



# The Signal Flag



## BRANDYWINE VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Campaign # 20

Skirmish # 4

December 2006

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### From the Rear Ranks:

“Even with all the sorrow that hangs, and will forever hang, over so many households; even while war still rages; even while there are serious questions yet to be settled – ought it not to be, and is it not, a merry Christmas?”  
Harper’s Weekly, December 26, 1863

**As we pass from Thanksgiving into the holiday season it may seem a difficult task to combine the festive cheer of Christmas with the tragic moments of civil war. But our Victorian ancestors experienced this full range of emotions from 1861 – 1865. Saving souls and saving the Union both required the ultimate sacrifice. Lincoln bore the cross of civil war until he was silenced on Good Friday, less than a week after his nation was resurrected at Appomattox. Before his death, however, the rail-splitter breathed life into his country through the American gospel that he preached; a nation, under God, conceived in liberty, and a new birth of freedom for all men.**

**Four score and seven years prior to “Harper’s Weekly” quote above, on another Christmas night, Thomas Paine inspired an army on the banks of the frozen Delaware with his declaration that freedom itself was a “celestial article.” Others looked to the heavens as well. Following the Battle of Fredericksburg, Southerners saw the Northern Lights in the December sky as divine approval of their victory. Some slaves, on the other hand, saw redemption in the direction of the “drinkin’ gourd.” For the Union cause, they would need wiser men than McClellan, Burnside, and Hooker.**

**The very loneliness and heartbreak of war led many Americans to seek solace and security by celebrating the holiday season. Many Christmas traditions began during the Civil War. The exchange of holiday greetings through cards, carol singing, special foods, winter dances, and decorating the home with trees and greens became popular during the 1860’s. Americans have always made the best of their holiday mood. Troops in the 5<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire conducted a greased pig chase to liven up their holiday mood. The German immigrant Thomas Nast, a Union supporter, created the character of Santa Claus. In cartoons, Nast portrayed St. Nick being saluted by Federal soldiers as he gave them gifts of “Harper’s Weekly.” Lucky soldiers received holiday boxes from home, Lincoln received the city of Savanna. Not a bad deal.**

**“May the spirit of peace be with you now and throughout the New Year.”**



*I remain your most obedient servant,  
Robert Sprague, President, BVCWRT*



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**President:** Bob Sprague  
**Vice President:** John Walls  
**Secretary:** Lynne Fulton  
**Treasurer:** Dave Walter

*~ Committee Members ~*

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**Speakers:** Roger Arthur, Joe Lehman  
**Monthly Scribe / Trips:** Susan Mahoney  
**Credentials:** Bill Sitman  
**Greeter:** Loretta Thomas  
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**Historians:** Bill Sitman, Mike Liddy

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David Hoffritz, James Lawler

*~ Official Sutler ~*

John Carr: Books / Periodicals  
610-696-6506

*~ Annual Membership ~*

Individual \$25.00; Family \$40.00; Student \$15.00  
(Full time student up to age 23)

**? Questions ? Contact:**

Bob Sprague  
23 Wistar Road  
Paoli, PA 19301  
610-644-0353  
[novacsacomcast.net](mailto:novacsacomcast.net)

**BVCWRT Web Site:**

<http://bvcwrt.home.comcast.net>

**Webmaster:** Jim Lawler  
[dtownjim@comcast.net](mailto:dtownjim@comcast.net)

**Signal Flag Editor:** Lynne Fulton  
610-647-1039  
[fultonlm1949@aol.com](mailto:fultonlm1949@aol.com)

Unsolicited articles from our members are welcome.  
Please contact Lynne!

\* Our meetings are handicap accessible \*



## What is the BVCWRT all about???

We were founded in 1987. According to our by-laws, "the purpose of the Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table shall be to provide a congenial medium through which persons having a common interest in the events of the American Civil War - its causes and effects, engagements, personages, units, armaments and other things pertaining thereto - may satisfy their interest and broaden individual knowledge through discussion, lectures, field trips and the exchange of books, paper and other data. The purposed is also to consider the preservation and protection of the battlefields, sites, landmarks, relics and collection of the period."

In plain English, we are an organization of diverse people brought together by our common interest in the American Civil War. This interest can range from the casual to the obsessive. We intend to tailor our activities and presentations to appeal to all our members, novice or expert.

## Welcome New Members & Reenlistments

The Round Table welcomes our new members since our last meeting. Please welcome them and share your Civil War enthusiasm.

