

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

November 10, 2022

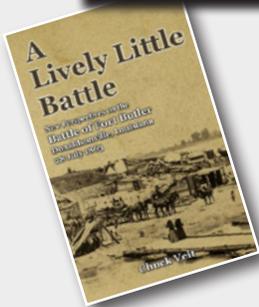
Civil War Roundtable Congress
The Wallace L. Rueckel
Innovation Award
presented to OB CWRT

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

“A Lively Little Battle: New Perspectives on the Battle of Fort Butler, Donaldsonville, LA, 28 June 1863”



Chuck Veit



The little-known Civil War engagement at Donaldsonville, Louisiana, is the Battle of Fort Butler, which saw a ragtag collection of 200 Union soldiers (mostly invalids) unaccountably repel the assault of a 1700-man Confederate force in the early morning hours of 28 June 1863. Lively Little Battle, as one contemporary newspaper described the action, includes multiple eyewitness accounts (the majority never before referenced) with every stage of the action diagrammed with maps based on a previously undiscovered 1863 plan of the fort found in the National Archives. The story told in this book and the conclusion drawn shine a new and different light on this small and long-misunderstood action.

Chuck Veit is the author of original research books, including *A Dog Before a Soldier: Almost-lost Episodes in the Navy's Civil War*; *Sea Miner: Major E. B. Hunt's Rocket Torpedo*; *Natural Genius: Brutus de Villeroi and the U.S. Navy's First Submarine*; and two books focusing on the salvage exploits of Massachusetts native, John E. Gowen: *Raising Missouri* and *The Yankee Expedition to Sebastopol*. *Sea Miner* claimed the 2016 award for Narrative Non-fiction from the Independent Publishers of New England, and *Yankee Expedition* won awards in both the Perennial Seller category and Book of the Year in 2017.

As President of the Navy & Marine Living History Association, Chuck has presented naval history at living history events, lectures, and conferences including NOAA's Maritime Heritage Education Conference, the 2012 Civil War Navy Conference at the Mariners' Museum, the Naval War College, and the Naval Order of the United States at Jacksonville. As a freelance graphic designer, Chuck has taught Graphic Design at the university level and in a corporate environment. He holds a Bachelor's in Studio Art and Historical Linguistics, and a Masters in Historical Linguistics from Clark University.

Notes from the President

As we enjoy the Phillies in the World Series and the start of the Sixers season, the weather cools, it gets dark earlier and the OB CWRT marches on. Thank you very much to everyone who assisted our Round Table in hitting a new high on sales of Boscov's Friends Helping Friends coupons. We plan to sell

Meeting Notice

Join us at 7:00 PM on
Thursday, November 10, 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.

Please join us at 5:30 pm at
Bertucci's Restaurant
East Gate Square
Mount Laurel, NJ

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Rich Jankowski
President, OBCWRT



New Members



Flat Old Baldy and President Jankowski welcome Rick Zarr in front of Two Old Goats in Cedar Lake, IN and presented his membership badge and OB CWRT items.

more next year. We look to build on our recent Innovation Award to bring more recognition to the work our Round Table does in the Civil War and local community. We are currently working on a partnership for an event next summer, more information will be in upcoming newsletters. As the calendar year closes, remember to submit your 2023 dues to fund our program, preservation and education projects.

Last month **Jim Remsen** and **Brad Upp** visited us, at the Katz Jewish Community Center to tell us about Camp Discharge. All in attendance enjoyed the fine presentation on this local former site as several interesting questions were generated. This month we return to the Rohrer Center to welcome back **Chuck Veit** for a talk on a Battle down in Louisiana. He last visited us three years ago to tell us about African Americans in the Union Navy. Bring a friend for an enlightening presentation. Let's pack the meeting like we did last November for **Carol Adam** for her talk on the Reading Railroad.

At the November meeting, the nominating Committee will announce their slate of candidates for the December election. Nominations will be open at the November and December meetings. Elections will be conducted on the second Thursday of December (8th). After the election we will host a social gathering with light refreshments. Those on Zoom will provide their own refreshments. Tune in for discussions, ceremonies and Holiday cheer. Contact **Paul Prentiss** about what will be needed for this event.

Some Board members visited **Rich Rosenthal** at Eastern PA CWRT for his presentation on Judah Benjamin and to connect with our friends at that Round Table. Officers also attended the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey meeting in Paterson. Look for reports on these events in a future newsletter. As our Facebook followers have seen Flat Old Baldy's "Welcome Wednesdays" have returned. A new member profile on **Ed Komczyk** is available in this newsletter, as well as many other great features. Send a copy to an associate so they may learn about our organization.

Wreaths Across America is on December 17th. We will be at the Beverly National Cemetery to place wreaths at noon. Visit the WAA website to register. The Regional New Jersey History Day Contest at Rutgers Camden will be February 25th. The theme next year is "Frontiers in History: People, Places. Ideas." Consider serving as a judge, visit the History Day website to sign up. Reusable blue Old Baldy bags are available to purchase and use for your Holiday shopping. Our South Jersey Civil War Site maps make a fine gift for the local historian on your Holiday list. If you know of a member who is under the weather or having a challenge, let Vice President **Kathy Clark** know so we can send them a card.

