

January 2005



Hope everyone had a good holiday season and a very merry Christmas. Let's hope that 2005 is a better year for all of us than 2004 was!

Program for our 20 January meeting has not yet been set as I put this newsletter together. If nothing else, I'll have my collection of Civil War documentaries on DVD with me!

If you are interested in going on our trip to Frederick, Maryland (visits to the Monacacy and Antietam battlefields, the Civil War Medical Museum and Harper's Ferry) please be sure and contact Ed Clark at 609-390-8642. The trip will take place March 8th and 9th and will cost \$150. Bring a sack lunch for the day; all other meals, transportation, and hotel fees are covered.

If any of you have information about Civil War re-enactments and other events in 2005, please give a copy of the information to the secretary so I can include that information in these newsletters. I can't publicize events if I don't know about them! Thanks...

A few people have asked where I get the illustrations for these newsletters. I have three CD-ROMs with period illustrations. Two are from Dover's "Electronic Clip Art for Macintosh and Windows" series of books. They are *Civil War Illustrations* and *American Historical Illustrations and Emblems*. My third CD-ROM is published by Archive Arts.

Events coming up:

March 3 – 6, Battle of Hampton Roads Weekend. The third annual "Battle of Hampton Roads Weekend", a re-enactment of a battle from the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, is scheduled to start Thursday 3 March near Newport News, Virginia; one of the sponsors is the Mariners' Museum in that city. The Museum's web address is www.mariner.org. The library at the museum, in addition, will be open to attendees for research purposes. Events will include a boat tour in which participants will hear from author and historian John Quarstein about how Hampton Roads would have looked to Lincoln when he saw the area immediately after the battle between the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* on 9 March 1862. The following day there will be a tour of McClellan's march on Richmond, as well as several sneak peeks at the new *USS Monitor* Center. The weekend will continue with several more lectures and tours, including "The First Evacuation of Richmond", "Joseph E. Johnston and the Peninsula Campaign", "The Image of McClellan and Lee", "By Land and Sea – Army-Navy Planning and Operations During the 1862 Peninsula Campaign", "The Worst Enemy in the Peninsula Campaign: Sickness", "Life on Board the USS Monitor", "Union and Confederate Navies on the James in 1862", a Fortress Monroe Lantern Tour, Gallery Tours of Ironclad Evidence, Reader's Theaters with Abraham Lincoln, and a number of other events. Membership in the Museum is \$60 for a family membership; member registration for the weekend is \$70 while non-member is \$85; accommodations and most of the tours are extra. I will make some copies of the flyer the Museum sent to me and have them on the table at the January meeting.

Our Long Endurance Lecture Series by the East Jersey Olde Towne Village: The Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission in New Brunswick is helping put on a series of Civil War lectures as the East Jersey Olde Towne Village at 1050 River Road, Piscataway, NJ. Lectures are free to the public. Currently schedules subjects are: **Sunday, 23 Jan:** at 1:30 pm "Philip Kearny, New Jersey's Most Distinguished Soldier" and at 2:45pm "The Foodways of the Civil War"; **Sunday 6 Mar at 1:30 pm:** "Music of the Civil War Era"; **Sunday 10 April at 2:45pm:** "New Jersey's Troops in the Gettysburg

Campaign”; **Sunday 15 May at 1:30 pm:** “The Training of New Jersey’s Civil War Troops”. You must pre-register for the lectures; call 732-745-4177 or write

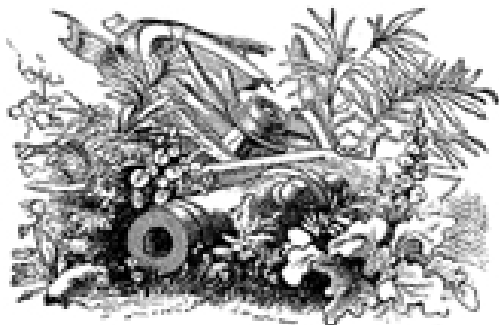
Our Long Endurance Lecture Series
Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage
Commission
703 Jersey Ave.

New Brunswick, NJ 08901-3605

Saturday, 5 March; Preservation Dinner in Support of the GAR Civil War Museum & Library:

Featured speaker will be Scott Hartwig, Historian and Gettysburg National Park Service Ranger; his subject will be “The Philadelphia Brigade and Repulse of Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863.” It will be held at the Williamson Restaurant at Easton Road and Blair Mill Road in Horsham, PA, ½ mile north of exit 343 (Willow Grove) on the PA Turnpike. Reservations are required, and cost of the dinner is \$35 each (payable to the GAR Museum). Choice of Roast Sirloin, Bordelaise or Boneless Breast of Chick. If interested, send your name, address, phone number and email address along with a check to GAR Museum, c/o Preservation Dinner, 4278 Griscom St., Philadelphia PA 19124. Tickets are to be picked up at the door. Final date for reservations is 3 March. Information: 215-673-1688. There will be a raffle, book sales, and door prizes.

