



June 2005
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The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2004-05 OCCWRT Officers

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Meeting

Thursday, June 16, 2005
7 PM

**Annual Meeting
of the 2004-05 Season**

**General Business Meeting
Election of Officers
Show and Tell**

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.

President's Message

It was wonderful to see so many at our last meeting to hear John Rudy, my son, talk about his passion. It is nice to know that we, his Dad and I, are getting our money's worth!

We have been notified that starting in September the NYSUT building where we have our meetings is going to begin charging \$100 a night to use the facility. The Board decided that this will be a drain on our treasury which we are trying to build up for the restoration of General Sumner's grave in Oakwood Cemetery. Therefore, we are going to need another facility for our meetings. Some of our members have been looking around at places to consider. We need all the input we can get, so if you know of a centrally located place, with good parking, please bring that information to the June meeting. A decision will have to be made sometime this summer, and the Board wants to have as many options as possible.

Our June meeting is our Annual Meeting as dictated in our By-Laws. It is the meeting for the elections of officers. We were supposed to have presented a slate of nominees at the May meeting, but it slipped everyone's mind (too busy, I guess). So we will have to conduct elections from the floor. It would be great if we had more involvement from the general membership. Our two trustees cannot be reelected due to term limits. New faces and new and fresh ideas would be welcome and would keep our organization in the forefront of the Civil War community. We need everyone's help in deciding where we will be going in the future. I would encourage you to attend the June meeting.

This is our Show and Tell meeting as well. Anything related to the Civil War is fair game. Don't worry if you don't have anything. We don't want to scare you away from this important meeting.

See you soon,
Mimi Rudy

Past Meeting

Thirty members at our May meeting, held in the NYSUT library, heard an animated presentation by John Rudy, OCCWRT member, Gettysburg College sophomore, and our scholar-in residence. He afforded us a fresh, innovative portrait of two brigades at Gettysburg, the US Regulars in the Wheatfield and Greene's New York Brigade on Culp's Hill. John's use of well-documented first-person accounts explored the actions of each brigade down to the individual soldier and furnished insights into how each brigade's successes and/or failures figured into the total battle. His remarkable use of the many features of *PowerPoint* complemented his analysis. In particular, his seamless panoramas of the Wheatfield with troop movements superimposed effectively illustrated the US Regulars' plight. John admitted to putting the finishing touches to this study at 1 am the night before which proves he is an effective military historian even at that hour. Congratulations, John. And to mom, Mimi, and dad, John-- keep up those tuition (\$\$\$\$\$) payments.

Another Cannon Update - What You Can Do To Help

Right now the Morelle Bill #A03432 sits before the New York Assembly. The bill will protect Civil War monuments/cannons in local communities from the likes of Ken Watterson and Bruce Stiles who are responsible for buying local cannons for their "museum". The bill curtails the unauthorized sale, purchase or transfer of any cemetery marker, flag holder, monument, statue or other physical memorabilia over 75 years old and classifies those acts as class B misdemeanors punishable by a fine up to \$500 or imprisonment for up to 3 months. This bill when it becomes law (6 months after its passage) will not return any of the cannons, but it may prevent the loss of others in the future. In May, the NYS Senate voted 61-0 unanimous for the Senate companion bill. Now is the time to write, call, or email your State Assemblyman/woman to commit to bringing the bill out of the "Codes Committee" **and** to promise to vote for it.

The NYS Assembly webpage, www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/, is the most convenient way to locate the name of your assembly person. If you are unsure, you may locate the name by entering your zip code. You'll find an email or a mailing address for your assembly person. The OCCWRT asks that you then urge your assembly person to get the

Joseph Morelle Bill #A03432 out of the "Codes Committee" and on to the floor for a vote. Don't hesitate. This bill has been languishing for 3 years and within those 3 years cannons from Sidney, NY, Kendall, NY, and now Groton, NY have been illegally sold to Ken Watterson's "museum" at 812 Bebout Rd., Venetia, PA 15367-1203.

In 1999, the McGraw, NY cemetery board raised funds to preserve the 2 Civil War cannons that continue to grace the Civil War veterans' section of that cemetery. Our Dick Crozier, aka General Lee, was asked to deliver a dedication speech for the return of the cannons now with new carriages and freshly painted and repaired. The audience was spellbound by Dick's eloquence. I quote the last paragraph of that speech to inspire you to contact your Assembly representative:

We are grateful for your return. (You look marvelous!) We understand your place in our history and we appreciate the help you gave our ancestors. We pledge ourselves to keep you safe and in good repair. We will paint you. We will tend to your carriage. We will preserve your iron. We will let our children play on you and we will tell them what you did. But mostly we will sit. We will gaze at you..... And we will remember.

Coming Events

June 18 (rain date June 19): **Living History Tour of Oran Cemetery.** Will include some of the Pompey boys of the 149th NYSV. Continuous from 2 PM. Park at the Oran Church. Wagon Rides provided to the cemetery.

August 28: **Civil War Tour of Oakwood Cemetery** with Drew Ellis. Meet at the Chapel at 2 PM.

