



Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

December 8, 2022

Civil War Roundtable Congress
The Wallace L. Rueckel
Innovation Award
presented to OB CWRT

The Society For Women
and the Civil War
for Service to the Society
presented to OB CWRT

“Old Baldy Election Night & Social” Election of officers and Social Event.

Meeting Notice

Join us at 7:15 PM on
Thursday, December 8,
at Camden County College
William G. Rohrer Center
1889 Marlton Pike East
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

The program will also be
simulcast on Zoom for the
benefit of those members and
friends who are unable to attend.
Please email
oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net
at least 24 hours prior to request
Zoom access.

Old Baldy is having a unique meeting, part business and part social event. Many times, we do not get a chance to talk to other members to get to know them a little better. This is the opportunity to do just that! We will have a short business meeting first. This is a special occasion for many different reasons. First, we will be gathering on this meeting night with our members, friends, and maybe family members both at the meeting and on zoom. Several members have brought snacks and munchies, water, soda, coffee and along with other surprises as the night continues. Come out and see what we have in store for all who attend in person and online.

This month will be the election of members running for various offices introduced by the membership committee. This is your opportunity to nominate someone for an office if you wish. If not, we will be electing the names of the members that the nominating committee brought to our attention. Next, we will be considering a constitutional amendment for our by-laws. Frank Barletta has a special presentation for the family of the late Sean Glisson. It was Frank’s suggestion to have Sean’s family come to the December meeting to give each of Sean’s boys honorary membership to Old Baldy CWRT. Sean was a Civil War enthusiast, a reenactor and with this membership the tradition of Civil War history will continue to be a part of his family’s lives. It would be a great thing to have a few younger voices in our group as well. We all welcome them to Old Baldy!

There will be added surprises throughout the meeting. You will not want to miss the next part of the meeting. Bring yourself, a friend, a family member in person or on zoom and celebrate friendly hospitality, a laugh, a joke, or go shake a few hands and get to know some of our members who are new or maybe someone we do not know very well. Getting to know each other is an important part of the roundtable experience. Don’t forget one thing: you may come to the meeting empty handed but who knows what surprises you may be going home with at the end of the night.

*The nominations committee
submits the following slate of nominations.*

- President – Richard Jankowski**
- Vice-President – Kathy Clark**
- Secretary – Mike Bassett**
- Treasurer – Frank Barletta**
- Member of the Board – Jim Countryman**
- Member of the Board – Paul Prentiss**
- Member of the Board – Dave Gilson**

*Respectfully submitted
The Old Baldy CWRT nomination committee
Arlene Schnaare
Jim Countryman
Mike DiPaolo.*

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Have fun! Enjoy!
**No matter how you celebrate in the month
of December let the season bring peace, love,
and joy to all of us this year.**



**Rich Jankowski
President, OBCWRT**



Awards



Flat Old Baldy and President Jankowski presented Steve Peters his 5 year award pin.

**By Frank Barletta,
Treasurer, OBCWRT**

Notes from the President

Thank you all for another great Old Baldy year. We won several awards and grants, presented outstanding programs, gained a sister CWRT, the Phillies made it to Game Six of the World Series and OB grew to 80 plus members. We were blessed with **Kim Weaver** and other volunteers coming into our circle to advance our organization. We are grateful to all who served in some capacity to make this happen and look forward to more adventures next year. We miss those we lost and welcome new friends into our group.

For our long-time members, it is hard to believe we have been in New Jersey for ten years. Thank you for your support in keeping our round table moving forward. It has been a fun adventure establishing our footprint in South Jersey and the region, as well as attracting a national audience. Next year will bring several events for all to get involved. These include our fundraising campaign for a Civil War Trails sign at the Williamsburg Battlefield, our Organizational Partnership with the Society of Women and the Civil War for their 2023 Conference and a lecture series with Camden County College. We will continue to learn about a member each month in our profile series and hear about escapades of our ambassador Flat Old Baldy.

Last month **Chuck Veit** and his wife **Lorie** visited us in Cherry Hill to share his research on the Battle of Fort Butler. After a nice dinner and superb presentation, members purchased Chuck's books and he received our gifts to remember his visit.

This month we will have our election to bring new players to our Board. Thank you to **Tom Scurria** for his service to our Board and for planning a profitable symposium that did not happen. After approving a modification to our By-Laws, we will enjoy an evening of social interaction with reminiscing, prizes and refreshments. Tune in on Zoom if you cannot make it in person.

Our Board recently met to review this year and map out a plan for next year. Once the process and procedure documenting project is completed, members will have the opportunity to participate in our operation and contribute to our progress. Our Round Table belongs to all of us and we have the obligation to keep it going and growing for future members. Be sure to acquire Old Baldy reusable blue bags for your Holiday shopping and gift giving. Use "Old Baldy CWRT" for you Amazon Smiles purchases. Several members will be at Beverly National Cemetery at noon on December 17th to place wreaths for Wreaths Across America. Register to volunteer at the WAA website. Join us at Laurel Hill Cemetery at noon on December 31st for the General Meade birthday celebration. It will be our first wreath placement on the grave. Registration for New Jersey History Day at Rutgers Camden on February 23rd will open soon. Watch for details in a future newsletter.

*May all be blessed with a relaxing, joyous and rewarding Holiday Season.
Stay warm and safe travel.*

Rich Jankowski, President

Seasons Greetings from the Treasure's Desk

This has been a year of milestones, the most important of all being the growth in our membership. **OLD BALDY** has reached a new level of 81 members, representing not only New Jersey but 11 other states. This is a credit to the overall leadership of **Rich Jankowski** and the efforts of the entire board of directors. It also is a tribute to **Don Wiles**, who continues to maintain the excellence of our award winning newsletter. Further, to the work of **David Gilson** who persist in bringing to the Round Table, the quality of diversified speakers that always deliver, while meeting the challenges of our changing venues and the complexities of in person and simulcasted Zoom meetings.