The following article on the death of the last Union Widow is from *General Orders #3, Series 2002-2003, May 2003*; the national newsletter of the Daughters of Union War Veterans. (I knew I had a copy of it somewhere, and it surfaced while I was going through and cleaning out stuff this winter.)



Charitable Project

I go up two or three times a year to the Veterans Home run by the VA in Vineland to donate stuff for the use by the veterans. If anyone would like to donate items for me to take up, I'd be happy for any additional items. Things that the staff is happy to see include videos, DVDs, books, magazines, stuffed animals, books of crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, toiletry items (shower gel, shaving cream, etc.), stationary, CDs, afghans, etc. Used books, DVDs, etc. are fine. If you are doing any 'spring cleaning' and want to give away items you no longer have any use for but which are still in good enough shape for someone else to use, please consider donating them for the VA Veteran's Home. Just box them up and give them to me at one of our meetings...Thanks!

Men's Basic Period Garments

In this article I am going to discuss mostly men's civilian clothing of the period. I will leave information on the various uniforms to others. I have to admit I am not as familiar with men's wear during the Civil War period as I am with that worn by women. Not only have I not done a lot of sewing or designing men's garb for the 1860s, there simply is not as much material available – other than lots of photos, especially of uniforms! – as there is on women's wear. There was no *Lady Godley's* equivalent for men's wear, no period magazine similar to today's *GQ*.

Men's wear tends to be more conservative than women's clothing. When doing research, the type of clothing a man might be wearing in a picture taken in 1850 would probably be very similar to that worn in 1860. Changes in men's fashion was more a matter of minor differences in cut – coats a bit longer, a collar thinner, the size and shape of coat lapels might change, the placement and size of pockets would differ. Men were also more likely to wear an outdated coat or jacket than a woman would wear an old-fashioned dress. The area where the most change in men's wear took place was

accessories. A vest front might be pointed rather than rounded or cut straight across. The size, color, shape and way ties were tied is often used to help date photos. The style of hat and what material it is made from was also more subject to the winds – or whims – of fashion. Additionally, with sewing machines in far wider use both in industry and at home, combined with the advancement of railroads, men's 'ready wear' was becoming readily available; and 'off the rack' purchasing of clothing was becoming a much more affordable option. Men's clothing needs much less fitting than women's does, and much of that fitting of men's clothing could be done at home rather than requiring the attention of a trained seamstress. With the home sewing machine and greater availability of clothing patterns for home use, many women were making more clothing items for their men as well. According to Joan Severa in *Dressed for the Photographer*, most at-home sewing concentrated on shirts and underclothing. The majority of men were buying their coats, jackets and pants from retailers by the 1860s.

The current day pattern companies have taken note that their line of Civil War period clothing designs have rather neglected the male half of the population – and let's admit, the percentage of men participating in Civil War re-enactments outnumbers women by a large margin. Someone finally noticed that they were neglecting a potentially large market. Therefore, now, in addition to the men's clothing and "small clothes" patterns from sutlers like Past Patterns, Simplicity's Martha McCain and their "The Fashion Historian" line of commercial patterns have recently released several patterns for Civil War period men's underwear. First is # 5033, which is similar to what we would today call long underwear. However, while we would probably see these items in flannel or similar warm fabric today, in the 1860s these items were also made of cotton and linen fabrics for wear during the summer months. The pants of this pattern can either be fitted with ties at the cuff, or with stirrups; in either case this would make sure the long underpants did not ride up underneath outer pants. For the basic pieces of men's

clothing that would go over the underwear they have released #5023, which consists of a period man's shirt and pants. The shirt is extremely long so it could be tucked into the pants; they would often also be used as a sleeping shirt. Pattern #5035 consists of another set of shirt and pants, with some differences in the cut of the collar of the shirt and the way the waist of the pants is fitted. #5023 is more suited for 'work clothes' – i.e., for a man who works with his hands. #5035 is a little dressier, for the man who is a merchant, doctor, clerk, or has another 'office' type of job. Next is pattern #5037, which has patterns for 'accessories' – in this case, a man's hat, suspenders, and a vest.

Simplicity #4851, while mostly items for a woman's 'Christmas Caroling' outfit, also includes a man's vest and necktie.

McCall's has now produced #M4745, a pattern for either Union or Confederate military uniforms. It includes a fitted, lined coat in two lengths and pants. This uniform is quite a bit more detailed than the earlier Civil War military uniform that is available, Simplicity #7274.

