



June 2009  
Volume 15 Number 10

# The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

## 2008-09 OCCWRT Officers

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## Meeting Site

**Town of DeWitt  
Community Room**

**148 Sanders Creek Parkway  
East Syracuse, New York**

**Election of Officers  
Show and Tell  
Silent Auction**

**Thursday, June 18, 2009  
7:00 PM**

**Our 15th Year!**

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 18th Meeting

Our 15th season ends with our busy June meeting. This is our **Annual Business Meeting** which means we will elect our officers and trustees for the 2009-2010 season which begins in September. After the election **Show and Tell** will begin. Take a few minutes to share your CW artifact with us or a book you've found interesting. Are you planning a CW trip this summer? Remember, since your audience shares your interest in the Civil War it will be easy to catch their attention with whatever you present. During the meeting you may bid on the any of the items we have on the **auction** table. Any item you wish to donate to this fund raiser will be appreciated. We haven't met since April. Hope to see you June 18th.

**17th Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend  
June 13th and 14th**

## Vote by Phone or Email

If you can't attend our June meeting and care to cast your vote, you may do so by calling 696-5531. Just leave a message. Or you may email your choices to [pas1865@verizon.net](mailto:pas1865@verizon.net). Write-ins are allowed. The slate is as follows:

President	Bill Goodwin
Vice-Pres	Diane Haller
Secretary	Dave Osborn
Treasurer	Scott Cauger
Trustee	Mike Carpenter
Trustee	Kathy Ryan

## The Homer Happening

Congratulations to the village of Homer planners for a stunning Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration that introduced us to three Homerians in direct contact with President Lincoln. Noted Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer in two insightful lectures traced the careers of artist Francis Carpenter and third secretary William Stoddard and assessed their impact on our understanding of Lincoln. Historian Jason Emerson, our September speaker, presented a new perspective on the lives Mary and Robert Lincoln after the assassination from his book *The Madness of Mary Lincoln*. The five days of events were well attended by the community and members from the OCCWRT, the Binghamton RT, the Cortland RT, and the General Butterfield RT. Well done!

## Directions to Town of DeWitt Community Room

From 481N take Exit 5W to Kirkville Rd West. Merge onto Kirkville Rd and travel 1.2 miles. Turn right onto Kinne St and travel 0.7 miles. Turn right at Sanders Creek Parkway and travel 0.2 miles to 148 Sanders Creek Parkway, the site of the East Syracuse Fire Department and the Town of DeWitt Community Room.

## Thank You for Your Dues

2008-09 dues paid as of June 6, 2009: Patricia Arvantides, Lisa Bradley, Bob & Kathy Brown, Mike Carpenter, Scott Cauger, Marion Chester, Dick Crozier, Gorden Cruickshank, Dave Cuculich, Collyn Conrad and Mom, Darothy DeAngelo, Frank DeGrenier, Jim Dromgoole, Nancy Edwards, David Fedele family, Bill Goodwin, Beth Greenfield, Sue Greenhagen, Diane Haller, Lamont Hahn, Ruth Hotaling, Ted Jones, Martin Joyce, Jim Kellogg, Cheryl LaManche, Kevin Milcarek, John Murray, Steve Nathan, Byron Nilsson, William O'Leary, Jane Maher Proper, Ed Raus, M. Kent Russell, Kathy Ryan, Richard Scott, Gerard Slate, Charles Snyder, Pat Stepanek, Rich & Natalie Trump, Courtney Tucker, Elaine Tucker, Eleanor & James Tyler, Valerie Williams, Marcus & Kristy Lee Witt, Fred Wyker.

Total: 50 members

## Rededication Is Now Complete



On May 31, 2009, a bright, warm and windy Sunday, bagpiper Avery Head led representatives of the 12th US, the 122nd and 149th NYSV to the newly conserved gravesite of General Edwin Vose Sumner in Oakwood Cemetery. Members of the OCCWRT and guests were seated, hoping not to be blown over by the howling wind. After five years of fund raising, donations, and a grant, Darothy DeAngelo, co-chair of the event along with Sue Greenhagen, welcomed the audience with a short history of the gravesite project. The well-planned program continued without a hitch, except for the unrelenting wind.

The photo above captures a few of the dignitaries. On the left is Civil War Chaplain Art Benschadel who delivered an inspired Invocation and Benediction. Next to Art stands Brig. General (Ret.) Robert Purple of the New York Air National Guard whose Keynote Address remembered all veterans and focused on General Sumner's many years of service. Darothy, wearing a unique straw hat covered with cherries, appears to be standing next to General Sumner who is tied to the monument lest the winds launch him or bend him in half. Next to the dapper but greying general stand member Collyn Conrad and his beautiful sister Caitlyn. Collyn led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, and both helped with the presentation of the memorial wreath. Not pictured is Ryan Drake, a senior from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, who played a flawless, haunting *Taps* for us all.

The general and his wife, Hannah, are now secure for another one hundred and forty years. This career soldier whose dying words were, "God bless the United States of America", will not be forgotten in his final resting place here in Syracuse.

