



May 2005
Volume 11 Number 9

The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2004-05 OCCWRT Officers

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Meeting

Thursday, May 19, 2005
7 PM

John Rudy

*They Taught Us to Die Like
Soldiers, U.S. Regulars in the
Wheatfield*
and
*That Sturdy Brigade, George
Sears Greene's New York
Brigade on Culp's Hill*

Location: NYSUT Building
Brittonfield Parkway
East Syracuse, NY

Route 481 to Exit 7. Take Route 298 West. First left onto Brittonfield Parkway. The New York State United Teachers' 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. The meetings are free and open to the public.

May Meeting Details



John Rudy

If the round table had a scholar-in-residence it would be member John Rudy. He is in the area only from May-late August, and gladly we have him for the May meeting. He will examine two brigade level commands at Gettysburg: The US Regulars in the Wheatfield, *They Taught Us to Die Like Soldiers*, and George Sears Greene's New York Brigade on Culp's Hill, *That Sturdy Brigade*. John spends the rest of the year at Gettysburg College majoring in history, acting in college theater productions (pictured here), hosting a radio show, working, singing in the college choir, and recently being inducted into the International Honorary Society in History. John was admitted to the college two years ago as a Presidential Scholar. Comemeet our "scholar-in-residence."

President's Message

It was so great to finally welcome Spring 2005 on top of Culp's Hill. We and the park service have made a definite change in the landscape. You can see down the hill to the Onondaga monuments, back to the town of Gettysburg, and down the hill to General Slocum's equestrian. I checked out the newest work by Dale Gallon and met the artist in his gallery. I also met German Civil War buffs who were checking out the US Grant reenactor who was a dead ringer for the general. I'll be back in Gettysburg at the end of September for the national golden retriever show and will have plenty of shots of my dogs and members of the Golden Retriever Club of CNY in front of the Onondaga monuments.

I would also like to give a great big thanks and huzzah to all who helped make Dan Paterson's presentation a great success. We had such a nice turnout, the hospitality was excellent, we did well on the book raffle, and we increased our membership. There was so much to reflect on about General Longstreet; personally I never knew he was partying it up with the notorious Dan Sickles!!! I wonder how he would feel today if he knew his great grandson was climbing Lookout Mountain with reenactors from the 149th NYSV. Would love to hear your views on him. The presentation of the Civil War flags at the Onondaga Court House was also a great success. So many groups involved with a pledge to keep on conserving the rich historical past of the greater Syracuse area. Of particular interest was the computerized sewing system used by Syracuse University for the flag replicas.

Sic semper,
Beth Greenfield

Past Meeting

Our April meeting, *A Longstreet Pictorial*, was a great success. 75 people attended and were captivated by Dan Paterson's review of his family's history with emphasis on the General. Dan's serious research of his family is quite recent, though he was raised with an awareness of his great grandfather, General Longstreet. We thank him for sharing his family's photo album and that of the General's as well. Dan showed us three Longstreet monuments erected in the south within the past few years. Though it has taken awhile, better late than never.



Dan Paterson

Our thanks to Nancy and Bob Graham for the bountiful hors d'oeuvre and dessert table they organized along with a fresh bouquet of spring flowers from Nancy's garden to remind us that winter is *finally* over.

Gettysburg Battlefield - Adopt-A-Position Work Day

Saturday, April 16th, a perfect spring day, seven OCCWRT members headed up Culp's Hill to General Greene's portrait statue. For the 5th time since October 2002, we donned our best working duds to honor our Adopt-A-Position (AAP) commitment to the National Park Service.



Left to Right Standing: Bill Goodwin, Sue Greenhagen, Beth Greenfield, Mimi Rudy, Ed Czajak.
Seated: Pat Stepanek, Darothy DeAngelo.

We did our usual maintenance with gusto: raking, cutting brush, planting grass, felling dead trees, and collecting the occasional "CW" beer bottle. Our commitment takes on more significance each year as the park maintenance budget shrinks. Currently the AAP program has 228 groups (over 1,000 volunteers) who have adopted over 350 sites in the park.

