

WOMEN AT GETTYSBURG





**Gettysburg Civil War Women's Memorial
(Evergreen Cemetery)**



Elizabeth Thorn

The caretaker during the Battle of Gettysburg of the town cemetery --- Evergreen Cemetery --- was not a man but a woman who was about seven month's pregnant. Her name was Elizabeth Thorn, who was married to the official caretaker Peter Thorn, but he had enlisted in the Union Army in August of 1862 and gone off to war. Elizabeth had already had three young sons (all under the age of seven), and with basically only her father's help, she buried about 90 soldiers. In her own words, Elizabeth Thorn stated: "[We] kept on burying the soldiers until they had the National Cemetery ready, and in that time we buried one hundred five soldiers. In front of this house there were fifteen dead horses and beside the Cemetery there were nineteen in that field. So you may know it was only excitement that helped me to do all the work, with all that stench. And in three months after I had a dear little baby. But it was not very strong, and from that time on my health failed and for years I was a very sickly woman. In my older days my health has been better, but those hard days have always told on my life."

Peter Thorn returned home after Appomattox in 1865, and the family remained at Evergreen Cemetery as caretakers until 1874. Elizabeth Thorn died in 1907 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery along with her family.

In 2002, a Civil War Women's Memorial was dedicated. The memorial is within Evergreen Cemetery near the gatehouse. The sculpture depicts Elizabeth attending to burial duties. Her face is full of anguish, an apron covers her pregnant abdomen, and she holds a spade representing all she did.



**Marie Tepe --- "French Mary"
114th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment vivandiere**



(photo by Frederick Gutekunsts)

Seeing a woman in the midst of the hotly contested Civil War battlefield of Spotsylvania surprised the veteran officer of the 8th Ohio Infantry Regiment! Seeing her in uniform - a Zouave uniform at that - astonished him all the more. She was the famous Vivandiere, Marie Tepe, who served with in the 114th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Vivandieres appeared in European armies, especially in France, as women who were part of a regiment and provided the sale of spirits and other comforts, and attended to the sick. The women were known to wear the uniform of the regiment. Over the years the status of Vivandieres changed, and in 1865 a regulation appointed a certain number of women to each section of the French army. Some of these women, swept into some of the most dangerous parts of the battlefield, displayed enormous courage. Such courage existed among women in America, and when the Civil War began in 1861, there were women who were ready to join with the men to defend their country.

Marie Tepe was one such courageous woman. Originally born in France in 1834, Marie was raised by her father and later moved to the United States following his death. When she was nearly 20 years of age, she married Bernhard Tepe, a Philadelphia tailor. When the Civil War began, her husband joined the 27th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. As soon as her husband left so did Marie, despite Bernhard wanting her to stay and mind the tailor shop in Philadelphia.

In the spring of 1861, Marie Tepe became a vivandiere with the 27th Pennsylvania Volunteers. She is better known as the vivandiere of the 114th Pennsylvania. The original company of that regiment was organized in the early weeks of August, 1861, by

Captain Charles H. T. Collis. Then in mid-August of 1862, Collis raised nine more companies to form the 114th, with himself as colonel. Like the original company, the 114th was a Zouave unit, based on the Zouave regiments of the French army. The soldiers wore a Zouave uniform; so did Mrs. Tepe, who left the 27th and went with Collis's regiment. She wore a blue jacket and red pants; to distinguish herself from the men, she wore a skirt trimmed in red. "French Mary," as she was often called, participated in the Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862. During the battle, she received a bullet wound to the ankle. For her bravery during the battle she received the Kearny Cross, which was awarded for valor to members of the First Division of the III Army Corps in memory of its first division commander, General Philip Kearny.

After a short hospitalization she rejoined the regiment. In July of 1863, Marie and her regiment joined the fight at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. When the battle was over, "French Mary" volunteered her services as a nurse to help the wounded. After a few weeks of tending to the injured, she returned to her regiment. Marie Tepe served through the rest of the war and later moved to Pittsburgh. "French Mary" died in 1901.



