

Grand Army ^{of the} Republic

Civil War Museum & Library

Friends of the Museum,

We at the museum are very happy to see the winter weather move on. This past February, we had to spend \$8700 on a new steam boiler for 4278 Griscom St. We did receive a \$1500 grant from the William Penn Foundation to help offset this cost. Our many thanks to Mr. Robert Hanrahan for helping us to secure this grant. We also installed a new custom window on the third floor of the same building because the frame on the original window had rotted. This deterioration also allowed some outside "visitors" to enter, setting off the burglar alarm on a few occasions. Fortunately, the Philadelphia Police aided us in chasing out the rodent bandits. The new custom-made window cost \$1000.

You can see now why we have 10,000 large reasons to ask you either to become a member or to renew your membership if you have not already done so. We are an all-volunteer museum (that is right, NO PAID STAFF) and every dollar you send in helps us maintain the building and our valuable collection.

Thanks to many dedicated folks, we have moved about 95% of all of the ledger, minute and other books from many of our GAR Post holdings to the research side of the facility at 4282 Griscom St. Members of your Board and that of the General Meade Society spent many hours sorting, labeling, and storing these valuable archival materials. However, this is only part of the battle, as we still have to list these holdings and eventually list them on-line as well.

On another note, the folks from Winterthur Museum and the University of Delaware recently assessed the building and all of its holdings. We fared rather well even though we are not experts. Their report to us will be ready this summer and we will be able to use their report to apply for grants. Many thanks to the experts from the Winterthur Museum who helped us at no cost.

We held our annual Preservation Dinner on March 31 and all had a great time. The speaker, Mr. Don Ernsberger, spoke on the 69th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. We were also pleased to present the Annual Samuel P. Town Award this year to the re-enactors from the 3rd United States Colored Troops. Their group has presented programs at the Museum for many years. The "3rd" also gives its time almost every weekend of the year to various educational events. I am proud that the 3rd USCT's are friends of the GAR Museum and were chosen as this year's award recipient. Huzzah!!!!

In closing, I regret to inform you that we lost a friend of the Museum recently. Mr. Fred Heston, a retired Philadelphia Police sergeant, had volunteered to handle our membership list and was also our librarian. Fred had just finished taking inventory of the library when he passed away. We, the Board of the Museum, cannot thank him enough for all that he did. He had a great sense of humor and was with us several times a week at the museum. We will miss him as a volunteer and even more so as a friend!! Godspeed Fred...

My best to you all for a great Spring and please let us not forget Memorial Day. It is not just a weekend to get away or to find the best sale. If you have a chance, thank a veteran or place a flag on a veteran's grave in remembrance for what he or she did.

Eric J. Schmincke
President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
ERIC J. SCHMINCKE

Vice President
ANTHONY WASKIE, PH.D.

Treasurer
GLENN BARFORD

Secretary
GENE STACKHOUSE

MARGARET E. ATKINSON
ELMER F. ATKINSON
C. JEFFREY HEAGY
HARRY B. LAMB
JOHN T. McNULTY

BOARD OF ADVISORS

EDWIN BEARSS
FLORA L. BECKER
ROBERT E. HANRAHAN, JR.
JAMES M. McPHERSON
JOHN RUAN
DR. RICHARD A. SAUERS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN TAYLOR

Department of Maryland, Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.)

Wilson Post #1, Baltimore and Memorial Day Observances

Records of the G.A.R.

Unfortunately there are very few records from the Maryland GAR posts still in existence. The great fire in 1904 destroyed the Maryland GAR headquarters, and any hope of turning up significant records is slim in any libraries or historical societies for any later records or of those that would have been kept by the posts. The Department's published annual reports from 1904 until the 1930s are available at the Maryland Historical Society and the earlier records show up in the Library of Congress catalog.

The Wilson Post #1 was one of the most influential posts in the state. Over its history, it had its own post hall - the Rialto building, a post band, a post fife and drum corps, a post guard, a vocal ensemble and could turn out several hundred men to march on Memorial Day. For evening programs on Memorial Day they would join with the Dushane Post No. 3 and host very large dramatic programs.