These sites include monument positions, artillery sites, markers, and farmsteads. Sixteen volunteer groups have opted to help the park wherever there is a need. Superintendent Dr. John Latschar recently commented about the importance of the AAP program. "Every hour of every day that you volunteer your time and your labor, means *something gets done that would not get done without you*. I hope you are as proud of the work you have done, as we are thankful."

We usually meet interesting visitors at the site. This year the Chicago Civil War Round Table, touring the battlefield by bus, paused for a lecture by Marshall Krolick, author, historian, and past president of that round table. Among the group was a Slocum family descendant. When Krolick asked why we were flying the 3rd Brigade replica flag, we gladly told him about our successful fund raising to conserve the original. He asked what our future preservation goals were, and again we gladly told him about General Sumner's grave in Oakwood Cemetery and our interest in financing the structural repair of his tomb. Consequently, Krolick suggested we contact other round tables, including his, for donations. That opened an area of support we had never considered. Shortly, the board of the OCCWRT will address this issue.

To regain our strength, we gathered later at Dino's for a pizza lunch. In the evening, we met at the Kline Theater at Gettysburg College to enjoy member John Rudy's performance as a wealthy industrialist in *Diana of Dobson's* (photo on pg. 1). We hoped he would get the girl, but he didn't. He perfected a fine English accent for the role and commanded a strong stage presence.

Please consider joining us in Sept/Oct (to be determined) for our next AAP visit. We are proud of our commitment to battlefield maintenance for it has significantly improved General Greene's site.

Schedule of Events

June 5: Town Ball Game at Elman Field, Oran.
Baptist Brotherhood of Delphi Falls vs Oran Red Caps.
3-5 PM. See "Baseball" as it was played 150 years ago. Picnic supper following. All welcome.

June 11-12: 13th Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend, Peterboro, NY. The OCCWRT will have a display table. Volunteers needed (will receive free admission).

June 16: Annual Meeting. Election of Officers and Show & Tell.

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

Treasurer's Report

Dave Osborn reports for the month of April:

Preservation Fund	\$2055.67
General Fund	\$1816.18

Renewals from Mike Redding and Joy Gillis. Thank you. We welcome new members Eva Nies and Marilyn Hartshorn, both descendants of Peter Kappesser, 149th NYSV, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for capturing the flag of the 34th Mississippi Infantry at Lookout Mountain. We welcome Dan Paterson to the OCCWRT. He was given an honorary membership to the round table.

Total membership is now 54 paid members.

 **Same Old-Same Old**

April's newsletter was misnumbered. I can't keep that numbering straight. It should read Volume 11, Number 8.

13th Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend

June 11-12 10:30-4:30

Come Join Us at the OCCWRT Booth

In a few short weeks Peterboro, a hamlet of 200 in Madison County, will be filled with Civil War re-enactors, book sellers, crafts, period music, food, and, of course, the OCCWRT booth. This annual Civil War Weekend has been a favorite event for our round table, and we hope to be well-represented. We always need volunteers to spend a few hours manning our booth to answer the many questions visitors ask.

