



February 2007
Volume 13 Number 6

The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2006-07 OCCWRT Officers

Jim Dromgoole, President
315 457-2999
yankeetrader07@aol.com

Sue Greenhagen, Vice President
315 684-3418
greenhsh@morrisville.edu

Dave Osborn, Treasurer
315 446-1715

Bill Goodwin, Secretary/Publicity
315 437-3887

Dick Crozier, Trustee
607 753-9803
dickcrozier@yahoo.com

Kevin Milcarek, Trustee
315 374-2218

Darothy DeAngelo, Program Chair
315 682-6312
darothy__@hotmail.com

Pat Stepanek, Newsletter Editor
315 696-5531
pstepane@ix.netcom.com

Meeting Site *The Warehouse*

Syracuse University
School of Architecture

350 West Fayette St
Syracuse, NY
Room 3 Ground Floor

*West Point Classmates:
Civil War Enemies*

Thursday
February 15, 2007
7 PM

Meetings are held at 7 PM on the third Thursday of the month from September through June and are free and open to the public.

February 15 Meeting

Our program for this month is a fascinating study of what Robert E. Lee called a "Band of Brothers", the unique fraternity of graduates from West Point. They trained to become soldiers of superior character and skill. Yet, when the Civil War broke out, opposing loyalties turned these brothers into enemies who led armies, corps, and divisions against each other. Though these men had left the Academy itself, the "spiritual" West Point - a powerful mystique of belonging- remained with them. Beneath the political enmity, great friendships endured. This acclaimed video is a History Channel presentation with scholarly commentary from historians Thomas Fleming and Brian Pohanka. We'll enter the hearts and minds of Burnside, Buford, Early, Ewell, Grant, Lee, Hancock, McClellan, Pickett, Custer, Longstreet and many more. We'll gain insights into the West Point curriculum, pre-war tensions at the academy, the exodus of southern cadets from the academy, incidents from major battles, and the allegiances that guided these men who formed the nucleus of both the Union and Confederate armies. A round table discussion will follow.

Happy Birthday, President Lincoln

On the occasion of Lincoln's 198th, we celebrate with a bit of his humor. If you have read Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*, you know Lincoln's friends and enemies freely gave him their advice. Yet, Lincoln's decisions were truly his own. When he decided to appoint a new secretary of war, the leading Republicans in the Senate thought it the opportune time to replace all seven cabinet members to bolster the flagging confidence of the electorate. The president listened to the group of senators, and replied with a grin:

"Gentleman, your request for a change of the whole cabinet because I have made one change reminds me of a story I once heard in Illinois of a farmer who was much troubled by skunks. His wife demanded he get rid of them. The farmer loaded his shotgun one moonlit night and went outside to await the bush-tailed visitors. After some time, the wife heard the shotgun go off, and soon afterward the farmer entered the house and wiped his boots."

"What luck have you had?" asked the wife.

"I hid myself behind the woodpile," said the farmer, "with the shotgun pointed toward the hen roost, and before long there appeared not one skunk but seven. I took aim, blazed away, and killed one, and he raised such a fearful smell that I thought it was best, dear, to let the other six go."

from: *The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln* by Alex Ayres

Thus, Lincoln's cabinet remained intact for a while longer except for Simon Cameron being replaced with Edwin Stanton as Secretary of War. No mass firing ever took place.

President's Message

Congratulations to Collyn and Nancy Conrad, Kevin Milcarek, Bob Cruickshank and Mike Carpenter who were members of the winning team at the second annual Civil War Jeopardy Challenge during our January meeting. Their team was among five that competed to win the *Abraham Lincoln I Wish I Had Known That* certificate. We had very good audience participation during the event. It's a pleasure to see how much people know about the Civil War. A special thanks goes out to Pat Stepanek for arranging the evening's program.

It's good to see we have a lot of interest in going to Gettysburg to continue with the Adopt-A-Position program. I've never had the opportunity to go myself and am looking forward to seeing what it's all about. The tentative dates for this event are April 27-29. More information will be available at the February meeting. Please join us on February 15th for our next meeting and bring a friend.

Jim Dromgoole

Sumner Fund Grows

A pleasant New Year's surprise presentation to the Sumner Restoration Fund was made at the January meeting to Pres. Jim Dromgoole by Sumner presenter Darothy De Angelo. She turned over three checks for \$50.00 each plus a cash donation of \$5.00 from presentations to Tent #71 of the Daughters of Union Veterans, the Homer Searle Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans, and the Fabius Historical Society. In addition vice-president Sue Greenhagen forwarded a check for \$20.00 from subscriptions to *The Civil War News*, as their donation to the project. This brings the total to \$3,459.67 in the fund.

De Angelo reports that they have four additional commitments to do the Sumner presentation, "Gen. Sumner: Who Was He and Why is He Here?" over the next 3 months. If you would like more information about scheduling this presentation please call 682-6312.