The post was formed in 1875, as part of the re-constitution of the GAR in Maryland, and lasted into the late 1920s, early 1930s. During the 1900s the Garfield Camp No. 1 and the Wilson Post No. 1 were often together on Memorial Day.

There are two portions of articles below, one tells the story of a Memorial Day trip by the Wilson Post to the burial site of its namesake, and the other is a brief overview of the Maryland GAR that mentions the chartering of the post.

May 27, 1894 included in a Memorial Day article.

"GRAND ARMY IN MARYLAND" Original Organizers - Objects and Work of the Body.

Of the Grand Army in Maryland, the following were the organizers: Andrew W. Denison, Charles J. Brown, Harrison Adreon, Frederick Simon and J. Gabriel Glynn. The charter of the post, to be known as Post No. 1, of Baltimore, District of Baltimore, Department of Maryland, was

granted by Commander-in-chief B. F. Stephenson, the founder of the Grand Army of the Republic in the United States and the first commander-in-chief, and bore date November 14, 1866. Other posts were subsequently organized, up to Lincoln Post, No. 7, and when six posts were organized a department was formed. Through politics all of these posts afterwards became disintegrated, except Lincoln Post, which retained and still has its original charter. Post No. 1 was reorganized as Wilson Post, No. 1, August 23, 1875, the charter being granted by Commander-in-chief John F. Hartranft, at one time governor of Pennsylvania. The post was named for Colonel John W. Wilson, First Maryland Infantry, killed at Dabney's Mill, Va., February 6, 1865." [note: the first Post no. 1 was named *Ditman Post.*]

May 30, 1881 - this is an excerpt from an article that talks about the Observance of Memorial Day around Baltimore.

"The graves of Colonel John W. Wilson and others at Chestnut Grove, Baltimore county, were yesterday decorated by a committee of Wilson Post and others of the Grand Army, with appropriate ceremonies. Comrades W. F. McConn, Graham Dukehart, Thomas E. Collett, Charles H. Richardson, Charles E. White, Charles E. Gehring, S. H. Cole, James Glenn, W. E. Shorey and E. W. Bufts, of the committee from the Post, left Baltimore in a phaeton in the morning and at Towson town were joined by the rest of the committee - Comrades Dr. J. H. Jarret, Jno. I. Yellot, B. F. Chenowith, Geo. W. Seip, F. M. Heins and Ezra Brown. They proceeded to Chestnut Grove Presbyterian Church, where they were joined by Gen. W. E. W. Ross and Comrades Suter, Scarlett, Rittenhouse and Dodge, of the department staff. The entire delegation attended the service in the church, and afterwards proceeded with the decorations. The order of exercises was: A prayer by Rev. D. L. Rathburn; singing of the ode "Strew Blossoms Bright," by Wilson quintette, during the singing of the of which the comrades

were strewing the graves. Major John I. Yellot, of Towson, delivered the oration. The ode, "They Sleep Their Last Sleep," closed the exercises, which were witnessed by large numbers of people from all parts of the surrounding country, and the graves were totally covered with flowers. The graves decorated were those of Col. John W. Wilson, First Maryland, killed at Dabney's Mills, Feb. 6, 1865; Lieut. Robert A. Wilson, wounded at Dabney's Mills 6th February, died Feb. 11, 1865; Malcolm Wilson, captain, Co. F, Second regiment Maryland volunteers, killed at Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862; Marshall Wilson, sergeant, Co. C, Purnell cavalry, died of consumption since the war; Robt. Wilson, father, and Eliza Wilson, mother of Col. Wilson; James N. Wilson, private, First Maryland, Co. G, died since war; Wm. H. Francis, Seventh Maryland, (sergeant,) died since war; Chas. Hall, captain in Mexican War. The delegation lunched with the widow and sons of Col. Wilson, and at Towson town were entertained by Major Yellot."

Pete Johnston
Pete.Johnston@ssa.gov

A Special "Thank You" to those benefactors who have donated things to the museum:

Harry Reese of Hopatcong, NJ donated a Post 2 pin.

Ron McCullough of Alturs, Ca. donated a GAR membership badge.