Thank you to all who supported our display at the Glassboro Train Station last month. We are sending the weekly message of activities form the CWRT Congress to our membership. Let us know what you think. Be sure to be present or tune into our December gathering to hear more about the next administration's plan to expand our reach and get more members involved in our activities and projects. Thank you to the members who have worked with **Kim Weaver** in completing their profiles.

Please join Chuck at Bertucci's Restaurant near East Gate Square in Mount Laurel at 5:30 for a pre-meeting meal and conversation.

Rich Jankowski, President

Member Profile - Ed Komczyk

Profile by Kim Weaver

Long before he joined the Civil War Roundtable (and became Waldorf to Bill Sia's Statler of Muppets fame), Ed Komczyk was a star-rank Boy Scout concerned about the environment.

Ed was born in 1939 in Woodbury, NJ and lived with his family in the Red Bank section of West Deptford where he was raised. He was about 12 years



Ed Komczyk



old when he discovered an oil slick in the river that appeared to generate from the local Texaco oil refinery near Red Bank Ave. and Front St. the place locals know as Soupy Island, a 15-acre parcel along the Delaware River in Gloucester County. That scene stayed with Ed and he vowed to help create through advocacy a cleaner, greener future for West Deptford. "Yes, I'm a tree hugger!"

At the independent age of 15, Ed started offering accordion lessons at Klayman's Music Center in Woodbury. He was unsure if he was good enough at the instrument to teach others but it WAS the instrument of the 50s and enough people in the neighborhood seemed intrigued to learn it. He bought his first accordion in 1957 for \$1700, a fortune then, but Ed assures us he was making the big bucks to afford it. That same year, as a senior at Paulsboro High School, Ed enrolled in a drafting training program offered by RCA in Camden, and upon completion of the program and his subsequent high school graduation, he was hired on. After a year at the company he left to work full-time at Klayman's.

Ed's accordion days came to an end when he enrolled at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) to major in science and math. It is mathematics that Ed would go on to

teach for 33 years at Pennsauken High School, and where he would meet Miriam Reichenbach, an English teacher and reading specialist, and later in her career, a librarian who has been his loving wife for 35 years. "I was fortunate to be a teacher. I had a wonderful career. I know I impacted lives because I still get together with past students for dinner."

Pennsauken High School played an important role in Ed's now 25-year membership in Old Baldy CWRT. There he met with fellow teachers and Old Baldy members Bill Sia (American Government and History) and Bill Hughes (P.E and soccer coach). As union reps, Ed and Bill Sia worked together scrutinizing union contracts ("Bill Sia was my wingman"). And Bill Hughes is the one who asked Ed to tag along to an Old Baldy meeting. All three men have remained good friends and continue to support the Roundtable.

Like many Old Baldy members, Ed has been interested in the Civil War since high school. As he got older, though, his appreciation for the conflict deepened. "You age into loving history. I'd be driving down the interstate highway on really hot days and think about the troops marching in their wool uniforms and how tough they were." Reconstruction, the period in American history that followed the Civil War - or what prominent historian Eric Foner called the nation's second founding - is of particular interest to Ed.

"It was viewed as the formative stage of modern America - we had the underpinnings of a nation."

Ed's respect for military soldiers is evident in his admiration for 18th century Polish General and military engineer, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who not only fought for democracy in the American Revolutionary War but also designed and built fortifications on the Delaware and Hudson rivers. Thomas Jefferson called Kosciuszko "as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known." A book about the freedom fighter, *The Peasant Prince: Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the Age of Revolution* by Alex Storozynski sits on Ed's bedside table. "He embodied the spirit of why we fought the war and why we exist today."

Over the years, Ed has been honored for his restoration work on the USS New Jersey, berthed on the Delaware River and now a living museum and memorial in Camden, NJ. Together, he and Miriam serve on the West Deptford Environmental Commission: Ed as vice chair and Miriam as chairperson.

Today, Ed splits his leisure time between driving his Chevrolet C8 Corvette Stingray, flying (he's been a licensed pilot for 50 years), and relearning the accordion. Two years ago he took it up again after 50-plus years of silence.

Today in Civil War History

1861 Sunday, November 10



**Major General
George Brinton McClellan**

Eastern Theater

In a skirmish on the Guyandot River in western Virginia, recruits of the 9th West Virginia Regiment are attacked by rebels, and in the ensuing fight lose seven dead and 20 wounded to a Confederate loss of three killed and 10 wounded. There is a second, smaller action in western Virginia at Gauley Bridge.

1862 Monday, November 10

Eastern Theater

McClellan takes leave of the army which he has in large part created. He is well-liked by the troops and many are saddened by his departure.

1863 Tuesday, November 10

Eastern Theater

Fort Sumter withstands its third consecutive day of bombardment from the Union batteries outside Charleston. The federal cannon fire nearly 600 rounds a day at the shattered fort.

