



June 2006
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The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2005-06 OCCWRT Officers

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Meeting Site

June 15, 2006

7 PM

Eastwood Baptist Church
3212 James Street
Eastwood, NY

Annual Meeting

Show and Tell
Silent Auction

Sumner Portrait Drawing

Directions: Route 690 East to Midler Ave Exit 15. North on Midler to James St. Right on James. Church will be two blocks from Midler on the right.

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.

June 2006 Meeting Details

Our last meeting of the 2005-06 season will be an exciting one. First, we will elect our officers for next season. The slate is as follows: Jim Dromgoole, President; Sue Greenhagen, Vice President; Dave Osborn, Treasurer; Bill Goodwin, Secretary; Dick Crozier and Kevin Milcarek, Trustees. Nominations may be made from the floor.

Then Show and Tell begins with members' offering their insights, artifacts, photos, experiences, and who knows what for the enjoyment of the round table. At the same time, a table full of interesting items will await your silent bids. We will conclude with the drawing for the portrait of General Sumner.

Join us for an evening of entertainment with friends who share your interest and along with you can actually spell *Appomattox*, *Rappahannock*, and maybe even *Chickamauga*. Like you they enjoy stopping at and browsing through cemeteries. Most haven't bought a book of fiction in years and have actually eaten hardtack. Who else but our members can comprehend why a long hike on a battlefield, in any weather, is a great time!

May's Speaker: Charles Snyder

Thirty nine members listened to Mr. Snyder describe the grueling work of the 48th PA Infantry, comprised of former coal miners, as they tunneled 511 feet towards and 20 feet under Elliott's Salient, a Confederate redoubt near Petersburg. We learned of the ingenious ventilation system that drew stale air out of the tunnel while bringing in fresh air for the laboring miners. A total of 320 kegs of gunpowder, totaling 8000 pounds was ignited on July 20, 1864 creating a crater 150 to 200 feet long, sixty feet wide, and thirty feet deep and destroying a Confederate battery and most of a regiment in the process. So why wasn't this Federal effort a success?

Mr. Snyder placed much of the blame squarely on the shoulders of Gen. George Meade who reversed Burnside's plan to use new, enthusiastic black troops who had drilled and practiced maneuvers for weeks in preparation for leading the attack after the explosion. Burnside's method for selecting an alternative division to take the lead was to draw straws from a hat. The "winner" was BG James Ledlie's 1st Division. The luck of the draw had favored the least able officer to do the job. Though Burnside and Ledlie were given leaves that ended in their resignations, Mr. Snyder reminded us to focus on Meade's decision. In fact, the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War found Meade responsible for the loss of battle because of his decision and faulted Burnside only for his method of selecting the alternate division.

With Many Thanks

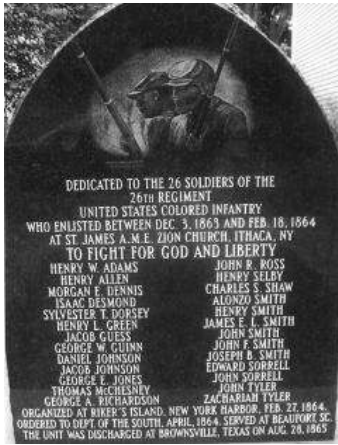
As the OCCWRT's first co-presidency ends after the June meeting, it's time to thank Mimi Rudy and Beth Greenfield for their time and efforts. Both have time consuming jobs, yet they managed the many demands the office presented. We appreciate their dedication to the round table, and thank them for their leadership.

Oakwood Cemetery Celebration

The Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association (H.O.C.P.A.) Anniversary event will be held on Saturday, July 15th at Oakwood Cemetery. It's an all day celebration with lunches available through pre-arrangement, or bring a picnic with you. There will be 2 tours in the morning and a repeat of those tours in the afternoon. The OCCWRT will have a table with organizational information as well as cold bottled water for sale. Members of the round table who are involved in the tours are Nancy Graham, Sue Greenhagen, Dick Crozier, and Darothy DeAngelo. For further information, call Letty Murray at 445-9388. The OCCWRT is honored to be part of this prestigious event.

Unique Memorial Marker

from the Ithaca Journal



At the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, 116 Cleveland Ave in Ithaca, stands a black, African gemite marble monument dedicated to 26 Ithacan soldiers of the United States Colored Troops. These men enlisted between December 1863 and February 1864 and were

sent to Rikers Island for training. They were ordered to the Department of the South in April of 1864 and served at Beaufort, SC. They were mustered out at Brownsville, TX in August 1865. 24 of the original 26 men came back home to the St. James in Ithaca.

The church, the oldest in Ithaca, was chartered in 1833 and erected in 1836 at its present site. It became the cultural, political, and spiritual heart of the Ithaca

black community. By 1861, Ithaca had a small but thriving black community and was a busy station on the Underground Railroad. Both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were closely involved at St. James.

