



November 2005
Volume 12 Number 3

The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2005-06 OCCWRT Officers

Mimi Rudy, Co-President
315 677-9743
mimirudy@twcny.rr.com

Beth Greenfield, Co-President
315 363-0012
BGreenfield@oneidahealthcare.org

Sue Greenhagen, Vice President
315 684-3418
greenhsh@morrisville.edu

Dave Osborn, Treasurer
315 446-1715

Bill Goodwin, Secretary/Publicity
315 437-3887

Dick Crozier, Trustee
607 753-9803
crozier@localnet.com

Kevin Milcarek, Trustee
315 374-2218
kxm1596@fastmail.fm

Darothy DeAngelo, Program Chair
315 682-6312
darothy__@hotmail.com

Pat Stepanek, Newsletter Editor
315 696-5531
pstepane@ix.netcom.com

Meeting Site

for November 17th meeting
7 PM

Eastwood Baptist Church
3212 James Street
Eastwood, NY

*Put Your Game Face On
and
Make Sure You Are Well Rested*

Details Inside Newsletter

Directions: Route 690 East to Midler Ave Exit. 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.

President's Message

I would like to thank Drew Ellis for October's presentation on the Irish agenda during the Civil War and his rendition of *Irish Lullaby*. As you may or may not know, I have been involved with showing and competing with golden retrievers for thirty years. Every year the Golden Retriever Club of America holds a yearly specialty. For 2005, it was held at the convention center just south of Gettysburg.

For the four days I was there, my brain was split between my two passions - Golden Retrievers and the Civil War. One side of the brain was going over pedigrees, discussing the correct movement in a golden, what the judges were doing wrong, what item I did not have that had a golden retriever on it, meeting golden retriever exhibitors from all over the US and abroad, and seeing goldens of all ages just being loved by their owners.

The other half of my brain involved preparing a presentation for these golden retriever lovers entitled *The Dogs of Gettysburg*. I started out on Oak Ridge at the Sallie Monument. As dog lovers they were teary eyed at her story, but they thought the field in front of the Peace Monument would be good for a dog tracking test. Then off to Culp's Hill for the little mysterious dog that ran in front of the Confederates. The real connection for them was seeing the monuments that said "mustered in at Onondaga County." I then finished up, usually at dusk, at the Irish Brigade monument. The reclining Irish wolfhound is symbolic of loyalty. I must modestly say that these small and informal tours were a big hit and got many club members interested in American history and historic preservation. I got great pictures of my two goldens, Callie and Magic, in front of cannon on Little Round Top with Union re-enactors and their ladies - they were definitely Yankees.

The highlight of the show was having 185 Champion golden retrievers being brought into the Best in Show ring behind a full regimental Civil War band. Both of my passions brought together in one dazzling display!!! A real brain explosion.

Sic simper,
Beth Greenfield, Co-President

December Reminder

Our December meeting will again feature good cheer, entertainment, delicious desserts and the silent auction. Please plan on donating an item for the auction. Books, art, Civil War related items, or just plain interesting "stuff" will all find new homes at the end of the auction. All proceeds will be added to our Preservation Fund.

General Sumner Raffle Still in Progress

Raffle tickets for the framed portrait of General Sumner will continue to be available at our November and December meetings. Tickets are available to any member who wishes to sell them to friends interested in supporting our effort to conserve General Sumner's weakening tomb. The drawing will take place during our December Holiday Fete.

The following article from the May 28, 1917 edition of the *Syracuse Post-Standard* recounts a touching memorial service held at General Sumner's grave in Oakwood Cemetery more than 50 years after his death at the Syracuse home of his daughter, Sarah Sumner Teall. General Sumner is referred to as "Syracuse's most distinguished soldier in the Civil War" giving us some idea of the esteem in which he was held by the people of Syracuse. The gatherers at this service were joined by the thought of not allowing "the laurels..set upon the uplifted brows to wither in the dust of forgetfulness." Nor should we allow his grave to wither in that same dust.

