The Camp Olden Gazette

News from the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table

Winter, 2009

President's Gavel

First and foremost I would like to thank our members and especially our volunteers for making the past year another successful and enjoyable year and extend best wishes to all for the holiday season.

On Nov.5th Elections were held and the new board for 2010 consists of: President, Bruce Sirak; Vice President, Gary DeSiver; Secretary, Mary Ann Sirak; Treasurer, Connie Davis; Event Coordinator, Warren Spengler; Event Coordinator, John Maleski; Museum Representative, Bruce Smith

Join The Camp Olden Civil War Round Table of Hamilton when Dick Simpson presents his slide program, "Missouri 1861 and the Battle of Wilson's Creek". This program, that is free and open to the public, will take place at the Hamilton Township Library on Thursday, December 3, at 7:00. Dick is a well known Civil War lecturer from Maryland to Maine and his previous presentations to our members have been much enjoyed.

This battle was one of the most significant Civil War battles west of the Mississippi. On August 10, 1861, Union Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon with 5,400 troops would meet Confederate General Sterling Price's 12,000 men along Wilson's Creek Springfield, Missouri. Despite outnumbered over two to one, Lyon decided to use the element of surprise to attack the Confederates in their camps along the creek. He planned a two prong, pincer attack. Colonel Franz Sigel would attack from the south with 1,200 men and Lyon would attack from the north with 3,200 men. Sigel's flanking attack started well while at the same time Lyon's force surprised the Confederates in their camps along the creek. But, as you will see in the slide program, Civil War battles never go as planned. Sigel turns tail and General Lyon will be the first Union general killed in combat during the Civil War. It's a western battle you don't want to miss.

Over the years, Wilson's Creek has been able to maintain its pristine condition and remain largely the same as it was in 1861. However, as recent growth in the Springfield area continues to increase, this critical battlefield is under severe threat from residential development and urban sprawl. The final part of the program will be a tour of the battlefield as it looks today. A raffle of Civil War books will be held to raise money for the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation.

The January 7th meeting will bring Samuel Davis, Principal of Trenton High School speaking on "Unique Civil War Artifacts". On February 4th our guest shall be Herb Kaufman with an interactive presentation: "What ifs of the Battle of Gettysburg". Mr. Kaufman will serve as the moderator and pose questions that go against the prevalent history of the Battle of Gettysburg. He will back up his contentions, and then ask the group to comment and argue with him. For example, one question is: "Little Round Top - Who Cares if it fell to the Confederates. It would have made no difference to the outcome of the battle if it had fallen to the Confederates."

At this time I would like to thank Kim Daly for all of her years of service on our board. She has been invaluable to the organization and hope she stays active. I would also like to thank Corinne & Mike Mazzocchi for stepping up and bringing the newsletter back to life. It is very much appreciated!

Happy Holidays!

Your Obedient Servant! Bruce

Civil War Visits.

Some of our members did some traveling over the past few months Following are some "field reports".

Goose Creek Bridge, Virginia

Submitted by Tony Travaglione

We've all been to Gettysburg, Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, etc. right? But how many of us have been to Big Bethel, Droop Mountain, Oak Grove, Piedmont? Men were killed and maimed just as tragically in these out of the way places as they were at the larger battles. I have visited many of these battlefields and I thought you might like to hear about them.

The Goose Creek Bridge battle site is located in Northern Virginia just off US Route 50 several miles west of Middleburg, Virginia. The stone four-arch bridge was built between 1801 and 1803. At the beginning of the Gettysburg campaign, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry fought a series of delaying actions along present day US Route 50 in order to shield the northward movement of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia from Union forces. The fighting at Goose Creek Bridge took place on June 21, 1863 when Stuart's rear guard, commanded by Gen. Wade Hampton, took a position on a ridge on the west side of the bridge, and delayed the Union cavalry, commanded by Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, for several hours with artillery fire. The bridge was taken when Union infantry commanded by Col. Strong Vincent forded the creek and Union cavalry forced the bridge crossing. The infantry climbed the ridge, threw back the Confederate forces and captured an artillery piece. Hampton withdrew further west where Stuart fought another battle the same day at Upperville.

This is one of those sites that probably only the local people know about. The turnoff for the road to the bridge is marked on Route 50. Upon reaching the site you must park and walk down the hill to the bridge, since vehicles can no longer cross on it. There was only one other person there when I visited in 2008. It's a peaceful and beautiful spot. ◆



View facing east toward Goose Creek Bridge.

