Thanks

To Ken Bertrand for his highly entertaining presentation of how the Civil War was reflected on the radio during the "Golden Age" of broadcasting. The members in attendance enthusiastically heard selections from "Gunsmoke", "You are There" and other old time programs which featured Civil War themes. We look forward to Ken's next installment on this topic.

Next Meeting

Thursday January 9, 1997 at the Yankee Diner in Ballard. 6 PM Social Hour with dinner at 7 PM. Choice of Swiss Steak or Mushroom Chicken. The main entree is served with Caesar Salad, Biscuits, fresh vegetables, potatoes or rice with the chicken along with coffee or tea. Price is $16.00 a person. Please write your menu choice, name and the name of any guests on the enclosed card and mail it ASAP.

Program

Our speaker will be Amy J. Kinsel who will speak on Gettysburg in American Culture and Memory 1863-1938. Ms. Kinsel will examine how "memories" of veterans were constructed to explain how events took place during the battle and how these memories were shaped by the development of the national park. This should be a good topic and we event all members to attend and bring guests.

This Month in the Civil War

On January 9, 1861 the "first shots" fired in the Civil War took place in Charleston where the relief ship Star of the West attempted to land men and supplies for Fort Sumter, but was forced to turn back when shots were fired at the vessel from fortifications in Charleston harbor. A year later on January 9th, 1862 President Lincoln wrote General George B. McClellan, advising him that it would be advisable to appear before the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War as soon as his health would allow him. John P. Usher officially was confirmed as the new Secretary of the Interior, replacing Caleb Smith on January 9, 1863. Captain Lavender, a master sailor from New York was interviewed by President Lincoln about a device to remove underwater obstructions on January 9th, 1864. Finally on January 9th, 1865 a constitutional convention in Tennessee adopted an amendment to abolish slavery in that state.

NEW BOOKS

"Where can I read about the war" was a question often asked of Douglas Southall Freeman after he wrote his biography of Robert E. Lee. His response was to publish The South To F stricter, a guide to what were to him the best books on the Confederacy. Now for modern readers David J. Eicher and the University of Illinois Press have attempted to sift the tens of thousands of books published on our great conflict to give what author Eicher's believes are the best 1100 key works on the Civil War. Available at the University Bookstore, or by special order The Civil War in Books: An Analytical Bibliography [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996 $40.00] offer evaluations for each of the books listed. These critical evaluations range at a minimum from 3 paragraphs to several pages. If you are interested in

HUMORS OF THE CAMP FIRE

A "Confed" who was in the battle of Shiloh happened to be inordinately fond of card playing. During the fight he had three of his fingers shot off. Holding up his mangled member, he gazed at it with a look of ineffable sorrow, and exclaimed, as a big tear stole in the corner of his eye, "I shall never be able to hold a full hand again!" Poor fellow!

Confederate War Journal 1893
reading/collecting books on the Civil War this new work will provide a valuable guide.

Raffle and Display Table

As always we ask members to contribute to and participate in our monthly raffle. We have had good participation this year and would like to see the good effort kept up as this is an important source of money for our speaker program. We also encourage members to bring items to share with fellow members. If you have a particularly valuable item that you would like placed into a locked display case than please see member Sue Crichton before the meeting begins.

Preservation News

An unusual preservation project is that being carried out by the Friends of the New York State Newspaper Project, P.O. Box 2402, Empire State Plaza, Albany NY 12208. The group is trying to raise funds to microfilm as many newspapers as possible as part of the United States Newspaper Program. Once these newspapers are on microfilm they will be available through interlibrary loan for use by researchers. If you have not used Civil War newspapers, than you will be in for a surprise as to the amount of valuable material which can be found in them. A sample of battlefield maps and letters from Union soldiers has recently been published by the group I Will Try to Send You All the Participants of the Fight: Maps and Letters from New York State's Civil War Newspapers, 1861-1865, which can be purchased for $18 & $4 postage. All proceeds go to benefit the microfilming project. If you want to “adopt” a newspaper [at about 40 cents a page] than your name will appear on every reel of microfilm for that paper. For additional information contact Vicki Weiss, (518) 474-4372.