This has been a year of continued financial strength for the Round Table through the efforts of the entire executive leadership. This year **OLD BALDY**

Continued on page 3

has been awarded three grants, the Camden County Grant, the Camden County Covid 19 Community Recovery Grant and the recognition by the CWRT Congress for the **INNOVATION AWARD**. A special note of gratitude goes to **Paul Prentiss**, whose diligent work in preparation of these grant documents is invaluable.

It is because of our financial strength that the Round Table has been able to continue our policy of making contributions to worthy causes and organizations. Among these are The American Battlefield Trust, who, this year, designated us to Color Bearer Member status, through our donation in support of the "Slaughter Pen Battlefield", the Civil War Trails Sign Program, the GAR Civil War Museum, the Armed Forces Heritage Museum, Seminary Ridge Museum, Memorial Hall Foundation, Wreaths Across America, League of Historical Societies of New Jersey, and the Camden County Historical Society.

Finally, I must give the overall membership the most credit for your success, your continued support in attendance at our meeting, the timely payment of dues, and for all of you who have made additional donations to the round table, we are indebted. Looking ahead we are planning a new major project for 2023, think New Jersey Regiments, Williamsburg, in which our strength and your continued support will be instrumental.

The **2023 Membership Dues** are now being collected. Dues remain the same, \$25.00 Individual Membership and \$35.00 Family Membership. Remember they can now be paid online. Just visit our **Web Page**, click on, "**Membership**" on the top bar, which will take you to the next page. Choose a method of payment, visa, etc., and click on "**Buy Now**". This will take you to the submission page, complete form and click on, "**Pay Now**". Done As always, if you prefer to pay by check, they can be given to me at any meeting or sent to my home at **44 Morning Glory Drive, Marlton, NJ, 08053**.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 856-334-5856 or frank.barletta@comcast.net.

Member Profile - Jim Mullen

Profile by Jenny Marmo



Jim Mullen

Jim Mullen was born in October of 1935 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He grew up in Northeast Philadelphia alongside his two brothers and went to Northeast Catholic High School. During this time, he enjoyed playing sports with his friends, reading books such as Sherlock Holmes, and playing the saxophone in his school band. After high school, he decided to commute to Villanova University, which required trolley rides, train rides, and car rides from friends until he eventually got his own car. He took the LSAT while in college and received a score that got him a scholarship for Villanova Law School. He lived on campus and although it was hard, he enjoyed his law school experience. He graduated from Villanova Law School in 1960.

After graduation, Jim decided to look for work in New Jersey because that is where his family had moved to. He took a bar review course and passed the bar exam on his first try, becoming a New Jersey attorney. He got hired at a law firm in Camden where he did trial work. He liked working with other attorneys and he was happy with his successful career. He became a partner of the firm until it dissolved in 1998. He then went into private practice until 2015 when he decided to retire.

In 1963, Jim married Judith, a legal secretary he had met at a Christmas party. The couple have been married for almost 60 years and have had four children together: Jenny, Jim, Thomas, and Terry. Jenny, Thomas, and Terry followed in their father's footsteps and became lawyers themselves. Jim and Judith enjoy traveling together, and they have visited multiple battlefields on their trips.

He became interested in the Civil War during high school when he read a series of books about the war written by Bruce Catton. His father was also interested in the topic. Jim would talk with his friends about the war and travel to related historical sites in his youth. He joined the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table with his friend while it was still located in Philadelphia. He loved traveling with the Old Baldy CWRT to visit the battlefield at Antietam. Besides the Civil War, he enjoys reading about local and country-wide politics.

Today in Civil War History

1861 Sunday, December 8

CSS Sumter



Naval Operations

Naval Operations CSS Sumter destroys the northern Whaler Eben Dodge in the Atlantic.

The CSS Sumter, a bark-rigged screw steam cruiser, was originally built as the merchant steamship 'Habana' (Sometimes referred to as 'Havana') and purchased by the Confederate Government in New Orleans in April 1861, before being hastily converted to a cruiser. When this had been completed, the Havana was quickly renamed CSS Sumter, after the Southern Fort Sumter which had already fallen on the 13th April 1861.

1862 Monday, December 8



General of the Army
Hiram Ulysses Grant

Trans-Mississippi

During the night the Confederates have slipped away from Prairie Grove and retreated toward the Boston Mountains. Union losses in the previous day's battle are 167 killed, 798 wounded, and 183 missing. Confederate losses are estimated at 300 killed, over 800 wounded, and 250 missing.

1863 Tuesday, December 8

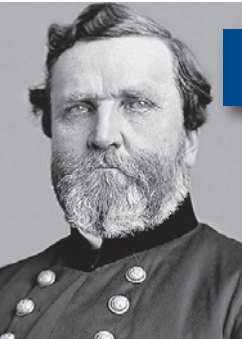
The North

President Lincoln announces a Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction at the end of his annual message to Congress. He offers a full pardon to all Confederates, except former officers in the US forces who resigned their commissions to fight for the South, senior government or military officials, and anyone who has mistreated Union prisoners of war. All property, except slaves, will be restored. He also offers Federal statehood to any Southern state in which 10 percent of the citizens swear allegiance to the Union and abandon slavery.

1864 Thursday, December 8

The North

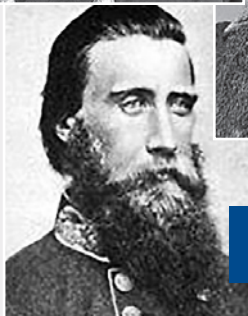
Grant tells Halleck that Thomas must be replaced by Schofield if he does not attack Hood without delay. Grant and Thomas exchange telegrams, Thomas pointing out that many of his cavalry are still waiting for their horses and that without a powerful mounted force an attack is pointless.



Major General
George Henry Thomas



Lieutenant General
John McAllister Schofield



Lieutenant General
John Bell Hood

A Monumental Confederate Gesture

By Joseph F. Wilson,
Member, OBCWRT

On a recent trip to Martha's Vineyard I never expected the twist that unfolded on the island regarding the removal of a Civil War monument. The controversy swirling around this particular statue was unlike any other monument.