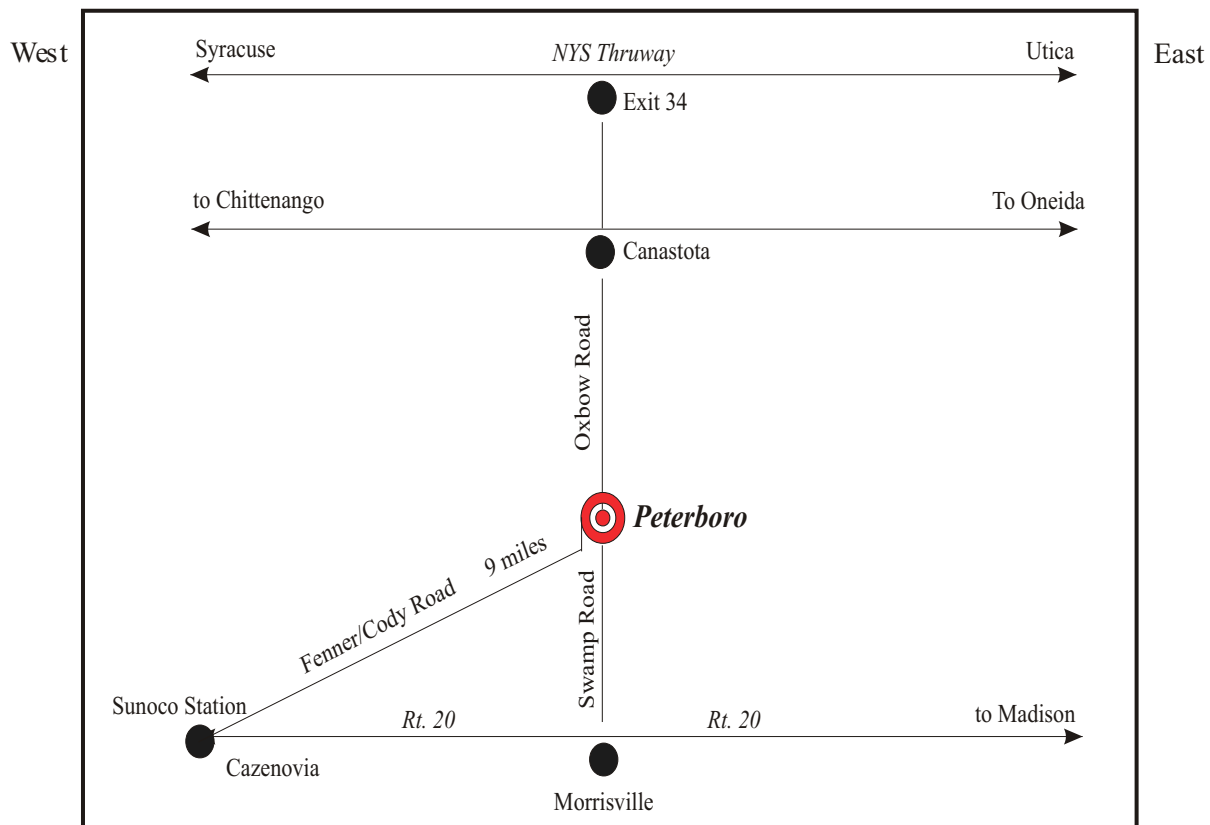
The final schedule will be in the *Post-Standard* shortly before the event. We do know the *Excelsior Cornet Band* will perform on Sunday, June 12 at 1 PM and the *77th NY Regimental Balladeers* will perform on Saturday, June 11 at 1 PM and 2:45 PM. The skirmish between the North and South encampments is usually scheduled for mid-afternoon on both days.

Peterboro was the home of Gerrit Smith where for more than three decades Smith's two-story mansion was an important station in the Underground Railroad network. Smith dedicated his personal fortune to the abolishment of slavery. The New York State Anti-Slavery Society held its inaugural meeting in October 1835 at the Smithfield Community Center, a short distance from the square where the CW Weekend is held. Norman Dann, our October 2005 speaker and a retired Morrisville professor who has written extensively about Gerrit Smith, mentions

this incident relating to Peterboro: "There was a famous black minister, Henry Highland Garnet (the first black person to deliver a sermon before the US House of Representatives) who said there were two places slave holders could never come -Heaven and Peterboro."

With a past this rich in history, both the Gerrit Smith Estate, of which only his land office remains, and the Smithfield Community Center have been designated as National Historic Landmarks by the National Park Service. The Community Center, after renovations, will soon be the home of the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum funded by a state grant and the past 12 Annual Civil War Weekends. The inaugural induction class will include: Frederick Douglas, William Lloyd Garrison, Luretia Mott, Harriet Tubman and Gerrit Smith. The Peterboro site will be a living history museum to the anti-slavery movement with an historical research center and plans for an annual symposium on Smith's life.

With the National Women's Hall of Fame in nearby Seneca Falls and the future National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum in Peterboro, upstate New York's tradition for reform will be well documented. Our congratulations to the Abolition Hall of Fame Committee from Peterboro, NY, a hamlet some 200 strong with respect for its past - soon to be recognized nationally.



