

THE  
**CIVIL WAR**  
IN PENNSYLVANIA



A SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

P·E·N·S·Y·L·V·A·N·I·A  
**HERITAGE**

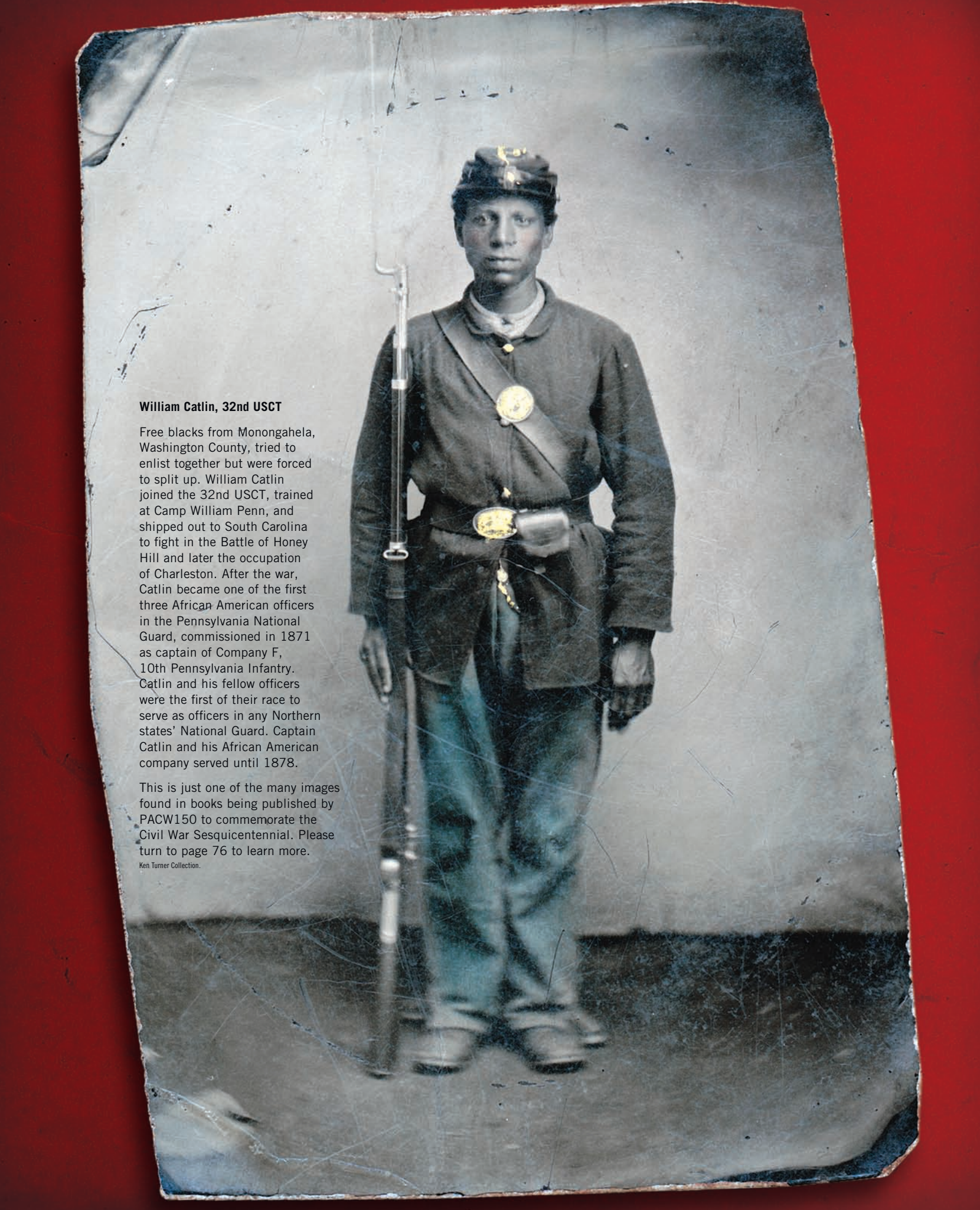


The Historical Society of PENNSYLVANIA  
**LEGACIES**



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
**HISTORY**

≈ SUMMER 2013 ≈



**William Catlin, 32nd USCT**

Free blacks from Monongahela, Washington County, tried to enlist together but were forced to split up. William Catlin joined the 32nd USCT, trained at Camp William Penn, and shipped out to South Carolina to fight in the Battle of Honey Hill and later the occupation of Charleston. After the war, Catlin became one of the first three African American officers in the Pennsylvania National Guard, commissioned in 1871 as captain of Company F, 10th Pennsylvania Infantry. Catlin and his fellow officers were the first of their race to serve as officers in any Northern states' National Guard. Captain Catlin and his African American company served until 1878.

This is just one of the many images found in books being published by PACW150 to commemorate the Civil War Sesquicentennial. Please turn to page 76 to learn more.

Ken Turner Collection.

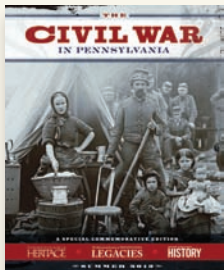
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**ON THE COVER:**

Wives and even families sometimes accompanied soldiers to the front. In this 1861 photo (one of a pair of stereographs), the 31st (later the 82nd) Pennsylvania Infantry passes time at Queen's farm near Fort Massachusetts/Slocum, five miles north of the White House.

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# THE CIVIL WAR IN PENNSYLVANIA

A Special Commemorative Edition of  
Pennsylvania Heritage, Pennsylvania Legacies,  
and Western Pennsylvania History

SUMMER 2013  
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# REMEMBERING THE CIVIL WAR IN PENNSYLVANIA

by **Andrew E. Masich**  
Chairman, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission


**THE** AMERICAN CIVIL WAR remains one of the most written about, read about, and wondered about conflicts in history. The enormity of the calamity that tore the nation apart less than a century after its founders imagined a new form of democratic republic is still difficult for us to fathom. Recent scholarship puts the death total at 700,000 or more—greater than all other American wars combined—leaving our country challenged to pull the states and their diverse peoples back together, an unfinished task that we wrestle with even today. The history of the Civil War reveals the best and worst in us. It demonstrates the horrors of war as well as “the better angels of our nature.” Volumes have been dedicated to the causes of the war. Historians generally agree with Abraham Lincoln’s assessment that slavery was “somehow the cause of the war,” though political ideology and economics were inextricably tied to the tragic consequences of the secession of the Southern states and the four years of fighting that set new precedents for modern warfare.

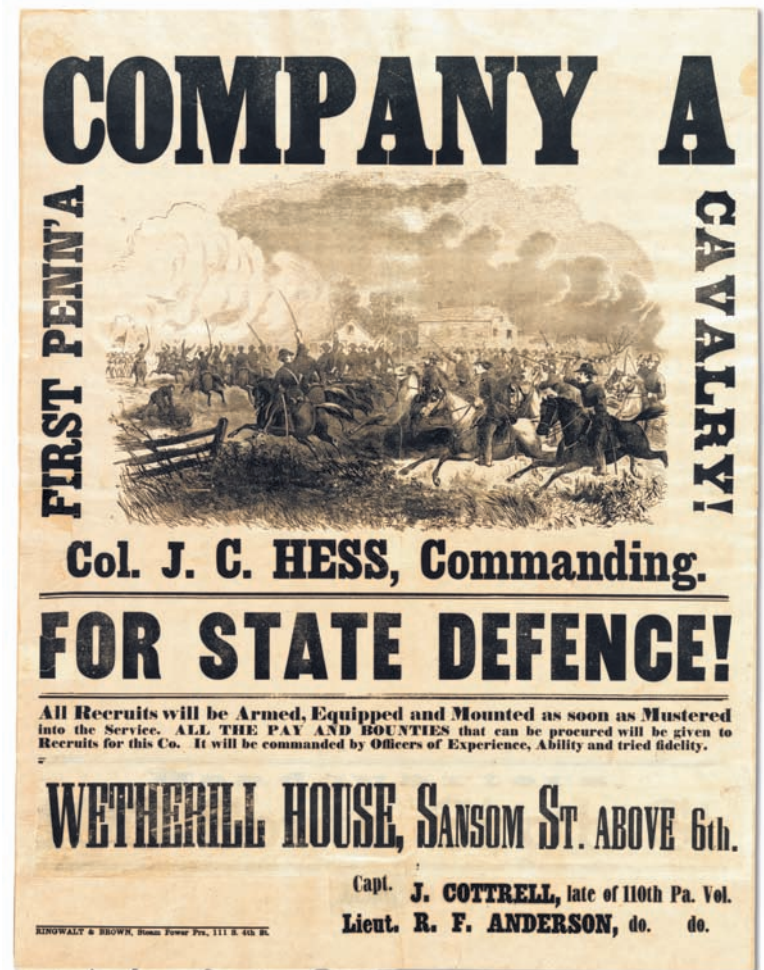
Through it all, Pennsylvania played a pivotal role, both on the home front and the battle front. The Keystone State provided more materiel and manpower than any state but New York. Pennsylvania men—both white and black—were among the first defenders serving bravely on land and sea. Pennsylvania’s mills, factories, and workshops became the “arsenal of the Union” and its farms the breadbasket. Women war workers played a significant role as did the many civilian volunteers and fundraisers who managed the nation’s largest Sanitary Fairs for the benefit of soldiers in the field or recuperating in hospitals. Sacrifice and privation marked the lives of those at home, and death could come as suddenly for women arsenal workers as it did for uniformed combatants. The deadly

explosion at Pittsburgh’s Allegheny Arsenal came on the very day that the Battle of Antietam saw the bloodiest single day in American history—September 17, 1862.

This year millions of Americans will make their way to Gettysburg, a place with the power to evoke memories of those who have gone before. It also has the power to inspire our generation to carry on the work that those who struggled there so nobly began. Lincoln’s dedication address at the Gettysburg National Cemetery in November of 1863 was one of the shortest ever uttered by an American president, but it will long be remembered. If the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1–3, 1863, marked the turning point of the Civil War then the Gettysburg Address might also be considered a turning point as the people of the nation began to comprehend the purpose of the war and the “new birth of freedom” that would remake the United States. Gettysburg symbolizes a turning point in American history, and it is altogether fitting and proper that we remember it now on the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

This joint issue is a precedent-setting partnership combining the best scholarship of Pennsylvania’s leading historical institutions:

the Heinz History Center (founded 1879), the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1824), and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (1945), originally organized as the Pennsylvania Historical Commission (1914). 



Recruitment poster for the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry.  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Poster and Broadside Collection.

