

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

April 14, 2022

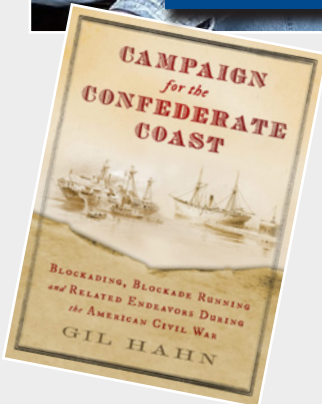
The Civil War: April 12, 1861 - August 20, 1866

“Campaign for the Confederate Coast: Blockading, Blockade Running and Related Endeavors During the American Civil War”

Meeting Room Change If you are attending in-person please note a room change to Madison Hall 110. The Madison building is next to and connected to our usual space in the Connector Building.



Gil Hahn



The Federal blockade of the Confederate coast during the American Civil War (1861-1865) did not cause the ultimate Federal victory, but it contributed to that victory to a significant degree. The Federal blockade deterred much of the commerce that might have flowed into the Confederacy, but it also created a profit opportunity for those willing to accept the risk of running the blockade. Although blockade running sustained the Confederates' ability to continue the battle for four years, the effect of this economic warfare substantially weakened the armies upon which the Confederate assertion of independence rested.

Gil Hahn is an attorney and historian who grew up in Washington, DC, near Battery Kemble, one of the ring of forts defending the Federal capital, and also within easy touring range of many Civil War battlefields in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

He works part time at the Hagley Museum in Wilmington, Delaware, which preserves the original DuPont gunpowder factory, and where he demonstrates and explains the operation of nineteenth century industrial equipment, including the steam engine.

Meeting Notice

We will be back in-person at the College for the April 14 meeting, so please note that on the event listings. However, due to commencement week activities they are unable to accommodate us for the May meeting, so that will revert to zoom only.

Please note our May-12 meeting will be Zoom and in-person at Riverwinds in West Deptford; Riverwinds Community Center, Multi Room C, 1000 Riverwinds Dr. West Deptford, NJ 08086

Start time 7:00 PM.

Dinner prior will be 5:30pm at; Country House Restaurant 224 Delaware St West Deptford, NJ 08086

By Rich Jankowski,
President OBCWRT

Notes from the President

Spring has sprung, baseball is starting up and basketball has reached the playoffs. Our Round Table looks forward to another prosperous year thanks to our supportive members and continued growth. Thank you to all who have submitted your membership dues to allow us to promote our mission of education and preservation of Civil War History. For those few who have not yet joined our 2022 campaign, please do so soon to be part of the progress we will make this year. As things are opening up, plan in getting involved in some of our projects this year.

On March 17th the Delaware Valley Civil War community lost Del Val President **Hugh Boyle**. Review the March newsletter for our tribute on his retirement and this newsletter for comments from



President's Notes Page 1
New Members/Awards Page 2
Hugh Boyle Page 2
Today in History Page 4
Treasure's Desk Page 4
Book Review Page 5
Save the Date Page 6
Thanks Page 7
Battery Wagner Page 8
March 10 Meeting Page 11
Book Raffle Page 12
Events Page 13
SWCW Page 14
2022 Speaker Schedule Page 14

Continued from page 1 - "Notes from the President"

those who knew him over the last thirty years. He will be missed but his influence will be felt for years to come. Our Round Table is grateful for the support and guidance he gave us over the years.

Last month **Meg Groeling** visited us on Zoom from California to share her research on *Colonel Elmer Ellsworth*. The informative and entertaining presentation was enjoyed by all in attendance as we learned more about this man who was an important part of the Lincoln family. This month **Gil Hahn** will visit us at the College to tell us about "*The Campaign for the Confederate Coast*." The presentation will also broadcast on Zoom for those unable to join us in person. Note the change of location to a different room for the April 14th meeting. Gil will be joining us for dinner at the Lamp Post Diner before the meeting, so come enjoy some pre-meeting fellowship with him. Next month **Drew Gruber**, Director of Civil War Trails, visits to tell us about a New Jersey Regiment, provide an update on the Williamsburg Battlefield and our Trail sign project. This meeting next month will be at Rivierwinds in West Deptford. Watch our website and newsletter for specific location information.

The Camden County History Alliance will host the Spring meeting of the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey on April 23rd in Camden at the County History Society. Several of our members will be in attendance to support the CCHA and promote our Round Table. If you are interested in joining them registration is still open. Plan on coming out to **Joe Wilson's** presentation on the *Merchant Marine in World War II* on April 21st at the College. Our annual picnic will be May 14th in Marlton, NJ at the home of the **Susan and Paul Prentiss**. We will be celebrating our *45th anniversary* and *Old Baldy's 170th birthday* at this event. Look for Paul's note on the event in this newsletter and an informational email in the coming weeks.

The wreath laying at the grave of *General Winfield Scott Hancock* will be at 11 AM on May 28th at the Montgomery County Cemetery in Norristown. Plan on attending if you are available. Flat Old Baldy is getting back on the road with some members. Watch for his adventures in future newsletters and on our Facebook page. The *South Jersey History Fair* will be on June 11th at the Gabreil Daveis Tavern House in Glendora. Look for the signup to staff our display. We are exploring purchasing bags with the Old Baldy logo. Stay tuned for more on this going forward. The revision and update of our mission and vision statements is under way. Updates will be forthcoming.

Continue to invite friends, family and acquaintances to join us for our outstanding programs and special events. As society continues to open up, pick up some rack cards to leave at a public place so more of our fellow citizens can learn about our fine organization,

If available join our presenter Gil Hahn and our members at the Lamp Post Diner before the meeting on the 14th.

