



The Signal Flag

BRANDYWINE VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Campaign # 20

Skirmish # 7

March 2006

From the Rear Ranks:

Elected and Appointed Leadership for 2007/2008

Who are we? 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.

What are we? 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 may satisfy their interest and broaden individual knowledge.

Why are we? “The purpose is to consider preservation and protection of battlefields....”

When are we? We meet the first Wednesday of each month from September to May of a calendar year.

How are we? One hundred members strong; celebrating our Twentieth year as an organization and Round Table.

Where are we? We are in need of leaders both elected and appointed to continue our tradition of preserving, maintaining and protecting the heritage of the American Civil War. Consider the following paraphrases:

Now is the time for all good people to come to the aide of their Round Table.

Ask not what your Round Table can do for you; ask what you can do for your Round Table.

As members of the Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table, I ask that you “**step up to the plate**” and assume the responsibility of either elected or appointed leader of our organization. Please see John Whiteside of the Nominating Committee before April of 2007 to indicate your interest.

This is my challenge to each of you!



I remain your most obedient servant, Robert Sprague, President, BVCWR



~ Officers ~

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

~ Committee Members ~

Preservation: John Walls, Mike Liddy, Mark Campi

Nominating / Speakers Committee:

Vince Carosella, John Whiteside

Speakers: Roger Arthur, Joe Lehman

Monthly Scribe / Trips: Susan Mahoney

Credentials: Bill Sitman

Greeter: Loretta Thomas

Publicity: Harriett Mueller

Historians: Bill Sitman, Mike Liddy

~ Members at Large ~

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:

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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:

John Olsen





Editor's Note

I would like to dedicate this month's issue of the Signal Flag to Mr. William Christy. Bill was one of our dedicated members who you could always find seating in the front row seats. Bill passed away last month. We will miss your presents at our meetings Bill and may you now rest in peace. Since this month we celebrates St. Patrick's Day I thought that you might like to read about the Irish that fought, from both sides, at Gettysburg.

Erin Go Bragh

Dues: If you have not paid your dues and you are on our mailing list to receive the newsletter we have now removed you from the list. In order to receive your newsletter by mail you must pay your dues. Please make sure you fill out the membership form found at the end of the newsletter with your recent information for our records. Make out your membership checks to **BVCWRT** and give to Dave Walter, our Treasurer at the next meeting.

Website: *The Signal Flag* is now on our website and should be available at the end of the fourth week of each month. If you have problems with downloading the newsletter, please let us know and we will see if we can help.

Articles: "Museum considers dropping 'Confederacy' from the name- it will be interesting to discover just what the new name will be. "Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase" Author will be at the Chester County Bookstore, sounds like it might be an interesting talk. "The American Question Aboard in the Civil War" (part 2). "Scene of a Religious Character on the Historic Battlefield of Gettysburg" whenever I read about the absolution that Father Corby served at Gettysburg and when I am at Gettysburg near the sit where it happened I just begin to imagine what it must have looked like and the feelings of the men. "A Salute to the Irish Who Fought at Gettysburg". "Last Victim of the Civil War Dies", this I thought was a interesting article. "Proposed increase of fees from National Archives and Record Administration" I thought that all you researcher needed to know of this possible charge. Please send in your comments.

Event Announcements: "GAR Museum and Library Annual Preservation Dinner" program 68th PA Volunteers , Russell S. Bond, author of "Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and First Medal of Honor" will be at Chester Co Book Store, March 15 at 7:30, "AMART Symposium" history of the PA Reserves, "Ladies Organizations" During and After the American Civil War" our own member, Dr. Florence Williams will speaking at the Chester County Historic Society on March 14.

Banquets: Our banquet is fast approaching. It will be on Tuesday, May 8th, at West Chester Elks. Our speaker will be Gobor Boritt, who will talk about the Lincoln speech no one knew about. Mr. Boritt's book, "The Gettysburg Gospel" will be available for purchasing and signing at the banquet. I will have flyers available at our March meeting.