## New Members:





## *Editor's Note*

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Someone once said, "This is the time to be jolly". I wonder if that person had as much as we have to do each year before the Holiday Season. There is shopping, decorating, card writing, baking, cleaning, wrapping, planning and the list goes on. In doing this newsletter I was searching for articles about Christmas during the Civil War and was surprised to find that many of the homes had similar lists of things to do in preparation for Christmas. Even during the dismal years of the Civil War the ladies left behind decorated their homes with the greens they could find around their yards, had small trees on tables, baked what food they could find for their Christmas dinners, wrote letters, created gifts for each other from what they had on hand and they prayed for their love ones away from home that the war would be over soon. The times were hard but through it all they found time to share the Christmas holiday with their family, children and friends. Christmas brings the best out of all of us. I often wonder why that "best" could not last the whole year through. Please take time this holiday season to pray for all those Americans soldiers away from their homes with a wish that they will return soon to their families.

**Dues:** there are still 49 members who have not paid their dues. Please make sure you fill out the membership form at the end of the newsletter so we have all your current information on record. Make out your membership checks to **BVCWRT** and give to Dave Walter, our Treasurer at the next meeting.

**Website:** Please make sure that you begin checking the website at the end of the fourth week of each month for the publication of the Signal Flag online. If you have problems with downloading the newsletter, please let us know and we will see if we can help.

**Articles:** "Caretaker trips over history" from Inquirer, "The Stuff of Democratic Life" by Allen Guelozo, "Christmas in the Civil War" T. Nast, "CWPT Adds UK Site" from Inquirer, "Toy Store Brightens Lincoln's Dark Days" Washington, "Bio of James Parke in Arlington National Cemetery" from Temple website, "Christmas at Arlington Cemetery" sent to me by a friend, "Union League Clubs" from Temple website, "Christmas at the Time of the Civil War" by Joanne Shelby, and "Christmas in Civil War" website <http://dburgin.tripod.com> I hope you enjoy the articles.

**Casino in Gettysburg:** the battle is still going on. We need your help. Mark Campi asked me to include in the newsletter a request for all of us to send personal emails to the editor of the Gettysburg Times, see page 7 for more information.

**Banquets:** Our banquet this year will be on May 8<sup>th</sup>, West Chester Elks, speaker will be Gobor Boritt, who will talk about the Lincoln speech no one knew about.

*Wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season  
Lynne Fulton, Editor*



*Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table*  
*Come to our next meeting*  
*6 December 2006*

**Speaker:** No Speaker this month  
**Topic:** "Old Fashion Round Table Discussion and Christmas Social"  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Place:** West Chester Borough Hall, Gay Street

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION FOR DECEMBER'S MEETING**

**Group A – Dave Walters, Moderator**

**Question:** "Fighting Brigades of the Civil War." Discuss which brigade on each side should claim to be the "best and toughest fighters," and why?

**Group B – Mark Campi, Moderator**

**Question:** In your opinion, did the Union win the Civil War in the Eastern Theatre OR the Western Theatre? Consider where the most significant victories of the war occurred and make a case for your answer.

**Group C – Vince Carosella, Moderator**

**Question:** If the South were successful in obtaining recognition from England, what effect, if any, would that have had on the outcome of the Civil War? Would England have sent troops? Explain.

**Group D – Roger Arthur, Moderator**

**Question:** One of the most controversial Union generals during the Civil War was General George B. McClellan. Was his poor reputation as a general justified? Explain.

## Meeting Minutes - From November 1, 2006

*Submitted by Lynne Fulton*

**The President's Report/Announcements:** Bob thanked John Walls and John Whiteside for filling in for him while he was recovering from surgery. He thanked everyone for their cards, letters and well wishes. Bob talked about the successful trip to West Point and thanked Susan and Dennis Mahoney for their connections at the Point which contributed to such a successful tour. Bob introduced all the members of the executive board and discussed the reasons why we are trying to migrate to an online newsletter over a hard copy mailed. We will now be responsible for paying higher prices for the printing and the cost of mailing so it was decided by the Executive Board that we go to an online version of the newsletter. If we don't, we will slowly eat up any funds we are trying to save for Preservation. We did agree to print a small number of copies to accommodate those members that do not have access to a computer. We will see how this goes. Bob read the letter we received from David Duncan the Director of Membership and Development at the Civil War Trust. He thanked us for our \$1000.00 contribution to the Slaughter Pen Farm. Mentioned that Roger Arthur was the guest speaker at a Civil War Round Table Eastern, PA where he talked about the Southern Commanders (Lee, Jackson, and Stuart). Members reminded to please pay their dues as soon as possible.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dave Walter reported the following: The General Fund as of 10/31 was \$2165.99. We took in \$124.00 in the book raffle. We now have 79 paid members for this year.