Civil War Adventures in Kentucky

Submitted by Mike Mazzocchi

Walking a battlefield in similar conditions under which the battle was fought provides a more special feeling than just viewing it under ideal conditions. I recently had an opportunity to do this at Mill Springs Battlefield near Somerset, Kentucky. This important union victory which kept the Kentucky under union control in the beginning of the war was fought on a cold rainy day in January, 1862. Since my visit was on a rainy and cold day in October, I was able to get a much more realistic feeling for the battle than if I had visited on a beautiful fall day. The heart of the preserved battlefield centers on a ravine that the confederates used for cover approaching the union forces to engage them at close range. Many of the green confederates that charged up the incline were using obsolete flintlock muskets which would not fire in the rain. On the day of my visit Corinne and I walked the 34 mile interpretive trail to get an overall feel for the battle. At the end of the hike with the rain coming down even harder, I decided to reenter the ravine and actually charge up the incline imagining the union firing and the emulating cannon fire. Since I was totally alone with no distractions, it was quite an emotional experience that I will not soon forget.

The battlefield has a visitor center / museum which shows a video about the battle.

(A description of the battle can be found at: http://www.millsprings.net/history/the-battle-of-millsprings-kentucky and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mill_Springs.)



View from the ravine to the Union Line.

Corinne and I also visited *Perryville Battlefield* near Danville, Kentucky. Again the weather matched battlefield conditions on a day which was one day short of the 147th anniversary. This time there was not a cloud in the sky as we walked the 7+ miles of trails. The site is very well preserved with few monuments. The 28 stops had informative interpretative panels the ups and downs of the trail gave a very clear feel for the battlefield action.



Attack on Parson's Ridge - part of Maney's advance.

The battlefield has a visitor center / museum which shows a video about the battle. (A description of the battle can be found at: http://parks.ky.gov/findparks/histparks/pb/maps/ and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Perryville.) \(\Delta

The New Gettysburg Visitor Center Submitted by Mario Florio

The new Gettysburg Battlefield Visitor Center is enormous, far surpassing its predecessor. The building has a large cafeteria and a huge gift shop carrying every conceivable item from books, maps, tapes, CDs clothing to toys. A combination ticket includes a film, the Cyclorama and the museum. The film is "A New Birth of Freedom" narrated by Morgan Freeman. The newly restored Cyclorama puts the viewer in

the center of the battlefield surrounded by military and battle debris. The museum has twelve galleries which feature hands on exhibits. Allow at least three hours for a visit. Ranger guided tours and lectures are also available. Further information can be found at http://www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm

In addition, a shuttle bus from the center goes to the Eisenhower Historic Site where the President's home and farm can be toured.

http://www.nps.gov/eise/index.htm. •

President Lincoln's Cottage

Submitted by Mario Florio

A September vacation included the opportunity to visit the recently opened President Lincoln's Cottage on the campus of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in northwest Washington, DC. Inside the Eagle Gate entrance, the Robert H. Smith Visitor Information Center provides interactive media displays, gallery exhibits of Lincoln items, Civil War prints and maps, and a gift shop. Lincoln used the cottage as a summer retreat, commuting by horse to the White House each morning. During his residency at this location, Lincoln worked on the draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. Tours of the "cottage" (actually a thirty four room house) are lead by knowledgeable guides whose well told anecdotes personalize and humanize Lincoln and his family. During his residency at this location, Lincoln worked on the draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.



Further information about the site can be found at

http://www.lincolncottage.org/about/index.htm.

"The Hanging of Captain Gordon The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader" by Ron Soodalter

(Book review submitted by Barry Leilich)

On the 21st of February 1862, at a little past noon, 400 people stood solemnly in the walled-in stone courtyard of the Tombs, New York City's (then) new prison. Eighty were marines; dressed In Union blue and standing rigidly at attention with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets. The rest of the crowd consisted of reporters, politicians, and observers who had procured invitations to an unusual execution. The condemned, flanked by government officials, was a small, dark-haired man in a black frock coat. His arms were pinioned, a black hood covered his face, and a noose encircled his neck. The other end of the rope connected to the crossbeam of a gallows. He had been convicted of "piratically confining and detaining Negroes with intent of making them slaves." His name was Nathaniel Gordon, and he was the only man in the history of the United States to be hanged for the crime of slave trading.