Thanks to Darothy DeAngelo's research skills, we have the following account of that Memorial Day Weekend service:

Memory of Gen. Sumner Honored by Societies

At the grave of Gen. E. V. Sumner in Oakwood, where on the top of one of the hills on the west side of the cemetery his body rests in a tomb of Onondaga stone, there gathered yesterday afternoon soldiers who had served under him, members of patriotic orders and others to pay tribute to Syracuse's most distinguished soldier in the Civil War:

The service was brief, but impressive, and was conducted under the auspices of General Sumner Circle, No. 58, Ladies of the Grand Army of which Mrs. Ada Cowles is president. Mrs. Cowles gave a short history of General Sumner's notable career in Indian, Mexican and Civil wars, telling of his birth in Boston in 1797 and his death in Syracuse in 1863.

General Thomas R. Scott read the following poem:

*Rest beloved hero
Peaceful thy sleep.
For the flag-that you loved
You have died.
And o'er this great nation
You fought to preserve,
It floats now in beauty and pride.*

*Rest-honored patriot,
Your last battle fought,
Rest in peace 'neath the
Flowers we bring.
May you reap your reward
In that army of God's
Where Jesus is captain and king.*

During the reading of the first stanza, John H. Forey, commander of Root Post G. A. R., placed a flag on the slab over General Sumner's grave and then, during the reading of the second stanza, Capt. James A. Allis, commander of the Lilly Post, G.A.R., placed a wreath upon it.

Prayer was offered by Rev. A. A. Jaynes, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church and chaplain of Company C, Third New York Infantry. The memorial address was given by Rev. F. L. Brooks, pastor of the South Geddes Street Church of Christ. Mr. Brooks said in part:

"We have met to pay tribute to our illustrious dead. The grateful affection of our city does not suffer the memory of her distinguished sons or their high service in her name to fade and perish in her heart, nor will she permit the laurels she has proudly set upon the uplifted brows to wither in the dust of forgetfulness.

"By our gathering here we declare that we hold in tenderest thought and remembrance an honored son, whose achievements have become a part of our enduring fame. It is fitting that we should gather to pay our tribute at this time, as we approach the day set apart in memory of our soldier dead- a day of wondrous meaning and hallowed memories.

"Our beloved country is a vast cathedral. Its east wall is the daring exploit of Columbus and his brave band; its west wall is the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers; the north wall is the American Revolution; and the south wall the glorious achievement of the Civil War. It remains for us today to place upon this structure the roof which is sacrifice in behalf of freedom and true democracy for the inhabitants of all the world."

At the conclusion of Mr. Brooks's address, Mr. Jaynes gave the benediction and Elmer Wentworth ...sounded taps. Mrs. Sarah Sumner Teall, in a few words, thanked those assembled for the honor paid her father and the service was concluded.

A Review of the Fenian Brotherhood

Drew Ellis' presentation on the Fenian Brotherhood at our October meeting opened another chapter of Civil War history to us. The Fenian Brotherhood was an Irish nationalist organization founded in America in 1857 by John O'Mahony who named the society after the Fianna, a legendary band of Irish warriors. At about the same time the Irish Republican Brotherhood was born in Ireland. Both organizations were dedicated to the overthrow of British rule in Ireland. The Fenians successfully recruited 25,000 battle-hardened Irish veterans of the U.S. Civil War from both the Union and Confederate armies to strike a blow to England.

Fenian plans in the 1860's were to attain control of Canada, rename it New Ireland, and hold it until the British agreed to exchange it for the freedom of Ireland. The American Fenians were quickly gaining arms, money, and even the tacit support of the US government.

The first raid occurred in late May 1866. Originating in Buffalo, NY, a much smaller than expected army of Fenians (800-1,500) briefly captured Fort Erie before being driven back. Other attempts to invade occurred throughout the next week in the St. Lawrence Valley. However, President Andrew Johnson quickly tempered the raids by sending General George Meade to thwart any more attempts. The raids continued through 1871, but by then the Fenian Brotherhood was weakened by the infiltration of British and American spies into the organization. The movement to free Ireland would have to occur in Ireland with American dollars as support.

Our thanks to Drew Ellis for giving round table members another reason to buy more books and for serenading us with the strains of the *Irish Lullaby* as we turned off the lights to go home. Drew Ellis-historian and Irish tenor. What a treat.