THE

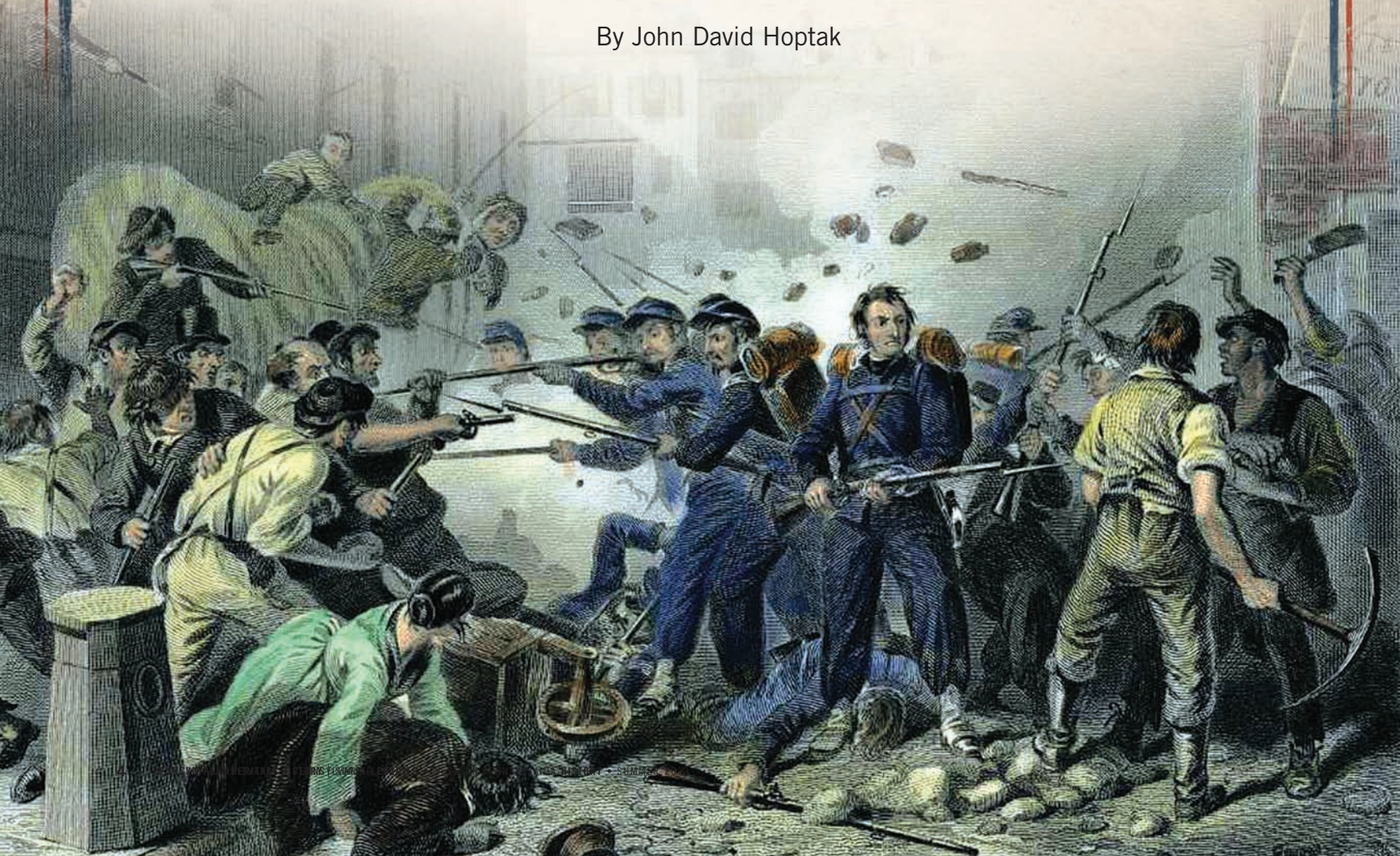
# UNION'S

*Forgotten*

# FIRST DEFENDERS



By John David Hoptak



FACING PAGE

Unrest in Baltimore did not subside with the April 18 departure of the Keystone State's First Defenders. On the following day angry anti-Union protestors attacked the Massachusetts 6th Regiment Infantry, killing four soldiers in what has since been called the Baltimore Riot of 1861 or the Pratt Street Massacre.

New York Public Library.



**T**

hroughout the four years of the American Civil War, more than two million men served the Union, some for months, others for years. The vast majority were volunteers, young boys and aging men who willingly left home behind to fight for the preservation of the Union and the eradication of slavery.<sup>1</sup> Historians have documented the stories of countless citizens-turned-soldiers, recalling the hardships they endured in camp and while on campaign, and describing in detail the horrors they endured in combat. Despite these vast annals of war history, many soldiers' stories are lost to time or overlooked.

Perhaps most notable is the forgotten history of the first Northern volunteers to arrive in Washington, D.C., following President Abraham Lincoln's call-to-arms. On Thursday, April 18, 1861, less than one week after the opening salvos of the war fired at Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor, 475 Pennsylvania volunteers, in five volunteer militia companies, arrived in the nation's capital. **Their timely arrival earned them the distinguished title of First Defenders.**

Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor on April 15, 1861, igniting the American Civil War, which ultimately caused the deaths of nearly 700,000 individuals on both sides by mortal wounds on the battlefield and diseases and infections.

*Harper's Weekly* (April 27, 1861).



**H**istorian Samuel Penniman Bates later romanticized that these Pennsylvanians arrived in Washington at “the head of the grand column of the two million men, who afterwards . . . marched in their footprints.”<sup>2</sup> In spite of this notable achievement, the history of the First Defenders remains overshadowed by famous officers, epic battles, and prominent military units. “In the progress of the gigantic struggle which ensued, of which the most farsighted had then no conception,” Bates wrote, “so many and such brilliant services have been rendered by the soldiers of the National armies, that the timely arrival of these companies had been little noted.” It is time, then, to rescue these soldiers from drifting further into the shadows of neglect.<sup>3</sup>

**O**n Friday, April 12, 1861, the decades-long sectional tensions that defined—and divided—the young nation broke out after Southern forces fired on Fort Sumter. Following the fortification’s capitulation two days later, President Lincoln, just one month in office, found himself faced with the greatest crisis to ever confront the United States. Realizing the rebellion could now be reconciled only by force, he issued a call on Monday, April 15, for 75,000 volunteers to serve for a period of three months. Enthusiastic men and boys swarmed recruiting offices throughout the North in response to the president’s urgent summons. Within several days—and, in many instances, within a matter of hours—thousands began their journeys as soldiers, embarking on one

of the most ferocious and deadly experiences of their lives. Only three days after Lincoln’s request, the first volunteer troops arrived in Washington.

These early troops came from eastern and central Pennsylvania, organized into five militia companies whose origins predated the outbreak of sectional hostilities. The oldest of the five companies, the National Light Infantry of Pottsville, Schuylkill County, had been organized in 1831. The Washington Artillery, organized in Pottsville in 1842, was the only company with wartime experience; the unit served as Company B, 1st Pennsylvania Volunteers, in the Mexican-American War, waged from 1846 to 1848 in the wake of the annexation of Texas in 1845 by the United

**These early troops came from eastern and central Pennsylvania, organized into 5 militia companies whose origins predated the outbreak of sectional hostilities.**



A flag “Presented by the Ladies of Lewistown” on September 19, 1859, one year after the organization of the Logan Guards in the Mifflin County seat of Lewistown, was carried by the volunteers as they made their way to defend the nation’s capital in April 1861.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania.

Members of the Logan Guards carried their large regimental drum as they rushed to Washington, D.C., in April 1861. Survivors of the First Defenders unit entrusted the drum to the commonwealth in the 1890s.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania.







Pottsville's Washington Artillerists was organized in July 1842 under Captain James Nagle.  
From *The First Defenders* (1910).

States. The Ringgold Light Artillery of Reading, Berks County, was formed in 1850 and commanded by Captain James McKnight, while the Logan Guards of Lewistown, Mifflin County, came into existence eight years later at the behest of Major Daniel Eisenbise. The newest company, the Allen Infantry of Allentown, Lehigh County, under the command of Captain James Yeager, was organized two years before the outbreak of the Civil War.

During the antebellum era, the organization of these companies was regularly maintained, and their members were drilled much more frequently than most of the Keystone State's militiamen. The Logan Guards, for example, met monthly

for parade and drill practice and participated in encampments at Lewistown in 1859 and at Huntingdon, Huntingdon County, the following year. Such rigorous training put the companies in an anomalous position within the state militia system, but their readiness to serve in the event of emergency caught the attention of state officials. After Lincoln's call for volunteers went out, it was little surprise to Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin that they were among the first to offer their services. In fact, anticipating hostilities, Pottsville's National Light Infantry telegraphed their willingness to serve to Secretary of War Simon Cameron on April 11, a day *before* the attack on Fort Sumter. Writing after the war, Cameron declared the company "was the first company of volunteers

**BELOW**  
 A photograph captioned "Ringgold Light Artillery / On duty at the Washington Navy Yard. / April 1861" and inscribed "With the compliments of / the Commandant—Captain Dahlgren." Captain A. B. Dahlgren was the commandant of the Navy Yard and chief of the Ordnance Bureau during the Civil War. He designed various types of guns and cannon for the Union war effort, earning him the title "Father of American Naval Ordnance."  
Ken Turner Collection.



The Ringgold Light Artillery of Reading, Berks County, was organized and equipped in 1850 with four six-pounder brass field pieces and caissons. A depiction of a cannon appears on the company's flag above a ribbon emblazoned with **STAND BY THE FLAG & DON'T GIVE UP THE GUNS.**  
PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania.



“War Governor” Andrew Gregg Curtin ardently supported Lincoln as advocate, friend, advisor, and confidant. He rallied troops from the Keystone State to fight for the Union.

Pennsylvania State Archives, MG-218, Photograph Collections.



APRIL 16 TELEGRAM TO  
RINGGOLD LIGHT ARTILLERY:

**Captain James  
McKnight: Bring  
your command  
to Harrisburg  
by first train.  
If any of your  
men need  
equipments, they  
will be provided  
by the general  
Government.  
Lose no time.**

whose services were offered for the defense of the Capital,” and it “with four additional companies from Pennsylvania . . . were the first troops to reach the seat of government at the beginning of the war of the rebellion.”<sup>4</sup>

Reading’s volunteers fired off a telegram on April 15 to Governor Curtin<sup>5</sup> after receiving Lincoln’s request:

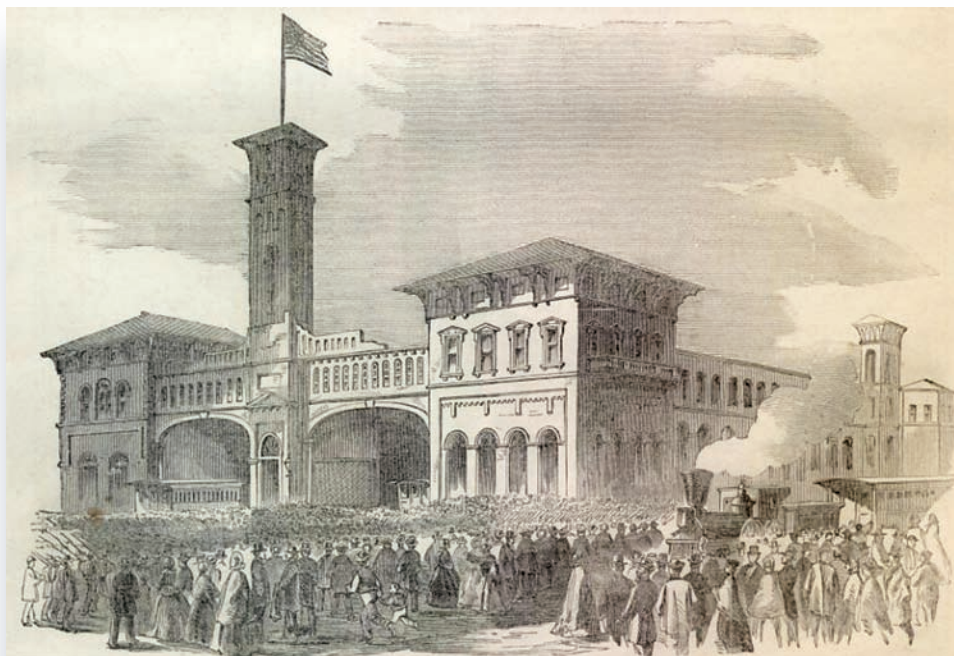
“The Ringgold Light Artillery are parading this morning with their guns for practice; have ninety men on parade, every one of them expecting to be ordered on duty for the U.S. service before they leave their guns.” Secretary of the Commonwealth Eli Slifer responded the following day, “Captain James McKnight: Bring your command to Harrisburg by first train. If any of your men need equipments, they will be provided by the general Government. Lose no time.”