Lnne Fulton, Editor



Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
Come to our next meeting
7 March 2007

Speaker: Dennis Kelly
Topic: "Fort Pillow Controversy"
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: West Chester Borough Hall, Gay Street

It was the atrocity story of the war. On April 12, 1864 Confederate cavalry General Nathan Bedford Forrest stormed Fort Pillow, an insignificant Mississippi River outpost upstream from Memphis held by a mixed garrison of white and black Federals. What happened sparked a controversy never fully extinguished. Union newspapers alleged a massacre occurred. Congress investigated and then in 1953 Bruce Catton, the eminent Pulitzer Prize winner, wrote: "After the surrender some of Forrest's tough troopers got out of hand and turned the occasion into something like a lynching bee"

But is that what really happened? The fort's garrison never surrendered, and that's a fact. Mr. Catton was a Northern historian. Down south where they say "y'all" folks there contend there was no massacre, and those who say so have pusillanimous motives. To Southern partisans like the Son of Confederate Veterans, the Fort Pillow incident remains a touchy spot.

For this month's program, Dennis Kelly will explain the battle's tactics, analyze the controversy, and offer some comments of his own. Kelly, one of our members, is a retired National Park Service historian who visited Fort Pillow State Historic area, Tennessee, while conducting map surveys for the Civil War Site Commission. He spent 20 years in the NPS at Manassas, Stone River, Kennesaw Mountain battlefield parks. He was educated at Temple University. Kelly is also a veteran U.S. paratrooper who fought in the 1965 Dominican Republic intervention and is a member of VFW Post # 928, and the Philadelphia Chapter, 82 Airborne Division Association. He was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

News: Museum considers dropping 'Confederacy' from its name

2/20/07 From The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Virginia (AP) -- The Museum of the Confederacy will likely drop "Confederacy" from its name when it relocates, because of the word's negative perceptions. "The Confederacy, and by association the museum, now symbolize racism," said a group of historians, preservationists and grant writers who studied the museum's health.

Richmond was the capital of the breakaway states during the Civil War in the 1860s, a conflict that, like slavery, remains a sensitive issue in parts of the U.S. South. The museum is the world's largest collection of Civil War artifacts. Annual visitation has dropped from 92,000 to about 51,500 since the early 1990s.

"One of our challenges is a gap between the public's perception of who we are and the role we play, and the reality of who we are and the role we play," said Waite Rawls, the museum's president and CEO. "The repositioning we have done over the past 30 years is to be more of a modern education institution and less of a memorial ... to the Confederacy."

Rawls said the new name will depend on the new location. Changing the name would "dilute the integrity of the museum," said Darryl Starnes, a Sons of Confederate Veterans member. Starnes also opposes relocating the museum. "Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy," he said. "That's the place the Museum of the Confederacy should be."

Meeting Minutes – From February 7, 2007

Submitted by Lynne Fulton

The President's Report/Announcements: Bob was anxious to announce how well known our Round Table is becoming. Our reputation has grown immensely following all the highly noted historians and authors we have had as speakers in the past few years. Just introducing yourself as a member of the Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table will get you noticed by other Round Tables and organizations. Robert Lee Hodge, who is pictured on the cover of Tony Horwitz's book "Confederates in Attic" is a re-enactor, who Tony highlights in his book and who has created his own film company named, "Wide Awake Films". One of Hodge's films, "Battle of Franklin" has won an Emmy. He has a website that you can obtain more information concerning this film. Bob is going to have our speaker for the Banquet, Garbor Boritt book "The Gettysburg Gospel" available for us to purchase and Mr. Boritt to sign. We will also be celebrating our 20th year as a Round Table so we would like to plan something special for that occasion.

Treasurer's Report: Dave Walter reported the following: The General Fund as of 01/31/076 was \$2,730.64. We have taken in \$491.00 in the book raffle. If you have not paid your dues as yet please bring your checks to the next meeting.

Book Raffle: John Walls, had again, a great selection of books this month. We had 2 calendars and two books donated by the speaker Professor James Hedtke. If you have books that you would like to donate please bring them in and give to John. We have three more months to really focus on our preservation donations. Our goal is to reach \$1000.00 this year towards preservation.

Website: Jim Lawler, our webmaster, continues to do a wonderful job at maintaining our webpage. The Signal Flag is now online for downloading. If you have problems with downloading or have not gotten on our website please let us know.