When the Civil War ended, monuments began populating the battlefields funded by States and private groups. Towns followed by erecting statues along the avenues and town squares to honor their heroes. One extraordinary Confederate soldier took a most unusual approach by funding and erecting a monument that defied logic. A statue that didn't celebrate the Confederacy, but surprisingly honored Union soldiers.

Charles Strahan grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and enlisted in the Confederated Army on May 24, 1861. Private Strahan joined the Maryland Guards which folded into the 21st Virginia Infantry. The 21st saw hard fighting in nearly every battle as part of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. At the Battle of Seven Pines, Private Strahan suffered a gunshot wound. Yet, he still found it in his heart to forgive his former enemy in the years after the war. When promoted to Lieutenant, Strahan served on the staff of General Isaac Trimble.

Like many former Confederate soldiers, Charles Strahan relocated in the north after the war. After dabbling as a coffee exporter in New Orleans, he put down roots in 1884 on the quaint island of Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts. Not long after arriving on the island, Strahan took over a newspaper in Cottage City that he renamed the "Martha's Vineyard Herald." Life seemed good for the new publisher. Or so he thought. Bitter feelings die hard in old soldiers. A measure of hostile sentiment directed at Johnny Reb still remained on the island.

With the approach of Memorial Day in 1887, Strahan advertised a huge picnic in his newspaper for all the residents of Cottage City to be held in town for all to remember the veterans, living and deceased. He never thought after so many years that resentment for a former Confederate still burned in the hearts of some Union veterans for a southern transplant. Former Union soldiers refused to attend the picnic with a rebel soldier present. So Charles Strahan stayed home.

The rebuke shocked the new resident and publisher. Strahan thought of ways to heal the small community of Cottage City that might erase the ill will coming from his former enemies. Then an idea struck like a lightning bolt. He'd erect a huge Civil War soldier's monument in the center of Cottage City. Not of a Confederate soldier, but a Union soldier. A former Confederate soldier commissioning a monument honoring Union soldiers took the town by surprise.

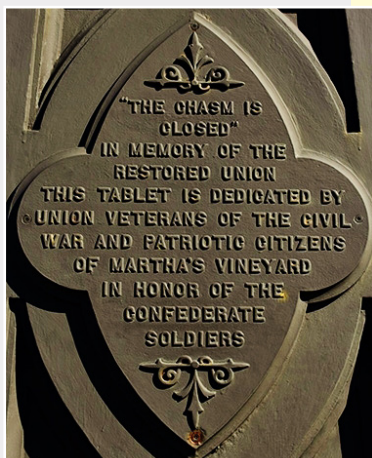
Already established in Cottage City was the Henry Clay Wade Post 201 of the Grand Army of the Republic. When completed, Strahan would present the monument to the GAR Post. Being a publisher of the island wide newspaper played a pivotal part of the plan. A subscription for Martha's Vineyard Herald cost \$2 for one year. All money for any new subscription went for the monument.

Strahan contracted with J.W. Fisk of New York at a cost of \$2000 dollars to construct the statue. A base of Quincy granite would support the 7 foot tall bronze Union soldier. Funds received amounted to only \$1500 dollars. It's believed that Strahan put up \$500 of his own money to complete the project. The monument became known as "The Chasm Is Closed" monument. Today, the chasm once thought closed is being forced wide open. Although the Civil War ended 157 years ago, the Union soldier atop the structure is coming under fire. And all because it was a Confederate that hoisted him up on his pedestal.



Martha's Vineyard
Civil War Monument

In 1907, Cottage City became Oak Bluffs. Ample space was left by Strahan hoping one day the monument might feature the name of a Confederate soldier on a plaque. At a rededication in 1925, the local Women's Relief Corps of Oak Bluffs added Strahan's name on a new plaque. Now well into his eighties, Charles got his wish. The plaque that so far remains to this day reads, "Erected in honor of the Grand Army of the Republic by Charles Strahan, Co. B, 21st Virginia Regiment." A second controversial plaque added at the ceremony in 1925 graced the statue for nearly 100 years before residents and Boston activists demanded its removal.



In 2019, the activist had their way. The second plaque is gone. The tablet read, "The Chasm Is Closed - In memory of the restored Union this tablet is dedicated by Union veterans of the Civil War and patriotic citizens of Martha's Vineyard in honor of the Confederate soldiers." The offending phrase they objected to read "in honor of Confederate soldiers." But the political activist made their feelings known that they want the entire monument removed. The offending tablet now resides inside a museum in Oak Bluffs. A section of the museum features an exhibit titled "The Chasm Is Not Closed." Indeed, the Chasm is getting wider in America by the day. A monument erected to heal is now swept up in a controversy that is fueling division by people who are over 150 years removed from the Civil War. A crusade that threatens the statue's future.



During the Obama years, President Obama and his family enjoyed frequent visits to Martha's Vineyard. As usual, the President's advance team ran point for his visit. They considered the statue put up by a Confederate to be offensive to the Obamas and wanted it covered up or removed for maintenance so as not to insult the first black President. According to locals, that never happened.

Strahan's attempt to foster reconciliation is having the opposite effect in our politically correct America. At the 1891 dedication, Charles Strahan spoke eloquently of a post-Civil War America when he said, "As your father and my father stood shoulder to shoulder at Valley Forge and Yorktown, and stood by their guns on the deck of the Constitution and Chesapeake, so the sons of the gray will stand with the sons of the blue, should any foe, domestic or foreign, dare attack that flag." Such sentiment can only be dreamed of today.

Charles Strahan forgave his former enemy despite still carrying the scars of a Yankee bullet. Forgiveness seems to be a lost virtue even if the offensive actions took place hundreds of years ago. The Virginian's gesture of good will has been replaced by a bitterness that has taken root. Sadly, the chasm is growing wider, not only on Martha's Vineyard, but across America.