With the offers of these companies immediately accepted, thousands turned out to witness the departure of eager volunteers from their respective hometowns. In its April 20 edition, the *Miners Journal* of Pottsville

recounted the departure of the Schuylkill County companies:

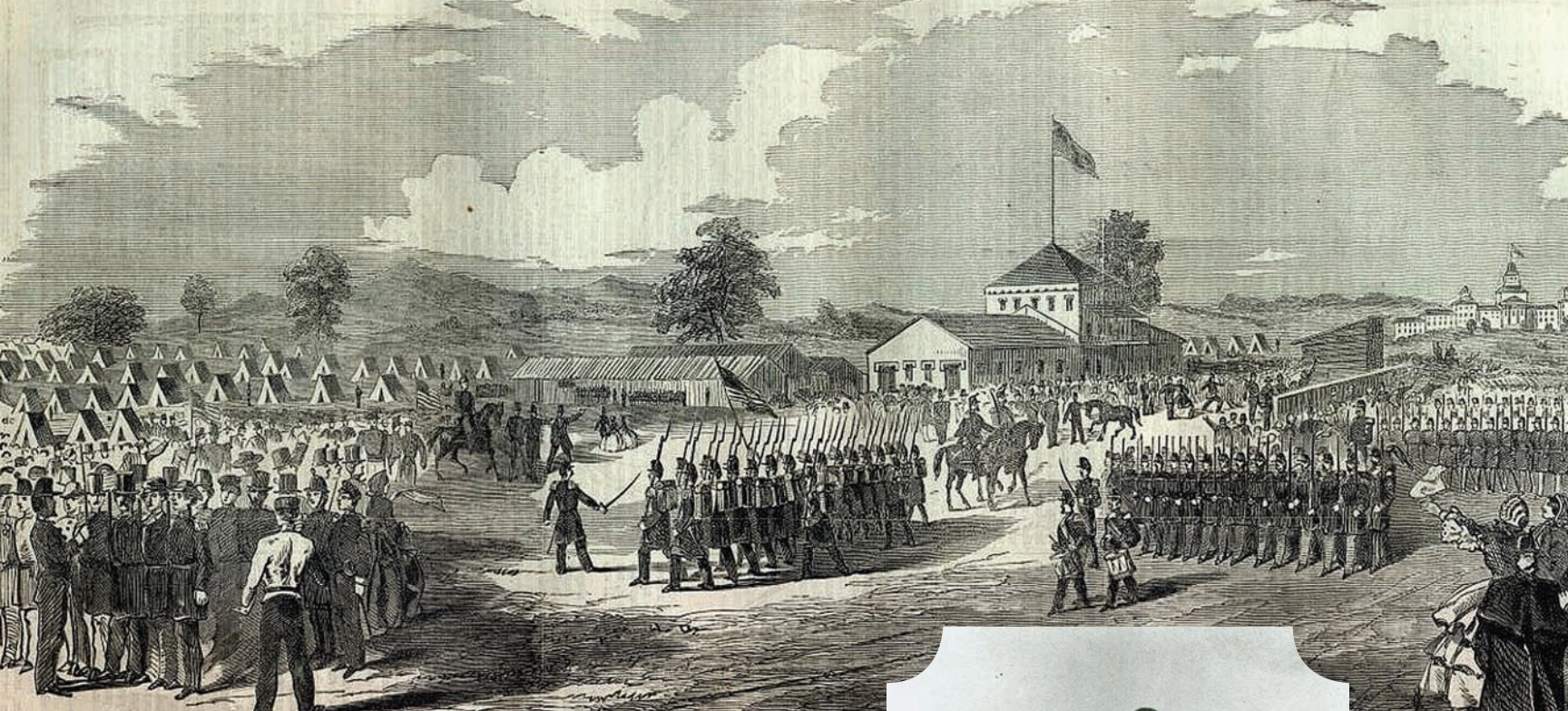
As the companies proceeded down Centre street, to the depot of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, they were greeted with cheers from the thousands who lined each side of the street, and a perfect ocean of handkerchiefs waved by the ladies, who had taken possession of all the windows, and every available situation along the street. All the stores were closed and business entirely suspended. At the depot the crowd was immense, and it was almost impossible to force your way through it. The tops of the passenger and freight cars, the roofs of the depot and neighboring houses, were black with spectators. Never had so great a concourse assembled on any one occasion before in Pottsville.

The Pottsville Cornet Band, which had escorted the companies to the depot, immediately before the starting of the cars played “Hail Columbia” and “Yankee Doodle.” As the train slowly left the depot, cheer upon cheer went up from the assembled thousands. The men were in good spirits, but there were



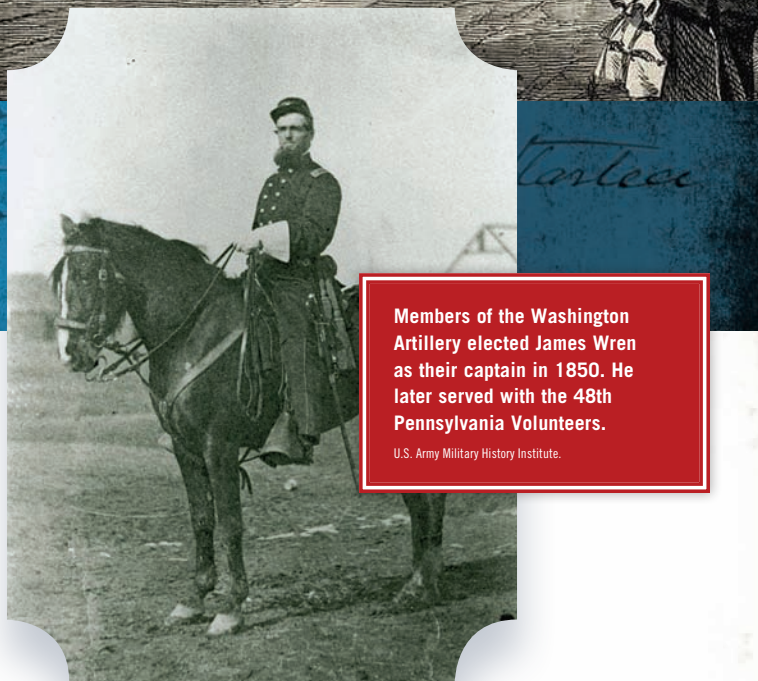
The year after the heroic First Defenders were mustered in at Harrisburg in April 1861, artist Theodore R. Davis sketched *The Railway Depot at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania—Arrival of Troops* that appeared in the October 4, 1862, edition of *Harper's Weekly*. Approximately 372,000 Pennsylvanians aided the Union cause.

*Harper's Weekly* (October 4, 1862).



The First Defenders were mustered in at Camp Curtin, Harrisburg, the Union's largest training facility which processed more than 300,000 soldiers during the American Civil War. The camp was erected on the grounds of the Dauphin County Agricultural Society and named for Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin. (The name originally proposed for the training grounds was Camp Union but the honor went to Curtin.)

*Harper's Weekly* (May 11, 1861).



Members of the Washington Artillery elected James Wren as their captain in 1850. He later served with the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteers.

U.S. Army Military History Institute.

some, who though possessed of manly hearts, who could brave toil and danger without complaint or fear, who could endure suffering with stoical indifference, but who could not prevent the tear starting to the eye, when called upon to bid farewell to all their friends.

Surviving letters and diaries written by First Defenders overwhelmingly cite a patriotic love of country and the desire to see the nation restored as the primary motivations behind their enlistment, but they also reveal a naiveté in realizing what war was really about. James L. Schaadt, historian for the Allen Infantry, wrote that when leaving Allentown, most of the volunteers “regarded the journey as a pleasant change from daily occupations, a picnic and agreeable visit to the Capital; a very few, more serious, realized it was the beginning of war, with its horrors, cruelties, and privations.” It would not be long before naïve notions about warfare would be laid to rest.<sup>6</sup>

**BY** the evening of Wednesday, April 17, all five companies had arrived in Harrisburg. Early the following morning, Captain Seneca Simmons of the 7th U.S. Infantry mustered the Pennsylvanians into federal service at Camp Curtin, the largest training facility for Northern soldiers during the war. Following their swearing-in, the soldiers boarded two trains of the North Central Railroad, each pulling 21 cars, and set off for the nation’s beleaguered capital via Baltimore, Maryland. Traveling with the volunteers was a detachment of 50 Regular Army troops who were ordered to report to Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. Commanding this detachment was John C. Pemberton, who, a few days later, resigned his commission in the United States Army to take up arms with

the Confederate States of America. (In July 1863, Pemberton would surrender Vicksburg, Mississippi, to General Ulysses S. Grant.) With few exceptions, the volunteer militiamen made the journey unarmed as they were ordered to leave their weapons behind in their respective armories and were promised modern guns upon their arrival in Washington.

Because no continuous rail line linked Pennsylvania’s state capital to the nation’s capital, it was necessary for the men to detrain in Baltimore, march two miles through the city to Camden Station, and board the



James L. Schaadt of Allentown, a First Defender and historian of the Allen Infantry, wrote *The Allen Infantry in 1861*, published in 1911.

John David Hoptak.

**“Roughs and toughs, longshoremen, gamblers, floaters, red-hot secessionists, as well as men ordinarily sober and steady, crowded upon, pushed and hustled the little band and made every effort to break the thin line ... It was a severe trial for the volunteers with not a charge of ball or powder in their pockets.”**

~ JAMES L. SCHAADT

railcars of another railroad line for the final leg of their journey. Baltimore was a hotbed of Confederate sympathy, whose residents had conspired to prevent the passage of any Northern volunteer through their city.<sup>7</sup> When word arrived that a train full of “Abe Lincoln’s damned Black Republican militia” was on its way, people began congregating at the depot.<sup>8</sup> The Pennsylvanians were soon to discover that soldiering was, indeed, no small feat.

