



January 2005
Volume 11 Number 5

The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2004-05 OCCWRT Officers

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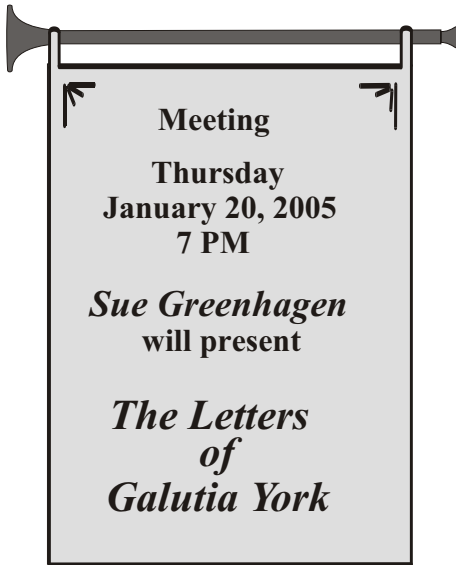
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Route 481 to Exit 7. Take Route 298 West. First left onto Brittonfield Parkway. The NYSUT Building is the third on the right. Parking in the rear. Enter by rear door.

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.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Osborn has closed out our fiscal year and his report follows. He reminds us all that our annual dues need to be updated. Most of us pay our dues throughout the year though technically they should be paid in December. Please make an effort to check with Dave at the next meeting to determine in what month you need to update your dues. We have 60 members, 34 of whom have renewed their memberships between Sept. and Dec. Our Christmas Silent Auction added \$470 to our preservation fund. Thank you all.

General Membership Fund: \$1542.77
Gen. Sumner Preservation Fund: \$1922.67

Gettysburg Adopt-a-Position Trip April 16-17

The Round Table will continue its tradition of a Spring clean up atop Culp's Hill on Saturday morning, April 16th. This year Beth Greenfield's brother along with his Cub Scout Troop will be with us to lend their hands and energy to our ongoing project of allowing General Greene to see clearly down the hill to his 3rd Brigade line. The weekend the board chose for our trip is a busy weekend in Gettysburg. It is the annual *Art's Weekend* with artist's appearing in the many galleries around town. We're hoping that Dave Collins can get us all a tour of private property near the 149th NYV monument where the first monument might have been dumped before it was crushed for the Culp's Hill roadbed. As usual, the Round Table will treat us to pizza and soda at our favorite pizzeria when we finish with the General. Call or email Pat Stepanek with your decision to join us.

FYI

Darothy De Angelo advises us to prepare for a county event. She met recently with Ann Ciarpelli, Onondaga County Clerk, to learn that the county is preparing an official ceremony in late April (exact date to be determined) in honor of the return of the last of the 9 Civil War flags and 1 GAR flag from the conservator. We congratulate Ann for her inspired guidance throughout this 4-year project. Perhaps the successful completion of this significant undertaking will inspire other counties. Now that the first two goals, conservation and display of the flags, have been accomplished, the third goal of education will begin. The Round Table will want to be well represented at this celebration. Further updates will appear in future newsletters.

Chittenango Meeting Notice

The Guns of the Civil War by Dr. Richard Carol
Monday February 7, 2005 at 7 pm
Chittenango Boat Landing Museum
Lakeport Rd., Chittenango
Hands on demonstration of several types of original rifles
For more information, contact Beth Greenfield

Correction

The December newsletter was incorrectly numbered. That issue was Volume 11, Number 4.

President's Message

I would like to wish all a Happy 2005! It is going to be a very busy year in all aspects. It is the 140th anniversary of many events: Lincoln's famous second inauguration address, the 140th anniversary of the capture of Richmond and the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, the surrender of Johnston in Bentonville, NC, and the great tragedy of Lincoln's death.

We are looking forward to our annual Spring Cleanup in Gettysburg on the weekend of April 16th -17th. This coincides with the History Meets the Arts Festival in Gettysburg. The galleries entertain all the great Civil War artisans, and there is always an unveiling of a great new piece of art.

I would like to thank all those who bid in our silent auction. We garnered over \$470! With this money we are proceeding to meet the goal of getting General Sumner's monument restored. Darothy DeAngelo is putting her presentation about General Sumner together. We are sending many letters out to local historians and veterans groups for presentations, and to the Sumner Family Association for donations.