On the Net

The usenet newsgroup alt.war.civil.usa has set up on the internet a list of 85 books, recommended as basic reading on the Civil War. This reading list is divided into sections covering 13 different topics from general histories on the war to Civil War magazines. If you would like to obtain a copy of this list visit the site at [ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/civil-war-usa/reading list.]

Upcoming Programs

The February 1997 meeting will be our annual short topic night when several members will present short programs. In March 1997 the speaker will be Richard Moe, author of The Last Full Measure: The Life and Death of the First Minnesota Volunteers. In April we will have another out of town speaker, as David E. Long, author of The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln’s Re-election and the End of Slavery will be our speaker.

Help wanted!!

Member Sylva Coppock is seeking help with a presentation on how to conduct Genealogical research on Civil War Veterans. If you have recently undertaken such a research project and would like to help, please contact Sylva at the address given on the roster.

Marc Duval is requesting that those members who volunteered to help with various aspects of round table business and forgot to list their names on the recent survey to please contact him, Pat Brady [if they would like to present a program in the future] or Jeff Rombauer.

THE SOLDIER’S REQUIEM.

After the Battle at South Mountain, Md., Sept. 14th, 1862.

South winds blow soft where the soldier is lying,
Tread with you lightest step, whisper more low—
Oh, waft to its home this spirit undying—
Never a mission more pure shall ye know!
 Ever let roses, their fragrance distilling,
 Weep o’er the mound of the hallowed dead;
 And, while their cups with dew-tears are filling
 Let the daisies and blue-bells wave over his head.
 Long be his name, his fame and his glory
 Joined in our hearts, with the land of his birth—
 And let his deeds live brightest in story,
 Chanted and sung by the fairest of earth!
 Keep bright the stars that he left to your keeping,
 Keep bright the stars that he left to your keeping,
 Soil not the Banner—let it wave
 Over the land where the hero is sleeping—
 Never should land be so proud of a grave!

ANONYMOUS

Poetical Pen-Pictures of the War 1863
"Tourist Town"

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania was just another small crossroads town, the county seat of Adams County and home of Gettysburg College when the turbulent events of July 1st through 3rd, 1863 changed its landscape forever. As one of the battle's most prolific students has noted, "The Battle of Gettysburg - equal in magnitude, in gallantry and desperation of the combatants, in human slaughter, and in the vast interests which hung upon the issue, to any recorded in history - has brought the name of Gettysburg from rural obscurity, to worldwide celebrity." Almost from the beginning tourists have flocked to the town to view the scenes of the fighting. One could almost say that the earliest tourists were present during the battle itself. This month in conjunction with the talk by Ms. Amy J. Kinsel on Gettysburg in American Memory, there will be a special display of early works and pamphlets from the period 1864 to the 1920's on the battlefield. Among the items on display members will see the following.


The original edition of the most famous "tourist" account by a foreigner during the Civil War. Fremantle was at Gettysburg with Lee's army and provides a superb account of the fighting except for Pickett's Charge which he somehow managed to miss.


One of the earliest and most popular eyewitness accounts of Gettysburg, this slim volume by a professor at Gettysburg College, went through 7 editions over a 45 year period.


This slim volume gives a history of the National cemetery as well as the program of events for the Dedication Ceremonies in November 1863.

➤ Gettysburg: What to See, and How to See it. Embodying Full Information for Visiting the Field... by John B. Bachelder. Boston: John B. Bachelder, Publisher, 1876.

Bachelder was an artist and printer from Boston, who attached himself to the Army of the Potomac in 1862. After the battle of Gettysburg, which he somehow managed to miss, Bachelder spent months gathering information from wounded soldiers of both sides to produce his famous "isometric drawings" of the battlefield. After the war ended, he became "the authority" on the battle and was instrumental in getting it preserved. In 1876 he published this early guide book for tourists to Gettysburg.

➤ Shaler's Brigade, Survivors of the Sixth Corps. Re-Union and Monument Dedication, at Gettysburg, June 12th, 13th and 14th, 1888. Published by Order of the Brigade Association. 1888.

Shaler's Brigade as part of the 6th Army Corps, Army of the Potomac took part in the fighting during the early morning hours of July 3rd on Culps hill to repulse an attack by troops under Confederate General Richard Ewell. This pamphlet covers the activities of the brigade at the 25th Reunion at Gettysburg in 1888.