Fort Sumter



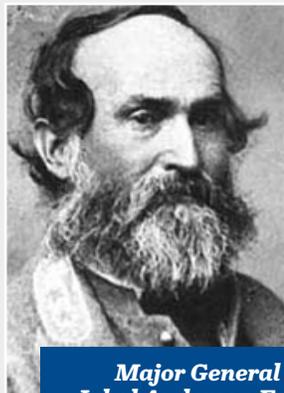
1864 Thursday, November 10

Eastern Theater

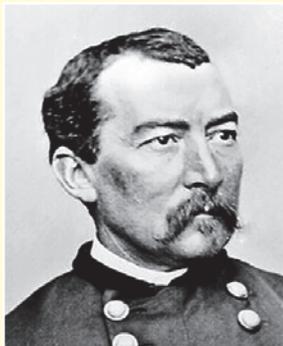
Jubal Early leads the remnant of his command from New Market toward Sheridan's forces in the Shenandoah, but he lacks the strength to offer effective opposition.

Western Theater

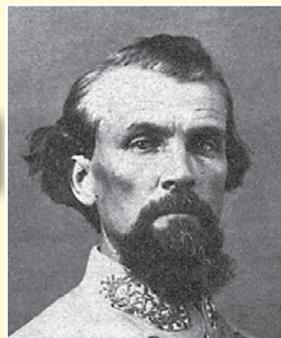
Bedford Forrest is back at Corinth, Mississippi, heading over to join Hood for the invasion of Tennessee.



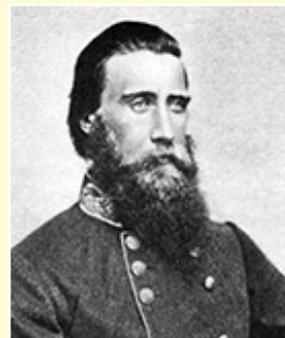
**Major General
Jubal Anderson Early**



**Major General
Philip Henry Sheridan**



**Lieutenant General
Nathan Bedford Forrest**



**Lieutenant General
John Bell Hood**

**Lorraine Gancher helping
us break that record**



Boscov's Friends Helping Friends

**Old Baldy hitting a new high on sales
of Boscov's Friends Helping Friends coupons.**

A Gettysburg Hero's Shameful Ending

By Joseph F. Wilson,
Member, OBCWRT



United States Army
Medal of Honor

Remembering our deceased soldiers on Memorial Day is a long held tradition across the country. By placing flowers or a flag on a grave we acknowledge their sacrifice. But not all our honored soldiers rest beneath the stars and stripes. Some of our heroes vanished into obscurity.

Corporal Bernard McCarren was one of many who won the Medal of Honor at Gettysburg. McCarren didn't live long after the war. He died from dysentery in 1870. He left behind a wife and no children. The Irishman was buried in the Old Cathedral Cemetery in Wilmington, Delaware, where most local Irish Catholics were laid to rest. In the 1880's McCarren's neglected corpse went missing for well over a century.

After the Civil War the Old Cathedral cemetery fell into disrepair. The Diocese urged the families of those buried in Old Cathedral grounds to move the remains to the New Cathedral Cemetery on Lancaster Avenue. Leaving the task to individual families to move the remains opened the door to neglect. As a result, the closing of the cemetery around 1882 resulted in a botched effort to reinter all the dead to the new location. Corporal Bernard McCarren's remains were left behind along with hundreds of other bodies.

McCarren rested beneath an empty dirt lot for decades unbeknownst to anyone. In 1954, the lot was sold by the Diocese to a hospital. The new owner paved over the former cemetery for a parking lot. Still, his body remained lost for five more decades. Drivers parked their automobiles for years on the lot in Wilmington, Delaware, never knowing Bernard reposed just below the surface along with Hundreds of other forgotten bodies. Finally, in 1998, a construction crew resurrected his abandoned bones.

Removing the bodies from the old cemetery to the new grounds took years. The Diocese thought all the bodies had been successfully removed and the job completed. Cities grew rapidly in the years after World War Two. Wilmington wasn't any different. The Diocese sold what they believed to be an abandoned lot to the new hospital located next to the former cemetery. The hospital paved over the land to construct the parking lot. Patrons of the hospital had no idea they parked their cars over a burial ground. Neither did city officials or hospital administrators.

In 1998, expansion once again brought more upgrades around what is now Christiana Hospital. More buildings to expand the hospital meant new plans for the parking lot. In digging up the lot, shocked construction crews discovered hundreds of the old bones. All construction came to a halt as archeologists arrived on the scene.

Officials found nearly 2,000 bodies still remained from the Old Cathedral Cemetery. Records at the New Cathedral Cemetery on Lancaster Avenue revealed that McCarren's body was never buried in the new cemetery. Officials determined that the bones of Corporal Bernard McCarren had laid underneath the lot for 128 years from the time of his death in 1870. The archeologist carefully removed all the bones from the parking lot. After so many years, identifying the bodies wasn't possible.

McCarren was born in 1830 in Ireland. Like so many patriotic Irishmen, McCarren rushed to answer President Lincoln's call to arms to save the Union. The Irish responded in great numbers to defend their newly adopted country. The 18 year old Irish immigrant followed another Irishmen, Captain Thomas Smyth, into the 24th Pa. Regiment. Bernard served for three months in the Irish regiment.