Martha's Vineyard is a beautiful island where many of the rich and famous like to spend time at their summer homes. The island features pristine beaches and seems disconnected from the mainland. But the same problems that infect the mainland now have encroached on the island. I recently had the privilege of viewing and photographing the monument on my visit. The Virginian's unusual tribute to Union soldiers may be gone in any future visit.

Charles Strahan is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery on the Island not far from the Civil War monument he thought would bring the country together. He'd be turning in his grave if he knew his effort to reconcile a nation opened a wider chasm 137 years after the dedication. At the dedication he spoke of Americans living together as brothers under the same flag. A heartfelt feeling lost in today's America.



Charles Strahan's Grave in Oak Grove Cemetery on the Island

The monument and the flag are both in trouble!

Joseph F. Wilson lectures on Andersonville Prison and The Pennsylvania Reserves. The writer also wrote and produced a documentary film now available on Amazon titled, "Civil War Prisons - An American Tragedy."

Contact - joef21@aol.com

Women of the War;

Sarah Jane Smith Thompson Garnet - Teacher, Principal, Suffragette

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



Sarah J. Garnet

American educator and suffragette from New York City and a pioneer and influential African American female school educator in the segregated New York City public school system.

Sarah J. Smith is the daughter of Sylvanus and Anne Smith born July 31, 1831, in Brooklyn, NY, the oldest of 11 children. Sarah's parents were farmers and owned land in Queens County then part of Long Island. Her father was founder of Weeksville, an early all-black community in Brooklyn. Sylvanus was only one of a few black men with the right to vote. He paid \$250 property tax and held the land. Her sister Susan McKinney Steward was the first African American woman in New York state to earn a medical degree and third in the United States. Sarah married Samuel Tompkins who died in 1852. Samuel and Sarah had a daughter Sivena Jane Tompkins who was an accomplished pianist and organist.

In 1854, Sarah taught in the African Free School of Williamsburg, New York. Brooklyn was a sizable city still decades from being consolidated until 1898. At this time New York City was confined to Manhattan and the Bronx. February 1863 a vacancy became available with the death of Charlotte S. Smith who was the African American principal of Manhattan's Colored School #7 on West 17th Street. Sarah was appointed that spring as principal of Colored School #7, renamed Color School #4, and was principal for 37 years.

During the Draft Riots of 1863 the school came under attack by a white working-class group who did not want the first Federal draft. Sarah protected her children as the mob tried to break into the school to look for two Black women who were inside. It was a failed attempt to get into the building. Later Sarah escorted the school children safely home. She taught some of students who went on to becoming accomplished in an area like Joan Imogen Howard, Black manager of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, William Appo who is a Black musician and composer, Walter Craig, leader in society orchestra who played for white and black audiences. By 1900 New York repealed a law allowing separate schools for African American and white children.

Between 1883 and 1911 Sarah owned a seamstress shop. The equal suffrage league was a small organization of well to do black women who first met at the shop and later met in the YMCA in Fort Greene. The object of this league was to get the right to vote for African American women as well as justice and equality for the entire community of black people. To them, voting was an integral component in the fight for civil rights, proper education, economic freedom, and racial impartiality. She is founder of the Brooklyn Suffrage Organization Equal Suffrage League in the late 1880's. Sarah becomes the superintendent of suffrage for the National Association of Colored Women which merged with the National Council of Women in 1905. She founded the Equal Suffrage League of Brooklyn in 1880's and affiliated her organization with the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. Sarah's social justice work range from her efforts to abolish race-based discrimination against black teachers to a commitment to equal rights for African American women. She also went to Albany, New York to lobby New York State legislators for equal pay for black women. As a member of the Equal Suffrage Club, Garnet supported the Niagara Movement, a predecessor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.W.A.A.C.P.).

Sarah married noted abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet, December 28, 1875. The marriage ceremony was performed by Amos Noe Freeman, minister associated with the legendary escape from slavery in 1855 of Anna Maria Weems in the underground railroad. In 1881 Henry became Ambassador to Liberia appointed by President Garfield. Garnet was in Monrovia and got ill and unfortunately died on February 13, 1882.

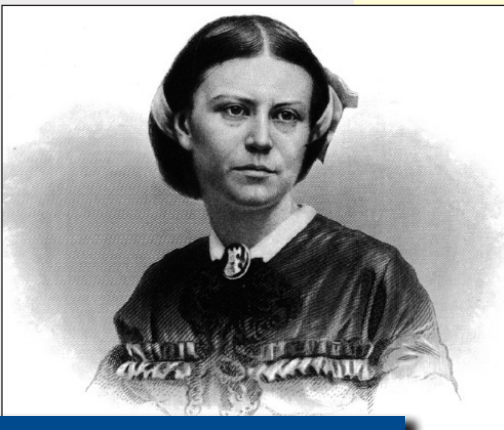
By 1911 Sarah traveled with her sister to London, England for the inaugural Universal Races Congress where her sister presented a paper "Colored American Women". W.E.B. DuBois attended. When Sarah came home from her London trip she was not well. Sarah died on September 17, 1911, at home with her sister at her side. She was buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. Sarah fought her whole life for the rights that the African American women wanted. As the suffragettes were fighting for white women and the right to vote, Sarah and her organization were going to make it happen for the black women too. All suffragettes know the risk they were taking for the equal rights that most men had already. Sarah was one of many brave women who helped make that happen. We must give them the place they deserve in the history book so all young girls and adult women will know the road we took to get our freedom. The road is not finished as we look toward 2023, we will still be fighting.

In 2019 the Taunis G. Bergen School was renamed to Sarah Smith Garnet Public School #9 and Middleton Playground in Brooklyn, New York was re-named Sarah J. S. Tompkins Garnet playground as part of the New York City Parks.