Thoughts On the Fenians From the Clergy

From J. B. Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati; ... *I love Ireland, I desire its independence, I deplore its sad fate for the late three hundred years, especially under the galling yoke of England's injustice and inhumanity, and tyranny; but I have no faith that the Fenian Head Centres, ...could govern her if they had the chance. ...I therefore conjure every man who has any respect for my judgments and advice to have nothing to do with the Fenians.*

NY Times 3/5/1865

From Archbishop McCloskey of New York City: "McCloskey issued a circular to the resident city clergy, to urge upon their flocks the Sunday impropriety of assembling on for so-called political purposes. The Archbishop has reference, of course to the proposed Fenian meeting at Jones' Wood this afternoon. The appeal carries with it the highest ecclesiastical authority and expresses the sentiments of that large body of educated, industrious, and thoughtful Irish-Americans who have taken no part in the present insane attempt to revolutionize their native country. The overthrow of evils (in Ireland) can never be compassed by agitations such as these Fenians are carrying on in this country to the great shame and annoyance of good, noble-hearted and patriotic men of the Irish race." *NYTimes 2/11/1866*

From Canada

Ottawa, Saturday, Feb. 3 1866 Correspondent of the New York Times: "The people of the capital are waiting for two arrivals-the Governor-General... and the Fenians. The latter are mostly expected by timid old ladies, who shuddered yesterday afternoon and turned white when the newsboys yelled "Fenians in Hamilton!" The French Canadians, including even some Government officials, are a little tender on raids. Night before last, at both Prescott and Brockville, attacks were expected in the "wee small hours," and guards and citizens were watchful accordingly. The raids did not come off for some reason, and Canada is still free. It might be well for me to whisper to any Fenian who reads your paper, that the Canadian Government is ready for them whenever they wish to come and will welcome (them) with bloody hands." *NYTimes*

The Fenian Imposture NY Times 11/14/1865

It was perhaps well enough for the Fenians to get up a temporary excitement, as a relief from the dullness which succeeded the cessation of hostilities in this country. Patriotic ardor must find vent in some way. But there is some danger of the joke being carried too far; not in the sense of creating international trouble - for that is altogether out of the question - but in this regard: Hundreds, and probably thousands, of poor, honest unsuspecting Irish, living in the unsophisticated sections of this country, have been cajoled into making remittances to the manager of the Order here and elsewhere - not one title of which, they may depend on it, are used for any other purpose than to maintain a set of scamps in idleness. Stories come to us of remittances of Fenian funds for Ireland. Most of these stories are doubtless intended to show that the contributions received are actually expended for some revolutionary end. Even if an honest share of the funds were sent to Ireland, the result would apparently be merely to send a few more ill-advised young people to jail. But we do not believe that the money is used for any other purpose than getting notoriety and patent leather boots for a set of idlers in this country. It is really time, that those who are in a position to advise the unsophisticated people in the rural districts as to the real nature of the Fenian swindle, should do so. It is a crime to bolster up the concern even as a joke. The clergy, on whose ministrations the Irish-Americans chiefly depend, are probably doing their best to stop the swindle. But everyone who wishes well to Ireland and her people should lend a hand in exposing what is really an unmitigated imposture.

Excitement at Oswego - Seizure of Arms Intended for a Fenian Expedition.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times, Oswego, Monday, April 23, 1866

This usually quiet city is to-day the theatre of a regular Fenian excitement, consequent upon the seizure last night by the United States Deputy Marshall, Stephen Ried, of about 140 Springfield rifles, which were secreted in a barn near the city, and destined for the use of the Fenians. These arms were brought here by railroad in boxes marked "machinery," and directed to Patrick Regan, a prominent Fenian.

In making the search, the Deputy Marshal was assisted by a squad of the United States regulars from Fort Ontario, and the guns are now securely stowed away in the fort. It has been ascertained that nine hundred rifles have been sent here, of which only three cases have been secured by the Deputy Marshal. Two hundred guns were distributed among the Fenians last week.

The seizure is mainly due to the exertions of a few British detectives, who have been in this city two or three weeks.