When that term ended, he enlisted for three years with now "Major" Smyth in the 1st Delaware Infantry. Smyth quickly rose in the ranks to Colonel. The regiment served bravely in all the major battles in the eastern theater losing 12 officers and 146 men killed or mortally wounded. Their sacrifices earned them

the designation as one of the 300 best fighting units in Colonel William Fox's post war study. At Gettysburg, the 1st Delaware served in Colonel Thomas Smyth's Second Brigade, Third Division, as part of General Winfield Hancock's Second Corps.

The regiment marched for the hamlet at Gettysburg attached to the division of General Alexander Hays. Bernard McCarren and the 1st Delaware Infantry took part in the thick of the fighting at Gettysburg. On the second day, the regiment spent most of the day fighting around the Bliss Farm well in front of the main line on Cemetery Ridge. Things got much hotter for the Delaware regiment on the third day of the battle.

The 1st Delaware laid in the path of Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863. Along with the 12th NJ and the 14th CT, the Delaware boys held the low stone wall near the Bloody Angle and just south of the Bryan Farm house. To their left, William Arnold's battery of ordnance rifles engage the Confederate batteries in the terrific cannonade preceding the charge. The divisions of Generals George Pickett, Isaac Trimble, and James Pettigrew soon emerged from the woods in fine order to attack the Union Center. A mass of 13,000 gray clad soldiers went forward seeking to split the Union line into two separate units.

Pickett aimed for the copse of trees. General Trimble and General Pettigrew directed their attack at the Division of Alexander Hays. When nearing the Union line, Trimble and Pettigrew faltered after heavy musket fire, accompanied by canister from Arnold's guns, decimated the oncoming southerners. While Pickett breached the Union line, the gray wave in front of Colonel Thomas Smyth's brigade came to a halt. The 1st Delaware saw a golden opportunity.

After halting an advance in their front from the Alabama boys of General James Archer's brigade, the Delaware boys leaped over the stone wall and counter charged the broken southerners. A stiff fight convinced the Alabama regiment to retreat. Coming out of the fight with the Alabamians, Private McCarren had possession of the battle flag of the 13th Alabama regiment. For capturing the colors, the private received our nation's highest award.

In 1864, McCarren took the field in the spring as a corporal when the regiment marched in Grant's Overland Campaign. At the Battle of the Wilderness he suffered a severe gunshot wound to the shoulder. The war was over for Bernard. After eight months in the hospital, a discharge returned McCarren to the civilian ranks.

McCarren rested undisturbed in the Old Cathedral Cemetery through the closure and the failed effort to remove all the bodies. After the sale of the land in 1954, the asphalt went down for the parking lot. For years cars came and went over Bernard's grave. No Flowers or flags ever honored the Medal of Honor winner or any of the other citizens under the black top.

Wilmington officials all thought the removal of the dead had been completed long ago. The Gettysburg hero rested forgotten by everyone at the same location for 128 years with 50 of those years being under the asphalt parking lot. All the newly discovered remains from the obsolete cemetery were transferred in 1998 to the All Saints Cemetery across town to be buried in a mass grave. Keeping the bones of all the cadavers whole after 128 years in the ground wasn't possible. Pine boxes simply disintegrate in the ground leaving the earth to claim the bones.

Bernard McCarren's bones arrived at the cemetery all jumbled together with the other bones in several wooden crates. An ending not so fitting for an honored veteran. A mass grave for the 2,000 at All Saints Cemetery holds an immense pile of bones that lack any identification.

Sometime after the 1998 transfer, a grave marker for Bernard was placed in the section holding the hundreds of remains reinterred from the parking lot. A large Irish cross marks the location of the pit with all the bones. Corporal McCarren's status as a Medal of Honor winner is noted on a handsome bronze MOH marker in the center of the grassy mass grave. The Veterans Administration

"to commemorate the gallantry of her sons"



1st Delaware Infantry
Second Corps - USA
Third Division - Second Brigade
Lieutenant Colonel Edward P. Harris (A)
Captain Thomas B. Hizar (W)
Lieutenant William Smith (MW)
Lieutenant John D. Dent
Engaged: 251 Casualties: 77
Location: Hancock Avenue (North)
Dedicated: June 1886

(A) - Arrested
(W) - Wounded
(MW) - Mortally Wounded

Medal Of Honor
1st Delaware Infantry
Captain James Parke Postles
Company A
Private Bernard McCarren
Company C
Private John Mayberry
Company F



approved the marker.

Rules by the VA require any marker placed in a cemetery without a body beneath it be clearly inscribed with the phrase "In Memory of." That designates the stone a memorial versus a grave stone. Bernard's bronze plaque has no such wording. So it's a grave marking the burial of an actual body.



Here's where a technicality may be at work. McCarren's body is surely buried in All Saints Cemetery in the mass grave. The McCarren marker sits atop the mass grave. But his body being directly under that marker is doubtful. The unidentified remains from 2000 bodies covers a large area. No body rests in the grave fully assembled as the Lord had created. McCarren's leg bone may be yards away from his arm bone.

Although his remains aren't exactly under the marker, Bernard's final resting place is certainly beneath the surface somewhere in the open area in front of the Irish cross. His bones may be scattered 10 or 15 yards away from the bronze marker, but the VA determined that would be close enough to allow a grave marker instead of a memorial.