**Book Raffle:** John Walls was back at his post selling raffle tickets. The book selections have been great again this year. If you wish to contribute books to the raffle please talk with John. Thank you to those that purchase chances each month, all this money will go to preservation. We want to contribute another \$1000.00 again this year so keep up the good work.

**Website:** Jim Lawler, our webmaster, continues to do a wonderful job at maintaining our webpage. You should now be able to see the Signal Flag out online for your downloading.

**Special Events:** Dave Kohler, one of our members, told us about "The Timber Chest" a Civil War Artifacts and Memorabilia shop at 401 Stoney Run Road, Spring City, PA 19475 (610)792-4143. Owners Ron and Dee Stonelake. They also do appraisals, their email [stonelaked@alo.com](mailto:stonelaked@alo.com) Mike Kochan, another member vouched for Ron Stonelake's honesty. Mike had dealt with him before.

**Speaker:** Michael Werner "Jewish Contribution to the War"

## Caretaker trips over history

By Edward Colimore

Inquirer Staff

Sunday, Aug 27, 2006

Caretaker Wayne Irby was mowing the grass at Fort Mifflin this month when he was literally swallowed up by the history of the place - up to his knees. Irby "turned the mower loose" just as the ground collapsed beneath him. Curious, he shoveled aside a few feet of earth over the next couple of days and made a stunning discovery: a tunnel and a two-room jail cell recalling the sad tale of a decorated Civil War soldier, a murder, clemency pleas to President Lincoln, and the only execution at the fort.

The barred cell at casemate No. 11 once belonged to convicted killer William H. Howe before he was hanged Aug. 26, 1864. One hundred forty-two years later - almost to the day of Howe's hanging - Irby pointed a flashlight above a doorway and eyed, with surprise, a name, both handwritten and printed: W.H. Howe. On a door nearby was another message: Shun this place, oh man, whom so ever thou art.

"Finding the rooms was very exciting," said Irby, 55, who on Friday stood in the cell littered with bottles, a tin cup, a plate, a chamber pot, a cannon vent pick, and many other artifacts. "But the name identified the rooms with a function and personality. It gave them a story and took it from a great thing to a fantastic thing." Historians and fort officials were thrilled. The site, where a few hundred patriots braved a British bombardment during the Revolution and where Civil War deserters were held, is off the beaten path for tourists, next to Philadelphia International Airport - and now hopes to capitalize on Irby's propitious accident.

William Mifflin, a descendant of the fort's 18th-century commandant Thomas Mifflin and member of the board of directors of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware, called the find remarkable, "another significant chapter in the fort's long history." "It not only gives us one more educational and interpretive opportunity - but it's entertaining," he said before ducking down a small, muddy hole that opened into the tunnel. Jim Mosetter, former president of the Fort Mifflin Historical Society, who thought he had seen everything after more than three decades of volunteering there, said he hoped more visitors would now be drawn to the site. "This is colossal," he said. "Why it wasn't discovered or researched before, I don't know."

Historian and author Andy Waskie, a Temple University professor who teaches Civil War history and languages, provided some perspective on the nature of the discovery: "Of all the thousands of prisoners - Union and Confederate - held at Fort Mifflin, to have a direct connection to one individual, who was under sentence of death, is astounding." Howe, a Union soldier of German descent, had distinguished himself during the Battle of Fredericksburg on Dec. 13, 1862. "He was a war hero," said Lee Anderson, director of public programming at the fort. "He picked up the standard and went forward; he rallied the troops, and they followed him." Wounded in the fight, suffering from severe dysentery and depressed by the loss of friends and separation from his wife in Perkiomenville, Montgomery County, Howe later deserted and returned home to recuperate. An enrolling officer, Abraham Bertolet, and two provost marshals later went to Howe's house to arrest him, and a gun battle ensued. Witnesses said Howe fired a rifle from an upper window of the house, killing Bertolet. The soldier surrendered, was convicted of murder and was sentenced to death by hanging. He was held at Fort Mifflin and escaped, possibly from the newly discovered cell.