Outrage # 1: Cannon Conspiracy by Dick Crozier

In the April issue of *The Battlefront*, Sue Greenhagen alerted us to the plight of the Kendall Cannon in the cemetery of the small Orleans County Town about 30 miles west of Rochester. Most of us have heard national and international news reports about the cannon/monument that was sold by the Kendall Town Board without the knowledge of most of the citizens of Kendall. Well, I've got some good news and some bad news. First the good news. I'm glad to report that Town Supervisor John Becker drove to the so-called "museum" and returned the gun to its proper place, guarding the graves of Kendall's Civil War dead. Before we praise Supervisor Becker too much, he was the fellow behind the unannounced "sale" in the first place. Also the Town had to come up with \$22,000 ransom, which was \$7000 more than they were paid for it! The Town has kept the "replacement" cannon, apparently because the "museum" didn't want it back! The broker for the "museum" claimed it was worth \$5000, but a Kendall resident wisecracked, "The only way we are going to get \$5000 for the new cannon is if we advertise it on eBay as the "Kendall Cannon...as seen on TV!"

The reason I placed quotes around the word "museum" is because I was unable to find any information or listing on the Internet about Kenneth Watterson's "Civil War Artillery Museum" in Pennsylvania. Because of many complaints and lawsuits against this fellow and his broker, I strongly believe the cannon were acquired for his personal and private enjoyment.

Before we get too satisfied with "our job well done", the Pennsylvania collector/curator and his assistant curator/broker/agent have struck again, this time in Groton, NY. A rare Civil War Navy Parrott rifle that has been in Groton Cemetery since 1901 is gone! Cemetery Association President Mary Flang says the Cemetery is in desperate need of cash (because of low interest rates on the operating endowment) and after investigating ownership ("We talked to EVERYBODY and they told us NOBODY owned it!") the cannon was sold. Several different prices were given, but it appears that Watterson's broker, Bruce Stiles, paid about the same as he did for Kendall's, and he put a "replacement cannon" on the pedestal. A plaque, which identified the original cannon/monument, stated the cannon was "on loan from the US government to the Groton GAR post" was quietly placed on the "replacement" barrel. After the New York State Commander of the Sons of Union Veterans, Dale Theetge,

asserted that the gun was always "owned" by the SUV, he also pointed out the plaque, which was now on the new gun, was "Bad History". The plaque was quickly removed and now resides in a Groton bank safe-deposit box.

Michael Aikey, Director of the New York State Military Museum and Veterans' Research Center said, "I could guarantee you that if you removed a veteran's item from World War II, that might be the last election you ever won. The federal government doesn't give things away. Most ordnance pieces in cemeteries and public areas are really on loan." While referring to the Kendall cannon Mr. Aikey said, "I'm not sure if we can do anything, but sometimes it is refreshing what can be accomplished when the "light of day" is shined on shadowy doings."

The Cemetery Association has consulted with Tompkins County District Attorney John Dentes, and, unfortunately, they were advised to respond with "no comment" about any progress about returning the cannon. This is sad because secrecy is what originally got the Cemetery Board into this sad predicament. The future of the Groton Civil War Cannon/Monument, which was placed "in perpetuity" by Groton citizens and Civil War veterans to honor their fallen dead, is uncertain.

When asked if "selling" a Civil War monument is a "good idea", people have universally answered, "No". However the "sales" by financially strapped, ignorant, and greedy cemeteries, veteran's posts, and municipalities goes on. As historians, we must be proactive and impress on these people that their cannons are not a "piece of iron" or "expendable", but are priceless artifacts of our country's past! These local custodians of our treasurers are our friends and neighbors, but we must insist they tell us if there is a problem and not be afraid to ask for help. We also must vow to seek return of all cannon sold to these parasites and prevent any future looting of our cemeteries. It is up to us to educate our local communities that such outrages are possible, before they happen. From my experience, the people of the community WILL react positively. As proof, in the past few weeks while working on this insult to our nation's veterans, several people have said to me, "All they had to do was ask!"