At last, an attractive bronze marker now acknowledges for future generations McCarren's status as a war hero. After so many years lost to history, Corporal Bernard McCarren's remains now receives a flag atop the grave marker every Memorial Day to honor the service to country of a patriotic and dedicated Veteran.

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; "Those White Roses" Carrie Sheads - Gettysburg

*By Frank Moore,
Women of the War,
1867*



Carrie Sheads
A later image

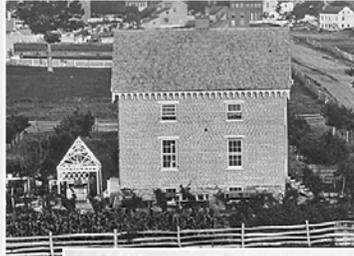
Gettysburg will be ranked in history as one of the few great, decisive battles of the world; and, in consequence, every hero who fell, and a great many of those who were there, will enjoy a prominence not accorded to those who fought and bled on the other battlefields. So of those who were casually connected with those three momentous days, so big with the destiny of the Republic.

The name of Carrie Sheads, besides its association with that great battlefield, will be remembered as of one who, being summoned, by the terrible boom of hostile cannon, from a life of quiet and scholastic seclusion, met the terrible demands of the hour with the calmness of a heroine, and, amid the roar and crash of battle, and the fierce hate of the fiery belligerents, acted with a discretion and genuine courage which entitle her name and her act to be held in perpetual remembrance by the daughters of America.

When Lee's army advanced to the invasion of Pennsylvania, Miss Sheads was principal of Oakridge Seminary, a short distance west of the village. As many idle and groundless rumors of the rebel advance had reached the village, she had at length dismissed anxiety, become indifferent to the reports, and kept on in the even tenor of her way, little dreaming how soon or how fiercely the storm would burst around her. The evening of the 30th of June came, and with it Buford's cavalry, the van of the Army of the Potomac. The first brigade of this division camped on the Chambersburg Pike, not more than two hundred yards from the seminary.

Closing the usual routine of the day, she promised her scholars a holiday on the morrow, to enable them to visit the camp, and contribute to the comfort of the weary and hungry soldier boys.

The next morning was ushered in by the heavy boom of artillery, soon followed by sharp volleys of carbine and musket shots. So suddenly and unexpectedly had war unfurled its gorgeous but bloody panorama around her and the cluster of girls in her care, that no time was left to withdraw to a place of safety, and the battle was now actually raging a few hundred yards from her door.



Various photos of the Shead house at 331 Buford Avenue (formerly the Chambersburg Pike), on the north side of the street.

So near the line of battle, and situated on the turnpike, the buildings of Oakridge Seminary, very soon used as a hospital; and, with that amazing suddenness which can happen only in a time of active and invasive warfare, Miss Sheads found herself converted from the principal of a young ladies' seminary into the lady superintendent of an army hospital. The world is familiar with the story of this great battle, of which this cavalry engagement on the morning of the 1st of July was the opening; how Buford, with his handful of cavalry, checked the advance of the rebel masses, till Reynolds, with the First corps, came to their relief, and, by the assistance of the Eleventh and part of the Third, seized upon the key point of the position, - the Cemetery Ridge, which was strengthened by the entire Union force as it came up, and which, at the end of three days of awful carnage, remained secure in the iron grasp of the Federal army. The issue of the first day's fight was the falling back of Howard, who commanded after Reynolds fell, from Seminary Ridge, where the action began, to Cemetery Ridge, on the other side of town. Slowly and sadly the veterans of the First corps turned to obey the order. And, although the rebels pressed them hard, and sought by desperate charges made wild huzzas to rout them in confusion, still they maintained their discipline, and, obstinately contested every inch of ground.

Reynolds had fallen, but the dead hero had left his own gallant and self-devoting spirit in the breasts of his men. They were fighting on their own soil, by their own hearth stones, on hills that had been familiar to many of them from boyhood; and this had made heroes of them all.

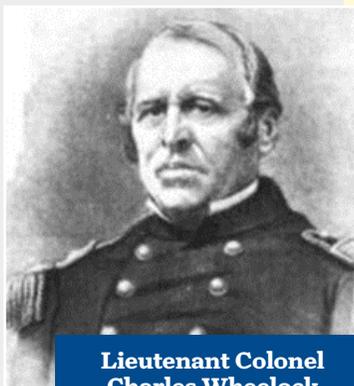
Among the last to leave the field were the Ninety-seventh New York infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Wheelock, who, after fighting hand-to-hand as long as there was a shadow of hope, undertook to lend his broken column through the only opening in the enemy's lines, which were

fast closing around him.

Arriving on the grounds of Oakridge Seminary, the gallant colonel found his only avenue of escape effectually closed, and, standing in a vortex of fire, from front, rear, and both flanks, encouraged his men to fight with the naked bayonet, hoping to force a passage through the walls of steel which surrounded him. Finding all his efforts vain, he ascended the steps of the seminary, and waved a white pocket handkerchief in token of surrender. The rebels, not seeing it, or taking no notice of it, continued to pour their murderous volleys into the helpless ranks. The colonel then opened the door, and called for a large white cloth. Carrie Sheads stood there, and readily supplied him with one. When the rebels saw his token of surrender they ceased firing, and the colonel went into the basement to rest himself, for he was thoroughly exhausted.