The Ithaca Journal chose to remember the St. James marker for Memorial Day 2006 and the 26 men who chose "to fight for God and Liberty." The church is open to the public.

Congratulations to the CDCWRT

At the April 2006 annual conference of the Civil War Preservation Trust, the largest national Civil War preservation group with over 77,000 members, the Capital District Civil War Roundtable was honored with the Civil War Roundtable of the Year Award. Our friends from the Albany area were recognized for their generous contributions over a twenty year period for the purchase of battlefield land. The CDCWRT has issued a challenge to all round tables in the country to donate \$5/member to the CWPT before the next annual meeting.

Another Rave Review

He's done it again. Dr. Wayne Mahood has written another fine Civil War biography that has earned an excellent review from *The Civil War News*. The last time Dr. Mahood spoke to us, he introduced his 2003 biography of the *Life and Times of Brevet Major General James S. Wadsworth*, a compelling look into the man from nearby Geneseo, NY "who gave up the comfortable life of a New York millionaire land owner to serve his country and the Union cause."

Dr. Mahood's latest success is *Alexander "Fighting Elleck" Hays: The Life of a Civil War General, From West Point to the Wilderness*. This is the officer who cleared the Bliss Barn of Confederate sharpshooters at Gettysburg and was responsible for the defense of the stonewall (near the Angle) during Pickett's Charge. Described as a man's man, Hays was never afraid of a confrontation.

In 1868, presidential candidate US Grant while campaigning in Pittsburgh asked where Hays was buried. He then visited the spot and "sat on a cannon and wept for Hays, a man with the heart of a lion." Both Wadsworth and Hays were killed at The Wilderness in May 1864. Either book - a good summer read.

Update on Gettysburg Vandalism

Though no suspects have been apprehended in the February 2006 vandalism of 3 Gettysburg monuments, efforts to repair two of the monuments are continuing. The 114th Pennsylvania monument was fixed and returned to its base in March. Internet research has led park officials to a monument in New Hampshire that contains an artilleryman identical to the one depicted on the 4th New York Battery. Both the statue's head and rammer were stolen. Park officials could make a mold from the New Hampshire statue and cast new bronze parts, though they hope the original parts will be found.

Repair on the 11th Massachusetts monument will be more difficult. On the top of this monument, a carved granite arm holding a sword was shattered. The sword was stolen. "Sculpting the new granite arm will be very difficult without a model," a park official noted. Efforts have successfully tracked down descendants of the original granite company that made the statue, but no useful model was found.

A \$36,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the vandals is still being offered.

Local Battlefield Could Be National Park

The Ithaca Journal reported in early May that the Newtown Battlefield near Elmira, NY - not the state park but the site of the Battle of Newtown- could receive federal protection, including possible national park status. A recent study by the National Park Service ranked the site "one of the most significant battle sites of the American Revolution."

Paul Hawke, chief of the American Battlefield Protection Program, an arm of the National Park service, was in Elmira on May 12 to meet with local groups and to discuss the future of the Newtown Battlefield.

The Battle of Newtown took place in August 1779 in a field near what is now Lowman, NY. Forces led by Gen. John Sullivan and Gen. James Clinton were dispatched by Gen. George Washington to exact revenge for earlier Indian massacres. Nearly 3,500 American soldiers were able to defeat a band of 1,215 British soldiers, loyalists, and Iroquois warriors. Sullivan's troops went on to burn more than 40 Indian villages throughout the Finger Lakes region. "The natives were so devastated they flocked to the British stronghold at Fort Niagara and asked for help," Hawke said. "The British agreed to provide thousands of displaced Iroquois with food and shelter, but the effort so strained their resources that it seriously hampered their war effort," Hawke added.

The American Battlefield Protection Program concluded that Newtown Battlefield ranks high in historical significance after a team of scholars reviewed 3,000 battle sites nationwide from the American Revolution and the War of 1812; The battlefield is part of a 110-acre farm, and the owner is interested in talking with the Park Service. The State park created to commemorate the Battle of Newtown sits on a nearby hill, but does not include the actual battle site. Chemung County officials added, "We've always known the historical relevance of that site where the battles were held. There could be tremendous potential for this site in conjunction with all the work that's been done at the state park. People will drive hundreds of miles to see these sites."

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

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.



Absentee Ballot

for officers of the

Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2006-2007

		Yes	No	Write In
President	James Dromgoole	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Vice President	Sue Greenhagen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Treasurer	Dave Osborn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Secretary	Bill Goodwin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Trustees (2)	Dick Crozier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
	Kevin Milcarek	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

I accept the entire slate of officers for 2006-2007

Email your choices to pstepane@ix.netcom.com

or

**Mail your choices to: Patricia Stepanek
PO Box 175
Tully, NY 13159-0175**

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