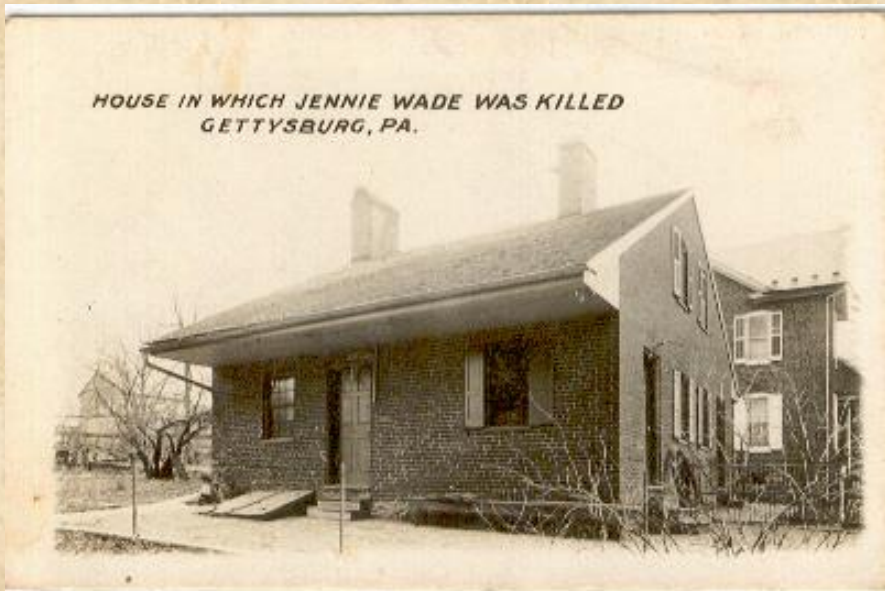


Jennie Wade



Georgia Wade McClellan

Virginia “Jennie” Wade died at the tender age of twenty. She is the only civilian to have lost her life during the 3-day Battle of Gettysburg. She lived on Breckenridge Street and was at her sister Georgia’s residence along with her mother, brother and 6 –year-old boarder Isaac, as her sister had just given birth. The McClellan’s lived on the opposite side of the home. Jennie was a seamstress, like her mother. The home, while not in the middle of the actual battle, was within close proximity. So close, in fact, that Jennie and her mother provided bread and water for the Union soldiers. The morning of her death, Jennie was kneading dough to make more bread for the soldiers when around eight thirty bullets shot through the door on the north side of the house. One struck Jennie and she was killed immediately.



Georgeanna (Wade) McClellan was born July 4, 1841 at Gettysburg to Mary Ann Filby of nearby York and James Wade, Sr. , a native Virginian who by 1845 was Captain of the 10th Company, Adams County Militia. “Georgia” became the first of six children, living at 242 Baltimore Street where both parents worked as tailors. Captain Wade was absent for prolonged periods, and Mary Ann moved Georgia and her siblings into 49-51 Breckenridge Street.

At about age 14, Georgia began learning the millinery business, continuing in the trade until her marriage on April 15, 1862 to John Louis McClellan , a private in Company E of the 2nd Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment. Georgia moved to 548 Baltimore Street, a rented 2-story brick double home where her sister was killed. Georgia and her husband and family lived there until 1866, when they moved to Dennison, Iowa to get a fresh start. Georgia died in Iowa in 1927.





Tillie Pierce
(age 15)



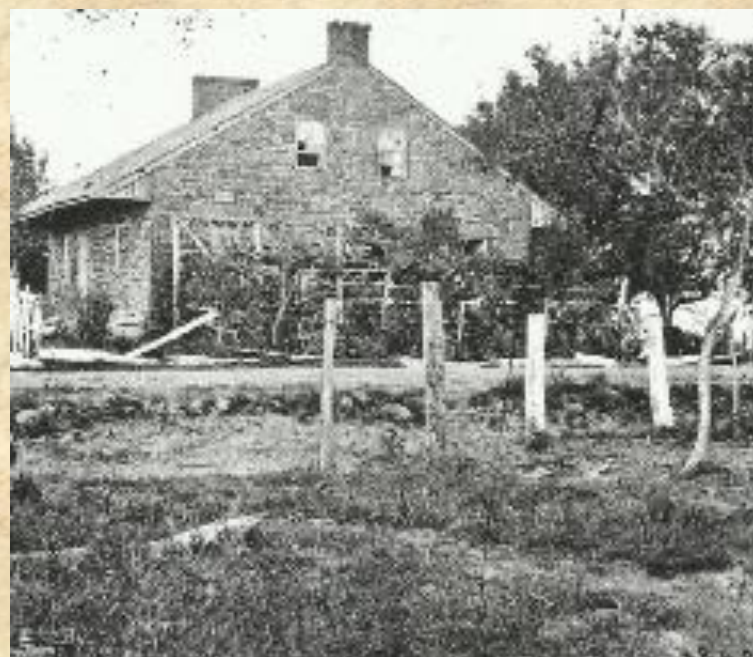
Tillie Pierce
(age 23)

Matilda “Tillie” Pierce was a 15-year-old girl when the battle erupted in her hometown of Gettysburg. Just before the battle began, Tillie was sent from her home on Baltimore Street to take two younger neighbor girls, Mollie and Sadie Shriver, to those girls’ grandmother’s home south of town to what they thought was the safety of a farm outside of town: the Jacob Weikert farm, about three miles down the Taneytown Road, on the east side (or behind) Little Round Top. This was a relatively good place to be on the first day of battle, but on the second day (and, to a certain extent, the third), it was a terrible place to be.