Soon a rebel officer came in, with a detail of men, and, on entering, declared, with an oath, that he would show them "southern grit." He then began taking the officers' side arms. Seeing Colonel Wheelock vainly endeavoring to break his sword, which was of trusty metal, and resisted all his efforts, the rebel demanded the weapon; but the colonel was of the same temper as his sword, and turning to the rebel soldier, declared he would never surrender his sword to a traitor while he lived. The rebel then drew a revolver, and told him if he did not surrender his sword he would shoot him. But the colonel was a veteran, and had been in close places before.

Drawing himself up proudly, he tore open his uniform, and still grasping his well-tried blade, bared his bosom, and bade the rebel "shoot," but he would guard his sword with his life. At this moment, Elias Sheads, Carrie's father, stepped between the two, and begged them not to be rash; but he was soon



Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wheelock

pushed aside, and the rebel repeated his threat. Seeing the danger to which the colonel was exposed, Miss Sheads, true to the instincts of her sex, rushed between them, and besought the rebel not to kill a man so completely in his power; there was already enough blood shed, and why add another defenceless victim to the list? Then turning to the colonel, she pleaded with him not to be so rash, but to surrender his sword, and save his life; that by refusing he would lose both, and the government would lose a valuable officer. But the colonel still refused, saying, "This sword was given me by my friends for meritorious conduct, and I promised to guard it sacredly, and never surrender or disgrace it; and I never, will while I live." Fortunately, at this moment the attention of the rebel officer was drawn away for the time by the entrance of other prisoners, and while he was thus occupied. Miss Sheads, seizing the favorable opportunity, with admirable presence of mind unclasped the colonel's sword from his belt, and hid it in the folds of her dress. When the rebel officer returned, the colonel told him he was willing to surrender, and that one of his men had taken his sword and passed out. This artifice succeeded, and the colonel "fell in" with the other prisoners, who were drawn up in line to march to the rear, and thence to some one of the loathsome southern prison pens, many of them to meet a terrible death, and fill an unknown grave.

When the prisoners had all been collected, and were about starting, Miss Sheads, remembering the wounded men in the house, turned to the rebel officer, and told him that there were seventy-two wounded men in the building, and asked him if he would not leave some of the prisoners to help take care of them. The officer replied that he had already left three. "But," said Miss Sheads, "three are not sufficient." "Then keep five, and select those you want, except commissioned officers," was the rebel's unexpected reply. On the fifth day after the battle, Colonel Wheelock unexpectedly made his appearance, and received his sword from the hands of its noble guardian, with those profound emotions which only the soldier can feel and understand, and, with the sacred blade again in his possession, started at once to the front, where he won for himself new laurels, and was promoted to the rank of a brigadier-general. He had managed to effect his escape from the rebels while crossing South Mountain, and, after considerable difficulty and suffering, succeeded in reaching Gettysburg in safety. General Wheelock finally died of camp fever, in Washington City, near the close of the war, in January, 1865.

As the battle raged, Miss Sheads and her little flock continued unterrified in the midst of the awful cannonade, she soothing and cheering the girls, and they learning from her that noble calmness in danger which, under all circumstances, and in either sex, stamps the character with an air of true nobility, and indicates genuine heroism.

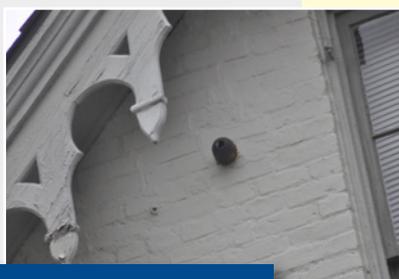
The seminary was hit in more than sixty places, and two shells passed entirely through it. At length Miss Sheads and her young ladies became accustomed, as it were, to the situation, and in the intervals of the uproar would walk out in the grounds, and watch the magnificent yet fearful sight, that the slopes of Cemetery Hill presented.

All devoted themselves to the great number of wounded with whom their halls and large rooms were crowded. For many days after the fighting ceased, and Lee had withdrawn his mutilated army south of the mountain, these poor fellows remained there, and were most kindly cared for, till all whose injuries were serious had been removed to the general hospitals that had been fitted up on the hills at the other side of the town.

The annoyance suffered by having the battle at their threshold was not the only trial which the war laid upon the family of Miss Sheads. There were four brothers, who, imbibing the spirit of patriotism which animated so many thousands in all the loyal states at the outbreak of the rebellion, thought

***"The time had come when brothers must fight,
And sisters must pray at home."***

The two eldest joined the army at the first call for troops, and by reenlistment remained in service until one was discharged for disability, and the other fell while bravely fighting at the battle of Monocacy.



**Artillery shell still stuck
in the wall of the house**

The other two joined the army later; one of whom entered the hospital at City Point, while the other received, at White Oak Swamp, wounds which have made him an invalid for life. All four have proved their loyalty on the bloody field, and, while two of them

**"Sleep their last sleep,
And have fought their last battle,"**

another, by her exertions in providing for the sufferers and for the family, at the time of the great battle, has rendered herself a chronic invalid. Thus five of this interesting and deeply loyal family have laid the most precious of earthly gifts - life and health- as free-will offerings-on the altar of their country.