Rich Jankowski, President



New Members
Robin Vaughn
Shippensburg PA

Membership
Awards



Bill Hughes
30 Years

Knowing Hugh Boyle

Team Old Baldy:

It is with heavy heart we announce the passing of Hugh Boyle. As you recall from our March newsletter, Hugh recently stepped down as President of the Del Val CWRT after thirty years. He was also very involved with the GAR Museum, the Meade Society, the Neshaminy Civil War Weekend, the Union League Lincoln project and Civil War Institute at Manor College.

A true icon of the local Civil War community, he will be dearly missed. Please keep his family in your prayers.

Our Round Table has made a \$100 donation to the GAR Museum in his name.

Hugh's obituary is posted on the Tomlinson Funeral Home website, www.tomlinsonfh.com



Hugh Boyle

Continued from page 2 - "Hugh Boyle"

Condolences may be sent to the Boyle Family at Rose Boyle, 1840 Gibson Road, Bensalem, PA 19020

*Thank you.
R. Jankowski, President, Old Baldy CWRT*

Some of you reading this knew Hugh longer than I did. My first time in his wonderful presence was when he spoke to our RoundTable many years ago. I am pretty sure Hugh spoke about his favorite figure, Abraham Lincoln. One thing from that evening I distinctly remember are my first impressions of Hugh - smart, well informed, FUNNY!, warm, personality-plus, this man loves life.

Some years later, when I discovered that Hugh was a "record man", those first impressions now all made sense. Hugh was in the first generation of the people that helped promote and develop artist's careers in the early days of rock n' roll and popular music. Hugh and his peers had a big hand in developing these artist's recording careers and it can be said that without this guidance and their contributions many of these artists wouldn't be the legends they are today. In Hugh's time in the record industry Philly was the epicenter of popular music - very exciting times. If Hugh had written and published his memoirs of his days in the business, it would have been a best-seller. Hugh was highly respected, and highly regarded - loved! - by his peers, by his customers and even by his competitors. In a business that had more than its share of characters, Hugh Boyle was a beacon of integrity, professionalism and sheer personality. May that light Hugh shone on all of us to brighten our lives, now perpetually shine upon him. My sincerest sympathy and prayers are offered to Rose and the Boyle Family for their loss.,

Sincerely, Bill Holdsworth

In 1992 I went to a small room at Holy Family College to present a discussion of Victorian life to the members of a new Civil War Round Table. As I walked into the room, I was met by a very sociable gentleman who said that he was Hugh Boyle, the President of the Delaware Valley CWRT.

Hugh "Reds" Boyle was a teacher, Lincoln scholar, friend and mentor. He was always ready with a great story or telling you something new that he had just learned about Abraham Lincoln.

I worked closely with Reds at both the Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Museum and the Delaware Valley CWRT. We spent many hours together at the Neshaminy reenactments. He was a thoughtful and brilliant man and a great friend.

Reds will be missed but never forgotten., Herb Kaufman

In Memory Of Hugh "Reds" Boyle
By Walt Lafty

There have been so many well-deserved comments made about the late Hugh "Reds" Boyle. He is well known for his long-time active involvement within the Civil War community in so many organizations. While I could do so here, I will let others make their tributes as it relates to those many organizations.

In a recent newsletter for the Delaware Valley Civil War roundtable, I mentioned how Hugh led that group with such "enthusiasm, dedication, integrity, humor, loyalty, professionalism, and vision, for 30 years". But what I will always remember about him as it relates to those qualities, is that he led his life in all of those ways as well. He did so not just as a history buff or a Lincoln Scholar but also as a husband, father, grandfather, and friend. It is something I hope people remember about him besides his knowledge of history.

Something which many people did not know about "Reds", and which is something fairly new to him at the end of his life, was that he finally achieved something he had hoped to do for so



*Sitting left to right: Hugh Boyle, Bob Louis, Rodney Roehner, Colin Backman
Standing left to right: Dave Daniele, Bill Roedel, Walt Lafty, Glenn Roedel, Mike Peter, Rob Clare, Reggie Wirth, John McNulty, Don Ernsberger, Steve Worthington, Al Farr, Ander Massinger, Dave Ashcraft
7 November 2021 Union Library of Hatboro*

Continued from page 3 - "Hugh Boyle"

many years. He was accepted as a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) only six months before he died on St. Patrick's Day of 2022. His son Patrick had finally made the family connection with their direct Civil War ancestor Jacob J. Staub. Private Straub had served in both the 131st and the 210th Pennsylvania Infantry. In November of 2021, Hugh Boyle was sworn into the Baker-Fisher Camp 101 of the SUVCW. His ancestor would be as proud of Reds, as he was of him.

Today in Civil War History

1861 Sunday, April 14

The North

Washington receives official notice of the fall of Fort Sumter. President Lincoln meets his Cabinet and decides the call for volunteers to "still the insurrection in South Carolina." At Fort Sumter itself, two Union soldiers are killed by an accidental explosion during the ceremony to lower the United States flag. They are the first fatalities of the war.

1862 Monday, April 14

Eastern Theater

Seven Confederates are wounded in a skirmish at Pollocksville, North Carolina.

Trans-Mississippi

In spite of Union successes elsewhere in the west, Missouri is still the scene of much activity. Small actions are reported at Montavallo, Diamond Grove, and Walkersville.

1863 Tuesday, April 14

Western Theater

With his plan for a dawn assault frustrated by the Confederate withdrawal, Banks orders his troops in pursuit. Grover's division threatened Taylor's retreat along Irish Bend, the great bow in the Teche River. Although both sides had about 5000 troops, the rebels successfully batter their way through with the assistance of the captured Union gunboat Diana. The gunboat was subsequently burned by the retreating Confederates when their small naval squadron was assailed by a Union gunboat force under Lieutenant Commander A. P. Cooke, CSS Queen of the West is destroyed during the Naval fight.