On the second day, with the battle rolling toward the Union left and centering in the wheat field, the peach orchard, and especially the round tops, the Weikert farm became a vast field hospital. Tillie saw her share of dead and wounded men and gave a drink of spring water to a grateful General Meade and talked with General Stephen Weed, desperately wounded on Little Round Top, the night before he died. She tended and fed wounded soldiers, and later wrote a book about her personal experiences, one of the best and most popular first-hand accounts written by a Gettysburg civilian of any age.

A few years after the war was over, Tillie met a young man who was a student at the Lutheran Theological Seminary and were married on September 28, 1871. They moved to Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, raised three children, and Tillie died in 1914 in nearby Philadelphia.

AT GETTYSBURG,
OR
WHAT A GIRL SAW AND HEARD
OF THE BATTLE
BY
Mrs. TILLIE FIERCE ALLEMAN



Anna Mary Long was born on November 12, 1793 near Littlestown, Pennsylvania. Her first husband was named Daniel Sell, with whom she had three daughters. Sell died at the age of 30 in 1822. Four years later she married Joshua Thompson, with whom she would have two sons and three daughters. Joshua Thompson became a drunkard and disappeared sometime after 1841, and was later presumed dead. Mary had the good fortune to be friends with Gettysburg Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, an abolitionist and a force behind the passage of the 13th Amendment ending slavery.

After the disappearance of Mary's husband, she took the money she had inherited from her father to Stevens and asked him to purchase the stone house in trust for her. Although Stevens 'name was on the deed, Mary owned the home. She moved into the property with her eight children by 1846, and lived there for the rest of her life. For a number of years thereafter, Mary cooked and washed laundry at the Lutheran Theological Seminary a short distance away. She appears in the June 1860 census as living at the old stone house in Cumberland Township by herself. Her children had all moved away.

In July 1863 she was 69 years old. She was known by the residents of Gettysburg simply as the Widow Thompson. The house General Robert E. Lee's staff chose as his headquarters at Gettysburg was a one-and-a-half story stone house, situated on a 4-acre tract on the crest of Seminary Ridge, west of town on the north side of the Chambersburg Pike (now 401 Buford Avenue). Mary Thompson died in 1873.



Lydia Leister farm



In 1861, Lydia Leister, the widow of James Leister, Lydia purchased a nine-acre farm with a small log house on the Taneytown Road just south of Gettysburg. She moved in with her six children, the youngest being only three years old.

Only two years later, she was forced out of her home when the American Civil War came right to her doorstep. During the Battle of Gettysburg, the Union forces were positioned in a "fish hook" shaped line several miles long and Lydia's home was located in the center of this line. The Union Commanding General, George Meade, chose her house for his headquarters, which was damaged during the battle.

Lydia and her children did so well rebuilding the farm from the devastation resulting for the war that they were able to purchase an additional seven acres in 1868. In 1874 , they built a large two-story addition to the farmhouse.

Reaching the age of 79 in 1888, Lydia decided to sell her farm to the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association and move into the town of Gettysburg. She must have had a great affection for her home for she decided to take it with her. She purchased a lot near the Dobbin House on the Emmitsburg Road and here she moved the 1874 section of her home. After the move, she built a two-story addition to the rear of the home. Here Lydia lived until her death in 1893 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.



Catherine Heagen House

Catherine Heagen

Catherine Little Heagen was a widow (her husband Henry had died in 1848) at the time of the battle and lived along the Baltimore Pike just east of Powers Hill. Her daughter Mary had married Joseph Sherfy, who owned a farm along the Emmitsburg Road. With Union troops all around her and being alone, she traveled to the Sherfy farm to get out of harm's way. However, heavy fighting occurred there on July 2, 1863 in and around their soon to be famous "Peach Orchard."

