Ms. Waddell has researched this topic extensively and has spoken on it before. This should be an excellent presentation.

A COMMISSION

An officer at South Adams, Mass., on a furlough, was recently addressed by a pompous individual: "Oh, you feel big, don't you? with your shoulder straps and your brass coat and blue buttons? Well, I could have had a commission, too, if I had wanted it, and gone to the war, and fought and been killed and buried by this time." "It's a pity you hadn't taken the commission," said the officer, quietly.

New Books: Just published in December is a new work The Civil War Diary of Lt. J. E. Hodgkins August 1862 to July 1865; Edited by Kenneth C. Turino; With Introduction by Dr. Steven C. Fames. Camden: Picton Press, 1994. Lt. Hodgkins served as an officer in the 19th Massachusetts Infantry "Hodgkins rose from private to First Lieutenant, was wounded at Fredericksburg, cited for bravery at Cold Harbor, endured the horror of Andersonville, and won release to participate in the final chase of Robert E. Lee to Appomattox." If you are interested in this handsome book it can be ordered from either Lynn Historical Society, 125 Green Street, Lynn, MA 01902 or Picton Press, Post Office Box 1111, Camden, ME 04843 for $22.50 and $2.50 for shipping or by calling [207] 236-6565.

Civil War Booknotes: Booknotes this month concern the U.S. Christian Commission.

Washington's Birthday Celebration. The Greater Seattle DAR is sponsoring the 86th annual George Washington Memorial Celebration. The event will be held Monday February 20, 1995 at 9:30 AM in Room 120, Kane Hall on the University of Washington Campus. Col. James C. Evans, Commander of the Air Force ROTC at the University will speak. Free parking is available at the underground lot located off 15th Ave NE. If you are interested in attending and wish additional information call Rita McGann on 488-7538.

Display Table & Raffle: Please feel free to bring in Civil War related items to share with our fellow members. Thanks to all our members who also contribute to and purchase tickets to the raffle.

IN MEMORIAM

We regret to announce the passing of member Tom Swint, who died December 12, 1994 after a battle with cancer. All our members offer condolences to his family.

Civil War Questions: Be sure to pick up on your way in from George Hood, a copy of the most frequently asked questions [with answers] on the American Civil War. This interesting 21 page document will be available for $1.00.

Program: Emilie Waddell, of Portland Oregon, will speak on the role of the U.S. Christian Commission in providing aid to Civil War soldiers, especially the wounded.
DISPATCH FROM THE PRESIDENT

Civil War Records of the postwar Presidents

ANDREW JOHNSON: In March, 1862, President Lincoln appointed Johnson military governor of Tennessee with the rank of Brigadier General.

ULYSSES GRANT: No intro. necessary [Lieut. General]

RUTHERFORD B HAYS: Served with the 23rd Ohio Infantry from June, 1861, entering service as a major. October '61 promoted to Lt. Colonel; Oct. '62 promoted to Colonel, commanding the 23d. After Cedar Creek [Oct '64] promoted to brigadier general of Vols. Received brevet dated March 13, 1865 to Major General Vols. Resigned June, 1865.

JAMES GARFIELD: Commissioned a Lt. Col. in the 42nd Ohio, Aug. 1861 and promoted to Col. in November '61. Commanded the 18th Brigade at Middle Creek, Jan. '62. Subsequently promoted to Brigadier General. January 1863 appointed Chief of Staff to Rosecrans, promoted to Major General. Elected to Congress in Sept., 1863, resigned in Dec. 1863.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR: Served in New York State militia from Feb. 1860 to Dec. 1862, rising from brigade judge advocate to quartermaster General. In Jan. '61, appointed engineer in chief with rank of Brigadier General. Apr. '61, promoted assistant QM general; Feb. '62 inspector general; July '62 QM General. Spring '62 inspected NY troops in Virginia. War Gov., Edwin D. Morgan said "he was my chief reliance in the duties of equipping and transporting troops and munitions of war. In the position of Quarter Master General he displayed not only great executive ability and unbending integrity, but great knowledge of Army Regulations. He can say No [which is important] without giving offense." Arthur was the uncle of Donald Larson's great grandmother, Johanna Arthur Huntsberger, Wife of Sgt Jacob Huntsberger, 87th PA Vol. Inf., maternal great grandfather of Donald Larson.