Thanks to George Baumann for the gift of books and a State of Pennsylvania flag

Monetary gifts from:

Fran Daily in memory of her husband Lt. Col. Bill Daily

**Bob Seeley,
our speaker in February**

On Sunday, February 11th, a number of the General Meade Society visited the museum for a work party. They tackled GAR records that had been stored away for who knows how many years, put them in labeled archival boxes, making them now available to researchers. There were also a number of scrapbooks of news clippings from the 1930s & 40s that were preserved for the future.

THE CHARACTER OF GENERAL GEORGE GORDON MEADE

Anecdotes and Observations

Submitted by A. Waskie

Colonel Theodore Lyman served on General Meade's staff as his "Volunteer Aide" (senior aide-de-camp) from September 1863 through the end of the Civil War. In that capacity he observed and came to know Meade better than anyone else save Meade's immediate family. His letters to his wife, Elizabeth Russell Lyman, were later edited and published as Meade's Headquarters, 1863-1865: Letters of Colonel Theodore Lyman, From the Wilderness to Appomattox (Boston, 1922)

1) Meade's coolness under fire, and his reputation as a storyteller

From Theodore Lyman's letter to his wife, Elizabeth Russell Lyman, September 11, 1863:

They say that General Meade is an extremely cool man. At Gettysburg he was in a little wooden house, when the hot fire began. The shells flew very thick and close, and his Staff, who were outside, got under the lee of the house and sat down on the grass. As they sat there, out came General Meade, who, seeing them under such a slender protection against cannon-balls, began to laugh, and said, "That now reminds me of a feller at the Battle of Buena Vista, who, having got behind a wagon, during a severe cannonade, was there found by General Taylor. 'Wall Gin'ral,' said he, looking rather sheepish, 'this ain't much protection, but it kinder feels as it was.'"

As a point to the Chief's anecdote, a spherical case came through the house at that instant, exploded in their circle, and wounded Colonel Dickinson.

2) Meade's sense of truthfulness and duty

From Theodore Lyman's letter to Elizabeth Russell Lyman, September 29, 1863:

My Chief, though he expressly declares that he is not Napoleon, is a thorough soldier, and a mighty clear-headed man; and one who does not move unless he knows where and how many his men are, where and how many his enemy's men are, and what sort of country he has to go through.

I never saw a man in my life who was so characterized by straightforward truthfulness as he is. He will pitch into himself in a moment, if he thinks he has done wrong; and woe to those, no matter who they think they are, who do not do right! "Sir, it was your duty and you haven't done it, now go back and do it at once," he will suddenly remark to some astonished general, who thinks himself no small beer.

3) "Steam-Engine Meade"

From Theodore Lyman's letter to Elizabeth Russell Lyman, October 23, 1863:

Jubal Early, the orderly, poked his head into the tent saying "Colonel Lyman, the General will have breakfast at seven" (which was an hour earlier than he had said the night before). As soon as I sat down, says the General, "I am going to Washington: would you like to go?" In much haste I ran, and crammed my best coat, pantaloons, shoes, sash, gauntlets and brushes into my big saddle-bags. Thereupon we speedily got on horseback and with little delay rode twelve miles, briskly, to Gainesville, whither the railroad comes. The Chief stepped into a little room, used as a telegraph office, and, quicker than winking, he stood, arrayed only in his undergarments; then, before, almost, I could get my coat off, he had put on a pair of shoes, a new coat, and an elegant pair of trousers! "Now then, Lyman, are you ready? Where's Major-General Humphreys? Humphreys is always late! Come, come along, the train is going to start!"

You should have seen me, the unfortunate Aide—my coat unbuttoned, my shoestrings loose; on one arm my saddle-bags, on the other my sword, sash, etc., etc., hastening after the steam-engine Meade!