Even as skirmishers fought in the woods approximately one-third of a mile to the west, while Catherine walked across the farmyard, a stray Minié ball passed through a fence and struck the folds of her skirts. Heagen picked up the ball and kept it as a souvenir. A Union officer soon ordered the Sherfys away "on account of danger," in Joseph Sherfy's words. The family then reunited with their children a few miles behind Union lines.

Catherine Heagen died in January of 1864 at the age of 81.



Joseph and Mary Sherfy

Josephine Miller

At the time of the battle, there was a one story log farmhouse on the property, which was the home of Peter Rogers, his wife Susan and their granddaughter Josephine Miller, a single woman twenty-three years of age. Peter Rogers is said to have stayed in the house during the battle while his wife Susan took refuge east of the Round Tops. Josephine stayed behind with Peter during the fighting, baking bread and carrying water to the thirsty soldiers.

On July 2, 1863, Josephine was in the kitchen baking bread. A Union officer later wrote that he told Josephine to leave home immediately, but she had bread baking in the oven, and said she would stay until it was done. After the fighting was over for the day, she remained at the farm, caring for wounded Union and Confederate soldiers. In a reunion address at Gettysburg, Union General Henry Slocum made this statement:

“The great artillery duel which shook the earth for miles around did not drive her from her oven. Pickett's men, who charged past her house, found her quietly baking her bread and distributing it to the hungry. When the battle was over, her house was found to be riddled with shot and shell, and seventeen dead bodies were taken from the house and cellar, the bodies of wounded men who had crawled to the little dwelling for shelter.”

Josephine Miller Slyder died on January 9, 1911.



Josephine Miller



Female Soldiers at the Battle of Gettysburg

Despite the fact that women were technically not allowed to join the military on either side during the Civil War, hundreds of women fought as secret soldiers during the war and at least seven of these women fought in the historic Battle of Gettysburg. According to the book *"They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War"* about five women fought at Gettysburg: two Union soldiers and three Confederates. Another book, *"Women in the Civil War"* indicates two additional women fought on the side of the Confederacy at the battle.

One of the female Union soldiers was a woman from New York later identified as Mary Siezgle, but the other was a young teenage girl who still remains unidentified to this day. Both women survived the bloody battle, although the young teenage girl received minor wounds during the fighting.

The three female Confederate soldiers mentioned in *"They Fought Like Demons"* who also remain unidentified due to the Confederate's poor record-keeping, were not as lucky. One of the women was shot in the leg and captured. She was sent to the military hospital in Chester, Pennsylvania where doctors amputated her leg. A Union soldier recuperating in the hospital at the same time as the young woman, Thomas Reed, wrote to his parents about her in August of 1863:

"I must tell you that we have a female Secesh here. She was wounded at Gettysburg but our doctors soon found her out. They say she is very good looking but the poor girl

has lost a leg. It is a great pity she did not stay at home with her mother but she gets good care and kind treatment."

The other two female Confederate soldiers mentioned in *"They Fought Like Demons"* did not make it off the battlefield alive. They were both mortally wounded during Pickett's Charge. One of the women died while storming a stone wall along Cemetery Ridge and the other later died on the field.

A male Union soldier guarding the Emmitsburg Road that evening heard one of the women's cries of agony as she lay dying on the battlefield and described it as the most awful sound he had ever heard. Their bodies were later discovered by a Union burial detail, as the Confederates had retreated and left their dead and wounded behind.

According to *"Women in the Civil War"*, two Confederate women soldiers, cousins Mary and Mollie/Molly Bell, who served under General Jubal A. Early, did survive the Battle of Gettysburg as well as the Battle of Chancellorsville and the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse until their true identities were discovered in 1864 and they were sent to a Confederate prison before being released when their combat exploits were confirmed and that they had not simply been "camp followers". The girls (Mary was 15 years old and Mollie was 22 years old) from Pulaski County, Virginia had enlisted in the Confederate Army under false identities; Mary enlisted as Tom Parker, and Molly enlisted as Bob Morgan (also listed as "Bob Martin"). However, it still has not yet been confirmed that Mary and Mollie Bell were at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Anne/Annie/Anna Etheridge

Born in 1839 in Detroit, Michigan, Lorinda Anna Blair "Annie" Etheridge had already been a nurse at a Michigan hospital as well as caretaker for her father before his death. She was reared in luxury but her father met with misfortune with his business ventures. She married James Etheridge and when he enlisted in 1861 in the 2nd Michigan Infantry Regiment, she joined as a nurse and "vivandiere", later transferring to the 3rd and 5th Michigan Infantry Regiments so that she could remain with the Army of the Potomac.