Continued on page 5

From the Treasurer's Desk

Hi Members, Just a reminder that you can now pay your dues online.

I have been surprised how many of you have utilized this method. You all are much better with computers than me. For those who want to pay by check, they can be sent to: Frank Barletta 44 Morning Glory Drive Marlton, NJ 08053 or in person at an upcoming meeting. Should you have any question, please contact me at 856-334-5856 or frank.barletta@comcast.net.

Dues remain the same for 2022 - \$25.00 for Individual - \$35.00 for Family

Just visit our web page, OldBaldyCWRT.org, click on, "Membership" on the top bar, which will take you to the next page. Choose a method of payment, visa, etc., and then click on "Buy Now". This will take you to the submission page, complete form and click on, "Pay Now". Done

1864 Thursday, April 14

Eastern Theater

Charleston's Fort Moultrie fires on the US tug Geranium.

Western Theater

Forrest's cavalry raids toward the Ohio River, skirmishing at Paducah, Kentucky.

Trans-Mississippi

There are minor actions at Bayou Saline, Dutch Mills, and White Oak Creek in Arkansas.

1865 Friday, April 14

The North

After meetings with the Cabinet and General Grant, President Lincoln visits Ford's Theater to see a comedy, *Our American Cousin*. He is accompanied by his wife, Clara Harris, daughter of a senator, and her fiancé, Major Henry Rathbone. At 10 p.m. Lincoln is shot in the back of the head by John Wilkes Booth, who stabs the major too before leaping onto the stage to make his escape. The bullet passes through Lincoln's head to lodge by his right eye.

The shooting is part of a conspiracy. Secretary of State Seward is attacked in bed where he is recovering from a carriage accident, but his attacker is driven off by his son and a male nurse.

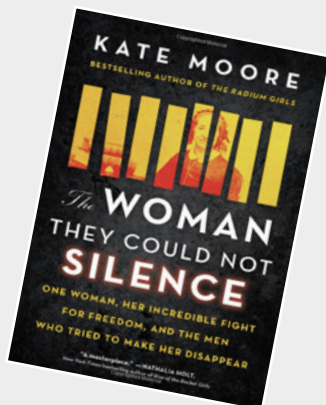
Eastern Theater

General Robert Anderson, who surrendered Fort Sumter to the Confederates four years before, raises the Union flag above the shattered rubble in Charleston harbor.

BOOK REVIEW for March Women's History Month

"The Woman They Could Not Silence: One Woman, Her Incredible Fight for Freedom and the Men Who Tried to Make Her Disappear"

By Kathy Clark,
Vice President,
OBCWRT



By Kate Moore

Elizabeth Packard was born to Samuel and Lucy Ware, the oldest of three children. Her father was a Congregational minister from 1810-1826. She came from wealthy parents who were able to give her a quality education at Amhurst Female Seminary, becoming a well-educated middle-class woman. Elizabeth's family encouraged her to meet Theophilus Packard, a Calvinist minister, even though he was 14 years her senior. They married on May 21, 1839, and because of their union had six children. Theophilus was a cold and domineering man and knew that his religious beliefs as compared to Elizabeth's family were different. Elizabeth started to express her own opinions as she was questioning her husbands' beliefs. Child raising, family finances and slavery all were topics that Elizabeth and her husband disagreed. Elizabeth defended John Brown which embarrassed her husband. At that time Elizabeth was working as a teacher while living in Jacksonville, Illinois.

Illinois opened its first hospital for the mentally ill in 1851. At that time the state legislature passed a law which required a public hearing before a person could be committed. That was not the case between husband and wife. She could be admitted without a public hearing or her consent in 1860. As a result of Elizabeth expressing her own opinions about Theophilus' religion and other aspects of his life which embarrassed him, he decided to admit her to the Jacksonville Insane Asylum in Jacksonville, Illinois. If a husband is

not comfortable with his wife keeping her place in the home, he can call her insane. That is what he did to Elizabeth. She spent three years in this insane asylum. Elizabeth had no trial it was totally up to her husband and the doctor in the asylum.

Dr. Andrew McFarland was the overseer of the hospital in 1860. He and his team of doctors questioned Elizabeth about being insane and then wanted her to change her religious beliefs. Elizabeth secretly began to write about her experiences inside this facility, but she did not want anyone to see what she was doing. Elizabeth was not alone for there were many women with her admitted for the same reason. Talking to these other women and counseling them was very helpful to the group, keeping them from really going insane and having religious services together. At this time the officials of this institution seemed to tolerate their activities until Elizabeth went too far trying to persuade her doctor to say she was sane so she could leave the asylum. She ended up being transferred to a very critical ward where patients were really insane. She did not panic or feel depressed but tried to help these people where the nurses and doctors would not. It was her willingness to help without thinking of herself that made the experience tolerable for her time in this ward.



Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard

Elizabeth's children were pressuring the asylum to let her come home and so the doctors stated that she was incurable and discharged her. It was not easy for Elizabeth after coming home for once home her husband locked her in the nursery and nailed all the windows shut. Lucky for her there was a small opening in one of the windows, so she was able to drop a letter and was delivered to her friend Sarah Haslett. The letter got delivered to Judge Charles Starr ordering her husband to bring Elizabeth to his chambers to discuss this matter. A jury trial was scheduled and lasted five days. Packard vs. Packard and in seven minutes declared Elizabeth sane.

The Jury Forman read the verdict aloud: "We, the undersigned, Jurors in the case of Elizabeth Packard, alleged to be insane, having heard the evidence in this case, are satisfied that said Elizabeth Packard is SANE."