Trips: The trip this spring will be to Spotsylvania on Saturday, May 19, 2007. Susan Mahoney is planning a wonderful trip for us and will be giving us more information at our next meeting.

Special Events: March 12, Roger Arthur will be speaking at the Avondale Public Library in West Grove, PA at 6:30 - topic "Colonel Roosevelt", in April he will talk on "Lincoln's Murder" 6:30.

Nominating Committee: John Whiteside and Vince Carosella will be gathering names of those members who would like to run for office. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Executive Board, Committee Member or Member at Large please see John or Vince.

Speaker: Professor James Hedtke – Ely Parker Seneca Indian on Grant Staff

Russell S. Bond to Speak at Chester County Book Company – West Chester

Russell S. Bonds, author of *Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor* will be speaking at the Chester County Book Company, West Chester, PA, on Friday, March 16 at 7:30pm. His book has received excellent reviews (two are below) and is a selection of both Book-of-the-Month and History Book Clubs. We are encouraging our members to try and attend. Mr. Bonds will be coming up from Marietta, Georgia.

This message was from Bruce H. Franklin, Westholme Publishing, www.westholmepublishing.com

James M. McPherson, author of *Battle Cry of Freedom*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize:

"The Great Locomotive Chase has been the stuff of legend and the darling of Hollywood. Now we have a solid history of the Andrews Raid. Russell S. Bonds' stirring account makes clear why the raid failed and what happened to the raiders."

Publishers Weekly, star review (their highest recommendation):

[**Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor**

Russell S. Bonds. Westholme, \$29.95 (464p) ISBN 1-59416-033-3

A spy and trader in contraband led an ill-fated commando mission during the first year of the Civil War with these words: "Now my lads, you have been chosen by your officers to perform a most important service, which if successful, will change the whole aspect of the war, and aid materially in bringing an early peace to our distracted country." The episode, which formed the basis for one of Buster Keaton's best-known films, took place in April 1862, when 20 Union soldiers crossed Confederate lines to steal a locomotive called the *General* and destroy a critical Confederate supply line. In this gripping, smooth-running account of the raid and its aftermath, Atlanta lawyer and Civil War historian Bonds zooms effortlessly from broad-stroke overviews of Civil War strategy to minute-by-minute scrutiny of unfolding events on the ground. He sets up the story with a quick, punchy outline of the first year of the war. What follows is a fast-paced, extremely well-told tale of espionage, capture, trial and escape. Half the team was executed; the half that escaped received the newly established Medal of Honor. With its authoritative tone and refreshing accessibility, this should find a place on the nightstand of the general reader as well as the bookshelf of the Civil War enthusiast.

The American Question Abroad in the Civil War (Part 2)

Turning from preliminary maneuvers to more settled diplomacy the Confederate government selected for the most important foreign capitals two distinguished men—James Murray Mason of Virginia for London, and John Slidell of Louisiana for Paris. Of these men it may be said that their diplomatic activities were of less significance than their initial voyage, which raised such serious questions as to bring England and the United States to the brink of war. At the Spanish port of Havana the commissioners had taken passage on a British merchant ship, a mail packet named the *Trent*. The day after leaving port (November 8, 1861) the vessel was stopped by the conventional signal, a shot across the bow, by a warship of the United States, the *San Jacinto* under Captain Charles Wilkes; and the two commissioners, with their secretaries, were arrested and removed to the *San Jacinto*. The searching party "met with some difficulty" as stated in Wilkes's report, and "a force became necessary to search" the ship. Though the envoys were "treated with every possible courtesy by Captain Wilkes and his officers" they were political prisoners and were placed in confinement in Fort Warren, Boston Harbor. The effect of this seizure was immediate and sensational. No international incident better illustrates the stupid thoughtlessness of popular clamor, which was fortunately in striking contrast to the caution and moderation of those who guided international policy. With unintelligent exultation and in ignorance of the merits of the controversy, the act of Captain Wilkes was vociferously applauded at home. He was banqueted at Boston and elsewhere; his exploit was approved by the secretary of the navy; American newspapers treated him as a hero; and the House of Representatives joined in the general acclaim by a ringing resolution.