Known as "Michigan Annie," she was often found on the front lines caring for the wounded where most surgeons wouldn't dare venture. She packed two pistols and rode a horse that hauled saddlebags filled with medical supplies. Annie was at the battles of First and Second Bull Run, Williamsburg, and Chancellorsville, before serving at Gettysburg. During one battle, when victory appeared hopeless, Annie shouted words of encouragement that inspired the men to fight on and win. One soldier later recounted: "All the officers in the Army of the Potomac would not have had as much influence over the men as did Annie, on her little roan mare." On May 27, 1863, Annie was awarded the Kearny Cross, a Union combat decoration awarded to soldiers for "overwhelming bravery."

Medal of Honor recipient Brevet Major General Clair Mulholland recalled observing Annie during the second day at Gettysburg during fighting around the Peach Orchard:

“Amidst cannon shot that was throwing up loose dirt around the farm ... a woman on horseback and in uniform galloped back from the line of battle, asked for some information, and quickly returned to the front again. She was a nurse of the Third Corps, Anna Etheridge and was directing the removal of the wounded. She was cool and self-possessed and did not seem to mind the fire.”

Annie went on to serve in many more Civil War battles. Annie once spoke about her pension papers: “When camped near Jeffersonville, Indiana July 5, 1865, I was presented with an official copy of the battles which we had participated in, nearly every one of which I had been with my command giving my services as a nurse.” The document lists her as fighting in 32 battles. After the war, Annie married a third time (Charles Hooks, a veteran of the 7th Connecticut Infantry Regiment) and settled in Washington, D.C., where she obtained a job at the Treasury Department. Annie died on January 23, 1913 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Anne Etheridge

Sophronia Bucklin

There were many people at Gettysburg on Nov. 19, 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln gave what we think of today as such a significant statement concerning the meaning of war and the country's future. Among the crowd was Sophronia Bucklin, who had gone to Washington a year earlier to offer herself to Dorothea Dix, the Superintendent of Nurses.

Dix first refused Bucklin's offer to become a nurse because Bucklin was under 30 years of age and Dix feared the work would be too hard for her. Bucklin was working at the Auburn Orphanage, and refused to take no for an answer. She arrived at Dix's door in Washington, D.C. — and, because of the great need for nurses, she was immediately set to work.

Bucklin was one of the first women nurses to arrive at Gettysburg. She found wounded men lying in the streets and feared walking on them as she passed by. They lay, she remembered, "like trees uprooted by a tornado," their lives "slowly ebbing away." She was directed to nurse those in the field, outside the hospital. She wrote that she was "thankful that I had been sent to aid," even though she faced a line of stretchers a mile and a half long. She washed "agonized faces," combed matted hair and bandaged slight wounds. She administered drinks to the injured: raspberry vinegar and lemon syrup. Hospital beds were set in rows, and she gave up her own mattress for one of the wounded. She was startled that there were Confederate soldiers among the wounded; she did not always approve of them, but she insisted

that all were nursed equally, “whatever my hands found to do,” despite her own hunger, swollen feet and wearied limbs. She contended with miserly quartermasters, unreasonable rules and surly medical men who had no use for women in the hospital — but she praised the kindly doctors she encountered.

Bucklin nursed through the summer and into the fall, writing that she had “grown familiar with death in every shape.” One soldier, she reported, said he would recommend her for a pension as she had “done more than any one man to put down the rebellion.” Bucklin left an account of the newly opened National Cemetery at Gettysburg, and she was there the day the cemetery was dedicated. She later went back to Washington and remained a nurse until the end of the war. She died in Ithaca, New York in 1902.



Sophronia Bucklin

Cornelia Hancock

Cornelia Hancock had embarked on a mission of mercy, and wasn't about to let her age and appearance prevent her from carrying it through. The day before, July 5, 1863, she had left her home in southern New Jersey to accompany her brother-in-law, Dr. Henry Child, to the Gettysburg battlefield. They had made their way as far as the Baltimore train station, where Ms. Hancock and other female volunteers had encountered Dorothea Dix, the superintendent of Union Army nurses. Mrs. Dix had established strict standards for the Army's female nurses, insisting that they be "mature in years (at least 30), plain almost to homeliness in dress, and by no means liberally endowed with personal attractions." In her memoir, written after the war, Ms. Hancock described the encounter with Dix:

"She looked the nurses over and pronounced them all suitable except me. She immediately objected to my going farther on the score of my youth and rosy cheeks. I was then just twenty-three years of age. In those days it was considered indecorous for angels of mercy to appear otherwise than gray-haired and spectacled. Such a thing as a hospital corps of comely young maiden nurses, possessing grace and good looks, was then unknown."