On Friday, Irby, the fort's projects manager, pointed out a window, with a wire-mesh screen and bars removed, allowing access to a large ventilation shaft that could have provided the escape route. "The bars are still lying there," he said. Howe was recaptured, then transferred to the more secure Moyamensing Prison on 11th Street in South Philadelphia. His former commanding officer, Gen. St. Clair A. Mulholland, a Medal of Honor recipient, wrote to President Lincoln, seeking clemency for the soldier. Howe also wrote to Lincoln, trying to put the best face on the desertion and shooting incident. The President declined to pardon him, and Howe was hanged at the fort between the arsenal and the sutler building (where civilians sold goods to troops), which still stand. "They were making an example of him and wanted everyone to have the optimal view," said Anderson, who also explored the cell, located next to an 1875 powder magazine once used for early torpedo research. Howe's wife wanted to bury her husband at Keelor's Church in Obelisk, Pa., but the elders declined to have a deserter buried in sanctified ground. He was interred near a stone fence at his house.

To see the cell where Howe was held, fort officials literally crawled through a small hole and passed through two doorways in the tunnel that led to a doorway of the cell. The casemate was built in 1798 to store military supplies but was later used to jail deserters. One of the 19th-century messages written on doors in the tunnel said To be

good is to be happy. Another was partly indecipherable: The appointed time of my sojourn will be... my release from March 1, 1864.

William Mifflin said he had contacted city and state officials as well as the University of Pennsylvania to report the find and seek advice and help in preserving the site and its artifacts. "The fort is one of Philadelphia's important historic assets and should be preserved," he said.

Meanwhile, Irby, a former Natchez, Miss., resident whose misstep put him in the spotlight, has been getting both congratulations and kidding. Already called Mr. Fort Mifflin, he's now taken on a new moniker with friends and colleagues: Indiana Jones.

For More Information

Contact Fort Mifflin at 215-685-4167 or online at <http://fortmifflin.com/pn/>

## Gettysburg Casino Information

Casino opponents are making pleas to individuals living in Pennsylvania to write a letter to the editor of the Gettysburg Times arguing against building the casino in Gettysburg. They tend to pay more attention to residents of Pennsylvania than they do to those living out of state.

This Casino is not a "done deal" and groups like ours are the only thing standing in the way of it being built. The Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table has given thousands of dollars towards preservation, but this time the most effective means of helping in this fight is through the power of your words.

The following is the format that the Gettysburg Times requires for its Letters to the Editor section. Please make sure you include your real name, address, and phone number they will usually call to ensure that you actually wrote the letter before they publish it. They will not publish any personal information other than your name. Anonymous letters are usually disregarded.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words and must include a name, address and daytime telephone number for verification.

They may be edited for brevity or clarity.

They may be emailed to this address: [editor@gburgtimes.com](mailto:editor@gburgtimes.com)

Or send by regular mail to

Editor,

Gettysburg Times

PO Box 3669

Gettysburg, PA 17325

Thanks for your help.

Mark

# The Stuff of Democratic Life By ALLEN GUELZO

From: Editorial page of the Wall Street Journal 11/22/06.

Obtain: from Temple website.

On Nov. 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln delivered the dedication remarks at the opening ceremonies of a cemetery for soldiers of the Civil War in Gettysburg, Pa. This "Gettysburg Address" – a gem-like model of conciseness, passion and political eloquence quickly became a fixed feature of McGuffey's Eclectic Readers and triple-decker Fourth of July orations, even the soundtrack of the first "talking" motion picture in 1922. It was read once again to dedicate a block of burnt earth in Manhattan during the solemn first anniversary of 9/11 at Ground Zero.

Lincoln wrote a great many other memorable speeches, from his two inaugural addresses to the proclamation that, a week after the Gettysburg Address, made Thanksgiving a national holiday. Why was the Gettysburg speech so much more important? The answer would be easier if his words had not become so worn with familiarity. Time has done more than just heal the wounds of the Civil War. It has grown moss over prose that captured, in a shorter compass and with greater power than any others, the three fundamental challenges of the American experiment.

In 1863, the United States was the only significant democracy in the world. The French Revolution had drowned itself in blood; the democratic uprisings of the 1820s and 1840s had been easily and successfully repressed by kings and emperors; and everywhere, it was power and hierarchy rather than liberty and equality which seemed the best guarantee of peace and plenty. Americans remained the one people who defined themselves by a natural proposition, that all men are created equal, so that no one was born with a superior entitlement to command.

But this republic of equal citizens had two basic weaknesses. The first was its tolerance of slavery, which drew the line of race across the line of equality. The second weakness was the question of authority in a democracy. In a society where every citizen's opinion carried equal weight, decisions would have to be made by majority rule. But a citizen whose opinion carries such weight might find it difficult to submit to the countervailing vote of a majority which thinks differently, and the result is likely to be a simple truculent refusal to go along. Refusals make for resistance, and resistance makes for civil war. Is there, Lincoln asked in 1861, some deep flaw in popular government, some weird centripetal force, which inevitably condemns popular government to whirl itself into pieces "and thus practically put an end to free government upon the earth"?

