



March 2008  
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# The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

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## Meeting Site

### *The Warehouse*

Syracuse University  
School of Architecture

350 West Fayette St  
Syracuse, NY  
Auditorium 1st Floor

### *Civil War Medicine*

with  
Linda Zach

Thursday, March 20, 2008  
7:15 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.

## March Meeting

Our speaker, Linda Zach, is a retired emergency room nurse whose interest in the Civil War was renewed in the early 1990's by Ken Burns' *Civil War* and Ron Maxwell's film *Gettysburg*. Like many of us her interest has become a full-time passion, taking her to many battlefields and the 2006 Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College for the one week seminar on Civil War Medicine. Her presentation to us will examine the state of medicine in 1860 and the impact the American Civil War had on medicine and the profession. Her extensive collection of the tools of the trade will be on display.

We will see more of Linda in the future for she is prepared to speak on the *Masons in the CW*, *Harriet Tubman and the Underground RR*, and is currently working on a study of women in the CW including those who fought as men. Join us for Linda Zach and her overview of Civil War medicine from her perspective as a medical professional.

## FYI: Our Newsletters Are Archived

[http://library.morrisville.edu/local\\_history/sites/cwrt/newsletters.html](http://library.morrisville.edu/local_history/sites/cwrt/newsletters.html)

Our February speaker, Stephen Dreher, shared his years of meticulous research on Battery B, First New York Light Artillery recruited in Baldwinsville, NY by Rufus D. Pettit. Since Mr. Dreher's focus was the Battery's trip from hell from Syracuse to Elmira and eventually to Washington in 1861, little mention was made of Pettit's 1865 tenure as Superintendent of Prisons in Arlington, VA, ending in his December 1865 court-martial and the loss of his Civil War pension. He had left the Battery in May of 1863 due to illness, and had rejoined the army in March 1864 assigned to the Invalid Corps.

The January 2007 newsletter contains a piece on Pettit titled *Rufus Pettit - Respected Artilleryman, Cruel Jailer*. If you wish to reread the article with the details of his superintendency, you can access the newsletter at Sue Greenhagen's *New York and the Civil War* website, cited above. She has archived the OCCWRT newsletter from September 2004 to the present. Thanks, Sue. For those who are organized and have filed the past newsletters, the chore of finding the January 2007 issue is no problem, **unless** you can't find the file folder! Been there; done that - too many times.

## Rufus Pettit Speaks

During Stephen Dreher's presentation, he mentioned that he was able to contact R. Pettit's descendants who generously gave him 200 letters either to or from Pettit. Those letters, 1861-1867, have been transcribed and edited by Stephen, and the manuscript has been donated to the Onondaga Historical Association. Stephen has also shared the manuscript with me. I was interested in three of the letters written by Pettit to his wife around the time of his court martial. They are tender and comforting to his wife who is worried about the trial.

Alex VA Nov 12th 1865: *I am sorry that you my love are so depressed in mind on my account. You need have no fears that I will bring disgrace on myself or family. Bad men attack me & I must defend myself against them & I hope to do so successfully - my trial will commence in this city before a court of Maj & Brig Generals the 14th - I am quite ready to meet all the charges & nothing but perjury on the part of a large number of witness can injure me...Do not give yourself any uneasiness on my account Dear Wife.*

Alex VA Dec 3rd 1865: *...the Court have rendered their decision - but are sworn not to divulge its findings untill published by Competent Authority that is the Hon Sec of War - who is the reviewing officer...it will doubtless be disposed of the coming week. ...Kiss our Darling Jess & Mary for me. Your ever faithful & loving husband.*

Dec. 13 1865: *Guilty of the Charge of Conduct to the prejudice of good order and Military discipline and of its first two specifications; the finding under its third specification was dismissed.* Court-martial order No. 645, 13 Dec 65 dismissed Rufus Pettit from the Service. Pettit had not yet received the news when he wrote the following letter to his wife:

AlexVA Dec 14 - 1865 *My Darling Wife*

*I have this morning read yours of the 10th inst - I am truly sorry my love that you feel so towards me. You know my love that you have my entire confidence - but I am not to be held responsible for all that others may say or that may be published & I have written you what the charge against me was & on which I was tried - simply cruelty - no charge of fraud or anything of the kind. No matter what the findings of the Court is in any case - it is never published or told to any one until the case has been reviewed & passed upon by the Reviewing Officer & my case is no exception to this rule - I have not been able to learn one word - or even a hint as to the findings - but in the natural course of events - I should know soon & as soon as I know I will let you know - You must not my Dear Wife ask of me more than I am able to do. I know my love that you are very anxious & so am I, but you must not blame me for I shall ere do that which in my judgment will be the best for us all having of course due consideration for your opinion - I would come to you my true wife - If I could - & then I think I could make the matter quite clear - I do so want to see you & our dear children that it seems as though I could not wait but I must see everything all right & straight - at least I shall do all that is in my power - to have the truth & justice prevail before I can come- Nothing new here my Darling - Give my love to our Dear little ones & accept the love & affection of your own Rufus*

**From the *Syracuse Daily Standard*, 3 Jan 66, P. 3, col.3.** Baldwinsville Items: *Cap R. D. Pettit, formerly of Battery "B", 1st N.Y. Artillery, but lately of the Invalid Corps, arrived home last Monday.*

We can only imagine what that home coming was like! Thanks to Stephen Dreher for sharing these little known letters with us.

## What No Birthday Cake?

The *Winston-Salem Journal* recently noted that "it hasn't been easy getting people excited about celebrating the 200th birthday of that tall, gaunt, bearded Kentucky-bred president who was born in a log cabin and went on to head his people through a bloody Civil War."