A colleague challenged Dix on Hancock's behalf, but the young woman didn't wait to hear the argument's outcome:

“The discussion waxed warm and I have no idea what conclusion they came to, for I settled the question myself by getting on the car and staying in my seat until the train pulled out of the city of Baltimore. They had not forcibly taken me from the train, so I got into Gettysburg the night of July sixth – where the need was so great that there was no further cavil about age.”

Cornelia served as a nurse and other capacities until the end of the war, and in 1866 she used funds from Philadelphia Quakers and the Freedmen's Bureau to open the Laing School for Negroes in South Carolina, where she taught for ten years. Hancock then moved to Philadelphia and she helped found the Children's Aid Society and the Society for Organizing Charity in 1878. Cornelia Hancock died in Atlantic City in 1927.



Cornelia Hancock

Georgeanna Woolsey

For some women, caring for the wounded was a family affair. “Have you friends in the Army, madam?” asked a wounded rebel soldier, as Georgeanna Woolsey, known as Georgy, attended to him. “Yes, my brother is on General Meade’s staff,” she replied. “I thought so, ma’am. You can always tell; when people are good to soldiers they are sure to have friends in the Army.” As nurses at Gettysburg, Woolsey and her mother worked for three weeks near the railroad depot, feeding and caring for men being sent to hospitals in Baltimore and Harrisburg. Afterward, Woolsey wrote a pamphlet about her experiences for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, which ordered and distributed 10,000 copies. After the war, she married and moved to New Haven, Connecticut where she founded the Connecticut Training School for Nurses. Georgeanna Woolsey died in New Haven in 1906.



Georgeanna Woolsey

Confederate Nurses at Gettysburg

Like the Union Army, there were also some women that served as nurses with Confederate military units at Gettysburg. Two of those women who are known are:

Lucinda Horne was born in 1814 and was from Edgefield County in South Carolina, and she accompanied her husband and son to war. She served as a regimental nurse, cook, and laundress in Company K of the 14th South Carolina Infantry Regiment (commanded by Colonel Joseph N. Brown), which was in Colonel Abner Perrin's Brigade in General William "Dorsey" Pender's Division of General A. P. Hill's III Corps.

Lucinda survived the war unscathed, and although both her husband and son sustained wounds, they also survived. They all returned home to South Carolina in 1865, and in the 1880's it is reported that Lucinda and her husband went to work as peddlers selling pottery. She died on February 29, 1896.

Rose Quinn Rooney served as a nurse, cook, and laundress with Company K of the 15th Louisiana Infantry Regiment (commanded by Major Andrew Brady at Gettysburg, which was in General Francis T. Nicholl's Brigade in General Edward "Allegheny" Johnson's Division of General Richard S. Ewell's II Corps) from June 1861 until the end of the war. There are reports of her on the field under fire at the Battle of First Bull Run and at Gettysburg. When some of the men in her regiment were briefly imprisoned after Appomattox, she insisted on joining them. After the war, she became the matron of a soldier's home in New Orleans.



Lydia Hamilton Smith

Lydia Hamilton Smith was the long-time housekeeper of abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens and a prominent African-American businesswoman after his death.

Lydia Hamilton was born at Russell Tavern near Gettysburg and was one-quarter African American. Smith married a free black man, Jacob Smith (who died 1852), with whom she had two sons.

After the Battle of Gettysburg , Lydia borrowed a horse and wagon and drove through Adams County, telling people of the thousands of wounded men. She accepted donations of food and clothing for the wounded and when the donations dried up, began spending her own money. Each day, with her wagon filled with supplies, she drove to the various field hospitals, where she distributed the articles (food, clothing, and delicacies) to Union and Confederate soldiers alike for several weeks.



Lydia Hamilton Smith

The Daughters of Charity of Emmitsburg

In late June of 1863, the war came to Emmitsburg. The armies of the Potomac and Northern Virginia succeeded each other at St. Joseph's. The sisters fed the soldiers encamped on the grounds. The brick house on tollgate hill and St. Joseph's Rectory were requisitioned for military headquarters. General Howard, later the founder of Howard University in Washington, D.C., was among those at the rectory. Surrounded by soldiers, the sisters prayed that the battle they knew was coming would not be fought on their land. The armies moved north to Gettysburg. Father Francis Burlando, the director of the Daughters of Charity, later wrote:

“On July first the battle commenced about nine miles from Emmitsburg; it continued three days. Two hundred thousand men were in the field and on each side there were from one hundred to one hundred-thirty pieces of cannon. The roar of these agents of death and destruction was fearful in the extreme, and their smoke rising to heaven formed dense clouds as during a frightful tempest. The Army of the South was defeated and in their retreat left their dead and wounded on the battlefield. What number of victims perished during this bloody engagement? No one yet knows but it is estimated that the figures rise to 50,000!”