Amid the noise and jubilation, however, the more serious-minded began to develop doubts. What after all was to be gained by sustaining Wilkes's act? Since he had acted without instructions, was it not fortunate that the government could save its face by disowning the act altogether? Did America not have an embassy in London and was there not a British ambassador at Washington? What was diplomacy for if not to deal with just such a situation? As for going to war with England while the tremendous conflict raged at home, would this not be an act of the utmost rashness, especially on an issue where the United States would appear to be renouncing its traditional defense of neutral rights at sea? If such a war should be the outcome, would not Mason and Slidell have accomplished, from the standpoint of Confederate intentions, infinitely more than they were likely to accomplish by proceeding on their mission?

As to the merits of the legal question, the point at issue was not a mere matter of searching a neutral ship. The right of search, ancillary to the right of capture where contraband is found or violation of a blockade involved, was clearly recognized. Nor was the right to seize and condemn contraband on board a neutral vessel a matter of question. The offense to England consisted in the fact that certain individuals had been "forcibly taken from on board a British vessel . . . while such vessel was pursuing a lawful and innocent voyage—an act of violence which was an affront to the British flag and a violation of international law." The act of Wilkes was not properly an exercise of the right of search: it was rather an impressment of persons from the deck of a neutral ship. Even admitting the right of the United States to take Mason and Slidell (on the doubtful ground that persons could be deemed contraband), it was clear that Wilkes's method was faulty. If any part of the ship's "cargo" was to be condemned this could be done only by sailing the ship into a port of the United States, submitting the case to a prize court, and carrying out the forfeitures as the result of a regular judicial decree in compliance with the substance and procedure of international law. The nub of the matter was that "Wilkes had undertaken to pass upon the issue of a violation of neutrality on the spot, in-

stead of sending the *Trent* as a prize into port for....adjudication.

Yet the act of Wilkes was more than a breach of international usage. It was an affront and a challenge to England's sense of national honor. When he heard the news, Palmerston blazed out in cabinet meeting: "You may stand for this but damned if I will!" The mass of the English people appeared to share his rage. War preparations were carried to the point of sending 8000 troops and war material to Canada, putting a steam fleet in readiness, and prohibiting the exportation of munitions. Henry Adams wrote from England to his brother: "This nation means to make war." A "few weeks [he said] may see us . . . on our way home..." The American minister was "indescribably sad" as he witnessed "the exultation in America over an event which [bade] fair to be the final calamity in this contest"; while the son wrote of the "bloody set of fools" that were applauding Wilkes.

Despite jingoistic manifestations, however, the affair was satisfactorily adjusted. The first letter of instructions from the British cabinet to Lord Lyons was softened by the royal tact of the Prince Consort, then on the eve of death. Lincoln's deficiencies in the refinements of international law were more than offset by a common sense which caused his thoughts to turn to arbitration if diplomacy should fail; yet he was determined that governmental reason and tact should not fail. In a timely exchange of letters Sumner in America and Bright and Cobden in England made known the wish of reasonable men on both sides that a friendly settlement be reached. As the weeks passed, suggestions continued to be made that the matter might be adjusted without war. Seward and Adams made it clear that Wilkes had acted without authorization. The cabinet in England, having avoided an ultimatum, first demanded an apology, but was led to reconsider even that demand and accept in lieu of an apology (which might have implied that the American government was originally in the wrong) an assurance that Wilkes had acted without authority. Finally the matter was threshed out in a meeting of Lincoln's cabinet (December 25, 1861), in which Sumner read his friendly letters from Bright and Cobden. After long discussion "all yielded to the necessity [i.e., to the conviction that war with England must be avoided], and unanimously concurred in Mr. Seward's letter to Lord Lyons...."

In this letter Seward closed the incident by a statement that the prisoners would be "cheerfully liberated," but not without irritating touches intended for home effect. After elaborately analyzing the pertinent questions of international law, he readily conceded the main point by declaring that Wilkes had erred in arresting the prisoners instead of sending the vessel into port for adjudication. This concession, however, was so phrased as to put England in the wrong as regarded her traditional contention for impressment and to call attention to America's high-minded role as a champion of freedom of the seas. Finally, in a saucy passage that his biographer has characterized as "sheer impudence," he needlessly stated that "if the safety of this Union required the detention of the captured persons it would be the right and duty of this government to detain them."