To that question, every king and autocrat in 1861 -- and every fuehrer, duce and president-for-life since -- has answered, smirkingly, yes. And the American Civil War looked like the chief evidence that this was so. Which is why, as Lincoln looked out across the thousands who had gathered on that November day, it seemed to him that what he was viewing was more than just another noteworthy battlefield. It had fallen to him to argue that the Civil War signaled not a failure, but a test, to determine once and for all whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.

We pass this test, Lincoln said, not by dedicating cemeteries, but by dedicating ourselves. That dedication lies first in seeing that equality is an imposition of self-restraint. It means refusing to lay upon the backs of others the burdens we do not wish laid on our own. Slavery was an outrage on the notion of equality, not just because it treated members of a different race as unequal, but because it allowed one race to exploit another without any restraint at all. "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master," Lincoln explained in 1858. "This expresses my idea of democracy." Popular government is not about what we want, or about our demands for ourselves, but what we should not want and not demand of others.

Dedication lies, second, in the enforcement of self-restraint. Democracy is a discipline. One cannot opt out on the plea of liberty whenever the political score goes against us. The Southern secessionists imagined that they were protecting their liberty by seceding from the Union, but they were in fact negating it. Secession, Lincoln argued, was the essence of anarchy, not liberty, since the only liberty the secessionists had in mind was the liberty to do what they pleased, without restraint, and to people whom they deemed unequal. Against that, a democracy must take up the sword, or cease to be a democracy at all.

But dedication also comes, third, in understanding how to sustain a fervor for democracy's defense. It was the complaint of Francis Fukuyama that the triumph of democracy had only managed to produce a "last man" who had no other reason for being free than the satisfaction of his own interests. It was Lincoln's words at Gettysburg

which invested the triumph of democracy with a transcendent meaning, as a good based on natural law rather than on personal comfort. It was because these honored dead were witnesses to that kind of democracy that we could take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.

The turn of the 9/11 ceremonies to the Gettysburg Address was instinctively correct. But Lincoln's words are more than just a tonic for crises. Self-restraint, self-enforcement and the recollection that democracy has a transcendent core arching far above our poor power to add or detract -- these are the stuff of democratic life, and the Gettysburg Address is the reminder of Lincoln's prescription for government of the people, by the people and for the people. If we forget it, it may be because we have forgotten all the other things that democracy demands.

Some of you might remember that we had Mr. Guelzo as one of our guest speakers at our annual banquet. Mr. Guelzo is the Henry R. Luce Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College and the author, inter alia, of "Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America" (Simon and Schuster, 2004).



*Thomas Nast's Original "Civil War Christmas" Print*

This original 1863 Thomas Nast print shows a touching scene of Husband and Wife on Christmas Eve 1862. The picture is from the January 1863 edition of Harper's Weekly. This leaf is a stunning illustration and is over 140 years old! The image shows a family split apart by the Civil War. The left image shows a scene of a woman, late at night on Christmas Eve, on her knees in earnest prayer. She is at the window looking up at the night sky, obviously distressed about the absence of her husband. In the background, you can see a small bed with her two children in it. On the wall, a picture of the woman's husband can be seen hanging. On the inset image on the right, the woman's husband can be seen sitting with his rifle around a lonely campfire. In his hand is a small album with photographs of his wife and children. He is obviously lonesome, missing his wife and kids on a cold winter night. Surrounding these two main images are a variety of scenes. In the upper left corner, an image of Santa Claus can be seen. Santa is crawling into a chimney. In the lower left is an image of soldiers marching in the snow. The upper right corner has another image of Santa, in a sleigh, being pulled by reindeer. This is one of the earliest images of this popular tradition of Christmas. The lower right corner shows ships being tossed in the sea. The lower center shows an image of the graves of soldiers lost in the war. This is a dramatic and moving Nast picture.

## Civil War Preservation Trust Adds United Kingdom Site

From: Ed Colimore of the Phila Inquirer

11/29/06

Civil War Preservation Trust Adds United Kingdom Site: Civil War Discovery Trail WIRRAL, England, Nov. 29, 2006 The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) today announced the addition of the Wirral Maritime Heritage Trail to the 600-site Civil War Discovery Trail. The Wirral Maritime Heritage Trail becomes the first Civil War Discovery Trail site in England and the second to be designated outside the United States.