Today the former colored school #4 stands vacant since 1894 but owned by the city of New York. The Sanitation Dept. of New York and the city of New York are working together to save the school building. They are thinking of making it a lyceum, with public programming, performances, and book signing. The historian Eric K. Washington stated, "When you walk by the building it is not ornate and will not stop you in your tracks. The ornateness comes from the soles that inhabited the place."

White Roses Woman's work in the Civil War; Margaret Elizabeth Breckinridge

*By L. P. Brockett, M.D.,
Mrs. Mary C. Vaughan,
Woman's Work
In The Civil War:
1867*



Margaret Elizabeth Breckinridge

A true heroine of the war was Margaret Elizabeth Breckinridge. Patient, courageous, self-forgetting, steady of purpose and cheerful in spirit, she belonged by nature to the heroic order, while all the circumstances of her early life tended to mature and prepare her for her destined work. Had her lot been cast in the dark days of religious intolerance and persecution, her steadfast enthusiasm and holy zeal would have earned for her a martyr's cross and crown; but, born in this glorious nineteenth century, and reared in an atmosphere of liberal thought and active humanity, the first spark of patriotism that flashed across the startled North at the outbreak of the rebellion, set all her soul aglow, and made it henceforth an altar of living sacrifice, a burning and a shining light, to the end of her days. Dearest to her gentle spirit than any martyr's crown, must have been the consciousness that this God-given light had proved a guiding beacon to many a faltering soul feeling its way into the dim beyond, out of the drear loneliness of camp or hospital. With her slight form, her bright face, and her musical voice, she seemed a ministering angel to the sick and suffering soldiers, while her sweet womanly purity and her tender devotion to their wants made her almost an object of worship among them. "Ain't she an angel?" said a gray-headed soldier as he watched her one morning as she was busy getting breakfast for the boys on the steamer "City of Alton." "She never seems to tire, she is always smiling, and don't seem to walk—she flies, all but—God bless her!" Another, a soldier boy of seventeen said to her, as she was smoothing his hair and saying cheering words about mother and home to him, "Ma'am, where do you come from? How could such a lady as you are come down here, to take care of us poor, sick, dirty boys?" She answered—"I consider it an honor to wait on you, and wash off the mud you've waded through for me."

Another asked this favor of her, "Lady, please write down your name, and let me look at it, and take it home, to show my wife who wrote my letters, and combed my hair and fed me. I don't believe you're like other people." In one of her letters she says, "I am often touched with their anxiety not to give trouble, not to bother, as they say. That same evening I found a poor, exhausted fellow, lying

on a stretcher, on which he had just been brought in. There was no bed for him just then, and he was to remain there for the present, and looked uncomfortable enough, with his knapsack for a pillow. 'I know some hot tea will do you good,' I said. 'Yes, ma'am,' he answered, 'but I am too weak to sit up with nothing to lean against; it's no matter,—don't bother about me,' but his eyes were fixed longingly on the smoking tea. Everybody was busy, not even a nurse in sight, but the poor man must have his tea. I pushed away the knapsack, raised his head, and seated myself on the end of the stretcher; and, as I drew his poor tired head back upon my shoulder and half held him, he seemed, with all his pleasure and eager enjoyment of the tea, to be troubled at my being so bothered with him. He forgot I had come so many hundred miles on purpose to be bothered."

One can hardly read this simple unaffected statement of hers, without instinctively recalling the touching story told of a soldier in one of the hospitals of the Crimea who, when Florence Nightingale had passed, turned and kissed the place upon his pillow where her shadow fell. The sweet name of the fair English nurse might well be claimed by many of our American heroines, but, when we think of Margaret's pure voice, singing hymns with the soldiers on the hospital-boat, filling the desolate woods along the Mississippi shores with solemn music in the still night, we feel that it belongs especially to her and that we may call her, without offense to the others, our Florence Nightingale.

Her great power of adaptation served her well in her chosen vocation. Unmindful of herself, and always considerate of others, she could suit herself to the need of the moment and was equally at home in making tea and toast for the hungry, dressing ghastly wounds for the sufferers, and in singing hymns and talking of spiritual things with the sick and dying.

She found indeed her true vocation. She saw her way and walked fearlessly in it; she knew her work and did it with all her heart and soul. When she first began to visit the hospitals in and around St. Louis, she wrote "I shall never be satisfied till I get right into a hospital, to live till the war is over. If you are constantly with the men, you have hundreds of opportunities and moments of influence in which you can gain their attention and their hearts, and do more good than in any missionary field." Once, on board a steamer near Vicksburg, during the fearful winter siege of that city, some one said to her, "You must hold back, you are going beyond your strength, you will die if you are not more prudent!" "Well," said she, with thrilling earnestness, "what if I do? Shall men come here by tens of thousands and fight, and suffer, and die, and shall not some women be willing to die to sustain and succor them?" No wonder that such sincerity won all hearts and carried all before it! Alas! the brave spirit was stronger than the frail casket that encased it, and that yielded inevitably to the heavy demands that were made upon it.

A rare and consistent life was hers, a worthy and heroic death. Let us stop a moment to admire the truth and beauty of the one, and to do reverence to the deep devotion of the other. The following sketch is gathered from the pages of a "Memorial" published by her friends shortly after her death, which occurred at Niagara Falls, July 27th, 1864.

"Margaret Elizabeth Breckinridge was born in Philadelphia, March 24th, 1832. Her paternal grandfather was John Breckinridge, of Kentucky, once Attorney-General of the United States. Her father, the Rev. John Breckinridge, D. D., was his second son, a man of talent and influence, from whom Margaret inherited good gifts of mind and heart, and an honored name. Her mother, who was the daughter of Rev. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, N. J., died when Margaret was only six years old, at which time she and her sister Mary went to live with their grandparents at Princeton. Their father dying three years afterwards, the home of the grandparents became their permanent abode. They had one brother, now Judge Breckinridge of St. Louis. Margaret's school-days were pleasantly passed, for she had a genuine love of study, an active intellect, and a very retentive memory. When her school education was over, she still continued her studies, and never gave up her prescribed course until the great work came upon her which absorbed all her time and powers. In the year 1852 her sister married Mr. Peter A. Porter of Niagara Falls, a gentleman of culture and accomplishments, a noble man, a true patriot. At his house the resort of literary and scientific men, the shelter of the poor and friendless, the centre of sweet social life and domestic peace, Margaret found for a time a happy home.