FACT: It wasn't until 1974 passing the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, that a single, divorced, or widowed woman had to have a man cosign any credit application before it would be granted. Before this time an independent woman could not get credit cards in her own name with her own credit references.

After her release she still was thinking about her fellow sisters in the asylum and those across America - "the many thousands who are still enduring the horrors of these inquisitions, from which the decision of this court has delivered me."

By 1864 Elizabeth published a pamphlet about Dr. McFarland as overseer of Illinois State Hospital, saying he was not fit to be head of the asylum with his abuse of his patients. Elizabeth was looking for a publisher for her book but decide to shelf a publisher. To get the revenue to print the book she sold tickets and took out an ad in the Chicago Tribune. She decided to do all this by

Save the Date
May 14, 2022

Mark **Saturday May 14th** with a bold red circle as we are going to not only celebrate Old Baldy's 170th birthday but also the 45th Anniversary of our Round Table. Join us in celebrating these two extraordinary events. Round Table members, family and friends are all invited over to hosts Paul and Susan Prentiss' home located at 16 Heather Drive in Marlton, NJ. Who knows what the season will bring but we will implement common sense health protocols for the picnic. We will be out in the back yard, sitting in lawn chairs to maintain social distancing. The dining fare will be similar to last year but with improvements. We will have hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, sheet cake, chips, cheese & crackers plate, and whatever you want to bring.

Please look for the initial Picnic Planning email this month. Send your ideas to Paul at PPRENTISSFAMILY@GMAIL.COM to make this momentous event a smashing success.

herself going door to door selling tickets for the book and selling her pamphlet.

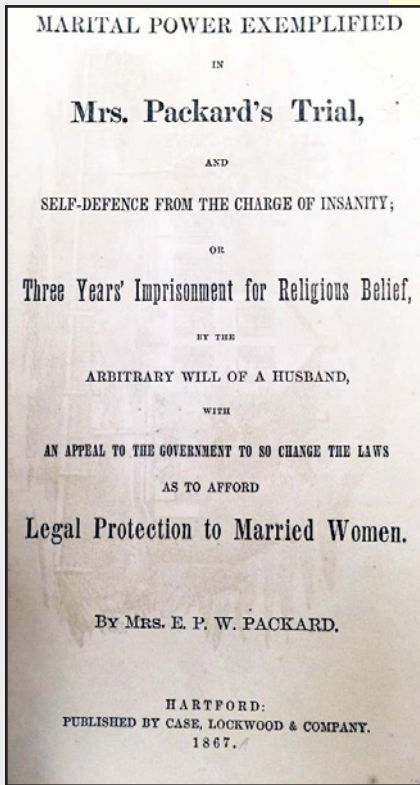
Elizabeth wanted to help her sisters still in the asylum by introducing a proposed bill to the Judiciary Committee and to Senator Joseph Ward who helped draft the bill. Elizabeth encouraged a penalty of a fine (not less than \$5.00 not more than \$1000) or imprisonment (not less than 3 months not more than a year) or both, for any doctor who admitted a patient to an asylum without a trial. A deadline was added for the appointed trial of the current inmates of the asylum. After many negotiations the bill finally passed and on March 5, 1867, Governor Oglesby signed it into law.

1. A jury trial for every single woman on the Seventh Ward and beyond.
2. No woman, married or otherwise, could be committed without a trial
3. Never again would a woman suffer again like she did

An inquiry was made, and trial opened for Dr. McFarland as director of the asylum. Elizabeth spoke against the doctor and his illegal tactics performed on patients. Elizabeth talked of her own punishment of being in the insane ward. McFarland continued by writing in the newspaper to humiliate Elizabeth and her sisters in the asylum. After the joint committee met by February 20, 1869, they agreed by all the evidence to fire McFarland.

Now Elizabeth was trying to get custody of her children. Along with her third son Samuel they helped draft a bill in March 1869 giving married women the right to their own earnings. In Boston Elizabeth went to court fighting for her children. Already in the Massachusetts Senate allowed a married woman to become the legal guardian of their children. Finally, after the case was deferred until July, Theophilus had simply given up the children. Elizabeth proclaimed, "My heart is filled with joy." The Mother's battle was fought, and the victory won." Elizabeth and Theophilus Packard were living close to each other and joined his family on occasion. Relations between husband and wife were at least cordial. She called him her "stranger gentleman."

In 1880, the National Association for the Protection of the Insane and the Prevention of Insanity was established with the help of campaigners like Elizabeth and others. She also campaigned for divorced women to retain custody of their children. Elizabeth still had controversy with both McFarland and her husband all the rest of her life. As it was, she outlived both, having the last word. On July 25, 1897, at age 80 Elizabeth passed. The Chicago Tribune simply wrote, "Wise friend of the Insane is Dead." On her gravestone was written simply, "Mother."



Thanks to the Symposium Team

As you learned last month, we had to cancel our Western Theater Symposium scheduled for April 30th due to low ticket sales. Much work was done to make it happen and it was going to be a grand event. Circumstances beyond our control prevented completion of the full project. The Board and membership of the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table would like to extend their appreciation and gratitude to Tom Scurria and Sean Glisson for the time, effort, energy and grit they extended in the last two years to make this event a reality. They worked with Rutgers University Camden, the Hilton Garden Inn, C-SPAN, each of the presenters, and Eventbrite to make the Symposium a great happening. Not sure they could have done anything more for the event.