On Sunday, the day after the battle ended, several sisters and Father Burlando set out for Gettysburg. Amid the carnage they began to care for those who had been

moved to the churches and hotels of the city. Sisters were assigned in pairs to various locations. The next day more sisters arrived, some from Baltimore and others from St. Joseph's. Government supplies began to arrive to supplement what the sisters had been able to provide. For as long as there were wounded, the sisters nursed the sick, and comforted and baptized the dying of both armies. One group of nearly 200 men was cared for in the field for three weeks until they could be taken to hospitals in New York and Philadelphia.



Sister Camilla O'Keefe

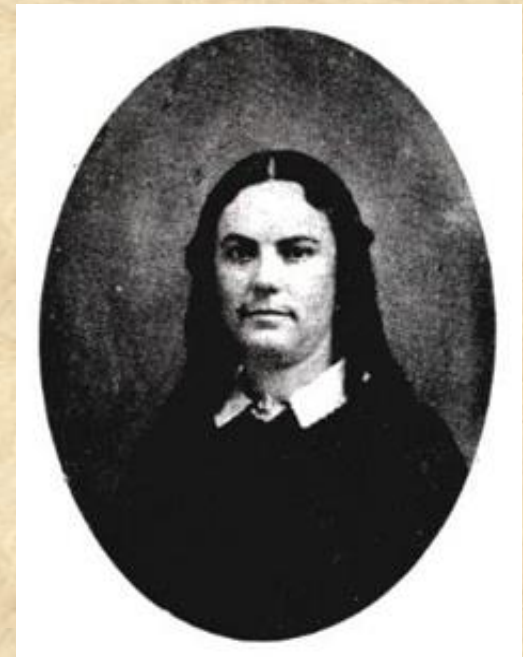
And two women too...

One of the most noticeable and unusual monuments on the battlefield is the “castle” monument to the 12th New York and 44th New York Infantry Regiments on Little Round Top:



In addition to the unique exterior design, an unusual aspect of the monument is in the interior on the bronze tablets listing not only individual officers and lower ranking soldiers but also commissary sergeants, hospital stewards, band members, and sutlers. But what is truly unusual is that these plaques also include the names of two women: Lora A. Hudson Bissell and Harriet Weld Corning.

Lora A. Hudson Bissell, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman, was born near Albany, New York in 1839. She became a schoolteacher and wrote the words to the poem "Ellsworth Avengers" to honor Colonel Elmer Ellsworth of the 11th New York Infantry Regiment, the first Union officer killed in the Civil War in May of 1861. Members of the 44th New York Infantry Regiment learned of the song, called upon Miss Hudson and asked permission to adopt the words as its regimental song. Learning of her desire to serve her country, they invited her to accompany them as the "Daughter of the Regiment." Miss Hudson did so, and joined the regiment as a volunteer nurse, later marrying Dr. Elias Bissell, Assistant Surgeon of the 44th New York Infantry Regiment, in 1864.



Harriet Weld Corning was a member of the wealthy and eminent Weld family of Roxbury, Massachusetts. Born in 1793, she married Erastus Corning, a businessman from Norwich, Connecticut who made his mark in hardware, nail and iron works, and other business ventures in and near Albany, New York. He also became involved in politics on the state and federal level in the late 1850's and early 1860's. As one of the plaques inside the monument states:

*"And as a
Tribute to a
Patriotic Woman
Mrs. Harriet Weld Corning,
who presented the 44th regiment the colors
under which it fought, with the injunction to
"preserve it forever from the traitor's
touch and let no coward's hand trail it in the dust."*