4) Meade the gentleman [a nice anecdote about a dinner party on October 24, 1863, one day before the date of the Meade Memorial Dinner at the Union League]

From Theodore Lyman's letter to Elizabeth Russell Lyman, October 25, 1863:

We went to Willard's after the pow-wow with the President, and got a very good dinner, except for poor General Meade, who was bored to death and driven out of all peace of mind, by dirty politicians who kept coming up and saying, "Ah, General Meade, I believe; perhaps you do not recollect meeting me in the year 1831, on a Mississippi steamboat? How do you do, sir? What move do you propose to execute

next? Have you men enough, sir? What are the intentions of Lee, sir? How are the prospects of the rebellion, sir? Do you look upon it as essentially crushed, sir? Or do you think it may still rear its head against our noble Union, sir?" etc., etc.

All of which the poor Chief would answer with plaintive courtesy, endeavoring to snatch a mouthful of chicken the whole while, while the obscure aides-de-camp were piling in all kinds of delicacies.

5) "The Extraordinary Moral Courage of General Meade": The Mine Run Affair, November 29-30, 1863

Meade's army had followed Lee's retreating forces southward and deep into the heart of Virginia, hoping to draw them into a fight. In late November, as Lee's forces were preoccupied in digging themselves into field fortifications near Mine Run, General Gouverneur Kemble Warren told Meade of his plan to attack their exposed far left flank; Meade placed two Third Corps divisions at Warren's disposal and ordered Warren to attack whenever ready. Warren assembled his forces on the night of November 29-30; back at Headquarters, Meade and his aides waited for the fighting to commence. But at daybreak, just as shelling began, Meade received word from Warren that Lee's forces were far more heavily fortified than he had anticipated. Meade immediately ordered Warren's troops to cease firing and pull back.

From Theodore Lyman's letter to Elizabeth Russell Lyman, November 30, 1863:

We tried to take it all philosophically, but it was hard, very hard. Most of all for General Meade and Major-General Humphreys, who really took it admirably, for both of them have excellent tempers of their own, which, on occasions, burst forth, like twelve-pounder spherical case.

The men and guns stood ready; the Chief had only to snap his fingers, and that night would probably have seen ten thousand wretched, mangled creatures, lying on those long slopes, exposed to the bitter cold, and out of reach of all help. Then people would have said, "He was unsuccessful; but then he tried hard, and did not get out."

But wherever the fault lies, I shall always be astonished at the extraordinary moral courage of General Meade, which enabled him to order a retreat, when his knowledge, as an engineer and a soldier, showed that an attack would be a blunder.

(continued on next page)

Memorial Day Observed at Historic Laurel Hill Cemetery Philadelphia, PA. Sunday, May 27, 2007

Recreating Original G.A.R. Decoration Day Service of 1868:

The traditional Decoration Day service of the Grand Army Meade Post #1 will be recreated at Historic Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Ave. Philadelphia on Sunday, May 27, 2007 at 12 noon. All are welcome to attend and participate in the ceremony.

Laurel Hill is the site of the first Memorial Day Observance in Philadelphia on this date in 1868. Special bronze veterans' markers will be dedicated at the graves of veterans. Speakers, ceremonies and pageant will highlight this special ceremony. Afterwards the entourage will gather at the grave of General Meade, hero of Gettysburg to perform the traditional service to honor all veterans who fell defending the Nation. Wreath-laying, speeches, music and honor guards will enhance the ceremony.

Historical groups, veterans, and citizens are urged to participate. Wreaths, military contingents, color guards, music and period civilians are encouraged to participate. Refreshments served after the ceremony. Tours of the historic cemetery available.

Co-sponsored by the General Meade Society of Philadelphia; Friends of Laurel Hill; American Legion Post #405; Post #1 Society, Union League; Anna M. Ross Camp #1, Sons of Union Veterans. **For information, call: 215-228-8200**

(Character of General George Meade... continued from previous page)

6) "I have acted from a higher sense of duty": Meade on what happened at Mine Run

General Meade outlined his thoughts about what transpired at Mine Run in this letter to his wife, Margaretta Sergeant Meade, December 2, 1863

If I had thought there was any reasonable degree of probability of success, I would have attacked. I did not think so; on the contrary, I believed it might result in a useless and criminal slaughter of brave men, and might result in serious disaster to the army. I determined not to attack, no other movements were practicable, and I withdrew. I assumed to myself all the responsibility.