We also want to thank each of the team leaders and their teams who worked their segment of the project. These include Frank Barletta (marketing and fund raising), Paul Prentiss (hospitality), Amy Hummel, Dan Hummel and Jim Countryman (exhibitors and living historians), Walt Lafty (transportation), Karl Pusch and Ken Funkhouser (food), Mike DiPaolo (registration), Kathy Clark (Chance Raffle), Harry Jenkins (program book), Dave Gilson for gathering and indexing the door prizes, Hal Jespersen for promoting the event

on our website and Don Wiles for the graphics on the forms and program book. Each team worked over the last year to complete their tasks, to make the Symposium an event that brought the attention and recognition to our Round Table it deserves. Working on this project during the pandemic made it more challenging. Everyone did their best in dealing with many unknowns to keep the project moving forward.

A hallmark of our organization is volunteers stepping up for the good of Round Table. We are fortunate to have many fine members. While the project was not fully completed, much was learned, connections were made and resources developed. Tom and the Symposium team will be compiling comments, notes and feedback into a report over the next few months. The report will permit the next set of members planning a large event for our Round Table so they may benefit from the lessons and successful planning of this project. It will allow our organization to continue grow and prosper as we pursue our mission of education and preservation of the history of the Civil War era. Be sure to thank the members of the team for their support of this venture the next time you see them.

Battery Wagner: Engineers to the Rescue

By Joseph F. Wilson,
Member OBCWRT

Fort Wagner Location



In the fading sunset, the Yankee soldiers waited for the order to charge across the beach to attack the Confederate stronghold on the shores of South Carolina. Already, one attempt to seize Fort Wagner on July 11th left 339 dead and wounded men scattered about the beach in front of the fort.

The second attack on July 18th, 1863, also met with defeat. Leading the charge, the 54th Massachusetts, an all colored regiment, gained fame in the movie "Glory." More than 1500 Yankee soldiers added their blood to the sand. Among them, General George Strong fell mortally wounded. Another plan had to be formulated.

Union General Quincy Gillmore wisely realized a third attack from his position would be futile. Stepping forward was Colonel Edward Serrell, Chief Engineer of the 10th Corps. Serrell had a much better idea. Muskets gave way to shovels in the new plan. Led by the 1st New York Engineer Regiment, the Union soldiers would burrow their way to the fort.

Not able to capture the earthen fort over the beach, the innovative strategy called for sappers to go under and through the beach one shovel at a time. Work commenced immediately carving up the beach and relocating countless tons of sand. Hundreds of soldiers inched their way in a series of trenches for well over three quarters of a mile until resting on the doorstep of the fort. A sudden attack from such a position offered a much higher rate of success.

Wagner stood 1350 yards from the Union line. A compliment of 14 artillery guns bolstered the 1800 man Rebel garrison. In front, a moat added more protection. If Union soldiers overcame the moat, hundreds of sharpened Palmetto tree trunks formed menacing pikes that poked out of the sand to slow the advance. Further out from the moat, gray clad soldiers in rifle pits greeted any assault force. Under the sand, a dangerous hidden mine field bolstered the defense.

Confederate commander, General William Taliaferro, stubbornly resisted giving up the fort on Morris Island. After the second offensive failed, the blood of nearly 2000 Union soldiers saturated the sand on Morris Island. The 54th Massachusetts Regiment lost half its strength in the attack, including Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who fell dead on the ramparts of the fort. Confederates lost only 175 men in the July 18th action. Union officers sensibly chose to avoid more bloodshed on the narrow strip of beach by digging.

Most of the work took place at night to protect the diggers. Officers crawled in



Battery Wagner



54th Massachusetts Charge

the dark ahead of the shovel battalion with a long rope marked at six foot intervals. Men dug holes at the proper mark. Coming behind them, diggers connected the holes to form a trench. Drawing closer, the engineers opened much larger trenches parallel to the fort that could support a body of troops and artillery. A total of five parallels and a mass of connecting trenches eventually cut up the battlefield. The original Union line served as the first parallel.

The engineers began the six week project by constructing gabions to protect the workers from the Confederate sharpshooters armed with the deadly Whitworth rifles. A round three foot long and hollow weave of saplings filled with sand placed on top of a trench fortified the channel along its length. The apparatus was capable of stopping a sharpshooter's bullet. Workers in the rear kept busy constructing a total of 1400 gabions.

Hundreds of men went out in shifts to channel through the sand. Many black soldiers made up the work force assigned to the hard duty. Surviving soldiers in the 54th Massachusetts likely felt much safer in the holes rather than charging the fort. Engineers comprised about one third of the workers. A force of soldiers known as the Grand Guard always kept watch over the diggers.

Slowly, Union sappers excavated their way closer to the enemy. Confederates in the fort watching the operation knew full well what was happening. As the Union scheme intensified, so too did the fire from the southerners. When the trench line reached 875 yards from Wagner, a larger Second Parallel was excavated to accommodate the heavy guns that strengthened the Union position. Hundreds of sandbags and iron plates fortified the new line. One soldier thought the Second Parallel just as strong as Fort Wagner.

The digging toward the Third Parallel became increasingly dangerous among the fatigue force as they closed the gap. Confederate gunners took notice of a group of men from the 85th Pennsylvania carelessly grouped together in an exposed position. A well placed mortar killed 7 of the men with one shot. Other reckless diggers fell under the accuracy of sharpshooters.

Still, the sand flew as they drew nearer to Wagner. Nothing stopped the digging. Temperatures hovered around 100 degrees. High tide sometimes flooded the trenches. Windblown sand troubled the sappers. And Wagner's artillery continued adding to the Union casualty list.

To shield the diggers from shot and shell, engineers employed 11 sap rollers. The 9 foot long and 4 foot wide round apparatus was made of saplings and branches banded with iron. An ingenious device that rolled forward in front of the shovel men offering excellent protection.