Sic simper,
Beth Greenfield



Speaker Profile Sue Greenhagen

January 20th, and All's Well

Party time's over. Time to get serious--not boring serious, but just regular serious.

The January program has to do with the letters of a young lad from Madison County--North Brookfield, to be exact. The letters of Galutia York, Co. G, 114th Infantry are in Special Collections at Colgate University. Our speaker, Sue Greenhagen, accessed the letters, transcribed them, then as a master's thesis for her MLS in Information Studies at Syracuse University, she posted them on the Electronic Super Highway--THE INTERNET. This was about 10 years ago, and it was only the second time that transcribed Civil War letters had been put on the internet for anyone and everyone to read.

Galutia wrote home to his folks (as well as to his brother, Henry) just about every week. And much to our benefit, these letters were kept and later donated in their entirety to Colgate. Sue was asked by the curator of Special Collections if she'd be interested in "that old bunch of letters." Of course, she was, and as a result, we now have access to the Civil War experience of a naive country farm boy with a wonderful Yankee sense of humor.

Sue, a long-time member of the OCCWRT, is Technical Services Librarian at Morrisville State College. She is the "web Miester" of the award winning site, "New York State and the Civil War." She is most proud to have been chosen to receive the communication award from the Capitol District CWRT in 1999. In addition, she received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History specifically for "The Letters of Galutia York" website. Various other awards are posted at the bottom of her website:

http://www.morrisville.edu/library/local_history/sites/

The presentation is accompanied by power-point images, another innovation of the modern "lecture circuit." She has previously given this unique presentation to the Norwich CWRT, The General Butterfield CWRT, and the now defunct Madison County CWRT.

Sue is the Eaton Town Historian and is a member of the Madison County Historical Society, the Morrisville Historic Preservation Association, and the NYS County & Municipal Historians.

That's all, folks...
Darothy De Angelo

Editor's Notes

Since we are all students of the Civil War, we are the bookseller's best friend. I know many of you are running out of shelf space with your Christmas haul of CW books. The next time you read of something that might interest all of us, think about writing it up and submitting it to the newsletter either by email or mail. My address is PO Box 175, Tully, NY 13159-0175. I welcome any length article.

The *Empty Chair* article that follows was inspired by Ernest B. Furgurson's new book *Freedom Rising: Washington in the Civil War* and the 142nd anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation issued on Jan. 1, 1863. I've always wondered about the empty chair in Carpenter's painting. When Furgurson mentioned, in a footnote no less, the possible occupant (Anna Ella Carroll) for that chair, I was hooked into doing a bit more research. When Furgurson failed to mention that the artist, F. Carpenter, was from Central NY, I was hooked again into doing a bit more research. There is another interesting local connection. Matilda Joslyn Gage, a women's rights leader from Fayetteville, NY, spent a frustrating quarter of a century arguing that Anna Carroll was denied her due because of her gender.

January is also the anniversary of Burnside's Mud March. In Burnside's defense, he did not have the latest weather satellite to warn him of the massive storm heading his way. The storm details can be found on

www.weatherbook.com/Mudmarch.html

My article is a summary of the conditions that produced such a disaster that no other major military campaign ever occurred again during the winter months in Virginia. Perhaps Burnside did teach the military something. Maybe not, unless there was a hidden lesson in the Crater fiasco.

Pat Stepanek

Why the Empty Chair?

Francis Bicknell Carpenter (1830-1900) of Homer, NY painted one of America's best-known historical paintings. *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation Before Lincoln's Cabinet* now hangs in the House of Representatives. Carpenter, with six months of art instruction at the studio of Sanford Thayer in Syracuse, worked on this painting in the White House from Feb - July 1864. While not present for the actual reading on July 22, 1862, Carpenter, an opponent of slavery, spoke extensively with the president about the occasion and wrote of his experiences in *The Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln: Six Months at the White House*. The 9 x 14 foot painting was sold in 1878 for \$25,000 to Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson who generously gave it to the government. Carpenter continued his career as a portrait artist.

