



October 2005  
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# The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

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## Meeting Site

for October 20th meeting

7 PM

Eastwood Baptist Church  
3212 James Street  
Eastwood, NY

Parking in the rear. Enter by rear door. Sign will direct you to the meeting room.

Handicapped Accessible

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.

## October Meeting: *The Irish in the Civil War*

If you've taken the Civil War Tour of Oakwood Cemetery with Drew Ellis, you know of his broad knowledge of Civil War history and local history. If you've watched *Gods and Generals*, you might have caught sight of Drew carrying the flag of the Irish Brigade as the brigade rushed Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg. This month Drew will enlighten us about the role of the Irish, both Confederate and Union, in the Civil War.

Perhaps no other ethnic group is so closely identified with the Civil War years and the immediate aftermath of the war as Irish-Americans. Approximately 150,000 Irish-Americans filled the ranks of the Union army and navy, and nearly 20,000 served in the Confederate army. Many of the Irish served in nonethnic regiments. However, many believed that the Irish were by nature the best fighters and should serve together to form superior regiments and brigades such as the Irish Brigade, composed of the 69th, 63rd, and 88th NYSV, the 28th and 29th Massachusetts Infantry, and the 116th PA. Famous Irish regiments from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio saw service as well.

Though fewer than their Northern counterparts, Irish Confederates comprised the largest of the Confederate ethnic groups. The 6th Louisiana was comprised largely of Irish from New Orleans. Other Irish regiments included the 10th Tennessee Infantry, Irish companies in the 1st Georgia Volunteers, the 1st Virginia Infantry, the 1st SC Infantry and the 8th Alabama. Many Southern Irish saw parallels between the Confederate rebellion and the struggle for independence in their Irish homeland.

Drew will introduce us to the men and officers who fought "under the green" and are remembered for their dedication and superb combat performance. Their service forms an important chapter in the history of the war.

## President's Message from Mimi Rudy

Hello to all. I hope you didn't miss Ben Dixon at our September meeting. His presentation was fabulous. Even I can remember getting sandwiches at Longstreet's "phantom" headquarters, and my son (the Gettysburg guru) knew nothing about the airport over Iverson's pits.

Ben's enthusiasm for his subject made for a great evening. We were warmly welcomed by the Eastwood Baptist Church thanks to Bob and Nancy Graham. We will be returning there for this month's meeting.

Many of our members have spent the past couple of weekends helping the Onondaga Historical Association with their *Haunted History Tour*. The round table received a lot of publicity and the tours were a hit. Through this community involvement, we gain new contacts, recognition, and new members. We need the support to continue our tradition of presenting informative speakers and to continue moving forward with our preservation projects. Hope to see you on October 20th.

## Welcome Back, Courtney

Member Courtney Tucker has entered retirement, again. Two years ago he was called back to Washington, DC as a Senior Policy Analyst and Inspector General Liaison for the Department of Homeland Security. According to his latest email, he has returned to Tully as of October 1st and is now retired. While he was in Washington, he often wandered to the National Archives where he pursued his interest in historical research. Recently he noted that Baldwinsville's Captain Rufus D. Pettit's Battery B, 1st NY Light Artillery fired the first shot starting the battle of Fredericksburg. He has also confirmed the 12th NY regiment, First Onondaga, was the first Union regiment to cross over the Potomac into Virginia over the Long Bridge at the start of the war. Hope to see you soon, Courtney.

## She's At It Again!




Why is Darothy DeAngelo sitting at dusk in the downtown doorway of the Onondaga Historical Research Building at 311 Montgomery St wearing a flaming red dress? No, she has not changed professions, though a few pedestrians who were not part of the OHA's Ghost Walk did double takes as they passed by her, particularly when she sneezed. Darothy vividly portrayed Kitty Moot, an actress who died of self-imposed starvation in 1922 at the downtown Howard Hotel. Other portrayals included: Sgt. Lilly mending the flag on Culp's Hill by member Art Benshadel (seen right); Matilda Joslyn Gage; Bishop Huntington, the first Episcopal bishop of Syracuse; a stop on the underground railroad; and Teddy Roosevelt on the steps of the County Court House orating about his 1915 libel trial held in Syracuse. Bill Goodwin, Sue Greenhagen, Pat Stepanek, and Mimi Rudy served as guides for the OHA's 2nd annual ***Haunted History Happening*** held this year for two weekends, Sept 10-Oct. 1 and Oct. 8-9. Can Darothy possibly top this performance next year? You bet she can...and she will!



## Cyclorama Painting Will Be Gone for Awhile

The centerpiece to the Gettysburg National Military Park's artifact collection will be pulled from public view at the end of the day, Nov. 20, 2005. It will be seen again in November 2007 when the new visitor center opens. The \$9 million conservation effort for the painting started 18 months ago when conservation teams took down two large sections. Since then, 23 conservators have been studying how best to clean the surface grime from 1.4 million square inches of Belgian linen artist Paul Philippoteaux used for his creation. The Park Service acquired the painting in 1942 and had the Cyclorama Center built in 1962 to house the painting. That building will be demolished once construction is completed on the new visitor center.