Treasurer's Report

from Dave Osborn ending June 4, 2005

Preservation Fund	\$2055.67
General Fund	\$1883.83

We welcome new members Mike Carpenter and Mike Mordue. We also welcome renewing member Christine Mordue. Thank you.

Total paid membership for the 2004-05 season is 57 members.

15 Minutes of Fame for George and Ron

According to the *Chicago Tribune* and the Executive Director of Mt. Vernon, George Washington will have a change of image. Work has begun on a new movie to be shown at Mt. Vernon's orientation center. "It will be a dramatic Hollywood-style film to dispel the elder statesman icon and introduce the image familiar to his contemporaries -- the heroic, dashing and charismatic young man who eventually gained recognition as the "Father of Our Country."

The *Tribune* was skeptical of the choice of director for this mini epic. Ron Maxwell, writer and director of the Civil War film *Gettysburg* and its prequel, *Gods and Generals*, is the choice of the Mt. Vernon committee. Said Maxwell of this new Washington film project, "This will depict George Washington as a dynamic youth, an adventurous and active leader, a businessman, military champion and America's original action hero, instead of the stiff figurehead on the dollar bill that we all know so well."

So why is the *Tribune* so uncertain? Maxwell has to do all the above in a 15 minute film! "The problem is Maxwell's penchant for intruding interminable and ponderous speeches upon his action footage. I think those mutinous Maine soldiers (*Gettysburg*) agreed to take up the musket and go back into the fight mostly because they feared Daniels' character would make another speech to them if they didn't." So says the *Tribune*.

The Civil War community has a bit more faith in Ron Maxwell. You know we would flock to another Maxwell Civil War film. Come on, Ron. We know you can do it.

Make Me A Map-- Difficult and Dangerous

The Fredericksburg, VA *Free Lance-Star* recently reported an interesting presentation to the Stafford County Historical Society by historian Ken Purks. Titled *Dangerous Duty*, Purks described the hazardous duties of Civil War mapmakers. "Mapmaking today, of course, is a highly technical art involving radio beams from satellites and aerial photographs digitized into computers," observed Purks. But he preferred to convey to his audience an appreciation for both the skills and resourcefulness of people like Jedediah Hotchkiss- a transplanted New Yorker, Lewis Blackford, and Capt. J. Keith Boswell, all Confederate topographers. Perhaps if Mr. Purks were speaking to a northern audience, he would mention Gouverneur K. Warren, W. A. Roebling, and E. B. Cope.

"These were men who moved days in advance of their own army who needed to combine the skills of an engineer, an artist, a cavalryman and a secret agent. They literally were spies, often wearing civilian clothing within enemy lines," said Purks. "If a mapmaker were to make a real difference, it was not enough to simply locate roads, streams, railroads and major landmarks. Both the width of roads and the grade were important in the movement of wagons and artillery. Knowledge about the depth of streams and the location of fords and bridges was critical. And areas of high ground were valuable in both offensive and defensive maneuvers." Purks said the tools of the trade for Civil War-era mapmakers included a telescope, field glasses, a compass, a measuring

chain and a barometer for determining elevation. "When time was of the essence, many mapmakers employed a more practical method of measurement based on the number of horse paces. For example, 430 horse paces equaled about 400 yards."

One of the most impressive maps of the Civil War was one of the Valley from Harpers Ferry to Lexington ordered by Stonewall Jackson and drawn by Jed Hotchkiss. The map covered a distance nearly 25 miles in width and 140 miles in length and measured more than 4' wide and 7' long. This map greatly aided Jackson's successful Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1862.

Captain J. Keith Boswell, Stonewall's chief topographical engineer, was helping to lead a scouting party that included Stonewall on the night of May 2, 1862. He was killed in a friendly fire episode, the same episode in which Jackson was mortally wounded during the battle of Chancellorsville.

Purks stated that because most maps were sadly out of date at the beginning of the war, generals on both sides were forced to reassign critically needed engineer officers to the task of mapmaking. Most of the maps, 821 of them, have been reproduced in *The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War*; a large, heavy tome often found on the remainder table at local bookstores for under \$30.00. Well worth the price for another aid to understanding the history of the Civil War and valuable as a collection of the dangerous and difficult work of the topographical engineers of the Civil War armies.

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 _____

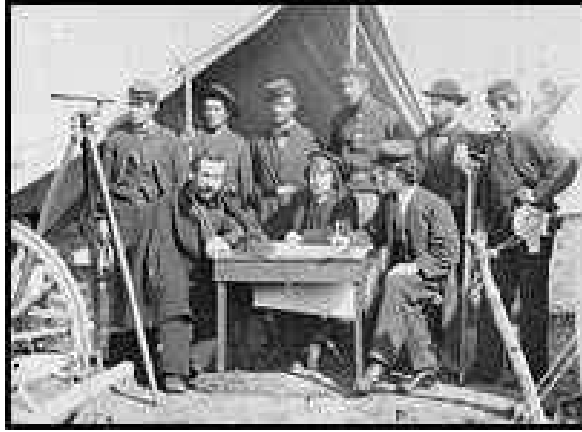
Address _____

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.



Detail of Yorktown, VA vicinity. Topographical engineers at Camp Winfield Scott

Onondaga County
Civil War Round Table 2589 Gardner Road Fabius, NY 13063