Most of these patterns are similar to some of the ones Past Patterns has put out, but are a bit easier to sew. However, 'easier' does not mean 'easy'. Even with the larger commercial pattern companies, most of these historic recreation patterns are for the seamstress who has at least some experience.

Men tended to wear more somber colors and patterns in the majority of their clothing, at least compared to that worn by women. (It should be noted that a 'fawn' or tan color was sometimes used in outerwear in addition to the more widespread darker colors.) Just because they tended to use darker colors doesn't mean they didn't use fancy fabrics. The economic status of individuals might dictate to a certain extent the types and expense of fabrics an individual used, but even those who earned less money would still own at least one silk tie and perhaps a vest made of figured or embroidered satin. Normal fabrics for underwear would include cottons, linens, flannels, and even wool and wool blends during the winter. Outer wear would normally be of heavier fabrics, from heavy weight cottons to boiled and other types of

wool. Pants were most often made of linen, but wool and heavy cottons were not unknown. Outerwear would normally be of solid colors, checked or striped fabrics; for that matter most under wear would be the same. Socks were normally knitted, often by someone at home, and might be in a variety of colors and/or stripes.

The so-called "sack coat" was the most popular, but it came in a variety of lengths. Longer cuts were more popular at the beginning of the decade, but shorter cuts had come into vogue later on, and later coats often were cut for a tighter fit than at earlier times. Vests, usually with collars, most often were made of fabric that matched the coat and were long enough to cover the trouser waistband. The majority of vests were single breasted, with buttons more or less from top to bottom. A side watch pocket was normally located toward the bottom of the vest.

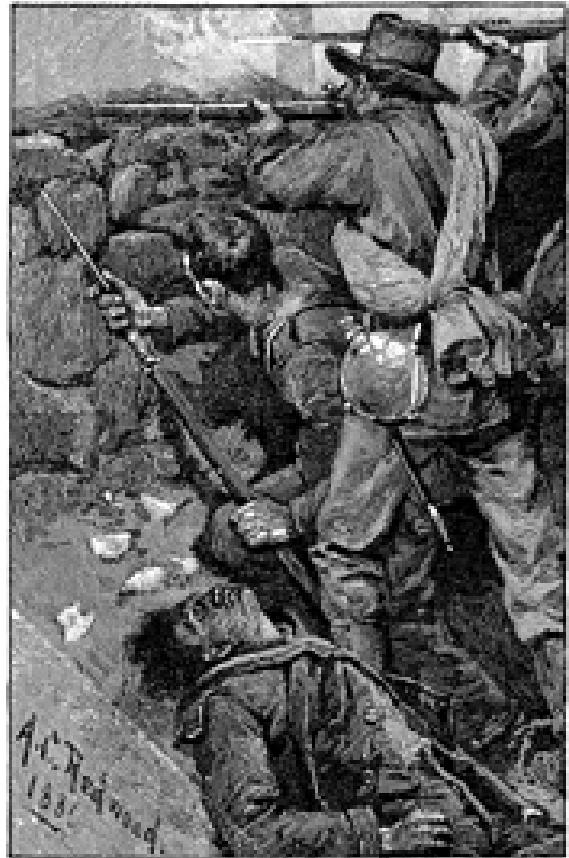
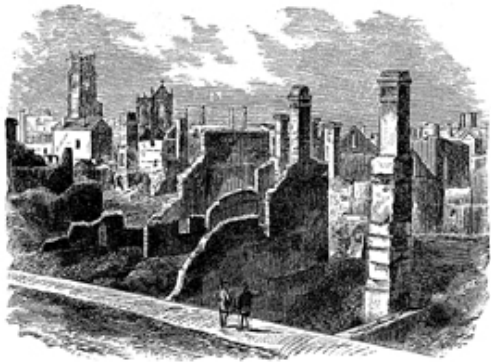
Trousers were normally constructed in a wide, tubular form and often were longer at the back than the front. Pleats and creases were seldom seen, with a button fly front the norm. While belts were sometimes worn, suspenders were far more common.

Hats were almost always worn when outside, and ranged from the silk top hat to the far more common workman's cap. In the 1860s, smaller caps seem to have been more popular in general. The most common materials used in their construction were the same seen in outerwear – wool, felts, and heavy cottons. I have seen very few photos from the period in which men wore straw hats. Men's hats tend to be unadorned, with at most a simple ribbon fastened around the crown.



Don't Forget!
2005 Dues are now Due!

Please pay your dues to either Pam Eaves or Andy Lolli. As of next newsletter, I'm hoping to include on your address labels the year your dues are paid through. Your dues help pay for the publication and mailing of this newsletter, as well as speaker fees for presenters at our meetings – to say nothing of paying the Cape May Court House Senior Center for our use of their building once a month.



Cape May County Civil War Round Table
P.O. Box 197
Cape May, NJ 08204