GROVER CLEVELAND: Drated, but purchased a substitute. Paid $150 to George Brinse [or Bennskey] a 32 year old Polish immigrant to serve in his place.

BENJAMIN HARRISON: 17th Indiana Infantry, starting as a 2nd Lt. in July, 1862. Eventually rose to Brigadier General.

WILLIAM McGINLEY: 23rd Ohio Infantry from June 61 to July '65, starting out as a private. April '62 Commissary sergeant; promoted to 2nd Lt. Commanding Co. D, but put on Col. Rutherford B. Hayes' staff. Feb. '93, promoted to 1st Lt.; July '64, promoted Captain. March 1865 brevetted Major.

DONALD LARSON

This Month in the Civil War: Early morning, February 9th, 1864 saw the largest and most sensational prison escape of the Civil War. 109 Union officers made their escape from Libby Prison in Richmond. 59 of the officers reached Union lines, 48 were recaptured and 2 died by drowning.

Special Cruises: The Delta Queen Steamboat Company is offering two special Civil War cruises this year. August 16 to 24th The Mississippi Queen [the largest steamboat the world has ever known] will depart from Chattanooga and stop at Decatur, Shiloh, Camden, Cave-in-Rock, Paducah and Dover and end up at Nashville. Special Guests will include noted historians Gary W. Gallagher, William C. Davis, Richard McMurray, James I Robertson. September 28 to October 6, the steamboat will travel from New Orleans to Memphis with stops at Natchez, Vicksburg, Arkansas Post, Helena. Free Round trip air fare is offered from 50 select cities. Prices range from $1,180 to $4,750 per person, with a 15% discount if booking early. If you are interested, call 1-800-856-9907 for additional information.

Upcoming meetings: March 6, 1995 William Brooker will lecture on the Battle of Wilson's Creek. April 1995 will find Dr. Earl J. Hess of Lincoln Memorial University talking on the Battle of Pea Ridge while for our final meeting of the year in May, PSCWRT member Jim Dimond will speak on the Galvanized Yankees.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION: Funds are being sought to restore a cemetery in Norristown, Pennsylvania where Winfield Scott Hancock is buried along with four other Union generals and 300 other Union veterans. For a tax deductible contribution of $25 a donor plaque will be placed on a "Wall of Support" composed of bricks from the now demolished boyhood home of Hancock. For further information contact Bob McCluskey [215] 679-2178 or send a check made out to Montgomery Cemetery to The Historical Society of Montgomery County, 1654 DeKalb Street, Norristown, Pa 19401 [610] 272-0297.

VIDEO WATCH: This month's documentary is Civil War: The Fiery Trial: From Fort Sumter to Appomattox. This video tells the entire story of the War Between the States. On site photography takes you to those fields where the fate of a nation was decided. Archival photographs and period music help bring the war to life. 35 minutes. B/W VHS $14.95
"Onward Christian Soldiers"

Like its more famous sister agency, the United States Sanitary Commission, the United States Christian Commission arose out of voluntary efforts by civilians in New York City to bring aid and comfort to Union soldiers. During the early months of the war, members of the New York YMCA visited camps to distribute tracts and bibles to soldiers and hold prayer meetings. As the scope of the war grew, other YMCA's from Buffalo, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cleveland and Boston sought to provide aid and spiritual comfort to soldiers who had been Y members. By November 1861 it was evident that a single national authority was needed to coordinate the activities of these various groups. And so the United States Christian Commission was formed in November 1861 with George H. Stuart as Chairman.

The Christian Commission eventually was administered by an executive committee, a Home Secretary, a Field Secretary, a number of permanent field agents, station agents, special agents, and numerous branch commissions and ladies' auxiliaries. The heart of the administration system however was the use of volunteer delegates, usually orthodox Protestant clergy, who contributed up to six weeks of their time to serve with the armies in the field. Among the important work performed by these delegates was helping with the wounded after battles, providing needed supplies to the sick and injured, helping chaplains by providing religious tracts, teaching soldiers to read and setting up a lending library that provided over 300,000 hard cover volumes to Union military personnel. Perhaps the Christian Commission's most important act was the establishment of special diet kitchens to aid the recovery of wounded and ill soldiers.