"Between her and her sister, Mrs. Porter, there was genuine sisterly love, a fine intellectual sympathy, and a deep and tender affection. The first great trial of Miss Breckinridge's life was the death of this beloved sister which occurred in 1854, only two years after her marriage. She died of cholera, after an illness of only a few hours. Margaret had left her but a few days before, in perfect health. The shock was so terrible that for many years she could not speak her sister's name without deep emotion; but she was too brave and too truly religious to allow this blow, dreadful as it was, to impair her usefulness or unfit her for her destined work. Her religion was eminently practical and energetic. She was a constant and faithful Sunday-school teacher, and devoted her attention especially to the colored people in whom she had a deep interest. She had become by inheritance the owner of several slaves in Kentucky, who were a source of great anxiety to her, and the will of her father, though carefully designed to secure their freedom, had become so entangled with state laws, subsequently made, as to prevent her, during her life, from carrying out what was his wish as well as her own. By her will she directed that they should be freed as soon as possible, and something given them to provide against the first uncertainties of self-support."

So the beginning of the war found Margaret ripe and ready for her noble womanly work; trained to self-reliance, accustomed to using her powers in the service of others, tender, brave, and enthusiastic, chastened by a life-long sorrow, she longed to devote herself to her country, and to do all in her power to help on its noble defenders. During the first year of the struggle duty constrained her to remain at home, but heart and hands worked bravely all the time, and even her ready pen was pressed into the service.

But Margaret could not be satisfied to remain with the Home-Guards. She must be close to the scene of action and in the foremost ranks. She determined to become a hospital-nurse. Her anxious friends combated her resolution in vain; they felt that her slender frame and excitable temperament could not bear the stress and strain of hospital work, but she had set her mark and must press onward let life or death be the issue. In April, 1862, Miss Breckinridge set out for the West, stopping a few weeks at Baltimore on her way. Then she commenced her hospital service; then, too, she contracted measles, and, by the time she reached Lexington, Kentucky, her destination, she was quite ill; but the delay was only temporary, and soon she was again absorbed in her work. A guerrilla raid, under John Morgan, brought her face to face with the realities of war, and soon after, early in September she found herself in a beleaguered city, actually in the grasp of the Rebels, Kirby Smith holding possession of Lexington and its neighborhood for about six weeks. It is quite evident that Miss Breckinridge improved this occasion to air her loyal sentiments and give such help and courage to Unionists as lay in her power. In a letter written just after this invasion she says, "At that very time, a train of ambulances, bringing our sick and wounded from Richmond, was leaving town on its way to Cincinnati. It was a sight to stir every loyal heart; and so the Union people thronged round them to cheer them up with pleasant, hopeful words, to bid them God speed, and last, but not least, to fill their haversacks and canteens. We went, thinking it possible we might be ordered off by the guard, but they only stood off, scowling and wondering.

"'Good-by,' said the poor fellows from the ambulances, 'we're coming back as soon as ever we get well.'

"'Yes, yes,' we whispered, for there were spies all around us, 'and every one of you bring a regiment with you.'"

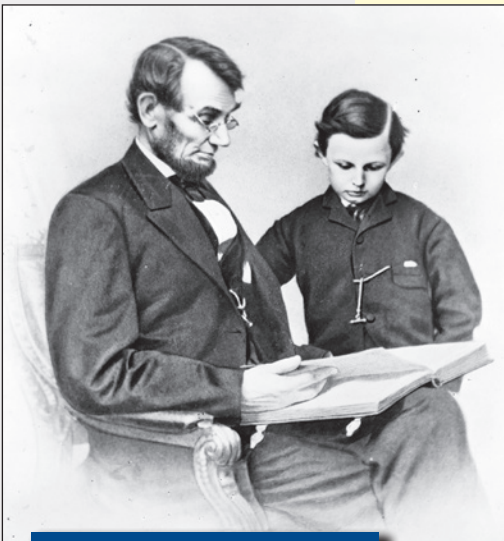
As soon as these alarms were over, and Kentucky freed from rebel invaders, Miss Breckinridge went on to St. Louis, to spend the winter with her brother. As soon as she arrived, she began to visit the hospitals of the city and its neighborhood, but her chief work, and that from the effects of which she never recovered, was the service she undertook upon the hospital boats, which were sent down the Mississippi to bring up the sick and wounded from the posts below. She made two excursions of this kind, full of intense experiences, both of pleasure and pain. These boats went down the river empty unless they chanced to carry companies of soldiers to rejoin their regiments, but they returned crowded with the sick and dying, emaciated, fever-stricken men, sadly in need of tender nursing but with scarcely a single comfort at command. Several of

the nurses broke down under this arduous and difficult service, but Margaret congratulated herself that she had held out to the end. These expeditions were not without danger as well as privation. One of her letters records a narrow escape. "To give you an idea of the audacity of these guerrillas; while we lay at Memphis that afternoon, in broad daylight, a party of six, dressed in our uniform, went on board a government boat, lying just across the river, and asked to be taken as passengers six miles up the river, which was granted; but they had no sooner left the shore than they drew their pistols, overpowered the crew, and made them go up eighteen miles to meet another government boat coming down loaded with stores, tied the boats together and burned them, setting the crew of each adrift in their own yawl, and nobody knew it till they reached Memphis, two hours later. Being able to hear nothing of the wounded, we pushed on to Helena, ninety miles below, and here dangers thickened. We saw the guerrillas burning cotton, with our own eyes, along the shore, we saw their little skiffs hid away among the bushes on the shore; and just before we got to Helena, had a most narrow escape from their clutches. A signal to land on the river was in ordinary times never disregarded, as the way business of freight and passengers was the chief profit often of the trip, and it seems hard for pilots and captains always to be on their guard against a decoy. At this landing the signal was given, all as it should be, and we were just rounding to, when, with a sudden jerk, the boat swung round into the stream again. The mistake was discovered in time, by a government officer on board, and we escaped an ambush. Just think! we might have been prisoners in Mississippi now, but God meant better things for us than that."