## Sumner Raffle Begins

	Onondaga County Civil War Round Table <b>General Edwin V. Sumner Portrait Raffle</b> Drawing December 15, 2005
Name: _____	
Telephone: _____	
Donation: \$1.00/6 @ \$5.00 <i>Need not be present to win.</i>	

This month the round table begins selling raffle tickets for a framed portrait of General Edwin Sumner. All proceeds will go into our Sumner preservation fund. The portrait and tickets will be available at our next three meetings. The drawing will be during our Christmas meeting. We would appreciate your support.

## Monument Avenue-Richmond, VA

Did you know that years before Richmond placed the Arthur Ashe statue at Monument Avenue and Roseneath Road, another monument was considered for that site. It was almost another Lee monument. Fitzhugh Lee, the nephew of Robert E. Lee and governor of Virginia from 1886-1890, was chosen not by Confederate groups, but by the United Spanish War Veterans who wished to honor Lee's role in the Spanish-American War as consul general to Cuba and commander of the 7th Army Corps. He never saw action there because Spain was quickly defeated. However, his corps went to Havana to help restore order in the Cuban capital. Lee retired from the Army in 1901 and died at age 69 four years later. He was buried in a US Army uniform, giving rise to a rumor that someone at the interment remarked, "What'll Stonewall think when Fitz turns up in heaven wearing that?" Though the monument was never built due to lagging funds, in 1955 7th Army Corps veterans dedicated a scaled-down monument to Lee in Monroe Park in Richmond.

## New Hampshire's Mount Kearsarge

We all know of the naval victory of the *USS Kearsage* over the Confederate blockade runner, *Alabama*, off the coast of France in June 1864. Since 1864 two US naval ships have carried the name *Kearsarge*. In fact, the newest *USS Kearsage* was christened by Alma Powell, the wife of Gen. Colin Powell, in 1992.

Because the original *Kearsage* was so famous, an exception was made in naming the two additional ships which followed. By law a battleship must be named after a state. Congress ordered the Navy to make an exception to its naming policy for the 2nd *Kearsarge* built during WW II.

The original *Kearsage* was named for New Hampshire's Mount Kearsarge. However, New Hampshire has two such mountains, and historians can't agree if the CW ship was named for the one in Warner, NH or the second mountain, one farther north near Conway, NH.

William Marvel, author of a book about the civil war ship, believes that Gustavus Fox, the assistant secretary of the Navy, was responsible for the name. Fox's wife summered at a Conway hotel called the Kearsarge House. Townspeople in Warner, NH have a different opinion, ofcourse. Marvel was unable to find any documentation of this in the diary of Gideon Wells, Lincoln's secretary of the Navy. So, the debate continues.

## NY State Cannon Update

This newsletter has been following the sale and removal of Civil War cannons from three NY State communities all within the last few years. Ken Watterson and his agent, Bruce Stiles, have encouraged municipal governments and cemetery boards - all in need of cash with little idea of the background and value of the cannons - to sell the cannons to Watterson for his Artillery Museum near Pittsburgh. Here's the latest on the uproar.

### Summit Hill, NY:

South of Binghamton in Broome Cty

Watterson and the borough reached agreement. Summit Hill refunded Watterson the \$70,000 plus interest. The cannons were returned and are 90 percent restored. Councilman David Wargo expects them to be ready for a public rededication soon and that dedication may have already taken place. In November 2002, a Panther Valley School District history teacher who had sent his students on a muzzle-rubbing trip discovered that the two cannons at Summit Hill's Ludlow Park were replicas and that the real ones had been sold by the American Legion to Watterson. After three years of publicity and deliberations, the cannons are back.

### Kendall, NY:

North west of Brockport in Orleans County

The outcry that emerged six months ago in Kendall, a town of 28-hundred people in farm country near Lake Ontario, over the sale of its Civil War cannon to Mr. Watterson has produced a loud backfire at the polls. In a September primary, John Becker, a long-time town supervisor, lost to his opponent who joined in a

successful effort this spring to retrieve the 816-pound muzzleloader. Two other seasoned councilmen on the five-member town board also went down in defeat. The cannon either is back or will be returned shortly with the usual hefty interest charge added by Watterson.

### Groton, NY:

West of Cortland in Tompkins County

The Civil War-era naval cannon sold to Watterson last September has been returned to the village with another interest charge added: \$5,000 for a replica cannon and \$3,000 for Bruce Stiles, Watterson's broker. An anonymous past-Groton resident donated the \$8,000 to the Groton Cemetery Association for the cannon's immediate return. So the cannon is back and the Cemetery Association that sold the cannon is back where it started, having little money to keep up the maintenance of the cemetery. The sale of the cannon was disputed after a Groton attorney discovered that the Cemetery Association did not have the right to sell the cannon because, according to Navy records, the cannon had been **loaned** to the local GAR and was still owned by the government.

Possibly the returned cannon will be rededicated this Veterans' Day. Member Dick Crozier, along with the Sons of Union Veterans from Ithaca, is committed to getting a new pedestal for the cannon when it returns to the Groton Rural Cemetery.

These three communities have been successful in regaining their cannons. How many more communities will become victims? Most certainly, the unrest and negative publicity Watterson and Stiles have stirred up will, in the end, defeat them. We can all help by staying alert.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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



**General Edwin V. Sumner**  
1797-1863

## Portrait Raffle

Donation \$1.00 or 6 @ \$5.00

**Proceeds to be used for the conservation of General Sumner's tomb in Oakwood Cemetery.**

Winning Ticket Will Be Drawn at December meeting. Need not be present to win.

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