It was my deliberate judgment that I ought not to attack; I acted on that judgment, and I am willing to stand by it at all hazards. I would rather be ignominiously dismissed, and suffer anything, than knowingly and willfully have thousands of brave men slaughtered for nothing.

I feel of course greatly disappointed; a little more good fortune, and I should have met with brilliant success. As it is, my conscience is clear. I did the best I could.

There will be a great howl all over the country. Letter writers and politicians will denounce me. It will be proved as clear as the light of day, that an attack was perfectly practicable, and that everyone, except myself, in the army, particularly the soldiers, was dying for an attack, and that I

had some mysterious object in view, either in connection with politics, or stock-jobbing, or something else about as foreign to my thoughts, and finally the Administration will be obliged to yield to popular clamor and discard me.

For all this I am prepared, fortified as I said before by a clear conscience, and the conviction that I have acted from a higher sense of duty, to myself as a soldier, to my men as their general, and to my country and its cause, as the agent having its vital interests solemnly entrusted to me, which I have no right wantonly to play with and to jeopardize, either for my own personal benefit, or to satisfy the demands of popular clamor, or interested politicians.

7) What makes a military leader "great"? Theodore Lyman clearly had Meade—his beloved "Chief"—in mind when he described the qualities that make a military leader "great":

There is a good reason why great soldiers should be so rare that generations pass without producing a single one. In war there is a critical instant—a night—perhaps only half an hour—when everything culminates. A great soldier is the military genius who recognizes this instant and acts upon it, neither precipitating nor postponing the critical moment.

A great soldier must have, in addition to all useful traits of intellect, a courage unmoved by the greatest danger, and cool under every emergency, and the quickness of lightning, not only in conceiving, but in enforcing an order.

HARRIET TUBMAN



is, perhaps, the most written about American woman.

She is most famous as an intrepid "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, a trail of routes and safe-houses through

which fugitive slaves escaped north and to Canada. After the Civil War broke out, in response to a call for Northern aid organizations, Tubman left her home in Auburn, New York in 1862, to go to South Carolina where Union forces occupied coastal areas. There under Col. James Montgomery, she commanded nine scouts and river pilots who gathered information on Confederate force strength and positions and led river incursions. Tubman ventured out on these expeditions with her haversack, musket, and canteen, sometimes clad in "bloomers." At the end of the war, she worked in hospitals in Virginia.

[Sources: C. Kay Larson, "Bonny Yank and Ginny Reb," MINERVA: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military, Vol. VIII, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 33-48; Earl Conrad, Harriet Tubman (Washington, D. C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1943); for books for youth, see website of the Women's History Project in California]

Any of our members who live nearby and have time, would be welcome as volunteers or to come and do research.

If interested in the former, you can help us. In the latter, we will help you.

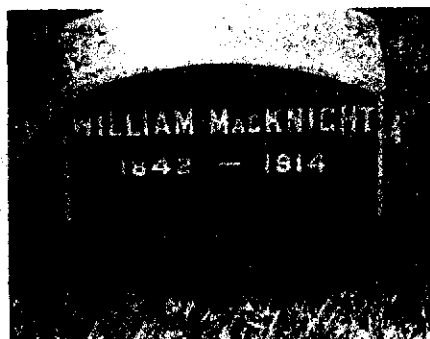
Give us a call at 215-289-6484

or send an email to garmuslib@verizon.net

William McKnight

William McKnight was born on May 3, 1842, in Ulster County, New York. On December 12, 1856 he enlisted as a seaman third class in the navy. He was discharged November 30, 1861, but reenlisted as a seaman on February 4, 1862.

