking forward to having many members on the trip.

If you would like to join us at Gettysburg, please give a \$20 deposit check (made out to Camp Olden CWRT) to Gary DeSiver at the March Camp Olden meeting (March 3rd). Please also email the following information to Gary DeSiver at (webmaster@campolden.org) prior to the March meeting:

- Your name.
- Your cell phone number.
- Are you planning on attending the dinner? ♦

Other Coming Events -

7th Annual Neshaminy State Park Civil War Reenactment; Sat., April 23rd and Sun. April 24th, in Bensalem, PA.

Experience five centuries of New Jersey’s history at the annual **SPIRIT of the JERSEYS State History Fair** on Sat., May 14th, from 11 AM to 5 PM at Monmouth Battlefield State Park in Manalapan, NJ. Admission is free (\$10 per vehicle parking) and runs rain or shine. For information and a complete list of activities, visit www.njhistoryfair.org or call (732) 462-9616. ♦

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 **Where am I?** feature, submit a couple of your own photographs of a favorite Civil War site for other members to try to identify.

For our **Cemetery Corner** feature, readers can submit a one or two paragraph, one photo feature of a Civil War veteran's headstone with a brief story to go with it. It’s an easy way to get your work in print and give tribute to a CW veteran.

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 CWRT. Please send a photograph so other members will know who you are.

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.

Meetings are held at the Hamilton Public Library located at **1 Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. Drive; Hamilton, NJ**, on the first Thursday of every month (except Aug.). For other information visit us on the Web: www.campolden.org. ♦

Answer to “Who Am I?” - Benjamin Franklin Stringfellow (1840 – 1913). ♦