The third parallel line opened on August 9th, only 540 yards from the fort. Groundhogs continued plowing forward to a fourth parallel, a mere 350 yards from the Confederates. During the last stretch, the obstacles they faced proved more dangerous and a bit unexpected. The minefield posed the greatest danger. Resistance from the rebels in the rifle pits withered quickly.

But the mines had to be dealt with carefully.

Shells of all sizes armed with pressure fuses lay buried under the sand topped with a board across the fuse. Any pressure from an errant foot set off a powerful explosion. Some were nothing more than 10 gallon wooden beer kegs loaded with powder and armed the same way. One soldier flew high in the air after stepping on a mine. When his mangled body landed, the dead body ignited another explosion.

If an explosive device was discovered, the engineers had a variety of ways to detonate them. Sometimes a well-placed musket shot did the job. Diggers lobbed iron of their own at the fuse hoping to blow the mine. For the wooden kegs, a hole drilled into the side allowed for soaking the powder with water to render the unit inert. One of the unforeseen hindrances presented a problem more ghastly than hazardous.

Union diggers unearthed hundreds of decaying human remains. The clothing



**Colonel Edward Serrell,
Chief Engineer
of the 10th Corps**



**Headquarters
Second Parallel**



Engineers with Sap Roller

Map showing trench works around Fort Wagner



indicated the bodies to be civilians. The decomposing civilians died from disease that plagued Charleston in earlier times. Morris Island was a dumping ground for the sick and dying population. Locals referred to it as "Coffin Island." But then the engineers channeled into a mass grave of freshly buried bodies of Union soldiers dumped in the hole by Rebels from the July attacks. These were their friends.

A final push to a fifth and final Parallel had them knocking at the door. Work commenced in earnest with victory in sight. The engineers struck out from the Fifth Parallel with a trench running close to the moat. Being so close to the structure, the Confederates couldn't depress their artillery guns for maximum effect. The engineers widened the last trench to accommodate a large number of troops.

A final assault was readied. After six weeks of hard digging, Union commanders geared up for the attack. General Gillmore assigned the charge to General Alfred Terry. All had confidence a sudden attack from the base of the fort would overwhelm the Confederates hunkered down in their fortress. September 7th was the date set for the Yankees to storm Fort Wagner a third time.

Inside the fort, Confederate officers agreed with the Union assessment. No longer did Union troops need to traverse hundreds of yards subject to a withering fire from musketry and artillery fire. General Taliaferro sent word to General Beauregard that it would be senseless to sacrifice the

garrison. On the night of September 6th, the rebels headed to the far end of the island carrying any supplies to be loaded onto the small wooden boats waiting at Cumming's Point. The few remaining Confederates in the fort spiked the guns and left. A valiant southern defense came to an end. The fort was abandoned.

A southern deserter notified Northern officials the fort was empty. Union troops warily entered the battered sand fortification in the early morning hours of September 7th. The prized bastion finally rested with the Union Army after a two month campaign highlighted by an impressive and highly unorthodox tactic employed during the American Civil War. An amazing feat and forerunner to the trench warfare associated with the battlefields of the First World War.

The tremendous amount of beach sand reshuffled on Morris Island could never be measured. Union Engineers deserve credit for the triumph. Had General Gillmore ordered a third all-out assault on Fort Wagner, the killed and wounded would have dwarfed the casualties taken in the six weeks of digging. The digging wasn't in vain. Total Union control of the strategically important Morris Island now put Charleston and all the forts protecting the harbor in jeopardy.

Today, the fort that demanded so much attention on Morris Island is but a memory. Over the years the Ocean claimed half of the island. Both the beach, where the 54th Massachusetts made their gallant charge, and the location of Fort Wagner itself, rest at the bottom of the ocean. All the sand piled high by the Union and Confederacy on the island has been reordered back to its original position by the forces of Mother Nature.

The Union dead buried on the Island, including Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, have been reinterred into a mass grave in the Beaufort National Cemetery in



Engineers in Camp

South Carolina. The civilians buried on "Coffin Island" likely remain beneath the ocean floor. Many Confederates buried in the walls of the fort during the siege probably share the same watery grave.

Had it not been for the movie "Glory" in 1989, the Battle of Fort Wagner may have been relegated to the back pages of the Civil War. Civil War buffs and beyond now know the story of 54th Massachusetts at Fort Wagner from the film. If only the film had kept rolling to showcase the monumental achievement of the Engineers and the dedicated diggers whose deeds secured the victory on Morris Island.

And all armed with only shovels!

***Joseph F. Wilson is the writer and producer of the documentary "Civil War Prisons – An American Tragedy" now available on Amazon. And he lectures on the Pennsylvania Reserves and Andersonville Prison.
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Old Baldy's presentation: March 10 Meeting

"FIRST FALLEN:

The Life of Elmer Ellsworth, the North's First Civil War Hero"

Presentation by Meg Groeling

***By Kathy Clark,
Vice President,
OBCWRT***



Meg Groeling

Elmer Ellsworth was born April 11, 1837, to Ephraim Daniel Ellsworth and Phebe Denton Ellsworth in Malta, New York. Malta was a thriving community once the Erie Canal was built with inns, restaurants, shops, and other business helping to support the Canal. As a child Elmer's love of reading, drawing, nature, community, and all things military was the foundation for his entire life. The family moved from Malta to Mechanicville about 9 miles away and near to Troy, New York.

By the age of 14 or 15 he did his first military drill called "Black Plumed Riflemen of Stillwater" just outside of Mechanicville. The men carried real rifles and black plumes in their hat. At this time Elmer met Arthur F. Devereux in the US Patent office and asked Elmer if he wanted a job. Elmer became a partner filling out forms and providing help between the inventor and the patent office. Arthur and Elmer were both interested in the military and became part of the National Guard. He worked in the patent office for three years. Due to an investment that went bad he lost all his saved money and had to move to the WMCA. He met Dr. DeVilliers who taught Elmer how to fence. He loved it! It was through the doctor that he learned about unusual uniforms of the Algerian Zouaves and beautiful military moves.