He put time aboard the Falmouth, Memphis, San Jacinto and Varuna. It was when serving on the latter he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



On April 24, 1862, the Varuna was one of the ships sailing up the Mississippi past Forts Jackson and St. Philip. As well as fire from the shore the Varuna was twice rammed by the Confederate ships Stonewall Jackson and Governor Moore. This is according to the navel records that differ from his citation that reads, "Captain of a gun aboard the USS Varuna during the attack on Forts Jackson and St. Philip and in action against the rebel ship Morgan April 24, 1862. During this action at extremely close range, while under furious fire and was twice rammed by the rebel ship Morgan, McKnight remained steadfast at his gun throughout the thickest of the fight and was instrumental in inflicting damage until the Varuna, so badly damaged that she was forced to beach, was finally sunk." No matter which account is right he earned his medal. The Varuna lost about 50 percent of her crew. Medal of Honor McKnight was promoted from Coxswain to Master's Mate.

William McKnight was discharged from the Navy on March 8, 1865 and settled in Woodhaven, New York, married, had a son and two daughters. He died on November 4, 1914 and is buried in Green Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York. At present he has no Medal of Honor marker on his grave.

In Memorium

On February 23rd the museum lost its most active volunteer.

Fred Héston passed away suddenly at age 54. He was a retired sergeant of the Philadelphia Police Department in which he served for over twenty-five years.

There were not many week days when he was not at the museum working in the library or on the membership list. He was a quiet, hard worker who would do whatever was asked of him. Fred will be missed.

NEW HEATER! The large building of the museum in which the artifacts are housed is getting a new coat of interior paint. On January 30 three volunteers arrived & turned on the heat before starting. In a bit they realized the place was still cold & in checking found the furnace was beyond repair. The men carried on till four days later and the museum \$8700 dollars poorer the heat was restored. If you loyal members have friends interested in preserving an institution you are part of have them join us and refill the coffers.

Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War (2011-2015)

The approaching Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War (2011-2015) offers the current generation of Americans a most important opportunity to know, discuss, and commemorate this country's greatest national crisis, while at the same time exploring its enduring relevance in the 21st century.

In preparation for the Sesquicentennial, the National Park Service through the collective efforts of the superintendents at Civil War-related parks proposes to undertake a multi-faceted, multi-year, integrated program that will simultaneously transform and improve interpretation of the Civil War in our national parks while providing a national forum for the observance of the Sesquicentennial of America's greatest national crisis.

During the preparatory period (2005-2011), the web site below will present information on the events leading up to the Civil War, so that the Sesquicentennial can be experienced as the 150th anniversary of major military events, but also of social, political, economic and cultural transformations that have changed the nation forever.

Please visit:

cwar.nps.gov/civilwar/abcivwarSesqInit.htm

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP ~ We need you to join the family of supporters of

the museum. Without your assistance we will not be able to continue to provide the historical programs, keep the museum running, and continue to do the research requested. Membership categories are:

- Individual \$20.00 Family \$30.00
- Colonel's Honor Guard \$40.00, includes family membership and premium.
- General's Staff \$50.00, includes family membership & Civil War book.



Name _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Address (Street) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

A distasteful part of the year has now passed, that of paying income tax.

According to an article in an old newspaper it started in 1862 to pay for the war. The tax was 3% on incomes of \$600 to \$10,000. Over \$10,000 it was 5%. The amount collected was 2.7 million the first year, 20.2 million in 1864, and 72.9 million in the peak year of 1866.

Upcoming Open House Schedule 2007 G.A.R. Museum & Library

June 3rd: Gen. Baller and the
98th Pennsylvania Regiment
Speaker, Mr. Mike Peter

July 1st: General Meade and the Battle of Gettysburg

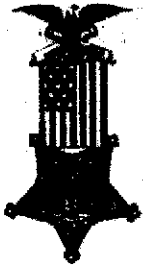
August 5th: "Stone's Brigade at Gettysburg"
Mr. James Dougherty (book signing)

September 2nd: The U.S. Colored Troops in the Civil War
PA Commonwealth Speaker, Mr. Joe Becton

October 7th: Dr. John Rumm, Executive Director of the
Civil War & Underground RR Museum of Philadelphia

November 4th: Germantown's G.A.R. Post #6, Ellis Post
Speaker, Mr. Gene Stackhouse

December 2nd: TBA



Grand Army of the Republic
Civil War Museum & Library

RUAN HOUSE 4278 GRISCOM STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA 19124



JEFF HEAGY
201 Sentinel Av.
Newtown, PA. 18940