Around one o’clock on the afternoon of Thursday, April 18, the train cars carrying the volunteers lurched to a halt in Baltimore. The crowd, which numbered approximately 2,500—five times the size of the unarmed Pennsylvanians—greeted the arriving soldiers

with insults, jeers, and threats. Cries of “three cheers for Jeff Davis,” and “damn the Northern abolitionists” went up among the crowd. Baltimore’s entire police force was called to provide a safe passage for the troops through the city, but with each step the mob grew increasingly vehement and violent. Some rushed toward the Pennsylvania contingent, landing a few well-thrown punches, while others spit on Lincoln’s eager volunteers. James Schaadt recalled, “Roughs and toughs, longshoremen, gamblers, floaters, red-hot secessionists, as well as men ordinarily sober and steady, crowded upon, pushed and hustled the little band and made every effort to break the thin line. . . . It was,” he concluded, “a

severe trial for the volunteers with not a charge of ball or powder in their pockets.”<sup>9</sup>

After the companies reached Camden Station, events became even worse. Many detractors began hurling bricks, stones, bottles, and pieces of wood; others, wielding clubs, surged towards the Pennsylvanians. Many of the projectiles hit their mark. Several members of the Allen Infantry suffered broken bones, while others were knocked unconscious. The most notable casualty that day, however, was Nicholas “Nick” Biddle, the frail, 65-year-old African American orderly (an attendant to an officer) to Captain James Wren of the Washington Artillery. The sight of a black man in uniform provoked the ire of the hotheaded

**“I have come here to give you a warm welcome to the city of Washington, and to shake hands with every officer and soldier in your company providing you grant me the privilege.”**

~ ABRAHAM LINCOLN

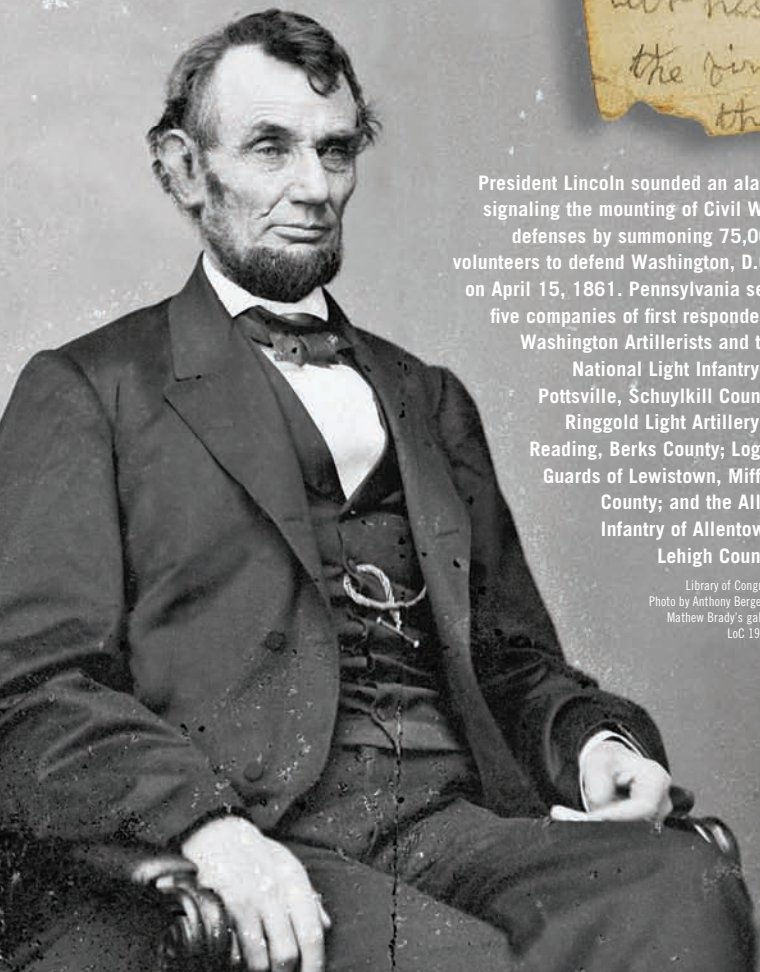
Nicholas "Nick" Biddle, an African American who served as an orderly (or attendant or servant) to Captain James Wren of the Washington Artillery, is recognized as the first to have shed blood in the war. His appearance in Baltimore—wearing a uniform of the Pottsville company—infuriated the mob. He was struck in the head by a brick and knocked to the ground, reportedly suffering a wound deep enough to expose bone. On April 18, 1861, the 90th anniversary of the confrontation in Baltimore, the citizens of Pottsville added a bronze plaque to the Soldiers' Monument recognizing Biddle.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania

He was cook for Capt Potts  
 from Pottsville, Pa  
 Co. It was the first Co to  
 reach Washington at the  
 first call for 75,000 men to  
 serve 3 mos. In passing  
 thro Baltimore they were  
 attacked by a mob and  
 Nick, standing on the  
 platform of the car, was  
 struck by a brick, which  
 cut his head and was  
 the first blood drawn in  
 the war.



**"NICK BIDDLE,"**  
 Of Pottsville, Pa. the first man wounded in the Great  
 American Rebellion, "Baltimore, April 18, 1861."  
 Published by W. R. MORTIMER, Pottsville, Schuylkill Co. Pa.



President Lincoln sounded an alarm signaling the mounting of Civil War defenses by summoning 75,000 volunteers to defend Washington, D.C., on April 15, 1861. Pennsylvania sent five companies of first responders: Washington Artillerists and the National Light Infantry of Pottsville, Schuylkill County; Ringgold Light Artillery of Reading, Berks County; Logan Guards of Lewistown, Mifflin County; and the Allen Infantry of Allentown, Lehigh County.

Library of Congress,  
 Photo by Anthony Berger for  
 Mathew Brady's gallery,  
 LOC 19470.

Lincoln was shocked by the sight of the former slave in uniform with his head wrapped in blood-soaked bandages. **The president urged Biddle to seek medical treatment, but he refused, determined to remain with Wren and the company.**

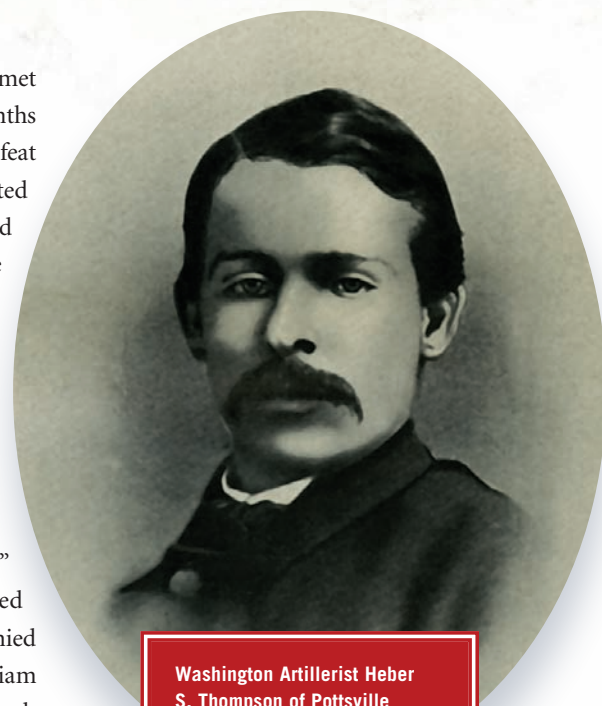
crowd. To screams of “Nigger in uniform!” Biddle was struck in the head with a brick, which reportedly left a wound deep enough to expose bone.<sup>10</sup> Badly injured, he nonetheless survived the gruesome wound and has gone down in popular thought as the Civil War’s first casualty.

The members of the five companies boarded cattle cars and nursed their wounded comrades as they steamed out of Baltimore. James Schaadt wrote, “Fortunately, the cars into which the infantry clambered were box or freight cars not furnished with seats, but whose wooden roofs and sides protected the volunteers from the cobbles and bricks now rained upon them by the rioters, more than ever infuriated at seeing their prey escape.”<sup>11</sup>

About seven o’clock that evening, they

arrived in Washington, where they were met by Major Irvin McDowell, who three months later led the Union army to ignominious defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run. He escorted them to temporary quarters in the halls and chambers of the U.S. Capitol Building. The Allen Guards, for instance, were assigned to Vice President Hannibal Hamlin’s office in the building. “Captain McKnight was asleep in the Speaker’s chair,” the April 18 edition of the *Pennsylvania Telegraph*, published in Harrisburg, reported, “while his first two officers were sleeping in chairs at the Clerk’s desk.” Early the following morning, a gratified and relieved President Lincoln, accompanied by Cameron and Secretary of State William H. Seward, met and shook hands with each of the men, thanking them for their service and, especially, their prompt arrival. A number of volunteers from Pottsville’s Washington Artillery enthusiastically called upon the commander-in-chief to speak, but he declined.

“Officers and soldiers of the Washington Artillery,” the president responded, “I did not come here to



Washington Artillerist Heber S. Thompson of Pottsville served as president of the First Defenders’ Association in 1909–1910 and wrote *The First Defenders*, a history of the unit published in 1910. The book chronicles the company’s experiences during its three months of service defending Washington, D.C., and the surrounding area, from April 18 through late July 1861.

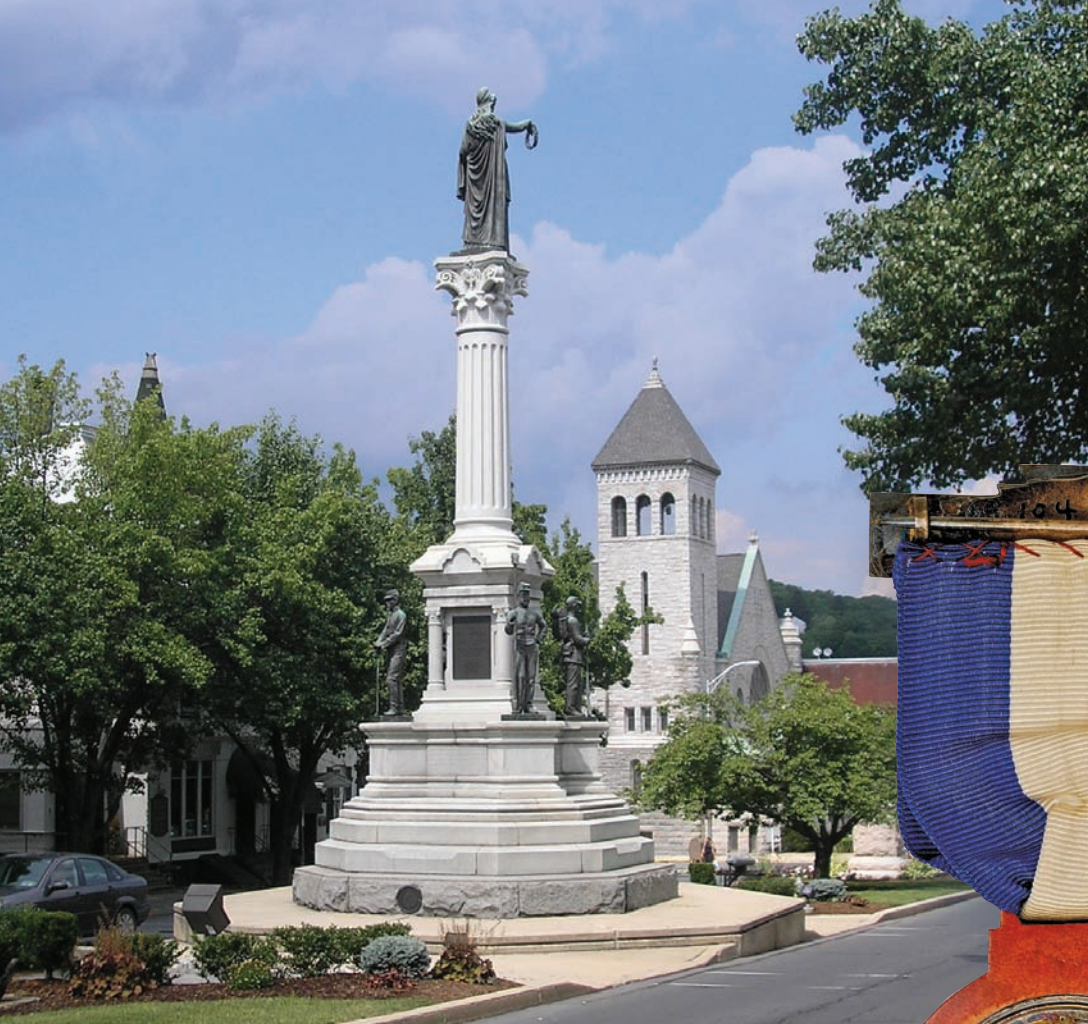
From *The First Defenders* (1910).