We see Lincoln and his cabinet seated around the actual cabinet table ready to hear a draft of the proclamation. A copy of the Constitution is on the table. Carpenter gave prominence to each cabinet member based on his support for the proclamation. On Lincoln's right are two of the avid supporters of the proclamation, Secretary of War Stanton and Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase. On Lincoln's left sits Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells also a strong supporter. To Welles' left stand Secretary of the Interior Caleb Smith and Postmaster General Montgomery Blair both of whom thought the proclamation would be costly to the Republican party in the fall congressional elections. Seated next to Blair is Attorney General Edward Bates who doubted that the document was constitutional. Seated prominently in front of the table is Secretary of State William Seward who had long advocated using black troops and at this meeting strongly suggested that Lincoln wait for a Union military victory before



issuing the proclamation. Behind Seward is an empty chair surrounded with folders of maps and notes. Is this the seat of an "unofficial or unrecognized" member of Lincoln's cabinet?

Though Carpenter never spoke to this issue, some historians have. The name most frequently mentioned is that of Anna Ella Carroll (1815-1894) who remains one of the more controversial female figures of the Civil War. Born on Maryland's Eastern Shore to a prominent family, her father Thomas, governor in 1830, educated his daughter in his legal and political activities. She became active in the Whig party and maintained involvement in party development and policymaking during the Taylor and Fillmore administrations.



Carroll celebrated Lincoln's election by freeing her slaves. A dedicated nationalist opposed to secession, she wrote news articles and letters to shape policy in Maryland and fought to keep Maryland in the Union. Her defense of the US Navy in 1855 appeared in the *New York Express* and the *National Intelligencer* as did her attack on the secession speech of Sen. Breckenridge which was republished and circulated by the War Department. Her powerful pamphlet, *War Powers of The Government*, that defended the president's war-making powers caught Lincoln's attention and at his request she wrote *The Relation of Revolted Citizens to the National Government* upon which Lincoln based some of his later actions.

Late in 1861, Assistant Secretary of War Thomas Scott suggested sending her to St. Louis to observe and report how Union forces should advance down the Mississippi to cut the Confederacy in two. Her November 30th report suggested a Tennessee River route instead. Her supporters suggest she had to forego public recognition for political and military reasons though the War Department saw the significance of this strategy. Early 1862 the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson by General Grant began the North's strategic penetration of the South. Her detractors point out that Grant already occupied the mouth of the Tennessee River by Nov. 30th. Many years later, Congress attempted to pass a bill to put Anna Carroll's name on the pension rolls for her "important military service rendered by her during the late Civil War." She fought unsuccessfully for that pension the rest of her life.

Secretary of War Stanton summed up Anna Carroll's importance by saying, "Her course was the most remarkable in the war. She got no pay and did the great work that made others famous." This was the woman who has been referred to as the "unrecognized" member of Lincoln's cabinet. Does the single empty chair with a folder of maps and notes similar to those Carroll had carried symbolize her place in wartime councils? Carroll enthusiasts believe this was Carpenter's way of acknowledging her importance. Others say no. What remains is a mysterious vacant chair with its possible occupant holding a prominent place in the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame.



Mud March by Edwin Forbes

Burnside's Mud March, aka Quagmire, January 20-23, 1863

Five weeks after Burnside's humbling defeat at the battle of Fredericksburg as pressure from Washington for action swelled, Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside had made a decision. "The auspicious moment seems to have arrived to strike a great and mortal blow to the rebellion, and to gain that decisive victory which is due to the country," he proclaimed to his Army of the Potomac on the morning of January 20, 1864.

For weeks, Burnside had watched Lee's army dig in deeper around Fredericksburg and extend its line to cover at least 25 miles of the Rappahannock river line. Burnside's plan was to quickly cross the river above Fredericksburg and attack Lee's left flank.

As the Union soldiers and the ponderous wagon trains started moving northwest up the river, the sky darkened and by the afternoon a slow drizzle began. A strong, winter coastal storm was moving in from the southeast (not unlike our Nor'easters) to disrupt the dry, mild January. By evening rain fell heavily while temperatures remained in the upper 30's, and Burnside's army quickly bogged down. "Wagons sank to their wheel hubs and artillery became hopelessly stuck. A team of 12 horses and 150 men could not pull one cannon out of the mud." Soldiers chilled to the bones slipped and fell sometimes losing their shoes and equipment. Thirty hours of rain turned the Virginia red clay "into some kind of earth without any consistency."