Continued in Next (January) Issue



On Christmas Day 1861 to 1864



**Lincoln and son
Thomas "Tad" Lincoln**

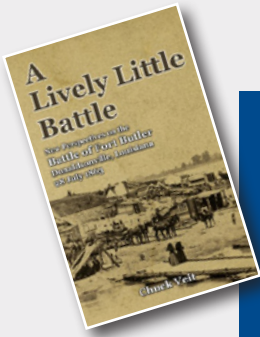
On the first Christmas Day during the war, Lincoln hosted a Christmas party during the evening; earlier that day, he spent many hours trying to legitimize the capture of Confederate representatives to Great Britain and France, John Slidell and James Murray Mason (the Trent Affair).

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and his son Thomas "Tad" Lincoln In 1862, the Lincolns visited injured soldiers at the various hospitals. Many Union soldiers in 1863 received gifts "From Tad Lincoln", as Tad had been deeply moved by the plight of Union soldiers when he was taken by his father to see them. The gifts were mostly books and clothing. The most famous Christmas gift Lincoln ever received came on December 22, 1864, when William Tecumseh Sherman announced the capture of Savannah, Georgia.

Military exercises also took place on December 25. In 1861, a blockade runner was caught by the Union navy, and there were two skirmishes in Virginia and Maryland. In 1862, there were several skirmishes, and Confederate general John Hunt Morgan engaged in his famous Christmas Raid in Kentucky. On that day, Morgan's men destroyed everything they could of the improvements that the Louisville &

Nashville Railroad had made along 35 miles of track from Bacon Creek to Lebanon Junction. There was also a military execution for desertion that the soldiers were forced to witness. In 1863, Union forces destroyed Confederate salt works at Bear Inlet, North Carolina and, in South Carolina, there were skirmishes between the Union navy and Confederate artillery on the Stono River and near Charleston. In 1864, the Confederates fiercely repelled the Federal assault of sixty warships on Fort Fisher and several skirmishes were fought in the western theater of the war.

Wikipedia



Old Baldy's November Meeting Review

“A LIVELY LITTLE BATTLE: New Perspectives on the BATTLE OF FORT BUTLER Donaldsonville, Louisiana 28 June 1863”

presented by Chuck Veit

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

The road to Donaldsonville and Fort Butler begins near Vicksburg. By mid-June 1863 Confederate Major General Richard Taylor failed to destroy Grant's supply lines so Taylor sent Brigadier General Alfred Mouton into Louisiana. The troops used a series of raids and surprise attacks as they were advancing to Thibodeaux; 45 miles from New Orleans. By June 24th the only thing standing in their way was Fort Butler at Donaldsonville. Fort Butler was a star shaped earthen fortification, built at the entrance of Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi between November 1862 and February 1863. It was designed by a West Point officer and constructed by freed slaves who lived in the area.

The Federal Navy was stretched thin because of several attacks to defend New Orleans. At this time Farragut's Naval Squadron was helped by the arrival of the USS Princess Royal. Even though the naval ship arrived to help Naval forces they were very sparse, so Brigadier General W. H. Emory went to hospitals and looked for sick or convalescent soldiers to help defend Fort Butler. The 16th New Hampshire responded with many soldiers who went to Donaldsonville to take part in battle “almost too sick to keep on their feet”. To defend the fort, it was commanded by Major Joseph Bullen with this group of men who had never seen action. They were basically green troops. The 28th Maine Volunteer Infantry regiment were ordered to Port Hudson with the group of sick and convalescent soldiers doing work that healthy soldiers had difficulty doing. The convalescent soldiers from New Orleans were sent along with the 1st and 3rd Louisiana, a group of Black soldiers sent to help the Yankee soldiers.



Chuck Veit

The men at Fort Butler were aware of their situation with the men as well as the miserable weather even for New Englanders. Dawn of June 27th General Thomas Green with two brigades of attacking troops, encamped about sunrise on the Ford and Davenport Plantations. Green believed that there were five gunboats with 500 Yankees and two or three hundred Black troops. He believed the fort was surrounded by a ditch which General Green thought would be very difficult to scale without a ladder. Green first thought the Confederate troops should call the attack off. Green thought the attempt to storm the fort would be at great loss to his troops and not even benefit the Confederate cause. Major Bullen had his men lined the parapets. Green arrived with his troops wanting unconditional surrender. Bullen's forces who were a very motivated group of men wanted to fight.

The men inside the fort felt an attack would come in the night with the weather conditions, foggy and dark, a great opportunity for a night assault. The Confederate plan at a precise time would pin down the Yankees and breach the stockade. Green readied his troops, so they were about 1 1/2 miles from the fort. He also felt the weather conditions favorable to overwhelm the men in the fort. Shannon's 5th Cavalry were to advance along the river and force an entrance through the stockade. Hardeman's 4th Texas was to move up the bayou road and when hearing firing would make entrance with Shannon through the stockade with hand-to-hand combat inside the fort. Phillips, Lane, and Herbert would take their troops from the woods to the edge of the ditch.

Presenter Book Winner - Carol Thron

**Mike DiPaolo, Deane Smith, Dan Hummel,
Jim Heenehan, David Zia, Sue DeSilver,
Frank Barletta, Bill Miller and Gary Kaplan
won the attendees raffle.**

Major Bullen had too few men to counterattack so they were stretched around the parapet. Bullen positioned his men as effectively as he could around the fort hoping all sides were covered equally. After all was done Major Bullen returned to his sick bed. The Yankee soldiers also readied their boats to cover important points along the river. The Princess Royal, Kines, and hopefully the Winona were on their way to help in this battle. Major Green was not totally sure he would be successful in battle with Confederates for the men were all sick and weak from illness.