So completely did the release of the envoys close the incident that by the end of January, when they arrived in England, there was "an almost complete disappearance" of public interest in them. The sense of relief felt in the American legation in London best appears in the Adams letters. Late in December Henry Adams had feared that "our stay here is at an end." Then came the settlement and the minister wrote on January 10: "Captain Wilkes has not positively shipwrecked us.... The first effect of the surrender of Messrs. Mason and Slidell has been extraordinary. The current which ran against us with such extreme violence six weeks ago now seems to be going with equal fury in our favor." **Source: "The Civil War and Reconstruction" (Chapter 20) by Randall and Donald**

"Scene of a Religious Character on the Historic Battlefield of Gettysburg"

Colonel John Bachelder

January 4.1879

Several days prior to this battle, the "Army of the Potomac," under the command of General Meade, was continually on the March. The day before the battle, the 2nd Army Corps left Fredrick City, MD about 5 in the morning and halted at 12 (midnight) to rest during the balance of the night on the cold wet ground and next morning opened fire on the enemy with artillery. The enemy responded in full numbers. Shells were busting thick and fast all morning over the 2nd Army Corp until finally all the troops were drawn up in line of battle. The men were ordered to "prime" and now everything was ready for the word "advance". At this moment the Chaplain of the Irish Brigade, Rev William Corby, C.S.C (the only priest then in the Army of the Potomac) stepped in front of the battle line and addressed the men and officers in substance as follows: My Dear Christian Friend! In consideration of the want of time for each one to confess his sins in due order as required for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance, I will give you general absolution. But my dear friends, while we stand here and in the presence of eternity – so to speak – with a well armed force in front and with missiles of death – in the form of shells bursting over our heads, we must humble ourselves before the *Great Creator* of all men and acknowledge our great unworthiness and conceive a heartfelt sorrow for the sins by which we have ungratefully offended the Divine Author of all good things. Him whom we ought to love – we have despised by sinning against his laws – Him whom we should have honored by lives of virtue, we have dishonored by sin. We stand in debt to our great Lord and Master. He loves us but we, by sin, have forfeited that love. Now to receive a full pardon for our sins and regain the favor of God – do not think it is sufficient to get the priest's absolution. It is true as a minister of God he has received the power to pronounce your sins absolved: Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, John XX. By virtue of this power the Apostles and their lawful successors, the priest acts. But the absolution pronounced by the priest or by St. Peter himself – would be worthless unless the penitent conceives a true sorrow for his sins which sorrow should include a firm determination never more to *willfully* offend and to do all in his power to atone for the past sins. Therefore, my dear friends, in the Solemn presence of Eternity, excite in your minds a deep sorrow for all the sins, negligences and transgressions of your past lives. "Rend your hearts and not your garments." And I, the consecrated minister of God, will give you general absolution. At this moment, all fell on their knees and recited an act of *contrition*. Officers mounted waiting to advance removed their hats, and then the Chaplain in solemn fervent tones pronounced the words of absolution (a few minutes after all were plunged into the dense smoke of battle) A more impressive scene perhaps never took place on any battlefield. It was indeed so earnest and truly sublime that non-Catholics prostrate themselves in humble adoration of the true God while they felt that perhaps in less than half an hour their eyes would open to see in to the Ocean of Eternity. Reverend William Corby C.S.C (Above letter was sold at public auction by Bachelder family on July 19, 1992, and later donated to Gettysburg National Military Park (From the book History of the Irish Brigade)



'A Salute to the Irish Who Fought at Gettysburg'

March 18 2006 from the Temple website

The Irish at Gettysburg By Kevin O'Beirne, Kevin P. Gorman, and Joseph E. Gannon

"The land of the Shamrock, as on other fields, contributed its quota on the strongly contested ground." - Colonel Joseph Newton Brown, of the 14th South Carolina, a veteran of the Pickett/Pettigrew Charge, writing of the battle of Gettysburg. Historical Art Prints: The 69th PA withstands Pickett's onslaught in "Rock of Erin" by Don Troiani.