Elmer began teaching small groups of men and by April 27, 1859, took over as head of the Zouaves, renaming them the "Chicago Cadets of the National Guard" with new uniforms. Elmer knew "that God had made him a soldier". Later they became the "US Zouave Cadets" with their spectacular drills and winning the "Prize Stand of Colors" at the Agricultural Fair. Their drills were largely theatrical and choreographed with routines not in any military drill book. It brought patriotism to many men and boys who saw the drills and made them want to be a part of the military. The cadets became famous in the Northeast and in Springfield, Illinois they were doing their drills, tumbling acts, and somersaults at the fairgrounds. The group met Abraham Lincoln and Tad before he thought about the presidency. At the time Lincoln was a practicing attorney.

While doing his military drills Elmer met Carolyn "Carrie" Spafford the daughter of a Railroad family. Elmer asked her father for her hand in marriage but said not until he could provide a good life for his daughter. He told Lincoln about his dilemma and Lincoln said become a lawyer and then there will be enough money plus prestige for your love to marry. Elmer did

just that working with Lincoln in Springfield and became a lawyer. He passed the bar exam before leaving Springfield for Washington. Elmer was now a corporate attorney.

During his time in Springfield, he met John Hay and George Nicolay and became best friends. The three men worked on Lincoln's campaign to become president. They volunteered their services to help Lincoln's manager, Judge David Davis. When the telegraph came from New York "We tender you our congratulations upon this magnificent victory." It was John, George, and Elmer who helped win the election for Abraham Lincoln and they were all overjoyed at the outcome. Before leaving for Washington Elmer presented plans to reorganize the state militia to the Illinois legislation. The idea was to put the state militia on firmer ground. This did not get passed as the war was starting. At the same time Elmer heard that there was a plot to kill Abraham Lincoln while he was on the Inaugural Express 1861.

When Lincoln left Springfield Elmer went with Lincoln and organized his guards. Ellsworth guarded Mrs. Lincoln and the boys on the original route departing from Harrisburg to Washington D.C. Elmer became a good friend to the family and loved playing with the children. Elmer enjoyed being a family friend and part of Lincoln's inner circle.

When Fort Sumter fell Elmer wanted to go to New York City and recruit a group of men from the fire department. Over 1200 firemen became the 11th NY "Fire Zouaves" with Lt. Colonel Noah Farmham in

charge. Major JA Cregier became in command after Ellsworth died. This "singularly attractive man" saved the day! The 11th New York leaves on the ship the Baltic on the way to the capitol. When they arrived, the men were placed in the senate chamber as no camps were set up for their tents. Fire brought out at the Willard Hotel and luckily the New York firefighters were ready to help. The press and onlookers watched as the firemen did their job and got the fire out. They just loved it!

As the VA legislature voted for succession on April 17th in Alexander, 8 miles south and across the river from Washington D.C. They were partying all night. On May 23, 1861, Lincoln sent troops to occupy the city. Winfield Scott's orders were to send two Union regiments to meet in Alexander to take over the city. Col. Ellsworth's Fire Zouaves, the 11th NY Volunteer Infantry, were sent to go to Alexandria. Ellsworth and his men arrive at the Alexandria wharves in three steamers. They were to march through the city securing the railroad and telegraph office. As the US Army marched into the city, they saw a flag flying from the Marshall House owned by James W. Jackson. Everything in the city looked fine except for "that huge, dammed flag". This flag was 18 x 24 inches made from sailcloth with a big star for Virginia in the middle. The residents of the White House could not see the flag unless they used a spy glass. Ellsworth's men went from the wharf, cut electric lines, arriving at the side of the hotel.

The men follow Ellsworth into the hotel and up the stairs to the roof to take down the flag. As he was coming back down the stairs Jackson met them with a rifle and shot Elmer. Pvt. Frances Brownell was right behind him and knocked the rifle out of Jackson's hand and killed him. Elmer was still holding onto the flag as he fell to his death. They took Elmer to one of the rooms and laid him on the bed with the flag covering him. The doctor came and said he had succumbed to his wound, pronouncing him dead. After that incident the 11th New York were told to get on the boat and get out of the city.

The funeral was in the East Room of the White House. The whole Northeast was shocked! Hay wrote "All classes seem to regard his death as a personal affliction, yet there is a smaller circle who mourn him in tears as the truest, tenderest, most loyal-hearted man that ever died". Elmer was dressed in his Zouave uniform, red kepi, sword, and kidskin gloves. The captured Confederate flag, stained with his blood, was folded across the foot of the coffin. At Mechanicville the journey ended. Elmer was buried by eight of his men with the honor guard firing three volleys in salute then put down their



Presenter Book Winner - Mike DiPaolo

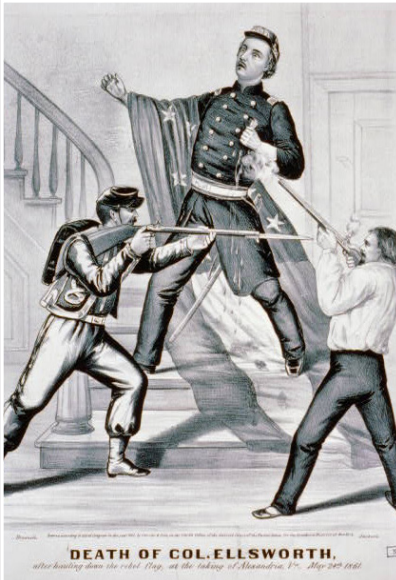
Regular Book Raffle Winners at the March Meeting - Frank Barletta, Harry Jenkins, Gary Saretzky and Ken Funkhouser.