On board the Princess Royal was John Henry Stevenson who was given a special assignment to visit the surrounding countryside to get information. Riding a "speedy black horse" with Ensign Frederick A. Miller, riding for three days going in and around the enemy's camp. Stevenson wore civilian clothes went into the enemy line, claiming he was "a refugee from New Orleans" "a prisoner aboard the gunboat". He was allowed into the camp and learned when and how they were to attack the fort. After dark he left the camp and boarded the ship Winona explained himself and were on the way to Donaldsonville. June 28th Union artillery opened fire on the surprised Confederate troops.



By 12:15 AM the anchor was raised on the ship in the harbor and slowly went along the north side of the fort. Fifty minutes later the Princess Royal was cleared and ready for action. Twenty-five minutes later a single musket shot was fired, and the Confederate attack began. At 1:20 AM the fort opened fire with two guns and four minutes later the gunboats opened fire into the woods to the right of the fort. Between 1:25 AM and 2 AM the attack struck the northern wall, gunboats opened as the fort was firing back. The 5th Texas soon became under fire from the gunboats. Men were starting to try to get at the stockade and realized they could not stop the rebels. The Yankees were told to fix bayonets. At 2:30 AM the Confederates used grapeshot and muskets upon the gunboats to drive them away. Many men were wounded or died in this fierce fighting. By 2:40 AM the 7th Texas mounted the slopes and fought the Yankees across the ditch and then the Confederate charged up the face of the levee where Yankees were waiting with bullets and bayonets until they could not reload so used hand to hand combat until the 5th Texas no longer had a leader. The rebels tried to retreat through holes in the stockade and the Yankees kept firing at the Texans to keep them away from the fort.



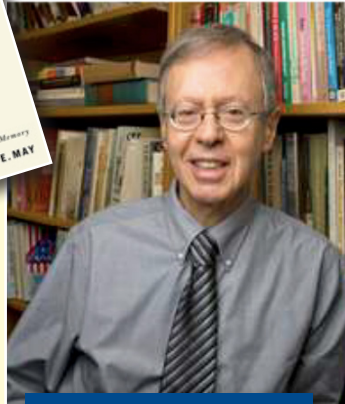
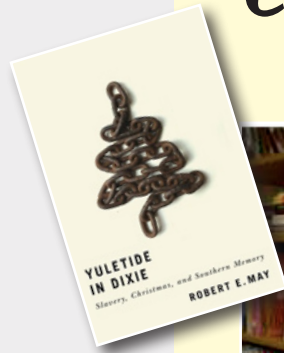
What about the ditch? In all the reports there was a ditch recorded but there was no ditch along the river. The north side of the fort would have to cross the ditch and scale the parapet. The Confederates used the ditch as protection from the Yankees but if they got out of the ditch the Confederate soldiers were in the open and easy targets. The Yankees could not get the Confederates out of the ditch. Even when the soldier raised a white flag, they ignored him, and the man was shot. Slowly the men started raising to get out of the ditch even though the gunboats stopped them even before reaching the stockade. This repulse of the 4th Texas ended the Confederate assault and by 3:45 AM the yelling and firing stopped.



Fort Butler was a key Union position along the Mississippi River. If the Yankees lost this position, they would have no important base between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The attack of this fort by the 25th Maine and 16th New Hampshire saved Fort Butler from falling. The brave defense played a big part in the outcome of this battle. Knowledge of the planned attack on the Union left was part of John Stevenson's spy work and the gunboat Winona. In Louisiana this was the first Union victory of the war using Black soldiers.

Thanks to the recruited soldiers who were basically sick or convalescing they fought for a Yankee victory. This is a story we may not have found in the history books but thanks to Chuck Veit through his research we became familiar with this story about Fort Butler. What a story it is! Chuck always brings our roundtable an interested story every time he visits Old Baldy. All our member in the room and on Zoom where glad Chuck was visiting us. Thanks again for bringing us this interesting presentation.

Christmas Comes Early to the Inland Empire:



Robert E. May

Robert E. May to Speak at December Meeting. Purdue professor emeritus and noted author Robert E. May will give a Christmas-themed presentation at the December 7th meeting of the Inland Empire Civil War Round Table.

May, who taught courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction, the history of the South, and Abraham Lincoln, will be speaking about his most recent book, "Yuletide in Dixie: Slavery, Christmas, and Southern Memory" (University of Virginia Press). His previous publication, "Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America," was a finalist for the Lincoln Book Prize. May's program is entitled "Christmas and Fugitive Slaves," which explores what Christmastime

meant for people in bondage throughout the antebellum South, from parties, feasts, gifts from masters and mistresses, and time off from labor. He will not only discuss the actual holiday experiences of slaves in antebellum times, but also how distorted stories about slave Christmases became mythologized years later in the so-called "Lost Cause," the enshrinement of the Old South and the Confederacy in American historical memory.

To join us on Zoom, go to IECWRT December Meeting

Meetin' ID: 831 8341 6333

Passcode: Lincoln

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

Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2023

January 12, 2023 - Thursday
Allison Johnson
"The Left-Armed Corps"
Writings by Amputee Civil War Veterans

February 9, 2023 - Thursday
Timothy Walker
**"Sailing to Freedom: Maritime Dimensions
of the Underground Railroad"**

March 9, 2023 - Thursday
Dan Casella
**"We are not Soldiers, but Bulldogs:
Cedarville Men in the 7th NJ"**

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

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia
Camden County College
William G. Rohrer Center
1889 Marlton Pike East
Cherry Hill, NJ
oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net
Founded January 1977

President: Richard Jankowski
Vice President: Kathy Clark
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Membership: Amy and Dan Hummel

Trustees:
Paul Prentiss
Tom Scurria
Dave Gilson

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

Editor: Don Wiles - cwwiles@comcast.net