The story of Gettysburg in many ways represents the struggle to define America in the mid-19th century. In many ways, too, those three bloody days in July 1863 helped to define the nature of several ethnic groups in this country, particularly the Germans and the Irish. In the hour of need of the two struggling nations, at Gettysburg and many other Civil War battlefields, the Irish nobly fulfilled their duty.

Among the battle's casualties were many sons of Erin, who served in large numbers in both armies. More than a million Irish immigrants had come to America during the preceding four decades, seeking an opportunity to rise above the poverty they faced in Ireland. While most remained in Northern ports of arrival, hundreds of thousands originally emigrated to or moved to the South, drawn by better pay, a generally warmer welcome, and an ample supply of jobs. When war broke out, they flocked to the colors of their adopted states.

In 1998 we posted day-by-day coverage of that summer's 135th anniversary re-enactment of the Battle of Gettysburg. Read the reports here. The largest gathering of Blue and Gray since the Civil War ended 133 years ago, the re-enactment drew nearly 20,000 soldiers, hundreds of horsemen, and 135 cannon to portray momentous scenes of the battle during July 3rd through July 5th. The 135th anniversary re-enactment attracted re-enactors from virtually every state of the Union and former Confederacy, along with hundreds of individuals from abroad. More than 100,000 paid admission to witness the historic re-enactment.

Irish America was well-represented at the event, held on a 300-acre farm several miles from the scene of the actual fighting. More than 300 re-enactors portrayed the Irish Brigade, which lost nearly 40% of its 500 men engaged during the battle, the bloodiest in American history. In addition, thousands of Irish Americans were engaged in both re-enacted armies, recalling the immense contributions of native Irish soldiers to both armies during the battle.

For the boys in blue, the Philadelphia Brigade's 69th Pennsylvania Infantry, which was almost entirely Irish and marched under a green regimental flag, was in the eye of the storm on July 3 directly in front of the famous Copse of Trees that was the objective of Pickett's Division. The 69th was like a rock as that high tide of the Confederacy lapped around it and was still in place when the tide rolled back. The men of the 69th lost their commander, Col. Dennis O'Kane, that day but, before he died of his wounds two days later, he managed to keep his regiment in place and fighting when other regiments ran and the battle appeared to be in doubt. O'Kane's Irishmen lost half their number on that terrible day.

One of the regiments that helped the 69th Pennsylvania repulse Pickett's men was the 42nd New York. The "Tammany Regiment," as the 42nd was called, was more than half-Irish. Their monument stands near The High Water Mark, not far from the 69th Pennsylvania's harp-adorned granite obelisk.

Like the Tammany Regiment, the 40th New York, the "Mozart Regiment," had its roots in New York City Democratic circles. Led by "Fighting Tommy Egan," the 40th had been recently reinforced by three-year recruits from

the former 37th New York Infantry, a.k.a. the "The Irish Rifles" and three other regiments, Egan's men helped stem the Confederate advance on Little Round Top by charging down into "The Valley of Death" near Plum Run. The regiment's monument and a rock carved by the men of the 40th to mark their position that day, can be seen from the access road to Devil's Den.

Also on the Federal side, the tiny remnant - only 530 men - of the famous Irish Brigade, fought in the killing ground of Rose's Wheatfield on July 2, led by Galway-born Colonel Patrick Kelly. The brigade emerged from its gallant delaying action in the Wheatfield and Rose's Woods minus 40 percent of its men, but with all its flags and its honor intact.

Boston's hard-fighting Irish 9th Massachusetts regiment, under County Tipperary-born Col. Patrick Guiney, was part of the Fifth Corps. The "Irish Ninth" fought well against the Stonewall Brigade on Brinkerhoff's Ridge but managed to avoid heavy casualties in the battle.

A brave Irish colonel, Patrick O'Rorke, of the 140th New York, of Rochester, N.Y., died with many of his men defending the west side of Little Round Top on July 2. O'Rorke, for whom Gettysburg's well-known, modern-day Irish tavern is named, hailed from County Cavan and his regiment included two companies that were predominantly Irish.