Edwin C. Bearss, CWPT Trustee and Chief Historian Emeritus of the U.S. National Park Service, will be the keynote speaker at the designation ceremonies. According to Bearss, the area along the River Mersey in southwestern England played a crucial role in equipping the Confederate Navy. He noted that the most famous Confederate raider of the war, C.S.S. Alabama, was built at the Laird Brothers Shipyard on the Wirral peninsula, across the Mersey River from Liverpool. "Adding the Wirral Maritime Heritage Trail to the Civil War Discovery Trail brings an important new dimension to our understanding of the international partnerships that supported the Confederate war effort," remarked Bearss. "The Civil War did not just stop at the water's edge."

The Wirral peninsula is bordered to the west by the River Dee, to the south by Cheshire, and to the east by the River Mersey. Facing Liverpool and extending into the Irish Sea, it already had a long shipbuilding tradition when Confederate leaders sent agents to England in 1861 to commission ships for its infant navy, including C.S.S. Alabama and C.S.S. Shenandoah. Alabama served as a commerce raider, attacking U.S. merchant and naval ships for two years. She wreaked enormous havoc on U.S. shipping, claiming more than 60 prizes valued at more than \$6 million. Cite de la Mer, a French maritime museum in Cherbourg with extensive exhibits on the recently rediscovered Alabama wreck, was the first foreign site added to the Civil War Discovery Trail, joining the ranks in 2004. In 2000, the Civil War Discovery Trail was selected by the White House as a National Millennium Trail. With more than 70,000 members, CWPT is the largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. Since 1987, the organization has saved more than 23,000 acres of hallowed ground. CWPT's website is located at <http://www.civilwar.org>. (Visit the Civil War Discovery Trail online at <http://www.civilwardiscoverytrail.org>) SOURCE Civil War Preservation Trust 11/29/2006 CONTACT: Jim Campi of the Civil War Preservation Trust -----

## TOY STORE BRIGHTENS LINCOLN'S DARK DAYS

By John Lockwood The Washington Times  
From Margie Burns: Temple website

Few presidents have felt the burden of office more heavily than Abraham Lincoln. Not only did he have to guide the country through its bloodiest war, but he endured domestic sorrows as well, especially the death of his son Willie in 1862.

One way Lincoln had of coping was his well-known habit of telling funny stories to people. Another way for the president to unwind was to take his young son Tad for visits to the Stuntz toy and candy store at 1207 New York Ave. NW, just four blocks from the White House.

The little shop is long gone, but it was a city landmark for more than 50 years. The store originally was a private home built by Ulysses Ward, who bought the land on Oct. 14, 1840, for \$157. The building was brick, two stories tall and 14 feet and 4 inches wide. In 1847, Ward leased the place to Joseph and Apolonia Stuntz. (Some accounts spell the wife's name Appolonia.) The couple converted it into a shop.

Joseph Stuntz died during the Civil War, and Apolonia then ran the place by herself. The store's most popular display by far was the "penny counter," where children could buy any item for 1 cent. The penny candies included black licorice, jujube paste, yellow taffy on a stick, little cakes shaped like horses, chewing gum and chocolate caramels, neatly wrapped.

The penny toys included miniature wooden churns and washtubs, paper dolls, china dolls, doll furniture, the "bean-blower" or bean shooter, paper parasols and tin whistles.

There were other, more expensive items, such as toy soldiers of wood or tin. Joseph Stuntz, who had been a soldier under Napoleon, would carve the wooden soldiers himself while resting his disabled leg on a stool. The toy soldiers were a special favorite of Tad's.

As the president once explained, "I want to give Tad all the toys I didn't have, and all the toys I would have given to the boy who went away," referring to Willie. On another occasion, Lincoln sadly asked of Stuntz, "Does it hurt you as much to have your soldiers shot down as it does me to have mine?"

The little store must have become quite successful, for after Joseph's death, his widow bought the property from Ward for \$2,800. Apolonia continued to run the shop until her death on April 19, 1901.

As the decades passed, Apolonia became as well-known as the store itself. She was the archetypal kindly old woman, beloved by two generations of Washington children. In particular, her young customers would fondly remember in later years how she never pressured them, no matter how long they took deciding what to buy.

The store kept going even after Apolonia's time, for The Washington Post of Aug. 27, 1913, mentioned the funeral of a Kate France, who had been running what by then was called the Lincoln Toy Shop. After that, the place became Larch's ? "Washington's Foremost Cleansers and Dyers." Larch's counted on the memories of Washingtonians, for as late as 1927 it still ran newspaper ads reminding people of how the Stuntz shop once had done business there.