Captain James McKnight organized and equipped the Ringgold Light Artillery after its official organization in 1850. He commanded the unit for 11 years and while serving as a First Defender stepped down to satisfy his desire to become a professional soldier. On June 14, 1861, he accepted a commission in the Regular Army and was assigned as battery commander of the 5th U.S. Artillery Regiment.

Courtesy John David Hoptak.

**Throughout the summer of 1861 the overwhelming majority of the soldiers reenlisted to serve in the scores of three-year regiments that were being speedily organized throughout the state. By war’s end, many former First Defenders would be among those killed in action or lost to disease.**



The Soldiers' Monument of Schuylkill County was dedicated on October 1, 1891, in the county seat of Pottsville's Garfield Square. The south side of the monument bears the inscription: "The Washington Artillery and National Light Artillery, of Pottsville, 246 men, were a part of the 530 Pennsylvanians who first arrived for the defense of the national capital, April 18, 1861." Among the many dignitaries attending the ceremonies was Governor Robert E. Pattison who presented medals, a gift of the commonwealth, to members of the five companies of First Defenders attending the unveiling.

Norman Gasbarro/Civil War Blog/Gratz Historical Society



The First Defenders presented a medal to Governor Robert E. Pattison who spoke at the October 1, 1891, unveiling and dedication of the Soldiers' Monument in Pottsville.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania

make a speech; the time for speechmaking has gone by, the time for action is at hand. I have come here to give you a warm welcome to the city of Washington, and to shake hands with every officer and soldier in your company providing you grant me the privilege."<sup>12</sup> No one denied Lincoln his request.

As he made his way through the ranks of volunteers, the president noticed many bloodied bandages, bruises, and injuries. Most of the injured soldiers were members of the Allen Infantry. Twenty-five-year-old Ignatz Gresser, a native of Germany, suffered an ankle wound.<sup>13</sup> Private David Jacobs endured a fractured left wrist and several broken teeth. Henry Wilson Derr was struck in the head by a brick, which left him deaf for the rest of his life. And then there was Nick Biddle.

Biddle had been associated with the Washington Artillery since its formation in 1842 and was so highly regarded by Wren

and members that he was permitted to wear the company's uniform. Lincoln was shocked by the sight of the former slave in uniform with his head wrapped in blood-soaked bandages.<sup>14</sup> The president urged Biddle to seek medical treatment, but he refused, determined to remain with Wren and the company.

The soldiers of Pennsylvania's First Defender companies spent most of their three-month term of service in guard and garrison duty in and around Washington, experiencing little in the way of active campaigning or battle. On May 1, the Allen Infantry and the National Light Artillery were transferred to the United States Arsenal, two miles south of Washington, on the Potomac River to guard

large quantities of materiel, including "70,000 stands of arms and heavy guns, with powder."<sup>15</sup> The Allen Infantry was first quartered on the second floor of the complex's Penitentiary Building and then in the rooms of the arsenal building itself. The unit was later joined by the Ringgold Light Artillery. The companies of the First Defenders marched in late June to Maryland, where they slept in a building used by the Rockville Fair. The following morning they took up the march to Poolesville, Point of Rocks, and Sandy Hook, Maryland, and to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. They then proceeded to Williamsport and across the Potomac River to Martinsburg where they camped.

Following several more uneventful encampments, their term of enlistment expired and they were mustered out in late

July and returned home. Throughout the summer of 1861, however, the overwhelming majority of the soldiers reenlisted to serve in the scores of three-year regiments that were being speedily organized throughout the state, filling the ranks of such units as the 48th, the 49th, the 53rd, and 96th Infantry Regiments as well as the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry. During their terms of service with the three-year units, many First Defenders became officers. More than half of the soldiers who comprised the ranks of the Logan Guards became commissioned officers during the war, including no less than four brigadier generals. By war's end, many former First Defenders would be among those killed in action or lost to disease.

Years later, Heber S. Thompson, a private in the Washington Artillery and later a captain in the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry, wrote:

Hardly a single great battle was fought in the four years of the war—from Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Five Forks to Appomattox in the East, and from Shiloh to Stone's River, Mufreesboro, Chickamauga, Resaca and Atlanta in the Middle West—in which the First Defenders were not represented. Their individual war records would fill volumes of history.

Although these soldiers witnessed much more of the brutalities and harrowing hardships of war than during their three-month term of service as members of the First Defender units, they would long carry the torch of their achievement and take great pride in being the very first volunteer troops to arrive in Washington after President Lincoln's April 1861 call-to-arms.<sup>16</sup>

Even though the early volunteers were the first to defend the Union, they are among the last to be duly recognized for their contributions to the North during the American Civil War.

“And so, in time to come, the example of the First Defenders will remain an inspiration whenever our flag and country shall need prompt, ready and un-hesitating defenders,” opined James Schaadt in December 1909.<sup>17</sup> They indeed remain an inspiration. ★

**John David Hoptak**, a lifelong student of the American Civil War, is a native of Schuylkill County, home to two First Defender companies. He is the author of several books, including *First in Defense of the Union: The Civil War History of*

*the First Defenders* (2004), *The Battle of South Mountain* (2011), and *Confrontation at Gettysburg* (2012). He resides with his wife Laura in Bendersville, Adams County, and is employed as a park ranger by the National Park Service at Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Maryland, and Gettysburg National Military Park. His work has appeared in *America's Civil War* magazine. The author maintains a highly popular Civil War blog, *The 148th Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry/Civil War Musings* at [www.48thpennsylvania.blogspot.com](http://www.48thpennsylvania.blogspot.com).



On May 26, 1861, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania authorized the production of medals—funded by an appropriation of \$5,000—for presentation to First Defenders. The bronze medals were minted at the United States Mint in Philadelphia. The original medal was suspended from a red, white, and blue ribbon attached to a bar inscribed with a stylized keystone and “First Defender.” This medal was presented to Joseph Hettinger of the Allen Infantry.

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Artist's rendering of the commonwealth's First Defenders medal showing both obverse and reverse and the ribbon and bar.

From *The First Defenders* (1910).





“Hardly a single great battle was fought in the four years of the war ... in which the **First Defenders** were not represented. Their individual war records would fill volumes of history.”

~ HEBER S. THOMPSON

First Defenders proudly wore medals, badges, buttons, and ribbons to their reunions through the years. This ribbon was acquired in 1977 by The State Museum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, administered by PHMC.

PHMC. Photo by Don Giles



A group shot by well-known Lehigh Valley professional photographer Arlington Nelson Lindenmuth in its original frame and backing is inscribed in pencil on the reverse “First Defenders Civil War Vets Pottsville, Pa. at Allentown Civil War Monument.” The circa 1916 photograph shows more than 30 of Schuylkill County’s surviving First Defenders at the base of the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument on Allentown’s Center Square, dedicated on October 19, 1899. The image was a presentation copy by Colonel Henry C. Trexler, at the time Quarter-Master of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Courtesy Frank Harchuska/Antique Investments.

<sup>1</sup> Some men also joined the ranks as conscripts or substitutes.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Penniman Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–1865* (Harrisburg: B. Singerly, State Printer, 1869), 1:8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:8

<sup>4</sup> *Schuylkill County in the Civil War* (Pottsville: Historical Society of Schuylkill County, 1961), 14.

<sup>5</sup> William Muhlenberg Hiester, *The Place of the Reading Light Artillery of Reading Among the First five Companies Which Marched to the Defense of Washington, April, 1861* (Reading: Historical Society of Berks County, 1870), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Heber Thompson, *The First Defenders* (First Defenders Association, 1910), 30.

<sup>7</sup> John David Hoptak, “A Forgotten Hero of the Civil War” in *Pennsylvania Heritage* 36, 2 (Spring 2010), 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> James A. Schaadt, “The Allen Infantry in 1861” in *The First Defenders* by Thompson, 139.

<sup>10</sup> Hoptak, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Thompson, *The First Defenders*.

<sup>12</sup> Hoptak, 6–7.

<sup>13</sup> For his bravery during the Battle of Antietam, Sharpsburg, Maryland, in September 1862, Ignatz Gresser was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1895—three decades after the war ended.

<sup>14</sup> Hoptak, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Schaadt, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, 95.

<sup>17</sup> Schaadt gave an address to the Lehigh County Historical Society on December 15, 1909, which appeared the following year in Thompson’s *The First Defenders*, and as a 16-page booklet titled *The Allen Infantry in 1861*, in 1911.



**WAGING  
WAR**

**THEIR OWN WAY**

**WOMEN  
AND THE  
CIVIL WAR  
IN**

**PENNSYLVANIA**



By Judith Giesberg

*Harper's Weekly* featured an idealized drawing of volunteer women making havelocks, intended to protect soldiers' necks from the sun, though the men found they kept in the heat and instead used them as rags or coffee strainers.

HHC Detre L&A, *Harper's Weekly* (June 29, 1861).



Pennsylvania's recently conserved Civil War Muster Rolls, housed at the Pennsylvania State Archives, document the commonwealth's contributions to the Union. Nearly 345,000 Pennsylvanians served in the U.S. Army during the war, or approximately 60 percent of the adult male population.<sup>1</sup> A century and a half ago clerks carefully transcribed the names, ages, regiments, and brief descriptions of the men who left their homes, farms, workshops, and desks to defend the nation in a time of uncertainty and peril.

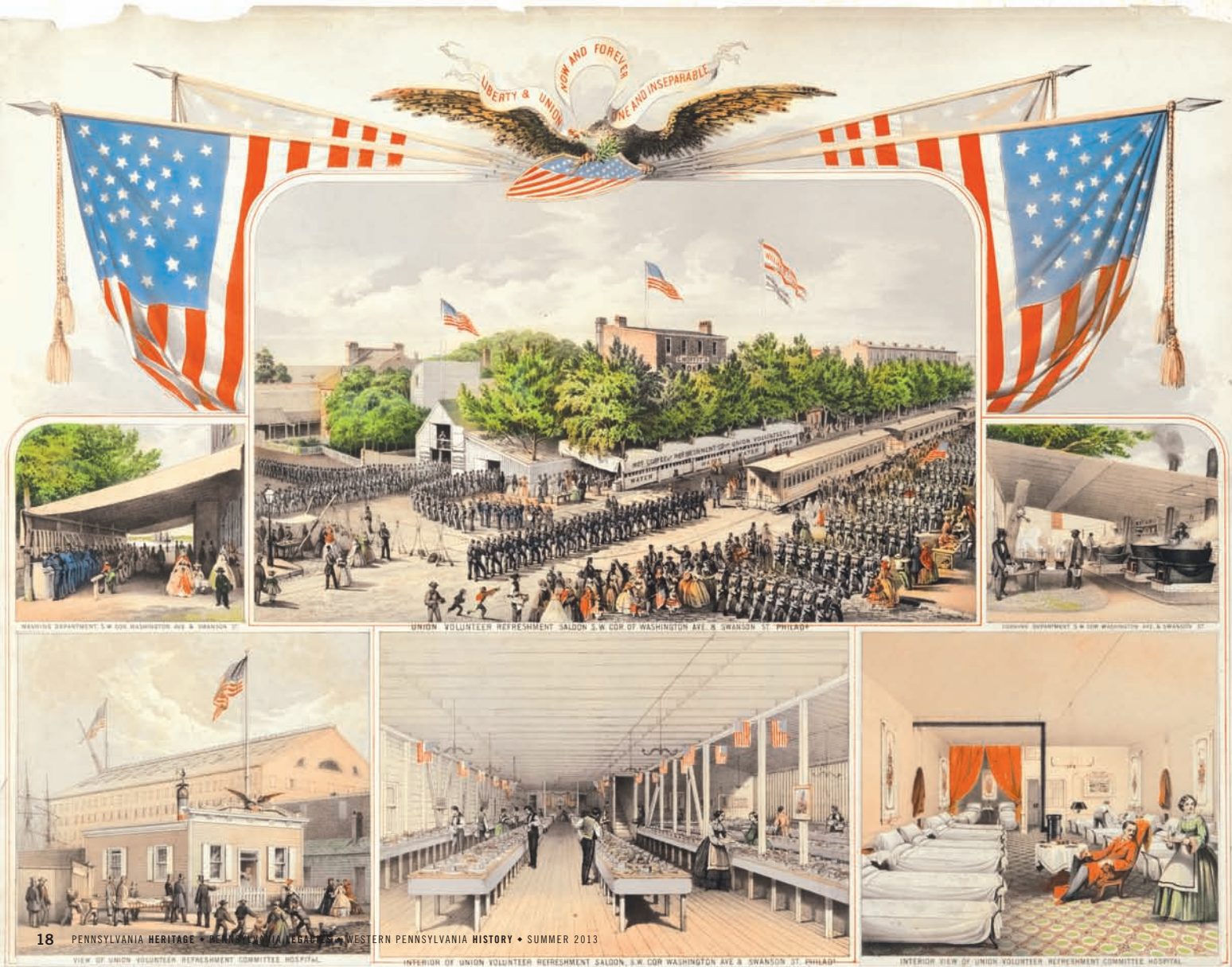
Charles D. Fuller—or Charley, as his friends called him—enlisted in Harrisburg in