Capt. James McKay Rorty, of Donegal, who had once made a daring escape from a Confederate prison, was killed while desperately trying to keep one of the guns of his Battery B, 1st New York Artillery, in action during Pickett's Charge. Derry-born Col. James F.X. Huston was killed on July 2, while trying to rally his 82nd New York near the Peach Orchard as the assault of Longstreet's Corps rolled over it. Cork-born Col. Thomas Smyth commanded the Second Brigade, Third Division, of the Second Corps at Gettysburg where his men distinguished themselves in fighting at the Bliss Farm on the second day and in the defense of Cemetery Ridge during the Pickett/Pettigrew Charge. Smyth, who would briefly command the Irish Brigade in the spring of 1864, would die the same day as Lee's surrender at Appomattox, April 9, 1865, succumbing to a head wound suffered two days earlier from a sharpshooter's bullet.

On the Confederate side, Irish patriot John Mitchel's son Willie fell with the color guard of the 1st Virginia as his regiment assaulted the position held by the 69th Pennsylvania during Pickett's Charge.

There were a number of Irish companies in various Confederate regiments on the field, especially among the two Louisiana brigades in Richard S. Ewell's Second Corps, and in several Georgia regiments. The State of Louisiana, New Orleans in particular, had a large Irish population, which was well-represented in the gray ranks at Gettysburg. Similarly, many Irish immigrated to the Savannah, Georgia, area and fought in the Peachtree State's ranks in Pennsylvania.

The 6th Louisiana, of General Harry Hays' "Louisiana Tigers" brigade, in Jubal Early's division, was largely Irish in its make-up. The 6th Louisiana fought well on July 1, 1863 and suffered heavily when it participated in Early's twilight assault on Cemetery Hill the next day. The 6th left fully one-quarter of the 222 men it took into the fight on the fields near Gettysburg.

Similarly, the 10th Louisiana, which was about 40 percent Irish, suffered heavily in its attacks on Culp's Hill on July 2 and 3. The 10th Louisiana was part of Williams' Louisiana Brigade in Edward Johnson's division. The regiment suffered 91 killed and wounded, with no figures officially recorded for "Missing."

The Irish Brigade Monument at Gettysburg WGT Photo / Gerry Regan County Tyrone-born Colonel Robert McMillan's 24th Georgia Regiment, which had a large number of Irishmen, was part of Wofford's Brigade (McLaws's Division, James Longstreet's First Corps). It fought well in the area of Gettysburg's Wheatfield. Seven months earlier, the 24th Georgia had helped to defend Fredericksburg's famous stonewall against the Irish Brigade. At Gettysburg, they once again helped to drive the Irish Brigade from the field, losing 36 men in the process.

Like the rest of the nation, the Irish-American community bound up its wounds after the end of the war. In one of the more poignant and ironic coincidences in the history of the Irish at Gettysburg, the famous Celtic cross monument to the three New York battalions of Kelly's Irish Brigade, which stands today in the woods near the Wheatfield, was sculpted in 1888 by an Irish immigrant from Louisiana who fought in the Confederate ranks at Gettysburg.

The war drum's throb and bugle sound
 Ye loved to hear is o'er --
 The damp, cold earth is heaped above
 Your hearts forevermore;
 But memory of your gallant deeds
 Enlivens, stirs, and thrills,
 Like echoes of a clarion call
 Around Killarney's hills.
 From 'The Irish Brigade at Gettysburg'
 by William Geoghegan



The Regimental Colours of 'the Fighting 69th', the Irish Brigade. Meagher organised and commanded this illustrious unit.



Ireland Forever



Georgia Irish Regiment



10th Tenn. Infantry
 Irish Rebels

Event Announcements

Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Museum and Library Annual Preservation Dinner

Saturday, March 31, 2007
9130 Academy Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19114
215-332-0121

Program of Entertainment: Philadelphia's Irish 69th Pennsylvania Volunteers:
In Story and Song: Featuring the 69th Penna. Irish Volunteers Band &
Author Don Ernsberger: Tales of Irish Volunteers
Dinner and Entertainment: \$35 per person
Choice of Virginia Ham or Chicken Parmesan
Cocktails 6PM-Dinner 7PM-Program 8PM

To make reservations call 215-289-6484, 215-438-5805 or email
garmuslib@verizon.net or genestackhouse@msn.com

All proceeds to benefit the museum!
Deadline to order: March 20, 2007
Raffle of Civil War art to benefit the museum.
Gene Stackhouse

AMART Symposium

“The History of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps”

September 22. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Association of Mid-Atlantic Civil War Round Tables (AMART) Symposium :
History of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps - "Shock Troops of the Union"
Ritter Hall Walk Auditorium, Main Campus, Temple University.
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Followed by an Honor Ceremony at Laurel Hill Cemetery for PVRC commanders at
5 p.m. and dinner at 6 p.m. Distinguished speakers, book displays,
artifacts, living history.