**Carrie Sheads
Grave**



**James Sheads
Grave**



**Elias Sheads
Grave**



**David Sheads
Grave**



**Robert Sheads
Grave**

Carrie Sheads and Brothers David, Robert, Elias and James Sheads

Carrie was principal of the Oak Ridge Seminary for girls. Her building (house) became a hospital and she and the students became nurses. Her four brothers enlisted in the Union Army and two were killed and two died soon after the war due to their war wounds.

A Latin quote was placed on each of the brother's headstones:
"Dulce et decorum est pro Patria mori."

It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country.
Location: Evergreen Cemetery

Old Baldy's October Meeting Review

**"BACK FROM BATTLE: The Forgotten Story of Pennsylvania's
Camp Discharge and the Weary Civil War Soldiers It Served"**

presented by Jim Remsen and Brad Upp

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

The last stop for Pennsylvania Civil War soldiers before they could be discharged from the war was Camp Discharge on a ridge overlooking the Schuylkill River, near today's Schuylkill Expressway, in Gladwyne, PA. If a person looks across the river it looks like a mountainous retreat with wooden buildings higher than the treetops that are going down the sloped mountains. An enormous flagpole was on the grounds and could be seen for miles.

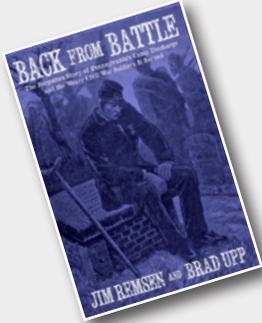
Many of historians and those not as knowledgeable may not have heard about Camp Discharge or even thought of a camp in the present-day Lower Merion Township or riding along the Schuylkill Expressway. There is not a word about this camp in a history book or area history. The camp was erected in 1864 and by early 1866 was rapidly taken down. The original property is now in private hands today with a member only golf course which is off limits to the public.



Jim Remsen



Brad Upp



Camp Discharge was the last place Civil War soldiers had to pass through to finally get home. The 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry, the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry were part of a massive cannonade in Gettysburg at Pickett's Charge seeing the horrors of war. Some of these soldiers survived the war and went home with no problems, but some left with psychological problems that lasted a lifetime. Those soldiers that survived Andersonville and other Prisoner of War Camps had lost all their physical strength, needing the care of Fort Discharge's hospital. With the help of nurses, the soldier hoped to get back to health. They

wanted the chance to get home to their loved ones and be nursed by a member of their family. Most of the soldiers coming to Fort Discharge were three-year enlistments in the summer and fall of 1861. By the time these soldiers entered Fort Discharge many were not able to fight in any further battles. Some of the soldiers coming to camp were not with their regiment for many different reasons. They had enough of war!

The camp site was in rural lower Merion on a property about a quarter mile square about nine miles from the city. The land was right along the river along with a railroad line. The additional 18 acres were on a rocky wooden incline. On the slope was a stone farmhouse and a barn, uphill wagon path and many springs of pure spring water. Construction began first leveling the ground and erecting new buildings and barracks that were spread out over the grounds to prevent diseases such as smallpox, skin infections or TB.

Finally, by mid-November Dr. Rush Van Dyke became a camp surgeon along with his assistant Dr. Joseph K. Cornon who worked in the camp's hospital. The hospital consisted of two matching infirmary buildings with thirty impatient beds per building. An ambulance wagon was available to help disabled men up the hill from the train stop. The average number per day could be as many as thirty sick. Late 1864, improvement had been made to the sanitation and hygiene. Only designated cooks would prepare meals and soldiers had to bath twice a week. An engine house was built to help the water supply. There was a 170 feet high flagpole from the fairgrounds of the US Sanitary Commission on Philadelphia Logan Square. The flag was next to the parade grounds along with a pair of Napoleon cannon at two corners of the parade grounds. The flagpole could be seen all over the camp and countryside for miles.

Solders were given a pass and were allowed to go into the city but had to be back by the next morning. If they did not come back were considered deserters and risked even being executed. An offender could be sentenced to time in the brig, hard labor, a fine, or have the letter "D" branded on their hip.

Presenter Book Winner - Robert Hahn
Jim Heenehan, Randy Acorcey, Michael Kalichak, Marty Wilensky, Rich Jankowski, Tom Scurria, Ted Leventhal.... won the attendees raffle.

By July 19, 1866, came orders from the Adjutant General's office in Washington Special Order 381 directed the camp to break up immediately and turned over to the Quartermaster's Department for action. The camp's last monthly report was filed on July 31. It listed the final fifty-one people "disposed of" and fourteen others who went AWOL. The only building left open was the hospital and as of August the garrison guards remained on duty. After being discharged at the fort the soldier's life began by going home to their family. Some men became leading citizens of their communities. Others wanted to wander and never came home and were never seen again. Some soldiers died young, and others lived into their eighties. Some profiled men were Albert Thalheimer who owned and operated a cigar box machining company. He hired Vets and lived into his eighties. Isaac Horner had been a farmer and produce dealer in early 1864. By December 12, 1879, he left his wife and family, boarded a train, and vanished.