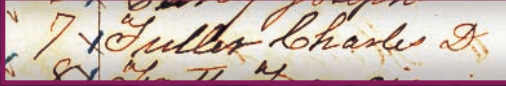
September 1861, when war enthusiasm ran so high that recruiters were turning men away. Fuller was mustered into Company D of the 46th Pennsylvania Infantry. Described as a slight boy with a sallow complexion, black eyes, and light hair, he was detailed as a surgeon's nurse.<sup>2</sup> Fuller listed his occupation as a clerk. However, in the last column of the roll, titled "Remarks," a clerk noted Fuller was discharged after he was "detected as being a Femal[e]."

How was Fuller discovered? Though many veterans later examined the rolls to add details or correct errors about their service and that of their comrades, Fuller's service card offers no clue. The only other reference is found in the "Reminiscences" of Mathew Taylor, who

served in Fuller's 46th PVI.<sup>3</sup> Taylor recalled that "the boys of Company C hollowed [hollered] out to a comerad did yo see that woman in Company D?... She played boy to a finish but was detected and sent home." Adding to the mystery, Fuller's service record at the National Archives lists him/her both as a deserter at Camp Lewis, Maryland, on October 31, 1861, and discharged at Alexandria, Virginia, on July 16, 1865. The latter date seems highly unlikely; it does not correspond to the information known about Fuller, leading to more questions than answers.

Scholars don't know the circumstances prompting Fuller's enlistment, but she was not the only woman to attempt such deception,





Charles Fuller, fifth entry from bottom on this Pennsylvania muster roll, can be seen in the last column as being dismissed from Camp Lewis in Maryland for having been “detected as being a Femal[e].”

Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-19, Records of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

*“the boys of Company C hollowed [hollered] out to a comerad did yo see that woman in Company D?... She played boy to a finish but was detected and sent home.”*

nor was she the only woman employing extreme measures to contribute to the war effort.<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania women relentlessly waged war on the home front in both ordinary and extraordinary ways. They knitted socks and organized volunteers, cared for the wounded and the ill, worked in factories, celebrated veterans’ returns, helped bury the dead, and memorialized the fallen. As fathers, husbands, and sons left for battle, women more than ever worked to support their families. For many, particularly those who lost loved ones or who welcomed home men permanently disabled, their lives would never be the same. This essay explores both the change wrought by war and the continuity of life on Pennsylvania’s Civil War home front.

LEFT: *View of the Philadelphia Volunteer Refreshment Saloons*, lithograph. Bc 32 U58, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Large Graphics Collection (Collection V65).

*Troops from the Keystone State, New England, New Jersey, and New York convened at Philadelphia’s Navy Yard where they waited for trains—and where they were often treated to refreshments by families in the neighborhood.*

Philadelphia’s Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon and the Volunteer Refreshment Room of the Pittsburgh Subsistence Committee were both credits to civilian ingenuity in response to the exigencies of war. Similar to the modern USO, the refreshment saloons were intended to “be the bridge between the American public” and the Union army. In the early months of the war, men throughout Pennsylvania organized into regiments and congregated in towns and cities on their way to Washington, D.C. In those early days, family members often accompanied soldiers to train stations in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and at smaller depots throughout the state, attracting well-wishers to see them off. Troops from the Keystone State, New England, New Jersey, and New York convened at Philadelphia’s Navy Yard where they waited for trains—and where they were often treated to refreshments by families in the neighborhood. Pittsburgh residents found themselves suddenly playing host to large

numbers of soldiers who had traveled great distances and who arrived with little in the way of provisions to sustain them.

Saloons grew from local women’s volunteer efforts to feed passing soldiers, efforts that eventually attracted the attention of businessmen who rented and fitted rooms to feed the troops and formed committees to raise funds to continue the work. Behind the scenes, women planned and cooked meals and stayed awake late into the night awaiting the arrival of soldiers on their way to and from the battlefield.<sup>5</sup> When women carried food from their kitchens to troops rendezvousing nearby, they unwittingly began the refreshment saloon movement, the same sentiments that set in motion the initiative behind the creation of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), a private relief agency established by federal legislation on June 18, 1861, to aid sick and wounded soldiers. The USSC was well known for its sanitary fairs to raise money for its work (see “All’s Fair” on page 56 in this issue).

The fairs in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, both held in the summer of 1864, focused attention on local soldiers’ aid societies, for which women raised money, sewed clothing and bedding, and knitted socks. Knitting brought women together and helped sustain volunteer work, even though the war taxed their resolve and squeezed their resources. Women

## CHESTER COUNTY SOLDIERS' SOCKS,

FOR THE

Great CENTRAL FAIR for the SANITARY COMMISSION to be held in Philadelphia in June.

### Every Woman to the Work.

Let our brave *Soldiers* know and feel that they are remembered, and cared for in every household in the land. Let us begin by knitting one or more pairs of Socks. And to distinguish the *CHESTER COUNTY* Socks, from all others, let the ribbing at the top be red, white and blue, one inch of each color.

In order that a full report may be made of the whole number contributed, it is requested, that they be sent with the names of the donors, to the nearest *Aid Society*, or to the *Central Aid Society*, West Chester. **Ply fast your Needles.**

**S. H. HIESTER,**

*Associate Manager, U. S.*

*Sanitary Commission.*

Read  
and  
circulate.

Whole length of Foot from  $\text{D}$  to  $\text{H}$  inches.

Whole length of Sock from  $\text{L}$  to  $\text{I}$  inches.

HARSON & SON, PRINTERS, PHILADELPHIA.

Hoping to have their work included in the USSC's Great Central Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia's Logan Square, the women of Chester County conceived an unusual pattern that would allow recipients "to distinguish the CHESTER COUNTY Socks, from all others." The design stipulated three one-inch stripes of ribbing in red, white, and blue. The countians included their "drawn-to-size plan" on a broadside circulated among women who would knit to their specifications.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania (2007.48.1).

*Knitting brought women together and helped sustain volunteer work, even though the war taxed their resolve and squeezed their resources.*

combined knitting with childcare, and labored while talking with neighbors or fellow aid society members, exchanging news from the battlefield, and sharing gossip from the neighborhood. The USSC supplied local societies with yarn or cloth to keep them at work. It attempted to keep donations anonymous but makers took pride in their needlework and often attached personal notes to the garments.

Knitting and sewing formed the basis of women's voluntary societies; many women also relied upon needlework to support themselves. Enlistment bounties offered to the wives of Pennsylvania's soldiers only went so far to bolster family finances, and wives, mothers, and sisters often waited in vain for money to arrive from the front. Women whose families relied on their income might contribute to the support of the soldiers, but primarily they

needed money to feed their children and to keep their homes. Their financial needs, combined with the enormous material needs of the military, required women to negotiate informal and formal contracts to supply a wide variety of goods and services. Women performed a good deal of work for the U.S. Army, including knitting socks and sewing uniforms, washing and repairing uniforms and hospital clothing, and nursing the sick and wounded.

During the war a variety of people nursed, including convalescent soldiers in the North and slaves in the South. Nursing included work such as cooking, washing hospital floors, and caring for soldiers. Nursing as a profession had not yet been established and army nurses were more likely to be male than female.

Victorian era ideas about women's behavior and strong gender prejudices made it

difficult for most women to find good paying work and discouraged middle-class women from pursuing it entirely. Nevertheless, the army relied on working-class women and they, in turn, depended on money they could earn by providing goods and services to volunteers and others who camped or convalesced in the Keystone State as well as those who passed through.

Like the brief glimpse of Charley Fuller's enlistment, an invoice submitted by Ellen Lovett of Philadelphia presents us with a host of questions about Pennsylvania women's Civil War. Ellen Lovett of Philadelphia submitted an invoice to the commonwealth in March 1862 for storing the "arms and accoutrements" of Company K, 24th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, for six months after the company mustered out. Placed in her care by Captain

An invoice from  
Ellen Lovett  
to the State of  
Pennsylvania,  
March 12, 1862.

Pennsylvania State Archives,  
RG-19, Records of the  
Department of Military and  
Veterans Affairs.

Andrew McManus [sic] in August 1861, Lovett safeguarded the arms until they were returned to authorities in February 1862. Her invoice charged for the service that Lovett provided especially for this particular regiment or one that she routinely offered.<sup>6</sup> What is known of Company K substantiates Lovett's claim. The unit's mostly Irish recruits were mustered in at Philadelphia in early May 1861, saw service in the Shenandoah Valley and, when their three months of service ended, they mustered out.<sup>7</sup>

Many soldiers hired women to sew, knit, cook, and wash clothes. Caroline Abel laundered clothing and bed linens for the General Hospital at Harrisburg's Camp Curtin between December 1861 and March 1862. Unmarried and apparently with no parents to support her, washing clothes might have been 15-year-old Abel's main source of support. The work was difficult and tedious, but Abel and others like her had few options. Once a week, Abel arrived at the hospital with heavy baskets of clean bedding and clothes and returned home with them overflowing with soiled sheets and blankets. Although machines had begun to revolutionize the work of plowing fields and manufacturing garments, women who worked at Camp Curtin used crude wash tubs that were awkward to carry. Several of Abel's invoices are also signed—by both women with an x—by Rebecca Masters, who might have been a friend or a neighbor who shared the work. For their hard work, Abel and Masters split the pay, 50 cents per dozen items totaling more than \$100.<sup>8</sup> Even shared, the money Abel earned monthly compared favorably with the wages earned by a common soldier, which averaged between \$14 and \$16 a month.