Nathaniel Gordon's story is linked to the history of the slave trading in America. This history begins in 1619, when a "dutche man of warre" sold "twenty negars" to the settlers of Jamestown, Virginia, and slavery and the slave trade began and became an integral part of America's history. Many of the Founding Fathers were slaveholders, and some signers of the Declaration of Independence, such as Philip Livingston of New York, made vast fortunes in the slave trade. Half the country relied upon slave labor for its existence, and entrepreneurs and seamen from the other half provided it. If the South wanted slaves, it was largely the New York and New England sea captains, their ships and crews that delivered them. During the mid-1800s a slave purchased in Africa for approximately \$40 worth of trade goods would bring a price ranging from \$400 to \$1,300. This meant that the selling price of a ship's cargo of 800 slaves ranged between \$320,000 and \$969,000. If we estimate that \$100 in the 1850s would be worth about \$4,000 today the profits of a slave voyage were tremendous. Rarely has there been an enterprise as lucrative as the slave trade.

After he was captured as the captain of a slave ship (This was his fourth voyage as a slave ship captain), he was indicted and jailed in New York, the least likely place to convict a slaver. As the single largest center in the world for the financing and outfitting of slaving expeditions, New York had little reason to want Gordon executed. Men like him had been part of the city's financial infrastructure for years. However, with the election of Lincoln, a new Republican administration and the subsequent appointments of E. Delafield Smith to the office of U.S. attorney and Robert Murray to the position of U.S. marshal, the climate in New York City changed. Despite the fact that laws forbidding it had been on the books for 68 years, suddenly people were awakened to the horrors of the trade, largely due to-the publicity given trials such as Gordon's.

U.S. Attorney E. Delafield Smith had no intention of hanging every slaver he brought to trial; he was out to set examples. What he saw that was needed to break up the slave trade were the successful prosecution and conviction of the three types of men most crucial to the slave traffic's success. First were those men who owned and outfitted the vessels; secondly were those men who sailed them; and thirdly were those who bonded the ships so that they might sail again. The slave trade in New York was, in the words of one of Smith's predecessors, "carried on with a regular machinery to evade the law," relying on "lies, fraud, and perjury..., agents and foreigners... having no design but to circumvent justice." Smith's master plan was to unravel this skein of deceit by attacking its three main facets.

In the Preface of the book, Ron Soodalter explains that as a young undergraduate he first learned about Captain Gordon and was captivated by the drama of the story of a young Yankee sea captain with a beautiful wife and a small son, caught in the machinery of a government determined to hang him as a slaver. Years later, when he finally did write about Captain Gordon, the book became a revealing history of the American tragedy that allowed men like Gordon to prosper for decades on the countless bodies of captured Africans, even though the laws of the land prescribed death for their crime. •

It's Membership Renewal Time!

Below is your renewal form for 2010 membership in the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table.

These rates reflect a \$5.00 discount for payment by the February meeting.

For payment after that date, please add \$5.00.

New members can use this form also with. Of course, the same discounts.

Camp Olden Civil War Round Table and Museum Membership Application		
Name: _		
Address: _		
_		
Telephone No. (
E-Mail Address: _		
Birthdays: _		
Memebership:	Single (\$25) Senior Citizens: Single (\$20) Student (\$15) Family (\$35) Sr. Husband & Wife (\$25)	

Send the completed form and your check to:

Camp Olden Civil War Round Table, P.O. Box 10565, Hamilton, NJ 08690

Below is a picture of the tree that fell on the museum during a summer storm.



Be a Gazette Contributor!

Share your experiences with round table members. Explore a battlefield? See an interesting museum exhibit? Read a new Civil War book or reread a favorite one?

Jot down a couple of lines and send your photos and your thoughts to the NEW email address for the Gazette - oldennewsletter@optonline.net. The mailing address is C&M Mazzocchi, 1430 18th Ave. Wall, NJ 07719.

Did you know this?

Cannon Balls!!!

It was necessary to keep a good supply of cannon balls near the cannon on old war ships. But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck was the problem. The storage method devised was to stack them as a square based pyramid, with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine, which rested on sixteen.

Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem -- how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others.

The solution was a metal plate with 16 round indentations, called, for reasons unknown, a Monkey. But if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make them of brass - hence, Brass Monkeys.

Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts

much more and much faster than iron when chilled.

Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would come right off the monkey.

Thus, it was quite literally, cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey. And all this time, folks thought that was just a vulgar expression? *Courtesy of Kim Daly*



If you would like to submit an article to the Camp Olden Gazette, you can e-mail it to:

oldennewsletter@optonline.net

or mail your article to:

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Visit us on the Web: www.campolden.org