March "Dollar" Winner - Priscilla Garbosch



**Colonel
Elmer Ellsworth**

Continued from page 12 - "March 10 Meeting"

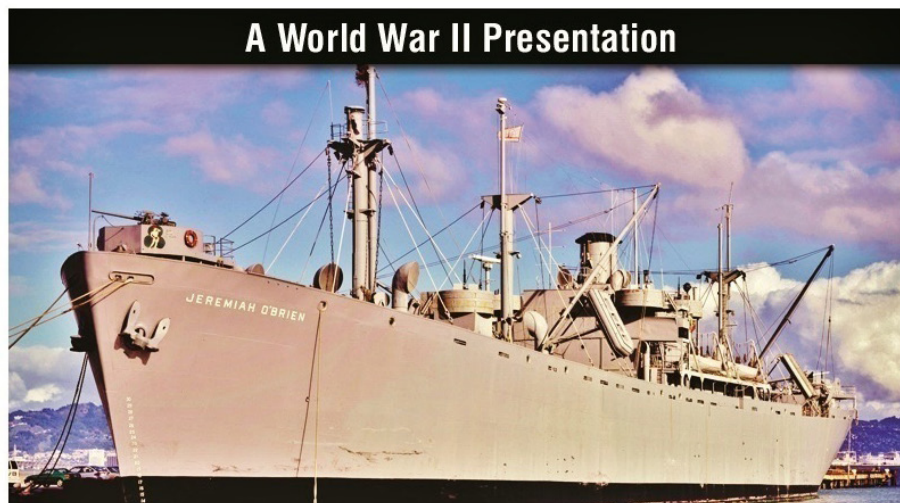


rifles and picked up a shovel to bury their friend and fellow Zouaves.

The last paragraph of Hay's eulogy was written to Elmer and to all the Union soldiers who would become part of this Civil War: "One last word. May he rest forever in peace, under the Northern violets and the Northern snows. May his example sink into the hearts of Northern youth, and blossom into deeds of valor and honor. His dauntless and stainless life has renewed the brightest possibilities of the antique chivalry, and in his death, we may give him unblamed the grand cognizance of which the world has long been worthy- Le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche".

"Never," said the New York Times "had a man of Ellsworth's age commanded such national respect and regard in so short a space". Elmer was the first of many casualties that happened as this Civil War became part of the Northern and Southern conflict.

What a wonderful, informative presentation by Meg Groeling. Thank you for making Elmer Ellsworth a Civil War soldier we will remember for his story. He was a young man who had a future but died in one act of valor for his beloved North. The book is also a very educated read about this man who had a life and story to tell. This is only the second biography of his life and made Elmer come alive in print. The roundtable was very glad that you brought the story to us and have a record in print. This was a wonderful night of history.



A World War II Presentation

THE MERCHANT MARINE IN WW II



Without the U.S. Merchant Marine transporting vital supplies to the troops, the mighty Allied war machine would've come to a screeching halt.

Despite cargo ships being sunk at an alarming rate by U-Boats and bomber planes, patriotic Americans sailed into harm's way to "Deliver the Goods."

POWERPOINT BY JOSEPH F. WILSON, WHOSE FATHER (LEFT) SERVED IN THE MERCHANT MARINE ABOARD THE FAMED "LIBERTY SHIPS."

Joef21@aol.com

The Merchant Marine in World War II

**Thursday, April 21, 7 PM, Room 103, Free
Connector Bldg, Camden County College, Blackwood, NJ**



**The Society
for Women
and the
Civil War**

**“Recognizing
Women’s
Efforts,
1861-1865”**

The Society for Women and the Civil War (SWCW) is dedicated to recognizing the lives and contributions of women who lived through, or participated in, the American Civil War, as well as supporting those who research, reenact, or otherwise honor these women of the past. The society sponsors an annual conference and two publications: the monthly “Calling Card”, which provides announcements of events of interest, and “At Home and in the Field”, a quarterly e-journal which features the research interests of members.

SWCW sponsors the National Registry of Women’s Service in the Civil War. The Society offers scholarships to college and high school students. It supports the research of members, provides opportunities for cooperation in that research, and mentors author members.

SWCW encourages members who are reenactors and living historians. It offers presentations and networking to assist them in researching their subjects and in establishing and strengthening their impressions. Annual memberships for individuals (\$25.00), for individuals (plus one) (\$40.00), for students (\$15.00), and for organizations (\$55.00), are available and provide discounts for registration for the annual conference and access to members-only benefits. Dues for the calendar year may be paid via PayPal at SWCW’s website or via postal mail.

SWCW Contact Information

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**Kevin M. Hale Award
for
best Historical Newsletter
in New Jersey**

**WEB Site: <http://oldbaldycwrt.org>
Email: oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net
Face Book: Old Baldy Civil War Round Table**

**Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT
Speakers and Activities
for 2022**

**May 12, 2022 – Thursday
Drew Gruber**

**“The Battle of Eltham’s Landing
and the New Jersey Brigade”**

**June 9, 2022 – Thursday
A. J. Schenkman**

**“Unexpected Bravery: Women and Children
of the Civil War”**

**July 14, 2022 – Thursday
Peter Miele**

**“Talking Flags - The United States Signal Corps on
July 1 and Beyond”**

**Questions to
Dave Gilson - 856-323-6484 - dgilson404@gmail.com.**

**Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia
Camden County College
Blackwood Campus - Connector Building
Room 101 Forum, Civic Hall, Atrium
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Founded January 1977**

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