



October 2007  
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# The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

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## Meeting Site

**Onondaga  
Historical Association**  
321 Montgomery St  
Syracuse, NY

featuring

**Dennis Connors**  
Curator of History  
OHA

presents

*Civil War Battles  
That Saved Washington*

Thursday, October 18, 2007  
7 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.

## October 18th Meeting

Dennis Connors, curator of history at the Onondaga Historical Association, lecturer and author, will present *Civil War Battles that Saved Washington* at our October meeting, and he will do so at the Onondaga Historical Association, our meeting site for this month. His most recent book is the celebrated *Crossroads in Time: An Illustrated History of Syracuse*. This scholarly and comprehensive volume of local history will keep the reader engaged with Dennis' strong narrative voice as commentary. It deserves a place in our personal libraries. He has also authored two other histories of Syracuse, *Syracuse* and *Greater Syracuse*, both of which are OHA publications. All will be available for Christmas giving at the OHA on October 18th.

Dennis comes highly recommended by all of us who have attended his past presentations at our OCCWRT meetings or have toured historic areas in downtown Syracuse and Oakwood Cemetery with him. We are delighted to host this fine historian again. We hope to see you and why not bring a friend to the OHA on October 18th - 7PM.

## President's Message

October is here and if you're interested in baseball as I am this has got to be your favorite time of year. As a lifelong Yankee fan I'm hoping they make it back to the World Series this year.

It was good to see a lot of familiar faces at the September meeting. I know everyone enjoyed Wayne Mahood's presentation on General Alexander Hays.

The application for the John De Francisco Heritage Grant was submitted on October 1st. This makes us one step closer to our funding goal for the restoration of General Sumner's gravesite. The Community Foundation grant application will be submitted October 12th.

Please note the change of location for our October meeting. Dennis Connors will have his presentation at the OHA building at 321 Montgomery St. Syracuse. See everyone there.

Jim Dromgoole, President

## Last Chance for Ghost Walk 2007

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 12 & 13, is the last weekend to attend the OHA's *Ghost Walk 2007: Park Ave Poltergeists*. From 6:30 to 9:30 pm, an "historical, hysterical and haunting" guided walking tour of the Park Avenue neighborhood west of downtown Syracuse will occur. Fourteen "departed" residents from the neighborhood including a former mayor will reveal what life was like in their day. OCCWRT members Darothy DeAngelo and Sue Greenhagen will appear as the spirits of two of five sisters, all of whom reappear. Simply check in and park free at Superior Office Products at 225 Wilkinson St. The cost is \$12 adults and \$5 for kids under 12. Call 315-428-1864 for information or reservations.

## John Rudy's Tour Now Published

John Rudy, now 21, has been an OCCWRT member since he was 12. Last June he graduated cum laude from Gettysburg College and is now studying for his MA in history at American University. During his junior year at Gettysburg College he began to research the college's Civil War history. The research grew into a successful independent study project and took the form of a walking tour of the campus and the immediate area.



Tour Guide, John Rudy, at Gettysburg College

During his senior year he led a number of groups on the 90-minute tour. This past summer the tour

was offered to participants of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College. Your editor was on that tour and walked with and listened to John deliver a polished, informative, and engaging tour from combat sites north of campus to Lincoln Square where students gathered with townspeople to walk to Evergreen Cemetery to hear Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Now you can take this same tour while seated comfortably at your computer. The college has published the tour in the Summer 2007 *Gettysburg College Magazine*. Printed copies of the tour will be available at our September meeting to our members without computers. For our "wired" members here's how to get to it: <http://www.gettysburg.edu> - Click on *Uniquely Gettysburg* at the top right and follow the cues to ***Tour It Up with John Rudy***.

## Trustee to Be Recognized for Excellence

At the upcoming fall conference of the Association of Public Historians of New York State, member and trustee Sue Greenhagen will receive the Joseph F. Meany Award for excellence in a military/marine project or publication. Specifically, she is being recognized for her outstanding *New York and the Civil War* website. If you have never visited the site give a try at the following address: [www.library.morrisville.edu/local\\_history/sites](http://www.library.morrisville.edu/local_history/sites). Congratulations, Sue.

## Lincoln at UC Berkeley

Each summer all incoming freshmen and transfer students at UC Berkeley receive a book in the mail as part of the university's **On the Same Page** program. The goal of the program is to stimulate campus wide discussion of a single literary work by an author who has changed the way we view the world. Stephen Hawking, a world-famous physicist, was the featured author in 2006. This year the university chose ***Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*** by Gary Wills.