Perhaps the most famous eyewitness account by a participant of the fighting at Gettysburg is the long letter written by Haskell, who was serving on John Gibbon's staff during the battle. Written to his brother a few weeks after the battle, it was first published in an extremely limited pamphlet edition in 1881. The copy that will be on display is the first cloth edition, annotated by a member of Haskell's family to show deletions made by the editors from the private 1881 pamphlet.

➤ The Battle of Gettysburg: How General Meade Turned the Army of the Potomac over to Lieutenant Haskell. Published by the Philadelphia Brigade Association Philadelphia: Bowers Printing Company, 1910

Veterans of the Philadelphia Brigade were so upset by what they viewed as Haskell's slander of them, that this booklet was published to defend their honor.

➤ The Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg: Prepared for the Use of the Cadets of the United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. By Colonel G. J. Fiebeger.

Prior to World War I, cadets at the U.S. Military Academy used this text book to study the Battle of Gettysburg. Featured along with this text is a copy of the itinerary for such a visit by cadets.

➤ Fifty-Second Anniversary and Reunion of the Tenth New York Cavalry at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania July 1, 2, 3, 1913. Washington: The Tenth New York Cavalry Association, 1913.

1913 saw the 50th anniversary celebration of the Battle of Gettysburg. One unit to take part was composed of veterans of the 10th New York Cavalry who issued this commemorative volume to document their reunion at the old battlefield.
November 13, 1864

Engineer Camp Near
Popular Grove Church
November 13th Sunday

My Dearest Wife

I take this opportunity of writing you these few lines to let you know I am in Pretty Good health thank God for his goodness and I hope they will find you all well, I am sory to say that the news is here that Lincoln is Elected Dear Wife I have not got Much news to tell you to day, I am rether Surprised that I did not get a letter from you last night for if you send a letter on Monday I get it Mostly on Friday or Saturday but this is Sunday and I have not got one since a week from yesterday I got the Tobacco and I am thankfull for it I sent you 2 News Papers the other day and wrote in one that I had Received the tobacco, Dear Liz Major that is Squire Davison is in Camp about a Mile from here I have not seem him Yet his Regiment was in the last fight that we was in and got Several Men killed and Wounded but I don't Know how Many, I here that Michall McMahon from Rochester is Quarter Master in Davisons Regiment but I have not seen him yet. I saw Ory Chambers in the 15th Engineers at City Point I forgot weather I told you of it or not I also jest saw Mort Chamblin but not to Speak to him it was the day I got my likeness taken

Dear Wife this is Monday Morning [14th Nov. 1864] and I got no letter last Night as I hoped I would. You spoke in your letter about it being bad weather, and you said Mrs Hamers had sent for you to go to see her before she Moved, I hope you did not go and take Cold so you are down Sick again, do My Dear Liz take as good Care of yourself as you can.

Please give My love to all the Children and I hope they are all well Please Kiss Etty and Baby for Me, I hope I shall get a letter from you to night, I shall send 2 Sunday Papers for I think they are good to read, I

Must Conclude by hoping you will write often as it is the only pleasure I have is to get a letter from you - Now May the God of Mercy Protect you all, I Remain your Loving Husband till death.

B. J. Lay

It is Very Cold here now at Night to lay in Camp with no bed I cannot Sleep only when I am near worn out

A True and Pure Kiss for My own
Dearest Wife  Goodbye

Thanks to member Mark Terry who submitted this letter and had these additional remarks about the author. "My uncle's name is Henry Lay. His great-grandfather was Barnabas James Lay. Barnabas was born in England and joined the English Army at the age of 19. He was in the '20th Regiment of Foot [Infantry] and was stationed in what is now Montreal, Canada. He left the service with an honorable discharge to get married in 1849. By the time of the 1850 Census, he and his wife were living in Rochester, NY. He became a U.S. Citizen in 1857.

It was not until very late in 1863 that he enlisted. He joined a new company being formed of engineers. At the age of 46 he became a private in Co L, 50th Regiment N.Y. Volunteer Engineers, officially in January 1864. Barnabas was with the engineers all through Grant's campaigns vs. Lee to Appomattox. He was marched back and was discharged with the rank of Sergeant in June, 1865. Lay kept a diary of his experiences which I hope to publish someday. Barnabas James Lay died on July 17, 1883."