## Side Bar by Darothy DeAngelo

Those who attended the Sumner rededication or who have visited the general's grave site, may have wondered about the stone next to the general and Mrs. Sumner.

The gravestone has the name "Nancy Jenkins" etched clearly. So, who was "Nancy Jenkins"?

Nancy Sumner Jenkins was the oldest child of General and Mrs. Sumner. She was born at Sackets Harbor on 12 February 1823, when the general was stationed there with the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

In 1845, at age 22, she married Leonides Jenkins, an 1841 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He served in the U.S. Army in the Mexican War where he was killed in 1847. Nancy and Leonides had one son, George, who was born in 1846. He, too, served in the Union Army, but died of fever at New Bern, N.C. on 19 October 1864. He had attained the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the N.Y. 1st Mounted Rifles during the Civil War.

Nancy remained a widow for the rest of her long life. She passed away in Syracuse on 10 February 1911, 2 days short of her 88th birthday. She had resided with her sister's family, the Tealls, on E. Fayette Street opposite Fayette Park, and is buried in the Teall lot in Oakwood Cemetery. Neither her husband, nor her son are buried in Syracuse.

## What Sesquicentennial?

The years 2011-2015 mark the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. Yet, according to the *Civil War News* (June 2009), the state of Virginia is one of only six states with an active Sesquicentennial Commission and a dedicated Web site. Arkansas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and West Virginia are the other five states each with a commission and web site. Thirteen other states have a Sesquicentennial Commission, or a state law to create one or a state historical society with Sesquicentennial plans. Twenty-five states do not have any active Sesquicentennial organizations, including four from the Deep South and two Border States. An internet search did not show an active NY State Sesquicentennial Commission.

In fact, there is no national Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, though there have been several attempts to create one. All attempts have failed to pass through Congress. From the late 1950's to the mid-1960's there was a U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. Perhaps the Lincoln Bicentennial has diverted attention away from the 150th anniversary of the start of the American Civil War, often referred to as the defining experience of our country's development. Is this the time to write a note to our state and national legislators asking that they insure a suitable national observance? I think it is.

## FYI

Col. James W. Ripley was the man in charge of munitions production for the United States. Unfortunately several of his better manufacturing plants were captured, and the machinery relocated, by the Confederates in the early days of the war. (The plant at Harpers Ferry was shipped to North Carolina in its entirety.) Since demand was sky-high to supply all the incoming recruits, Col. Ripley was driven to place huge orders for guns with private manufacturers. The Colt, Remington, and other companies profited early in the war.

from *Civil War Interactive*

## Recollections of Benedict R. Maryniak

by Sue Greenhagen



It's hard to accept the death of a friend. It's even harder to put down on paper all the thoughts that come streaming back. Ben Maryniak died on May 25 after a long battle with illness. His wife, Cathy, would send out email updates on his condition, just to let his friends know how he was doing. We followed his struggle for some three months, and then Ben was gone.

His achievements were legion: from co-authoring two books (*Faith in the Fight*, 2003 and *The Spirit Divided*, 2007) to serving as the Historian for the Town of Lancaster, from re-enacting a Civil War chaplain (Philos G. Cook, 94th NYSV) to playing Father Corby in the movie *Gettysburg* (they showed him only from the back, but I knew it was him).

As importantly, his knowledge of the Civil War was encyclopedic. He majored in chaplains and minored in G. A. R., but he could speak on any topic at the drop of a hat, and without notes. The OCCWRT was fortunate to have him as a speaker twice. He also was our Chaplain at the re-dedication of the Soldiers' & Sailor' Monument. I'll never forget how his strong voice reverberated around Clinton Square.

I was fortunate to have known Ben, not just as a friend, but as a teacher and mentor. I learned a great deal from him. The entire Civil War community will miss him greatly.

He once wrote, "...our Civil War never went away; it didn't stay in our attics. It had a tug on our imaginations and affections that we continued to feel. It remained a compelling story with very familiar characters. The battlefields were still familiar and thousands of photographs remained. Though we've been deluged by war and death through our televisions, it may be that their realities are better-comprehended from the distance of the Civil War."

Ben was just 61 years old. He left us way too soon.

### Worthless Money Makes Money

The South Carolina State Archives in Columbia, SC, amid a tight state budget, has provided itself with an influx of money. A retired history professor volunteers eight hours a month to sift through boxes of Civil War state currency supposedly destroyed when the new Reconstruction government in SC refused to cover the paper money issued by the state. More than \$200,000 has been realized from eBay sales. State law prevents the proceeds from going toward salaries but allows it to go towards supplies. Archivists have set aside several potentially high-value items for a future live auction. Those include notes signed by Confederate Lt. General Wade Hampton, a former SC governor. Excitement comes at the least expected times, like the day the volunteer turned over a \$1 note and found a handwritten message: "The last of fifty-thousand and this is going for whiskey." That \$1 note remains in the SC archives.

## Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

### New Member/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: A. Scott Cauger Treasurer

216 Windebank Lane

Minoa, NY 13116

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.



*Onondaga County*  
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