OCCWRT Member Back on Stage (sort of)

The History Mystery Players of the Onondaga County Historical Assoc. are deep into rehearsal for the up-coming performance of *Death With Chocolate*, written, directed, and produced by the OHA Staff.

Round table member and long (long) time community theatre performer, Darothy De Angelo, has been cast as "Floria Swansong," a silent movie actress of "a certain age." In the play within-the-play, she becomes "The Countess," who loses her head to the French Revolution rabble.

The production, billed as "off, off, off Broadway," will perform on Saturday evening, Feb. 10th at 7:00 p.m. Seating is limited for this interactive evening; so reservations are a must. Sample some chocolate delights, sip coffee & tea, and savor an old fashioned murder mystery. Cost is \$15 per person. Call 428-1864, Ex. 312, for info or reservations. And Darothy...break a limb!

35 Days To Gettysburg

Member **Mike Carpenter** has responded to our call for member participation in the newsletter. We asked for reviews of what you are reading, or comments or observations. Here's Mike's review:

The book that I read was: *35 Days To Gettysburg* by Mark Nesbitt, a well-known Gettysburg historian. The book was first published in 1992. Mr. Nesbitt examines the diaries of two Civil War soldiers, one from the North and the other from the South. Both diaries begin on the date June 1, 1863, and as the title suggests, follow their lives for the next 35 days as their armies march towards the conflict at Gettysburg. They would end up meeting in the same battle, one on Little Round Top, and the other a short distance away at Devil's Den. Thomas Lewis Ware, from Georgia, was a member of the 15th Georgia Infantry Co. G, and Franklin Horner was with the 12th Pennsylvania Volunteer Reserve Infantry, Co. H. Each diary appears in the book exactly as each man had written it, misspellings and poor grammar included. It is often hard to understand what they have written because of the abbreviated thought and the individual dialect. What makes this book really remarkable is how after each pair of entries, the author explains what the two soldiers are trying to say. This is done so smoothly and convincingly, that you feel that you're actually along side of the men. I found the book so interesting that it was often hard to put down. I would highly recommend this book to any one interested in reading of the actual day to day life of a common Civil War soldier.

Folklore and Fact Collide in Central Park

A \$15.5 million dollar project honoring Frederick Douglass is underway at the northwest corner of Central Park in New York City. The completion date is fall 2008. The plans call for an eight-foot-tall sculpture of Douglas standing on a huge granite quilt. Within each square of the quilt is a symbol, supposedly part of a secret code sewn into family quilts and used along the Underground Railroad to aid and advise escaping slaves to safe houses and escape routes and to convey other information vital to a slave's survival. Two plaques would explain the quilt code based on the decoding information in the 1999 book *Hidden in Plain View* by J. Tobin and R. Dobard. Oprah Winfrey featured the book on her show in November 1998 and sales have now reached 207,000 copies and captured the unquestioning attention of many including the memorial's designer, Algernon Miller.

However, work on the monument has been halted as prominent historians are voicing their opinions. Professor David Blight of Yale University, who has written a book about Douglass and edited his autobiography, calls the quilt theory "a myth, bordering on a hoax." Blight adds that "Douglass never saw a quilt used to free any slaves in his day. Why do we need to pin this nonsense on him now?" Other historians have noted that the code was never mentioned in any of the interviews of ex-slaves carried out in the 1930's by the WPA or in any diaries or memoirs from the period. An art historian from Michigan State feels it will take years to "undo" this myth. The book's authors now state that people have tried to make too much of the book, which they intended to be one family's story. Historian Christopher Moore of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem has been asked to write an historically accurate text for the memorial to replace the quilt plaques. Will Douglass still stand on the quilt? Only time will tell as debate now focuses about whether the memorial is a work of history or a work of art. What's your opinion?

The Thirteenth Amendment - Part 2

Last month's newsletter revealed the text and ratification controversy of the first Thirteenth Amendment proposed by Congress in 1810 to prevent anyone who held a title of nobility or honor from serving in any official capacity in government. In the waning days of the Buchanan administration, Congress proposed another 13th Amendment hoping to avert the outbreak of the Civil War by making slavery the law of the land. It read as follows:

No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State.

Less than 2 weeks after Lincoln's inauguration, Lincoln wrote to all the nation's governors seeking support for this amendment though secession had begun. In seeking to preserve the Union, the pragmatic Lincoln endorsed this amendment. Once the war began, the amendment was moot and Lincoln changed course, drafting the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. After the war, 27 of the 36 states ratified the 13th Amendment we know, the one that abolished slavery.

Appomattox, the Opera

The San Francisco Opera will stage the world premier of Philip Glass's *Appomattox* during its 2007-08 season. West Coast opera/Civil War fans must be ecstatic.