Because she was unable to sign her own name, Able relied on the ward master and assistant surgeon to prepare her invoices and compute her pay and they, in turn, relied on her to return the items quickly and in good shape. Several other women also submitted similar bills indicating there were more than enough tasks to be performed at the hospital to employ a number of local women. Only two were able to sign their names, highlighting the class differences between

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
To Mrs Ellen J Lovett 27  
For Storage for the Arms and accoutrements  
of Company K's 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment Pa 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf Volunteers  
from August 6<sup>th</sup> 1861 to February 6<sup>th</sup> 1862 125.00

City of Philadelphia S.S.  
Personally appeared before me, an  
Alderman in and for said City, Ellen J Lovett who  
having been duly sworn according to Law, said that  
the above account is correct, that the Storage for the said  
Military Arms and accoutrements was furnished to  
the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on the order of  
Captain Andrew McManus Co K's 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment Pa Inf  
and that the rate charged for the same are the actual  
cash prices or rates charged to other customers, and no  
more, that no Commission, abatement or allowance whatever  
has been or is to be given to any person concerned in  
the entering or contracting for the said Storage, or any  
other person whomsoever, and that the said Storage  
was for the time mentioned in the said account  
seen and subscribed before me  
this 12<sup>th</sup> day of March 1862  
Alfred B. Allen

Received Harrisburg March 1862 of A. L. Bishop  
Assistant Surgeon the sum of Twenty five dollars being  
the amount in full of the above bill  
\$25.00  
Mrs Ellen Lovett

(Signed Duplicates)

Camp Curtin December 1861  
Receipt of J. H. Graham Ward Master  
Two hundred & 23 pieces to wash and  
return during the week at hospital  
at fifty cents for dozen Caroline & c. Abel

Shirts	85
Shirts	42
Pillow Slips	40
Drawers	16
Towels	12
Comports	6
Blankets	2

Total Pieces

I do here by certify that the above washing  
has been done and returned y. me  
at General Hospital for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf  
Camp Curtin December 1861 J. H. Graham  
Ward Master

A. L. Bishop  
Asst. Surg. General Hospital

A receipt for the  
return of 203 pieces  
of clothing washed by  
Caroline Abel at  
Camp Curtin General  
Hospital dated  
December 7, 1861.

Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-19,  
Records of the Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs.



***Nothing matched the risks assumed by civilians who worked at U.S. Army arsenals during the war, including the Allegheny Arsenal in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia's Frankford Arsenal.***

the illiterate and the white middle-class women (such as Dorothea Dix) who were making inroads into the hospital hierarchy, or the women of Philadelphia's Ladies Aid Society who collected money and donated hospital clothing through voluntary organizations such as the USSC—women who wrote and signed their own letters, corresponded with army officers about their relief work, and generally expected no pay in return for their work. At army camps and field hospitals, women of color, many of them self-emancipated slaves, often did the washing.

Class and race made a difference in the way women in Pennsylvania experienced the war, but so too did region. Camp Curtin's washerwomen made use of the opportunity

accorded by the proximity of a general hospital to find work. Closeness to army camps had distinct disadvantages, though, as civilians learned all too well when the fighting came near in the fall of 1862 and again when Rebel soldiers crossed the border in the summers of 1863 and 1864. Women who lived near or worked at camps worried about stragglers and deserters and the threat of disease. Eight men died at the camp hospital in November 1861, and after Secretary of War Simon Cameron visited the facility the following month, he recommended it be abandoned because of poor conditions.<sup>9</sup> Women washed clothing and bedding at the camp's two measles hospitals. The washerwomen did not receive additional compensation for the added risk of washing the clothes of soldiers infected with highly communicable diseases.<sup>10</sup>

Nothing matched the risks assumed by civilians who worked at U.S. Army arsenals during the war, including the Allegheny Arsenal in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia's Frankford Arsenal. Explosions in December 1861 and February 1862 slowed Frankford's efforts to increase production to meet military demand and underscored the dangers confronting the Union's new civilian work force. Despite early setbacks, the arsenal's production of small arms ammunition was brought up to speed.<sup>11</sup> At Allegheny Arsenal, a series of explosions on September 17, 1862, killed 78 women employed as cartridge formers (see "Allegheny Arsenal Explosion" on page 42).

In comparison to cartridge-making, sewing paid little. Philadelphia's Schuylkill Arsenal employed hundreds of women to make army uniforms. They took pride in the skill and the care with which they produced clothing that would withstand the rigors of warfare. By September 1861, some 3,000 women were sewing uniforms at the arsenal.

After Assistant Quartermaster Colonel George H. Crosman lowered the per-piece rate and began sending more of the work to private clothing manufacturers that paid even

less, Schuylkill's seamstresses balked. Crosman negotiated a contract with one manufacturer, Adolph and Keen, to produce 650 Zouave fez caps, for 99 cents each. Subcontractors employed their own hatters and seamstresses, creating a sizable number of middle-men (and women) and lowering the per-piece price paid to women employed by private firms. *Fincher's Trades Review* reported the Schuylkill Arsenal paid twelve and a half cents for a haversack but a subcontractor paid female workers only five cents. The contractor presumably made a profit of seven cents per piece.<sup>12</sup> By one estimate, sewing women earned as little as \$1.50 a week at a time when inflation and shortages raised the price of all necessities.<sup>13</sup>

Seamstresses addressed their first petition against private contracting to Secretary of War Simon Cameron in August 1861.<sup>14</sup> They argued, "we do most emphatically and earnestly protest against, and vigorously and righteously denounce the infamous contract system, by which we are robbed of more than half our wages, while it puts large profits into the pockets of a few speculators and contractors, and by which we are impoverished, and our government not benefited."<sup>15</sup> But even with the arsenal working to capacity, the army's insatiable demand for goods outpaced production. Adolph and Keen was part of a vast network of private subcontractors with whom Colonel Crosman negotiated to fill orders. The inequalities of the system troubled critics who saw contractors as opportunists who paid soldiers' wives starvation wages for their arduous work while their husbands risked their lives on the battlefield.<sup>16</sup>

Tensions between the seamstresses and Crosman climaxed in the tense summer of July 1863, when he laid-off more than 100 women who "belong[ed] to families opposed to the war" and those unable to provide written evidence of their relationship to army soldiers.<sup>17</sup> Two days after the layoffs, 145 women signed a petition to Cameron's successor Edwin M. Stanton demanding their jobs back, strongly refuting the army's spurious linking of the



layoffs with a lack of patriotism and railing against Crosman for “taking the work from us and giving it to the Contractors who will not pay wages on which we can live.”<sup>18</sup>

The seamstresses eventually won the sympathies of Lincoln, who intervened to raise their wages, but the army’s system of private contracting remained firmly in place, ensuring handsome profits for firms and low wages for women in the needle trades.

Women used the meager wages they earned by sewing to supplement money they received from soldier-husbands and sons. Women’s incomes often made the difference between remaining at home or seeking shelter at an almshouse. Families that lost the financial support of men to the war effort faced poverty, separation, and displacement.<sup>19</sup> Standing between the wives of Union soldiers and these dire circumstances were a multitude of state and local relief organizations.

State and local relief varied widely throughout the North during the war. Massachusetts and New Hampshire encouraged enlistment by offering advance payments on bounties and aid to soldiers’ families. Pennsylvania left the sustenance of the families of soldiers to local relief agencies or to overseers of the poor. City and county relief societies

providing support were privately funded and run by middle-class board members. Relief boards, including Bucks County’s, ruled on the applications of hundreds of women each month who sought payments of 50 cents to \$2.50 weekly to help support themselves and their children. To qualify for relief, women had to be residents and their husbands taxpayers.<sup>20</sup> Like Bucks County’s organization, not all local societies extended aid to the families of drafted soldiers. A woman applying for relief needed to provide proof of her marriage to a soldier and that the county in which she lived had received credit for his service.

Elizabeth Wert of Armagh Township appealed to the Mifflin County Relief to Families of Civil War Soldiers, seeking support for her and her eight children.<sup>21</sup> Her husband Jonas had been drafted into Company D of the 88th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers in March 1865. Even with a large brood of children Elizabeth waited two months before seeking help from the relief board. During

those eight weeks, she found “Two Taxpayers” to accompany her to the relief office, and the men added their signatures to her application, providing it with more weight, perhaps, than most. Elizabeth signed the application with an x, indicating that someone else filled out the form. Even with her husband serving in a regiment, she needed endorsements from three men before she might be considered worthy of so little support.

If Elizabeth Wert’s application was approved, she would face more hurdles. After a woman qualified, her behavior was carefully scrutinized by the board. Women were cut from the rolls when their husbands deserted, were discharged, or died; they were also dropped for claiming more children than they had or when they failed to live up to board members’ standards of propriety. The Board of Relief of Bucks County Board of County Commissioners dismissed women when their husbands or sons were discharged by the army, but what are historians to make of an entry excising Elmira Pfreder (sic), wife of Joseph,

because “she has not acted as a virtuous wife should have done, and her two children she has put in Bucks County Alms House?”<sup>22</sup>

The dismissal of

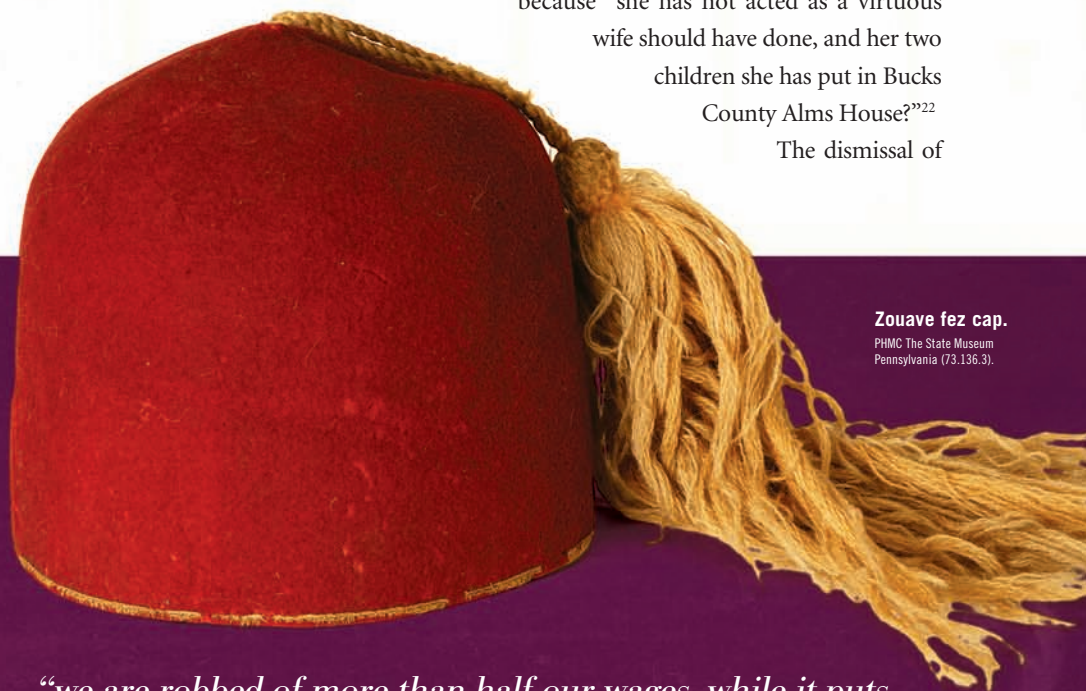
Schuylkill Uniform pants.

PHMC The State Museum Pennsylvania (73.136.2).



Zouave fez cap.

PHMC The State Museum Pennsylvania (73.136.3).