As James O. Henry notes in his article listed below during the four years it was in existence, the Christian Commission "sent to the field some 5,000 delegates and permanent agents, each laboring an average of thirty-eight days. Collectively they distributed among the Federal armies the contents of 95,000 packages of stores and publications, which included nearly 1,500,000 Scriptures, more than 1,000,000 hymnbooks, and over 39,000,000 tracts. They preached better than 58,000 sermons, held more than 77,000 prayer meetings and wrote over 92,000 letters for soldiers." While Christian Commission delegates were sometimes the butt of soldiers' jokes and ridicule, the work of this agency during the war provided important moral, spiritual and physical support to the fighting men at the front.

"I Would Never Sell It."

George Greedy, of Co. C, 3d Pennsylvania Reserves, had received a pocket Testament from the ladies of Bucks county, when he took his departure from home. It had these inscriptions: Psalm xci. 11: "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." 1 Timothy vi. 12: "Fight the good fight." This testament he always carried in his bosom pocket. In the battle of White Oak Swamp, a minie ball passed through his left arm, shattering the bone severely; then, through his coat into the Testament, splitting if from Revelation to St. John's Gospel, 11th Chapter, passing out, the ball wounded him slightly in the stomach. But for his Testament, he would have been killed on the spot. I asked him to give me the book to show to the committee of the Commission. He willingly assented, but added—"I would never sell it, for it saved my life."

E. P. Smith Incidents of the U.S. Christian Commission
philanthropy & welfare in the civil war era.
robert h. bremner.

an excellent study of the impact of the civil war on philanthropy in the united states. chapter three "philanthropic warfare" covers the u.s. christian commission and its sometimes less than friendly rivalry with the u.s. sanitary commission.

"the united states christian commission in the civil war" by james o. henry in civil war history. volume six, number four, december 1960. pp. 374-388.

this brief article provides an excellent summary on the activities of the christian commission.

book and libraries in camp and battle: the civil war experience.

chapter 4 in this work details the sources of reading materials for Civil War soldiers. Kaser includes a lengthy description of the work of the Christian Commission.


Chapter two in this fine study traces the career of Anne Wittenmyer, who developed and supervised the special diet kitchens in Union hospitals under the auspices of the U.S. Christian Commission.


This work contains hundreds of anecdotes by Christian Commission delegates relating to incidents they witnessed while in the field. An example is given on page one of the book notes.

The Life of George H. Stuart, Written by Himself: Edited by Robert Ellis Thompson.


The autobiography of the Philadelphia merchant who served as head of the Christian Commission for the five years of its existence. Only 40 pages of this lengthy work are devoted to his war time service.


The father of Henry Wallace, Jr. who was Franklin Roosevelt's second Vice-President served as a Christian Commission delegate during the closing stages of the war in Virginia.


Annie Wittenmyer's recollections of her Civil War service is a series of "unconnected vignettes not in chronological order." Civil War Books calls this one of the best books written by a woman on the war.

"When walking home with the chaplain, he gave me an interesting story out of his own experience. He had been a theological student in Boston, was drafted, and, being a bright fellow, was made chaplain of one of these Connecticut regiments. They were the toughest kind of a tough lot. He tried to hold prayer-meeting, but they would not attend. He finally persuaded the colonel to require them to stand for prayers at dress parade. He then tried to distribute tracts. They would follow with a New Testament, and tearing out a leaf, would mimic his words: "Have some good reading," or "Won't you have a tract?" He said he could not get their respect until the battle of Bermuda Hundreds... it was in this fight that my friend the chaplain saw his first battle. His boys were fearful to go in. Unarmed as he was, he went with them and encouraged them, exposing himself to the firing like any other soldier. Seeing that he was brave, they began to respect him, received his tracts and listened to his prayers; but he never really got the confidence of the men until the battle of Cold Harbor. The men had had a long march, and were almost perishing with thirst. Under fire, he went along the line, gathered up their canteens, took them to a stream and filled them, brought them back and distributed them. Ever afterwards they had the most respect for his preaching.

Uncle Henry's Own Story