

# The Arsenal Newsletter

## Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Round Table

[www.grpghcwrt.org](http://www.grpghcwrt.org)

Volume 10 No. 7

July 2009

*"The Civil War is the crux of our history. You cannot understand any part of our past, from the convening of the Constitutional Convention, down to this morning, without eventually arriving at the Civil War."*

*Bernard de Voto*

***"Dr. Daniel Leasure & The Round Heads"  
and***

***"Italy: The Pines of Rome"***

***Chuck Martin***

***July 27th***

***7:00pm***

***The Hampton Community Center,***

***3101 McCully Road***

***Allison Park, PA 15101***

Chuck Martin program will consist of 2 slide shows featuring his impressive talents as a photographer.



# "Celebrating and Honoring Our Veterans"

by Allison Caveglia Barash

This month's honoree is regular Round Table attendee, **Rege Ricketts**. Rege was a Specialist 5<sup>th</sup> Class with the US Army (1966-1969) and was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia and Forts Holabird and Meade in Maryland. He served in the 25<sup>th</sup> Division in Vietnam. He fondly remembers his friend, Barry Schild, from West Seneca, New York, whom he met in 1966 when they were both 19 years old. They spent most of their service years together and continue to be best friends more than 40 years later.

We are grateful to Rege for his outstanding and honorable service to our country and are delighted that he is a member of the Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Round Table.



# Spies and Spymasters of the Civil War: A Review By Jim Wudarczyk

In recent years there has been much controversy regarding the reliability of intelligence data gathered by the various security agencies. Throughout the history of the United States, our government has always utilized the service of spies, especially in times of war. Since the advent of World War II, we have become accustomed to the government maintaining a host of agencies that specialize in spying and gathering intelligence. However, the art of spying during the American Civil War was relatively primitive and the Union lacked a systematic means of sharing the collected data.

Donald E. Markle's 1994 *Spies and Spymasters of the Civil War* is an easy-to-read history, which analyzes the problems associated with gathering intelligence and analyzing the reliability of the data. He cites Toronto as a haven for spies during the Civil War, just as Lisbon was during World War II. Although Canada claimed neutrality during the conflict, it did not have a problem with allowing Confederates and Confederate sympathizers to operate within its boundaries. Of course, the Union also had spies operating abroad, and in Toronto, Mr. Lincoln employed spies to keep tabs on the Copperhead organizations operating in Canada.

Markle also contends that the Knights of Liberty operated in Baltimore and actively tried to recruit Copperheads for a Northern insurrection. The author notes that Captain Hines planned an uprising for early June in conjunction with one of Morgan's raids, but the raid did not produce the results that the planners thought. Therefore, Hines' uprising fizzled.

According to the Markle account, 1864 seemed to be a pivotal year for planned insurrections in the North. One uprising was planned for August 29, 1864 in Chicago to coincide with the Democratic National Convention. However, Jefferson Davis afterward realized that the Confederacy could not tap into the Copperheads because they did not have any military leaders.

In the autumn of 1864 Confederate sympathizers in St. Louis planned to destroy 75 Union transport ships by attacking them with "Greek fire" or crude Molotov cocktails. It was estimated that five to ten of the ships were destroyed or damaged, but the raid was limited in its effectiveness to hinder Union supply lines.

Then, in mid-October 1864, Confederate raiders struck Saint Albans, Vermont, where they robbed a bank and netted \$200,000 in gold and U. S. currency. The raiders made their way north into Canada. When Washington demanded the arrest of the bank robbers and their extradition to the United States, Canada refused on the grounds that the raiders were carrying out a military mission sanctioned by Richmond.

Markle contends that the Union also employed blacks as spies since the Negro had a language all his own and generally could move freely about camps, towns, and plantations.

The author also speculates on the identity of a Confederate spy named Renfrew. According to the author, General Philip Sheridan was not pleased with the meddling of Washington. Therefore, he, like many other Union generals, employed his own spies. One spy he utilized was a man named Lomas. One day Lomas showed up at Sheridan's camp with a disguise artist named Renfrew, who, according to Lomas, had a falling out with General Mosby. Sheridan eventually became suspicious of both Lomas and Renfrew for loitering too long in camp and ordered both men out. Both men were really Confederate spies, and there was a possibility that Renfrew may have been John Wilkes Booth.

Markle also lists 26 books written by Civil War spies.

Perhaps the most interesting of all of the Civil War officers involved in the spy game was General Grenville Dodge, who after the war achieved fame for completion of the Union Pacific Railroad. During the war, Dodge was the chief intelligence officer for Grant and also served as a regimental combat

commander. He was quick to adapt to spy craft, and was believed to have employed as many as 117 spies at one point. Dodge paid his informants well. For three months of service in the South, a spy was paid \$750 and informants utilized to check on Confederate troop movement earned \$300. He kept maps, used female couriers, and organized a spy network among the black population. Dodge never trust information regarding Confederate troop strength that McClellan provided since the figures were usually greatly exaggerated. Dodge's spy network was so effective that he even penetrated the staff of General Johnston. However, his hasty execution of suspected spies was frowned upon by Washington and Dodge was denied a promotion on these grounds.

Donald Markle's book is recommended for those looking for a quick overview of Civil War espionage.