What, you ask? What about all the Lincoln bicentennial committees, national and state? What about the four new Lincoln pennies the mint will issue in 2009? What's the problem?

It's the other tall, gaunt, bearded Kentuckian, Jefferson Davis, whose 200th "has turned out to be something of a lost cause." Southern states have not responded to the Davis Family Association's initiatives. For instance, the Dept. Of Defense didn't reply to the Association's request to participate in some activity "to educate the public about the real Jefferson Davis" who served as President Pierce's Secretary of War. Davis' home state of Mississippi did pass a bill to establish a commission to commemorate Davis; however, the bill died in the state senate appropriations committee.

Great-great-grandson Bertram Hayes-Davis, a Colorado Springs banker, and other family members will gather in Biloxi, MS on June 3, 2008, Davis' 200th birthday, at Beauvoir House where Davis spent the last 12 years of his life. The house was nearly

swept away by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. After a costly renovation, Beauvoir House will be rededicated by the family. That's about it for the Davis bicentennial.

## Sergeant William Henry Harrison Crosier Company G, 149th New York Volunteer Infantry Awarded Medal of Honor 12 January 1892

William Crosier is one of 6 men from the 149th NYV to be awarded the Medal of Honor. He was born in Skaneateles, NY in 1843, died in 1903, and is buried in the Civil War section of Oakwood Cemetery in Syracuse along with 230 other Civil War veterans. OCCWRT President Bill Goodwin found the following article about William Crosier in the *Post Standard* August 15, 1948 Centennial Issue, 45 years after Crozier's death, with details of Crozier's actions.

### 'Tip' Escaped Confederates Saving 149th Regiment Flag

*Everyone called him Tip, but his real name was William Henry Harrison Crozier, and he was known in these parts as a hero.*

*Tip belonged to the 149th regiment during the Civil War. One day he was with some men of the regiment in a ravine among bushes when they were surprised by withering enemy fire. The colonel ordered a retreat to save the force. The right and left wings had retired. Six color guards had been shot down.*

*Crosier stood alone, surrounded by hundreds of Confederates. He tore the flag from the staff, stuffed it into his shirt, handed a Confederate officer the staff and plunged into the bushes as bullets whistled after him.*

*Bleeding from wounds, he staggered empty-handed into the clearing where the regiment was being assembled. When the colonel asked for the flag, Crosier suddenly shouted:*

*"Here it is, colonel!" Then he fell to the ground.*

*This all happened on July 20, 1864, during the battle of Peach Tree Creek in Georgia. Crosier suffered wounds in the neck and right shoulder.*

*When he returned home, he was a deputy sheriff for many years.*

## Vocal Opponent of Slavery Going Home

The statue of Zachariah Chandler - 1813-79 - Michigan Senator, Radical Republican, and a member of the Committee on the Conduct of the War will soon be leaving Washington, DC. Chandler's statue is one of 100 statues in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. Each state is allowed 2 statues to honor persons notable in the state's history. New York State chose George Clinton, the first governor of NY, and Robert Livingston, one of five drafters of the Declaration of Independence and vice-president under Jefferson and Madison.

Chandler, one of the founders of the Republican Party and an opponent of slavery, will be relocated to the Detroit Historical Museum. He will be replaced with a portrait statue of President Gerald Ford to honor his life and service as Michigan's first citizen to become President. Ford died in late 2006. Lewis Cass, a territorial governor, U.S. senator, Secretary of State and unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president in 1848 will continue to represent Michigan.

## May 8th - Mark Your Calendar

Our May meeting will be on the second Thursday of the month, May 8th, instead of our usual third Thursday. Our board members voted for this change in order to accommodate a **very special speaker from Gettysburg**. We will be sharing this speaker with our friends from the Capital District Round Table. So, reserve May 8th if you can. This is a meeting you won't want to miss.

### \$\$ Dues \$\$

Though our fiscal year ends in June, the OCCWRT is still collecting dues for the current year. We thank the many members who have recently paid their dues. The membership form is at the bottom of this page and can be mailed to our treasurer or brought to the next meeting.

### 'Historic' Recycling

On March 1st, workers from Northrop Grumman's Newport News shipyard poured molten metal into molds to cast a propeller for a full-scale replica of the Civil War Ironclad ship **USS Monitor** to be housed at the Mariners' Museum also in Newport News, VA. So what's interesting about this? The molten metal was comprised of 1,200 guns and knives either seized or bought-back by the Newport News Police Dept.

The 2800 degrees of Northrop Grumman's foundry furnace melted the weapons in eight hours. Usually the induction furnace is used for making steel castings for Navy aircraft carriers and submarines. If there is an award for creative recycling, then someone from Grumman, or the Mariners' Museum, or the Police Department deserves that award.

## April 14th Soft Opening



The new Gettysburg National Military Park Visitor Center and Museum will open to visitors at 8 a.m. on Monday, April 14th. Access to the new site on Hunt Ave will be from the Taneytown Road as well as the Baltimore Pike. The center will include a collections storage area, two theaters showing a new 22-minute film about the battle, snack bars, galleries, and a new book and gift center. Two of the museum galleries will be able to be viewed from outside the museum. The Cyclorama painting is still being conserved and will open to visitors at the September Grand Opening of the Visitor Center.

The original projected cost of \$40 million ballooned to \$125 million of which \$105 million has been raised. Therefore, fundraising continues with the additional funds going toward battlefield rehabilitation. When the present Visitor Center on the Taneytown Road is removed, that area known as Ziegler's Grove will be restored to reflect the original unbroken Union line extending from Cemetery Ridge to Cemetery Hill.

## 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: Richard Walker, Treasurer

307 Sherbrooke Rd

Manlius, NY 13104

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

*Circle May 8th On Your Calendar*