Additional Information: On May 4, 2005, *Westside News, Inc.* of Spencerport, NY reported the town of Kendall has received a \$15,000 grant from Assemblyman Charles Nesbitt's office to offset the cost of returning the cannon and of improving the cemetery site.

Outrage # 2: Tour the Battlefield - Play the Slots

from the Harrisburg *Patriot-Times*

In a news conference last week in Gettysburg, David LeVan, owner of the Battlefield Harley-Davidson dealership, member of the Board of Trustees of Gettysburg College, and the head of a dozen investors calling themselves *Chance Enterprises*, announced plans to seek a license to open a casino with as many as 3,000 slot machines in Straban Township, 3 miles east of Gettysburg. The site spans 42 acres owned by Gettysburg businessman Robert Monahan who is building a complex of motels, conference centers, theaters, and restaurants on a 100-acre site across Route 30 from the proposed casino site. If the group obtains a state slots license, at a cost of \$50 million, and gets the project past the Straban Twp. planning commission and supervisors, the casino complex could be a reality by 2008.

A survey of 531 Pennsylvania residents found 59% of the respondents said they favored slots gambling. Local officials and even some historic advocates are taking a "wait-and-see" position. Gettysburg Mayor Troxell said he wasn't sure how the town's government should

react. "After all, we don't know if they will be able to build it, and it won't actually be in Gettysburg, but about three miles away. We think most of the impact will be out that way."

Nevertheless, others are certain of their opinions. James McPherson, author of *Battle Cry of Freedom*, commented that he is "outraged and flabbergasted." "Nothing would be a greater besmirchment of the sacrifice of the men who fought and died there. By failing to honor their memory in this fashion, we would dishonor ourselves," he said. Kent Masterson Brown, historian and author commented, "They should just let the dead rest." Author Jeff Shaara reacted by saying, "There are few pieces of ground on this continent that deserve our care and nurturing as much as the battlefield at Gettysburg. It is truly a sad comment on our priorities when the search for tax revenue outweighs the state's concern for the untarnished value of a pristine historical treasure." Care to comment? E-mail pstepane@ix.netcom.com

April 23, 2005 Onondaga County Civil War Flags Open House

All 10 flags are back.
They're beautiful, and they're conserved.
Phase III, availability and education, is now underway.
Below are images from the Open House at the Courthouse.



Well attended



Congressman Jim Walsh



Darothy and other dignitaries



OCCWRT members selling cachets
l-r, V. Williams, M. Rudy, F. Stepanek, S. Greenhagen, D. Osborn (standing)



3rd Brigade Flag and logo of the OCCWRT
Chris Piering, 122nd NYSV, left - Bill O'Dea, 149th NYSV, right

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 _____

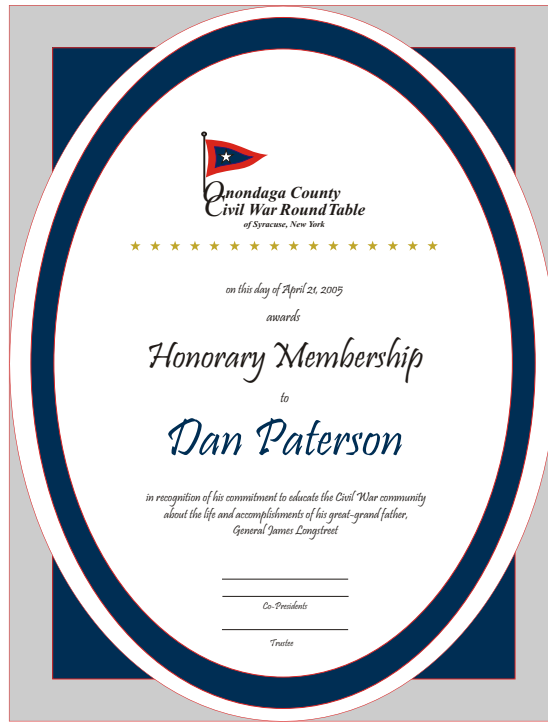
Address _____

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.



Our first honorary membership was awarded to Dan Paterson “in recognition of his commitment to educate the Civil War community about the life and accomplishments of his great-grandfather, General James Longstreet.”

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