Wills discussed his book before the incoming classes and argued that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address remains as relevant in the 21st century as it was during the Civil War touching on the religious and political circumstances that surrounded the president and his famous speech. "This too is a time of great trouble in many ways...There has been some hellish things about religion and politics lately," Wills said. "Lincoln was always trying to calm people down in times of religious fervor. He tried to expel fanaticism in times of war." Lincoln related to what Wills called "the Biblical sense of the struggle for freedom" yet he separated himself from the evangelical movement of the 19th century, instead drawing from transcendentalists.

Wills is a professor emeritus of history at Northwestern University who garnered a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award more than a decade ago for this book. His book was chosen for **On the Same Page** because its "historical and rhetorical content could appeal to a wide variety of students' interests." It was at the center of Welcome Week discussions and the focus of a variety of seminars such as "Political Words: From Lincoln to Jon Stewart" in the American studies department. Sounds like an interesting week at UC Berkeley!

## Winnie Davis , Daughter of Jefferson A Local Connection

In 1886, the 22 year old youngest daughter of Jefferson and Varina Howell Davis arrived in Syracuse to visit the Emorys, her mother's friends. Varina Anne (Winnie) Davis was known as "Daughter of the Confederacy" a name given her by Confederate General John Gordon when she started traveling with her father in the mid-eighties. The title was factually correct. Winnie was born in Richmond in 1864, but she did not remember the war and knew little of the South. She had been educated abroad, was fluent in German and French, and spoke with an European accent.

Winnie was cordially welcomed in Syracuse, a city proud of its reformer traditions. The press reported her attending an opera, attending dinner parties, even taking a sleigh ride. Winnie also met and fell in love with Alfred Wilkinson, Jr., a 28-year old lawyer practicing in Syracuse. Wilkinson was the son of Alfred and Charlotte May Wilkinson and the grandson of Samuel May, a Syracuse Unitarian minister, reformer and abolitionist. Though the bank run by Alfred Sr. and his brother had failed in a classic Gilded Age scandal, Alfred Jr. was not accused of misconduct. The family mansion on James St. was sold to Alfred Jr. after his father's death in 1886. In 1887 Alfred proposed to Winnie who accepted pending her parents' approval. Winnie was now engaged to a Harvard-educated lawyer, well-mannered, with a bright future who was also the grandson of an abolitionist.

In 1889, Alfred traveled to Mississippi to ask for her parents' permission to marry. Varina agreed to the marriage, but Jefferson responded with "death would be preferable" only to relent a few months later to everyone's astonishment. The families chose not to announce the engagement publicly until April 1890, four months after Jefferson Davis death. Since Victorian custom required a year of mourning after a parent's death, the wedding was set for late 1890.

Southern reaction to the engagement was fierce led by the determined Jubal Early who objected to Alfred's abolitionist

## Share Christmas With Our Forces in Iraq

*Member Diane Haller sends this request to our members.*

A Chaplain's assistant from a military unit in Iraq is requesting your help. She needs Christmas cards with personal notes or letters for 900 men and women of her unit to help build morale during this Christmas Season. She will include these personal notes and cards from you along with small packages she is preparing for each of the men and women of her unit. You may include your email or home address so they can communicate with you.

If you wish to include an international phone card, a CD or DVD, fine; however, they really need your works of care, warmth, appreciation and love during this season when they will be especially lonely and missing home. This will be the second year these men and women have been away from home at Christmas.

Please bring the cards with you to our October meeting. If you can't attend the meeting, just drop them off before November 1st at **Holy Cross Church** in Dewitt, in the Gathering Area in the basket marked Christmas Cards and Letters for our Military Men and Women. It is right inside the front door.

### **FYI: Bounties**

*Our January Jeopardy draws closer.*

The federal government spent about \$300 million in bounties to entice men to fight for the Union. Another \$300 million was raised by towns and states to encourage volunteers. Gen. Grant later said that not one in eight of the high-bounty recruits provided useful service at the front.

*from Atlas Editions, USA*



**Daughter of the Confederacy**

October 1890, the wedding was broken off. The national press reported disappointment in Syracuse and satisfaction in the South.

Alfred returned to his legal practice which prospered. He never married. For the next eight years, Winnie lived with her mother in New York writing articles for magazines and literary journals, appearing in the South at Confederate benefits, bonding with the neo-Confederate public. The beloved Daughter of the Confederacy died in September 1898 at age 33. She was laid to rest next to her father in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

## 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*