Hot Water, Clean Sheets

To assist our members in arranging to stay in Gettysburg in April, we're printing a list of ALL of the local motels. Some are better than others and, naturally, some are less expensive. Members of AAA and AARP are usually offered slight discounts at the chain motels.

There are also a half dozen campgrounds in the area and there is a youth hostel in Gardners (15 miles north on Route 34).

Remember, our volunteer day is April 28, 2007. We urge you to make plans in advance. There are always many activities in Gettysburg in the spring. (And we are the active-est!)

Gettysburg Area Motels and Hotels

- Altland House Center Square, Abbottstown, PA, 12 mi. E. on U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-259-9535
 - Battlefield Motel 2075 Old Harrisburg Rd. Phone: 717-334-6867
 - Best Inn 8 blks. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-1188
 - Best Western - Gettysburg Hotel Lincoln Square. Phone: 717-337-2000
 - Best Western - Westminster 451 WMC Dr., Westminster, MD. Phone: 410-857-1900
 - Blue Sky Motel 4 ½ mi. N. Rt. 34. Phone: 717-677-7736.
 - Budget Host Three Crowns 6 blks. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-3168
 - Carroll Valley Restort 121 Sanders Rd., Carroll Valley, PA. Phone: 717-642-8211
 - College Motel 4 blks. N. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-6731
 - Colton Motel 7 blks. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-5514
 - Country Inn 1 ¼ mi. E. U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-334-4208
 - Country Inn & Suites by Carlson 1857 Gettysburg Village Dr. Phone: 717-337-9518
 - Cozy Country Inn 103 Frederick Rd., Thurmont, MD. Phone: 301-271-4301
 - Days Inn - Gettysburg 1 mi. E. U.S. Rt. 30. 717-334-0030
 - Econo-Lodge 945 Baltimore Pike. Phone: 717-334-6715
 - Eisenhower Inn & Conference Center 5 mi. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-8121
 - Gettysburg Inn 4 mi. N. on Rt. 34. Phone: 717-334-2263
 - Gettysburg Super 8 Motel 6 blks. E. U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-334-4274
 - Gettysburg Travelodge 5 ½ blks. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-9281
 - Hampton Inn 2 mi. E. U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-338-9121
 - Holiday Inn - Battlefield 5 blks. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-6211
 - Homestead Motor Lodge 2 mi. E. on U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-334-3866
 - Howard Johnson Inn 1080 Carlisle St., Hanover, PA. Phone: 717-646-1000
 - James Gettys Hotel 27 Chambersburg St. Phone: 717-337-1334
 - Liberty Resort & Conference Center 78 Country Club Trail, Carroll Valley, PA. Phone: 717-642-8282
 - North Ridge Motel 4 mi. N. on Rt. 34. Phone: 717-334-8100
 - Quality Inn - Gettysburg Motor Lodge 7 blks. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-1103
 - Quality Inn - Larson's 8 blks. W. U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-334-3141
 - Red Carpet Inn 4 ½ mi. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-1345
 - South Ridge Motel 5 mi. S. on Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-5284
 - Western Inn 4 ½ mi. S. Bus. Rt. 15. Phone: 717-334-1339
- Campgrounds
- Artillery Ridge Campground 2 mi. S. Rt. 134. Phone: 717-334-1288
 - Drummer Boy Campground 1 mi. E. of Gettysburg off Rt. 116. Phone: 717-334-3277
 - Gettysburg Campground 2 mi. W. Rt. 116. Phone: 717-334-3304
 - Gettysburg KOA Campground 3 mi. S. off U.S. Rt. 30. Phone: 717-642-5713
 - Granite Hill Campground 6 mi. W. off Rt. 116. Phone: 717-642-8749
 - Round Top Campground 3 mi. S. off PA 134, Gettysburg, PA. Phone: 717-334-9565

Onondaga County
Civil War Round Table PO Box 175 Tully, NY 13159-0175

Onondaga County Civil War Round Table
New Membership/Renewal Form

Membership dues of the OCCWRT are:

Please Check one of the Following

_____ \$20.00 a year

_____ O.H.A. members \$10.00

_____ Seniors and Students \$15.00

_____ Family rate (2 or more) \$30.00

Dues may be paid at meetings or sent to:

Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

ATTN: Dave Osborn, Treasurer

2 Thistlewood Lane

Fayetteville, NY 13066

Please find \$ _____ enclosed in form of

Circle One:

Check M.O. Cash

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Please check if you prefer an emailed newsletter
and can receive an Acrobat (pdf) file.

E-Mail _____

The Onondaga County Civil War Round Table was organized in 1994 and is now an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month from September through June. The purpose of the OCCWRT is to stimulate and encourage interest in the American Civil War, to assist in community service in order to enhance the study and understanding of the Civil War, to provide educational and historical research of the period, and to promote historic preservation.