Finally, in 1933, the Post ran a mournful little story ? in its Christmas Eve issue, no less ? with a headline that said it all: "Landmark Becomes Auto Parking Lot." It would have been infinitely preferable to save the shop and turn it into a Lincoln historical site, with a bronze plaque out front. John Lockwood is a Washington writer

## Biography of James Parks buried in Arlington National Cemetery

From: Temple website

The first graves in Arlington National Cemetery were dug by James Parks, a former Arlington Estate slave. Parks was freed in 1862 under the terms of the will of his former owner, George Washington Parke Custis. He still lived on Arlington Estate when Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton signed the orders designating Arlington as a military burial ground. Parks served in the U.S. Army from 1861 to 1862 by working as a grave digger and maintenance man for the cemetery. When James Parks died on Aug. 21, 1929, Secretary of War Stanton granted special permission for him to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. James Parks is the only person buried in Arlington National Cemetery who was born on the property (1843). He is buried near Selfridge Gate (West Gate) in Section 15, Grave 2 (Grid G-26).

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By Christmas, 1862, Thomas Nast had allied Santa Claus with the Union Army. From *Harper's Weekly*, January 3, 1863.

This sad year brought forth the war's impact full force with battles at Shiloh, Manassas, and Antietam, and campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley and the Peninsula. Many Fredericksburg, Virginia citizens were homeless or fled their town just prior to Christmas.

*Harper's Weekly* illustrator Thomas Nast, a staunch Unionist, is now depicting Santa Claus entertaining Federal soldiers by showing them Jefferson Davis with a cord around his neck. Abraham Lincoln would later refer to a politicized Santa as "the best recruiting sergeant the North ever had." More moderate illustrations show soldiers decorating camps with greens and firing salutes to Santa. Ironically, it was Nast who fixed Santa's home and toy workshop address at the "North Pole" "so no nation can claim him as their own."

Officers of the 20th Tennessee gave their men a barrel of whisky to mark the day. "We had many a drunken fight and knock-down before the day closed," wrote one participant. But there were other more somber occurrences recorded for Christmas 1862. One account tells of soldiers being forced to witness an execution for desertion and another grim letter describes how men firing their weapons in a funeral salute were mistakenly punished for unauthorized holiday merrymaking.

## Christmas at Arlington Cemetery

The press only wants to print/tell/show our military in a negative light. If ever there was a "thank you" needed to be sent, it surely is to the guy who furnishes these wreaths and the shipping FREE every year!

**I had never heard of this. I wonder why the press hasn't enlightened the public about it????**

## Arlington National Cemetery



Rest easy, sleep well my brothers.

Know the line has held, your job is done.

Rest easy, sleep well.

Others have taken up where you fell, the line has held.

Peace, peace, and farewell...



**Readers may be interested to know that these wreaths -- some 5,000 -- are donated by the Worcester Wreath Co. of Harrington, Maine. The owner, Merrill Worcester, not only provides the wreaths, but covers the trucking expense as well. He's done this since 1992. A wonderful guy. Also, most years, groups of Maine school kids combine an educational trip to DC with this event to help out. Making this even more remarkable is the fact that Harrington is in one the poorest parts of the state.**

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### **Union League Clubs organized during the Civil War**

From Andy Waskie Temple Website

Union League Clubs, in U.S. history, organizations formed throughout the North in the Civil War after the military defeats and Republican election losses of 1862. A convention held at Cleveland (May, 1863) provided for national headquarters of the Union League at Washington. The clubs distributed war literature, raised money for soldier relief, and recruited both white and black volunteers for the army. In the South, after the war, the league, led by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau, carpetbaggers, scalawags, icon political organization that controlled the black vote. Its influence was curtailed by the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and vanished with the end of reconstruction. The Union League Clubs of New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago survived as conservative social organizations. See studies of the New York club by W. Irwin et al. (1952) and of the Chicago club by B. Grant (1955).

Information from The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed. Copyright 2005, Columbia University Press.

## ***Christmas at the Time of the Civil War***

**by Joanne Shelby**

Christmas is, without a doubt, my favorite holiday. The decorations, the lights, the carols, all fill my heart with joy. So too, was it for the Victorians. To help all of us with our impressions, I decided to do a little research on Christmas at the time of the Civil War. For the soldier, his thoughts would be about family and friends at home. I'm sure he would be thinking and talking about the holidays past as he lingered in camp or on the march, especially as the holiday approached. Think about what your persona would have experienced and remembered.