## Review of June's Meeting

By Rich DeCecco

Kathleen Washy an archivist from UPMC Mercy spoke to us about Pittsburgh's Sisters of Mercy during the Civil War. The Sisters of Mercy were a group of Catholic nuns of mostly Irish decent who came to Pittsburgh in 1843. They worked throughout the city administering to the medical needs of area residents until 1847 when they established Mercy Hospital which was the first chartered hospital in Western Pennsylvania.

When the Civil War began Mercy Hospital was a small hospital that saw only a few Civil War patients but as the war continued the need for hospitals and nurses increased and the Sisters became more involved in the war effort. In 1862 military hospitals were established and the demand for nurses rose dramatically. Female nurse were not widely accepted at that time but the Sisters proved their worth and were invited to staff the Stanton Military hospital in Washington DC.

The services these nurses provided helped more than just the soldiers they attended to. Their service helped to bring about a new understanding and respect for woman and Catholics in general.

## June Raffle Donations

Thank you to the many members who donated Items for our monthly raffle in June. John. Herock, Harry. Noss, Allison Barash, Ed & Jennie Davidson, Cheryl Loesch and Ron Brown



## Adopt-A-Position

*By Rich DeCecco*

Our Fall Adopt-A-Position trip is scheduled for Saturday, October 3. The clean-up will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will be followed at 2:p.m. by a tour with Licensed Battlefield guide Charlie Fennell entitled “Fredericksburg Redeemed: The 14th Connecticut Volunteers at Gettysburg”. Charlie is one of the most entertaining and knowledgeable guides in Gettysburg and gives tours that can be enjoyed by the Gettysburg novice as well as the serious student. The annual Apple Festival as well as other events are scheduled for this weekend so you are encouraged to make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Ulli Baumann: [ulrikeb1101@yahoo.com](mailto:ulrikeb1101@yahoo.com), or 717-394-1138.



### OWN A SLICE OF HISTORY!

This wood comes from descendants of witness trees on the Gettysburg battlefield. Each is branded with “Gettysburg Battlefield, Sept. 2007, GPCWRT” and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

Bring the order form below to the next meeting.

I wish to order:

\_\_\_ cedar slice(s) from Devil’s Den (Army of the Potomac) @ \$10 each

\_\_\_ white oak slice(s) from O’Reilly’s Battery (C.S.A.) @ \$10 each

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DUE \_\_\_\_\_

Call Bob Pender at 724-625-2329 for more information.

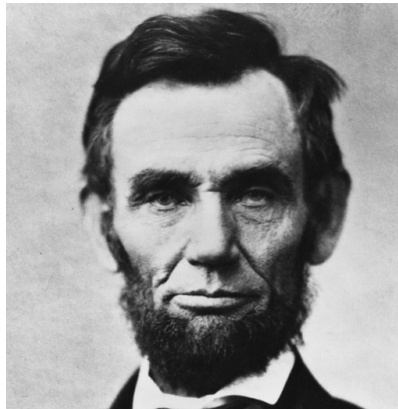


## Cookie Sign-up



Here is a list of members who volunteered to help out at future meeting by bringing cookies. We are looking for 3 volunteers to each to bring 2 dozen cookies to future meetings. If you would like to help please see Margie Pender.

Current Volunteers	July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Dana Del Bianco
		Olive Hessinger



## 2009 GPCWRT speakers

August	NO MEETING	
September 28 <sup>th</sup>	Gary Payn	Mr. Lincoln
October 26 <sup>th</sup>	Stephen Budiansky	The Bloody Shirt
November 16 <sup>th</sup>	Gary Kersey	The Assassination of Lincoln
December 14 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Ed Hahn Silent Auction and Holiday Dinner	

## Upcoming Events

**Thru Jan 2010** – Heinz History Center - Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War and Lincoln Slept Here

**August 6<sup>th</sup>** Greater Greensburg CWRT – Dave Fisher *Battle of Milliken's Bend*

**Aug 19<sup>th</sup>** Western PA Civil War Round Table meeting - Matthew Borowick: The Court Martial of Fitz John Porter

**Sept.3<sup>rd</sup>** Greater Greensburg CWRT – Bob Kendra, *The Venerable Wagons of the Conestoga Valley*

**Sept 16<sup>th</sup>** Western PA Civil War Round Table meeting - Robert Bosler: A Visit With Jeff Davis

**Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>** Adopt-A-Position

### Round Table Officers

**President:** John Campbell (724-265-4647) [jcubl622@nauticom.net](mailto:jcubl622@nauticom.net)

**Vice-President:** Rich DeCecco (412-486-7699) [radececco@comast.net](mailto:radececco@comast.net)

**Treasurer:** Joann Siriano (412-781-7254) [joey627@gmail.com](mailto:joey627@gmail.com)

### Committee Chairs:

**Publicity/Refreshments:**

Bob & Margie Pender (724-625-2329) [rmpend@connecttime.net](mailto:rmpend@connecttime.net)

**Seminars :** Ruth McCartan (412-364-6132) [theruths03@yahoo.com](mailto:theruths03@yahoo.com)

**Field Trips:/ Programs**

Michael Graswick (412-486-4781) [m.Graswick@comcast.net](mailto:m.Graswick@comcast.net)

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**Adopt-A-Position:** Ulli Baumann (717-394-1138) [ulrikeb1101@yahoo.com](mailto:ulrikeb1101@yahoo.com)