The large stone house which stood on a bluff became the summer estate of Howard Wood, operator of the Schuylkill Iron Works in Conshohocken which later became the Alan Wood Steele Co. Wood died in 1911, his son inherited the hilltop house. Clement Wood became troop's captain of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard and opened the grounds training and drilling troops.

By the early 60's the old estate was gone and by 1965 the Philadelphia Country Club expanded by purchasing 85 acres that was part of the Camp Discharge site. There was never a monument or a plaque to honor the men who went through the camp. The only physical relic is a sentry box at the foot of Howard Wood's drive. A local resident of this area, Brad Upp, co-author along with Jim Remsen of this book, managed to excavate finding bullets, buttons, rifle parts, medicine bottles, scabbards, and other objects that the soldiers have deposited in latrines and refuse pits. Brad is on a personal mission to honor the Camp Discharge and the soldiers who were at the camp along with the history that is part of the area for all to learn.

We hope that Brad will keep excavating the area around the golf course to continue the story of the soldiers and their path to being discharged and finally going home. Jim and Brad have told a story that had been hidden for many years even though the story was so close to our home. It makes the ending of the war complete for some of the soldiers that are near the Philadelphia area. This is such an interesting story. Thank you, Jim, and Brad, for bringing the story to our roundtable.



THE HISTORY INSTITUTE AT MANOR COLLEGE Presents a NEW Program via ZOOM

"The Battle for the Old Northwest: President Washington's Indian War"

Thursday, November 10 (6:30 – 8:30 pm)

Instructor: Tom Donnelly

Fee: \$30

The most one-sided defeat ever suffered by U.S. forces occurred on Nov. 4, 1791, in western Ohio. Shawnee and Miami warriors, led by Blue Jacket and Little Turtle, nearly wiped out political general Arthur St. Clair's command. The struggle for the Northwest Frontier had begun during the French and Indian War and would not end until the War of 1812. The fighting in Kentucky and Ohio also saw the rebirth of the U.S. Army under "Mad Anthony" Wayne.

This is the next installment of Tom's programs on early American history.

In the years during and after the American Revolution, the struggle for the Ohio country reached its bloody climax. The movement of Anglo-American long hunters and settlers turned Kentucky into the "dark and bloody ground." Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, Simon Kenton, and others fought to maintain American control of Kentucky. The Natives of the Old Northwest inflicted a series of shocking defeats on American forces. But the worst defeat ever inflicted on the U. S. Army was followed by the most important victory won by the U. S. in the Indian wars. Come and see how all this happened.

If you're interested in the early history of our newly-established country, this program is for you!

Please join local historian Tom Donnelly as he presents this brand new program for our History Institute, and a continuation of his popular program on this interesting and much-neglected period of American history. Please note that this a stand-alone program. You need not have participated in Tom's previous programs to attend!

Please access <https://manor.edu/academics/adult-continuing-education/history-institute/> to register for this program. You will be sent a link with a password that will enable you to access the virtual program. A reminder email will be sent again within 24 hours of the start of the program.

And as a lover of history, you know how critical it is to keep history alive, especially today! We would love to have your support, as we look to continue to make these programs available. Invite a friend!



The Lincoln Forum recently announced their new website. [WEBSITE](#)
 Plan to attend the 2022 conference in Gettysburg. It will be held
 November 16-18. [REGISTER HERE](#)

**CIVIL WAR INSTITUTE
 SUMMER CONFERENCE**
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<https://www.gettysburg.edu/civil-war-institute/summer-conference/2023-cwi-conference#schedule>

Questions? Contact civilwar@gettysburg.edu or 717-337-6590 for further information



To members of Old Baldy: I am making up chance auction baskets for our holiday party. I need fairly large baskets. If any member has a basket that will work for the auction and want to give it for the December party, please bring them with you to the November meeting. I appreciate your help.

Kathy Clark

**Save the Date
Thursday
December 8th**

Mark Thursday December 8th with a **bold red circle** as we are not only conducting OBCWRT elections, but we are also going to have a holiday party. What a year, we celebrated Old Baldy's 170th birthday, the 45th Anniversary of our Round Table and left COVID 19 behind. Join us at our regular December meeting to celebrate the end of the year and take a break from the holiday frenzy. Round Table members, family and friends are all invited to discuss the election results (Not that those elections), share stories, drink a little cheer and nibble on delicious treats. Some lucky folks will even walk away with presents too boot!

Please look for the Holiday Party Planning email later this month and of course more information will be communicated at our upcoming November meeting. If you dare to volunteer prior to knowing anything more or you just happen to be the Party Planner extraordinaire, send Paul an email at

pprentissfamily@gmail.com.

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

Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2022 - 2023

**December 8, 2022 - Thursday
Old Baldy Election Night**

**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
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1889 Marlton Pike East
Cherry Hill, NJ
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Founded January 1977**

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Vice President: Kathy Clark
Treasurer: Frank Barletta
Secretary:
Programs: Dave Gilson
Membership: Amy and Dan Hummel**

**Trustees:
Paul Prentiss
Tom Scurria
Dave Gilson**

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