Cost \$50 due by July 31, 2007. After July 31 or on-site \$60.

Includes: registration, breakfast, lunch, displays. etc.

Students free with ID. Make check payable to G.A.R. Civil War Museum; mail
to G.A.R. Civil War Museum, 4278 Griscom St., Philadelphia, PA 19124
www.garmuslib.org e-mail: garmuslib@verizon.net tel: 215-289-6484

Directions: <http://www.temple.edu/maps/directions.main.htm>

Ample parking at open lot 11th & Cecil B. Moore Ave.

For information; 215 - 204 -5452

“Ladies Organizations: During and After the American Civil War.”

Wednesday, March 14

- Dr. Florence Williams, a living history interpreter, will be presenting a lecture titled “Ladies Organizations: During and After the American Civil War.” Dr. Williams will be discussing the role of women’s organizations and their influence in the growing women’s movements of the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Dr. Williams’ lecture will include illustrations, and will cover specifically the roles that Chester County organizations played in the relief efforts.
- 7 pm Regular admission fees apply (members free).

Last Victim of the Civil War Dies

From Joe Topinka Temple Website 2/26/07

Last victim of the Civil War dies in Bedford, Pennsylvania. The last person injured from the battle of Gettysburg died March 14 2004 in his Bedford County home. The last shot of the civil war was fired in 1930. The victim of that shot was Russel Mowry of Bedford County, who just died at the age 92. His father, Clay Mowry, then age 85 related the incident to the newspaper. The Mowry family lived near Camp Sunshine in Bedford County since 1917. They purchased the home from Frank Imler and prior to that it was owned by the Tomlinsons' who were ministers from Gettysburg. When the Mowrys' arrived at their new home, they found a souvenir that the Tomlinsons' had left at the house, after bringing it back from Gettysburg, where they attended a seminary. The souvenir was an artillery shell filled with a cannonball. It was painted red and used as a door stop. For years the shell remained where it was as a door stop. Clay Mowry said it was July 13 1930 - a Friday the 13th - when the men in the family were out farming and working in the fields around the house. At lunchtime someone mentioned that the door did not stay open anymore because the doorstop had gathered dirt and dust over the years and was top heavy, and fell over. Then the 18 year old Russell Mowry went to the doorstop and sat down and began to clean it. The older men returned to the fields to work. Suddenly we heard an explosion like we had never heard before, Clay Mowry said, it actually shook the earth. My mother in law fainted and my wife screamed! The men rushed from the field to find the boy, Russel Mowry, sitting in the grass with his left hand gone! "It had been literally blown to bits" by the exploding shell. The father took his son to the doctor who could do nothing but to remove the remaining parts of his hand. Russell continued to farm all of his life, even after losing another 3 fingers of his other hand to a corn picker some years later. The Mowrys' kept the remains of the shell. So ends the life in 2004 of the last victim, of the Gettysburg Battlefield, and the Civil war.

When I first saw the headlines I thought, how could it be possible, that a victim was still alive from the Civil War but than after reading this article I understood what they were meaning. I thought the membership would also like to read this story rather interesting.

Proposed increase of fees from the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA) 3/2/2007

Special Announcement

This special announcement is to inform everyone of a proposed increase of fees from the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA). They are trying to raise the price of Civil War pension records from \$37.00 to \$125.00. Please read the specific information at the following links !

The Request for Comments Write up

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-3162.htm>

The Proposed Rule

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-3160.htm>

Link to submit a comment

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmpublic/component/main>

- Enter the National Archives and Record Administration * in the Agency field
- Enter Proposed Rules in the Document Type
- Click on Submit



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 - "Ely 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