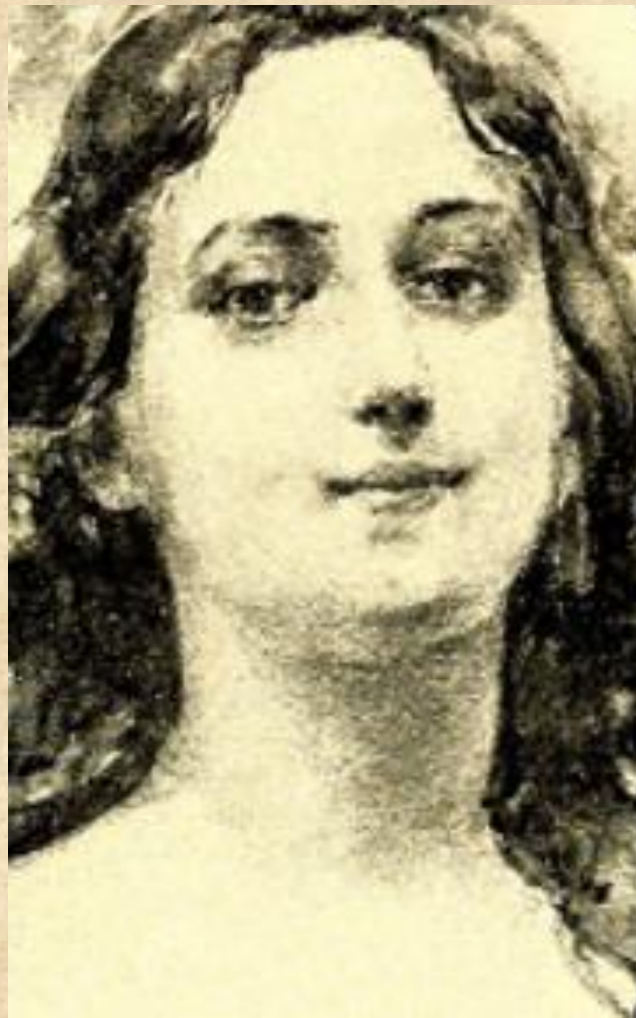


Arabella Griffith Barlow, the wife of Union General Francis Barlow (commander of the First Division of General Oliver O. Howard's XI Corps at Gettysburg), became a Civil War nurse after her husband joined the Union Army in April of 1861 as a Private in the Twelfth Regiment of the New York State Militia. Arabella was attached to the U.S. Sanitary Commission in 1862, and nursed her husband back to health after he was severely wounded during the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862 (he was wounded by an artillery shell in the face and by grapeshot in the groin). Arabella was in Baltimore when she learned that Francis was with the Union Army in Maryland. She arrived at Antietam on the day of the battle and nursed his wounds (first in a military hospital and then in a private room she had arranged), but it took him seven months to fully recover and did not return to active duty until the Spring of 1863.

History repeated itself at the Battle of Gettysburg, where General Barlow was wounded (he was hit in his left side about halfway between the armpit and head of the thigh bone and the bullet glanced down into the cavity of the pelvis) and then captured during the fighting on July 1, 1863. Taken to the Josiah Benner house, Confederate surgeons deemed his wounds mortal and later took him on July 2 to the John Crawford house on the northeastern edge of town. While there, some of General Ewell's and General Early's staff came to see him and Ewell and Early sent word through the lines under a flag of truce to Arabella, who was near the battlefield with the U.S. Sanitary Commission.

The Confederates granted her permission to attend to her husband, and several Gettysburg civilians reportedly saw her on horseback being escorted by Confederate soldiers on the night of July 2. Arabella again slowly nursed him back to health.

General Barlow returned to active duty in April of 1864 and ultimately survived the war. Unfortunately, it would be Arabella whose life was cut short --- she died on July 27, 1864 during the siege of Petersburg of typhus, a bacterial disease spread by lice or fleas.



My favorite “Woman at Gettysburg”

My great-great-grandfather, Felix, was a private in Company A, 12th U.S. Infantry Regiment, First Brigade (Colonel Hannibal Day), Second Division (Brigadier General Romeyn Ayres), in Major General George Sykes' V Corps.

Felix was wounded on July 2, 1863, during the battle for the Wheatfield and Little Round Top. Shot through both legs, he was taken to a field hospital (possibly the Jacob Weikert farm) and then probably to Camp Letterman before convalescing further in a home in nearby Littlestown.

Although a native of Columbus, Ohio, Felix returned to the Gettysburg area in 1864 and married Laura Will, the lady in Littlestown who had helped to take care of him. Purchasing a 178-acre farm (now better known as the Granite Hill Camping Resort) outside of nearby Fairfield, Felix and Laura raised nine children. Years later, when he was too old to run the farm, he moved into Gettysburg, building his own house on Springs Avenue, which still stands today. Felix died in 1915, and along with several family members, is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.