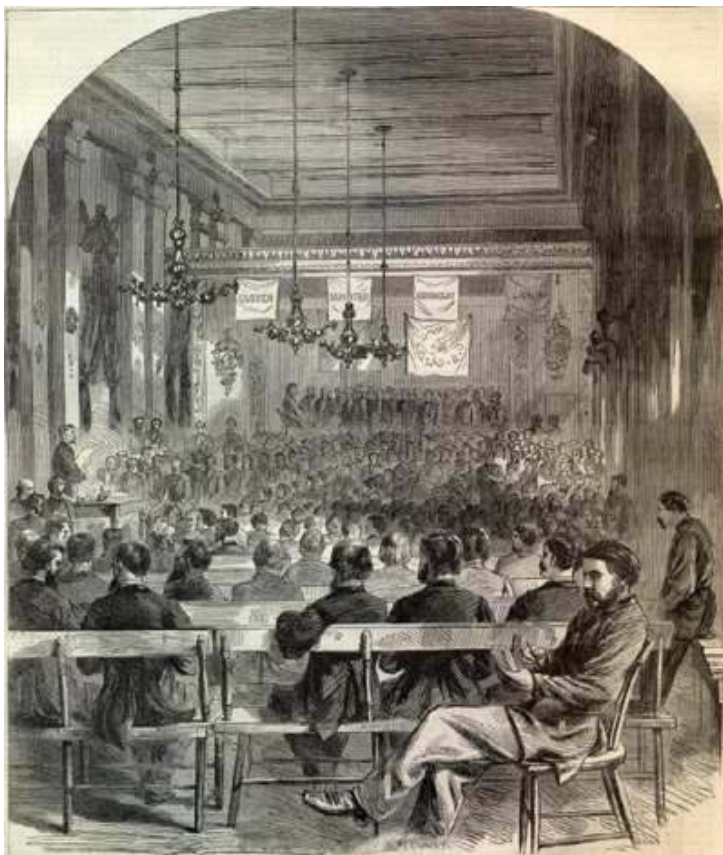
All sorts of rumors are afloat, and great excitement prevails among the Fenians, who are vowing vengeance for this interruption of their plans.

It is said that the arms were destined to be used in a Fenian expedition up the Bay of Quinte by means of sailing craft and steam tugs, having for its object the capture of Picton

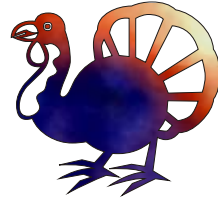
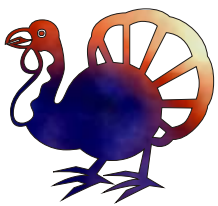
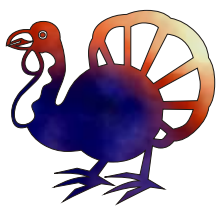
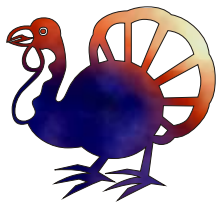
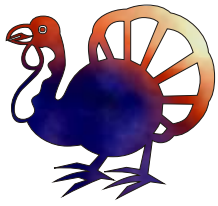
and Belleville, and the raising of the green flag in a situation almost impregnable by nature against assaults by land or water. The Gallore Islands in Lake Ontario, which at present are inhabited only by sea-gulls, are said to have been pitched upon as a place of rendezvous and base of supplies. Expeditions were to move simultaneously from other places on the frontier.

I give all these rumors for what they are worth, without assuming that the affair will end in anything more serious than another big scare, in which our neighbors across the lake are likely to get as much excited as the Fenians now are over the loss of their arms. (signed) PERSIMMON

Editor's Note: The excerpts and articles gleaned from the New York Times and quoted above are hardly an exhaustive study of the issues surrounding the Fenian Brotherhood in America. A doctoral thesis would do more justice to that subject. But the quick glimpse into the "spin" from the *NY Times* indicates a general lack of support combined with derision for the Fenian movement. Today's newspaper readers expect a bit more objectivity in news articles. The above articles reflect more of what we hear today on Fox News/MSNBC prime time news shows: commentary, opinions, and ridicule. Though the Fenians did not achieve their goal of a Free Ireland, they did successfully pass the flame to the next generation which achieved the goal in 1949 for an independent state except in Northern Ireland. That fight continues.



Front page and masthead of the November 4, 1865 edition of *Harper's Weekly*, showing the meeting of the Fenian Congress in the Assembly Building in Philadelphia.



OCCWRT
presents
the First Ever

Fun (not too serious)

Prizes

Turkey-Lurkey's Quirkey Civil War Game Night Bash

Thursday, November 17, 2005

7 PM at the

Eastwood Baptist Church



Need to be present to win!



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.

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