Teams of mules and horses were buried alive or had died of exhaustion. Men became weighted down with mud, some drowning in it. One soldier wrote that the storm was "harder for that moving army to encounter than a hundred thousand enemies."

Confederate pickets across the river watching the army struggle had posted large signs with messages such as : *This Way to Richmond, Burnside's Army Stuck in the Mud*, and *We'll Send Help*. Rebel pickets had also "plowed the earth along their side of the river so that if any of Burnside's men did get across, they would sink into more mire."

Lee's army felt no need to respond to Burnside's washed out flanking move. The exhausted Union army, now a disorganized crowd many of whom ridiculed their commander, returned to their flooded camps by evening of the 23rd.

Over 3 inches of rain had fallen during the march with gale-force winds adding a wind-chill factor to the upper 30's temperature. Light rain and fog continued for three days following the storm. On January 28th the rain turned to wet snow adding another 0.88 inches of liquid into the already soggy soil.

Though "On to Richmond" would have to wait, Burnside's dismissal was immediate. Lincoln named Joseph Hooker to the command on January 25th.

FYI

Robert Krick, retired chief historian of *Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park*, mentions in his web article, *The Winter Before Chancellorsville*, the generosity of the Army of Northern Virginia after the Union Army recrossed the Rappahannock River in Dec. leaving Fredericksburg a "city more savagely sacked than any other American community in history. Contributions from Jackson's Corps totaled \$12,583.50, an average of about two-days pay per man. Stonewall and his personal staff gave \$625." Citizens were grateful but feared the Confederate soldiers who were "universally" infested with lice.

Francis Bicknell Carpenter Homer, NY Artist



Carpenter, one of eight children, was born in 1830 to a farm family on Route 11, three miles north of Homer, NY. Today the site is marked with a highway marker. As a youngster, Carpenter would draw on anything he could find - pieces of wood, barn walls, doors, or fooscap. His father reluctantly allowed his 15 year old son to study in Syracuse for the winter term with landscape artist Sanford Thayer.

Upon his return in the spring of 1846, he opened his first studio in the Barber Block in Homer. His first commissioned work was pen and ink drawings in a "Sheep Husbandry" manual and portraits of the 10 trustees and the principal of the Cortland Academy. By age 21, Carpenter was married and living in Brooklyn where his commissioned portrait of the president of the American Exchange Bank led to his being elected to the prestigious Academy of Design, the youngest member of the group.

The city of New York hired him to paint Millard Fillmore which led to the White House where President Pierce sat for him. When summoned to the Lincoln White House,

Carpenter was given the state dining room in which to work and became an admirer of Lincoln. At the end of six months, Carpenter returned to his studio in Homer to finish his masterpiece of Lincoln's cabinet.

The list of distinguished people who sat for Carpenter is impressive and includes US Grant, James Garfield, William Seward, P.T. Barnum, Horace Greeley, Ezra Cornell, James Russell Lowell, Daniel Webster, Henry Ward Beecher, and Lincoln.

Each summer he returned to the family farm where he painted local commissions. Many of his paintings of the "locals" remain in CNY. His portrait of his younger brother, William, who served with the 157th NYV and died of his wounds sustained at Gettysburg, now hangs in the Fellowship Room of the Homer Congregational Church. Other CNY commissions included portraits of J. Barber who organized the Syracuse and Binghamton Railroad; Dr. John Miller of Truxton who founded the Cortland County Medical Society; Dr. Caleb Green of LaFayette who practiced in Homer; Sheriff David Coye; Rufus Boies who was Homer's first postmaster; and Dr. Thomas of the Skaneateles Water Cure.

As of the late 1980's, the largest local collection of Carpenters, a total of 11, belonged to the Homer Central School. Five of his earliest works are in the Cortland County Historical Society. 400 other works hang in major US galleries and museums. One even hangs in Windsor Castle.

CortlandStandard: Feb 8, 1988 and May 22, 1990

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 \$5.00
 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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

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.