Would your home have had a Christmas tree? The first Christmas tree in America was erected in Cleveland, Ohio in 1851, so most likely you would have had at least one prior to the war. Most decorations would have been made at home and were very simple, such as dried and sugared nuts and fruits, popcorn balls and string. Colored paper, wax ribbon, spun glass, and silver foil ornaments were also popular. Ornaments were made in the shape of doll faces, angels, the Christ Child, and animals. Most trees sat on the table top. Unwrapped presents would be placed under them. Without a doubt, the Christmas tree was the centerpiece of the home. According to the book, *We Were Marching on Christmas Day*, the entire house would have been decorated with greenery such as fir, pine, holly, ivy, and mistletoe. No house was considered festive without the fragrance of these greens!

Singing Christmas carols was a very popular activity. What carols would you remember from home and even sing in camp? Songs such as "Silent Night," "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and "Deck the Halls" were popular. "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" was written in 1850, and other songs such as "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "Away in a Manger," "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," and "Up on the Housatop" soon followed. I am sure that many a soldier sang these songs in camp with a twinge of longing for home in his heart and I'm also sure he looked for a fairly new custom to arrive with Mail Call--the Christmas Card (1844).

I hope you have enjoyed this brief overview of Christmas. For more in depth information, especially about Christmas during the war years, obtain the book *We Were Marching on Christmas Day* by Kevin Rawlings. It's a wonderful book and helps add to the human side of the war and those whom we portray. My Christmas wish for you and yours: May all of you find the coming year to be filled with HIS JOY, HIS PEACE, and HIS LOVE. Merry Christmas!

## Christmas in the Civil War

**Christmas 1864:** Many units were on the march, either trying to evade capture or pursuing the opponent for better position. Soldiers left in the squalid conditions of prison camps spent the day remembering holidays at home, as did others in slightly more comfortable settings. Confederate General Gordon, writing from his headquarters near Petersburg, wrote of fighting famine as well as General Grant:

*"The one worn-out railroad running to the far South could not bring us half enough necessary supplies: and even if it could have transported Christmas boxes of good things, the people at home were too depleted to send them."*

\* \* \* \* \*

By late 1865 the country was starting to reunite as the horrors of war and the shock of Lincoln's assassination faded into memory. That December brought the first peacetime Christmas in five years. Most soldiers had been mustered out of the military and were home to celebrate the holiday with their families. Of course, many others had never returned home. Harper's published a poem titled "By the Christmas Hearth" that was more in line with the nation's hopeful spirit of reunification. The last stanza especially captures the cheerful holiday mood and eagerness of the American people to put the turbulent conflict behind them:

*Bring holly, rich with berries red,  
And bring the sacred mistletoe;  
Fill high each glass, and let hearts  
With kindest feelings flow;  
So sweet it seems at home once more  
To sit with those we hold most dear,  
And keep absence once again  
To keep the Merry Christmas here.*

From website [http://durgin.tripod.com/cw\\_xmas/cwarxmas2.html](http://durgin.tripod.com/cw_xmas/cwarxmas2.html)



*Scheduled Speakers for 2006 - 2007:*

- Sep 6, 2006: Sid Copel - "Civil War Humor"
- Oct 4, 2006: Michael Kaufman - "American Brutus"
- Nov 1, 2006: Michael Werner - "Jewish Contribution to the War"
- Dec 6, 2006: Group Discussions of Selected Topics and Christmas Social
- Jan 3, 2007: Dave Kohler - "Henry Pleasants & Construction of the Petersburg Mine"
- Feb 7, 2007: Prof. James Hedtke - "Eli Parker, Grant's Secretary"
- Mar 7, 2007: Dennis Kelly - "Fort Pillow Controversy"
- Apr 4, 2007: BVCWRT Members - "Show and Tell"
- May 2, 2007: Roger Arthur - "The 97th PVI"
- May 8, 2007: (Annual Banquet): Gabor Boritt - "The Gettysburg Gospel"

**Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table  
Membership Application**

Application Type: New  Renewal

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Monthly newsletters are distributed by E-mail only.

Membership Type: Individual (\$25)  Family (\$40):  Student (\$15):

If family membership, please list other names: \_\_\_\_\_

Bring the completed form and a check payable to BVCWRT to a meeting or mail it to:  
**Dave Walter, Treasurer, 937 Thorne Drive, West Chester, PA 19382**