*“we are robbed of more than half our wages, while it puts large profits into the pockets of a few speculators and contractors, and ... **we are impoverished**, and our government not benefited.”*

Pfrender has a number of probable explanations. Placing children in the almshouse—as did many women of the period—was a last resort; if Pfender did so, she intended to retrieve them as soon as she had the means. Women used a variety of institutions, including almshouses and asylums, as temporary shelters for their children after they lost their jobs or became ill and could not rely on their husbands or families for support. If Pfender failed to report the change in her household to the board, members would have suspected she was attempting to deceive them by drawing more money than she deserved. When the board ruled that Pfender had not been virtuous, they may have been acting on information or rumors, for there was certainly a great deal of the latter, particularly in communities with divided loyalties. On the other hand, Pfender might have “taken up” with another man in her husband’s absence. Women enduring a hardscrabble existence in rural Pennsylvania tried a number of different living arrangements to make ends meet, including combining residences, living with kin, or hiring themselves and their children out to neighbors. While these arrangements allowed women to maximize their meager financial resources, relief board members interpreted them as evidence of immorality.<sup>23</sup>

For many women the war did not end in the spring of 1865. Mary Raivley’s war had not ended by late October, prompting her to write to Major H. H. Gregg, Chief of Transportation and Telegraph Department in Pennsylvania. She simply wanted her son’s remains returned to her. Raivley requested railroad passes to send one of her son’s comrades to retrieve his body. She was anxious to give him a proper burial. “He died an honorable death,” Raivley explained to Gregg, “he gave his life for his country and he Noble [nobly] performed his part as a private.”<sup>24</sup>

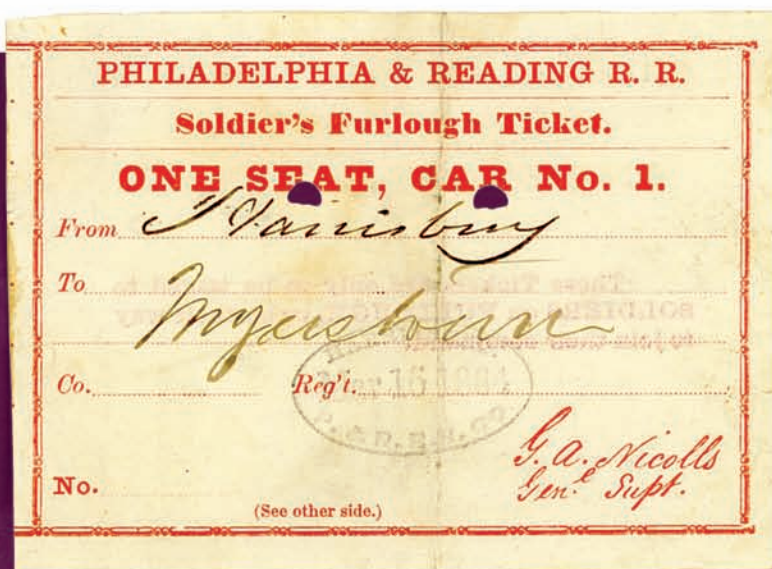
In recounting her son’s sacrifice, Raivley also reminded Gregg of her own. She gave her son to the cause, and she sought repayment in the form of a body to bury. Throughout Pennsylvania, long after the guns fell silent and the soldiers mustered out, mothers, wives, and daughters sought to pick up the pieces and move on. For many, the period of mourning could not commence until a soldier’s body was brought home.

Raivley faced a number of hurdles in seeking to bury her son. The U.S. War Department did not arrange for large-scale transportation of bodies from battlefields and camp hospitals in the South until 1867. During the war, identification and interment of the fallen were

irregular and uneven, offering grieving families little resolution and no opportunity to ensure that loved ones experienced a “good death,” one attended by family members and in which the condition of the dying man’s soul could be affirmed.<sup>25</sup> Although states often bore the cost of reburial on an ad-hoc basis, in response to mounting public pressure Governor Curtin agreed to reimburse family members for the costs of retrieving Pennsylvania’s soldiers from Southern battlefields.<sup>26</sup> The program, announced in autumn 1865, offered to pay for one family member to travel beyond Washington, D.C., to locate and retrieve the corpse.

Raivley’s first attempt failed when the undertaker she hired returned without her son’s body and refused to refund the \$25 she had given him. Undiscouraged, she communicated the urgency that many mothers, fathers, and wives felt when they went in search of a body to bury. “I must get his remains in some way,” Raivley entreated Gregg, “if I have to beg my way to the battle field my self.” With sketchy information gleaned from her son’s comrades, Raivley believed she could find him. From Philadelphia, Raivley asked Gregg for a pass to Washington, suggesting that whereas Curtin agreed to reimburse for travel beyond the nation’s capital, the commonwealth also

*Raivley requested railroad passes to send one of her son’s comrades to retrieve his body. **She was anxious to give him a proper burial.** “He died an honorable death, he gave his life for his country and he Noble performed his part as a private.”*



Philadelphia & Reading Railroad pass.  
 Pennsylvania State Archives, MG-95, Daniel Musser Collection.

### A NETTED OPERA OR USEFUL CAP.

*Materials.*—Two flat meshes; the small one for the cap to measure, by a string placed round it, five-eighths of an inch, that is, a trifle over half an inch; the wide one, without the string, half an inch wide or rather over. A skein of white Andalusian or white Berlin wool. A very pretty netted cap for morning wear may be made by using steel meshes half the size, and doubling the directions given, using Cotton No. 20.

Make a foundation of 57 stitches, and net a plain row.



In the next row, in the 29th stitch, make an increased stitch by netting another into the same loop, also one into the last stitch of the row.

In the next row increase one in the centre,

kind. To form the  
strations represents  
e of wool fourteen  
and the middle fin-  
e wool from these  
re about one and a  
ch some black silk



for Butterfly.

tly rolled; bend it  
e the wool, so that  
s shown in the en-  
small bunch of wool  
38\*

### Directions for making a netted cap.

*Godey's Lady's Book (May 1864).*

*Dressed in black and all shades of grey,  
donning bonnets and veils, women  
quietly slipped in and out of  
buildings and hurried along  
darkened streets, lending palpable  
sadness to the melancholy*

provided for travel to Washington. Finally and rather pointedly, Raivley makes mention of the special attention given to the Gettysburg dead who were treated to a more proper burial. "If he was laid in a cemetery like those that fell at Gettysburg I could be content," Raivley explains, but, instead she is left to "think that he must lay on a open battle field for his bones to be scattered."

Mourning was not confined to family. Women turned out en masse to mourn the death of Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson in 1863 when black-clad and veiled women formed what one historian has called "a uniformed sorority of grief."<sup>27</sup> Lincoln's death occasioned a massive outpouring of grief in the North

and brought together families who had also experienced personal losses. "Half a million sorrow-stricken people," filled the streets of Philadelphia on Saturday, April 23, 1865, to see Lincoln's casket where, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported, "flags were all at half-mast and heavily draped, and not a house in all this vast city, but exhibited the signs of grief, the weeds of woe."<sup>28</sup> Dressed in black and all shades of grey, donning bonnets and veils, women quietly slipped in and out of buildings and hurried along darkened streets, lending palpable sadness to the melancholy.

The proscribed "weeds of woe," such as mourning bonnets, enabled women to show respect for loved ones lost in battle. To

remember them they also created a variety of objects incorporating photographs, pieces of clothing, and hair. Women created hair wreaths (*memento mori*) using skills they learned from their mothers and that they passed on to their daughters.

The eagerness with which family members requested photographs of their loved ones at war and sought tangible evidence of their passing—a lock of hair, a shred of clothing, a worn Bible—spoke to the same urge as hair wreaths, the desire to remember the dead, to honor them, and to hold on to their memory. These impulses were shared by women and men throughout the Keystone State, and the folk traditions behind these pieces connected women from one generation to the next.

Mourning clothing and *memento mori* were created by women attempting to come to terms with the war's losses, to mark a moment in their lives when everything had changed. Women who applied for state pensions also marked that moment of change, but their applications are a telling reminder of the continuity of rural life in Civil War Pennsylvania as well. Susan Wunder of Reading, Berks County, was left

*Mourning clothing and memento mori were created by women attempting to come to terms with the war's losses, to mark a moment in their lives when everything had changed.*



A hair wreath memorialized Catharine Wagner, who died on September 17, 1863, at the age of 56.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania (83.1.26)

with six children to support when her soldier husband died. When she applied for a pension state officials asked for proof of their ages; Wünder brought in the family Bible where her late husband had listed the births of their children under the heading “*Familien Register – Births.*” It takes little to imagine the emotions Susan must have felt when she looked at the names written down by a proud father upon the births of his children. Now the responsibility would fall to Susan to keep the record—perhaps she began with Henry’s death on August 26, 1863.<sup>29</sup> Susan Wünder’s application for a pension marked the great changes the war had wrought on her family and so many like hers; that families like the Wünders continued to record the most important moments in their Bibles is a testament to the enduring continuities of life in Pennsylvania’s rural communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Sandow, *Deserter Country: Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 56-58. Pennsylvania’s number of men serving was second only to New York.

<sup>2</sup> Civil War Veterans Card File, PSA, RG-19.12.

<sup>3</sup> Linda A. Ries, Head of the Arrangement and Description Section at the Pennsylvania State Archives, says Matthew Taylor’s memoir, handwritten in a small ruled memoranda book in the 1890s, was donated to the archives in 2005 and is now part of Manuscript Group #7, the Military Manuscripts Collection, Item #409. His reminiscences appear in their entirety in “The Civil War Memoir of Matthew A. Taylor” edited by Linda A. Ries and Louis Waddell, transcribed by Christine Geiselman, *Susquehanna Heritage: A Journal of the Historical Society of Dauphin County*, Vols. 6-7, 2008–09, pp. 73-89.

<sup>4</sup> The *Harrisburg Patriot and Union*, September 11 and 14, 1861, as cited in William Miller, *Civil War City: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1861-1865, the Training of an Army* (Shippensburg: White Mane Publishing, 1990), 60-61, identified Fuller as Elvira Ibecker, a young woman who took her male identity seriously, drinking whiskey and chewing tobacco with her fellow enlistees. Ibecker likely had some confidants in the 46th, soldiers who knew her gender but who were

willing to keep it from her commanding officers. The same newspaper reported that Sophia Cryder of Carlisle, Cumberland County, enlisted with the Sumner Rifles, staying with the company for a week, during which time she was “in the habit of accompanying the men on their excursions to the river to bathe.”

<sup>5</sup> In Philadelphia, the saloon expanded to include several floors of a large building, one which became a volunteer hospital. The expanded complex provided a number of supplies to the passing troops and served as a clearing house of information. Frank H. Taylor, *Philadelphia in the Civil War* (Philadelphia: published by the city, 1913), 206-210. Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1913), 320-321.

<sup>6</sup> In a duplicate, Lovett makes reference to the rate charged to “other customers,” suggesting that Lovett perhaps stored other items at her Philadelphia home. The second invoice charges the army \$25, instead of \$30. Although the second invoice seems to have been approved, there is no indication if and what Lovett was paid for her storage services.

<sup>7</sup> Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers*, MOA, 218-219.

<sup>8</sup> Fourteen receipts, for monthly totals of December 1861: \$19.29, January 1862: \$39.80, February 1862: \$29.81, and March \$16.04. Rebecca Masters also submitted her own invoices for washing, but these totals were not included in the above estimate.

<sup>9</sup> Miller, *Civil War City*, 81-82.

<sup>10</sup> Miller, 80-81. Black soldiers were more likely to be afflicted than white soldiers. *Gangrene and Glory*, 210-211.

<sup>11</sup> James Farley, *Making Arms in the Machine Age: Philadelphia's Frankford Arsenal, 1816-1870* (State College: Penn State Press, 1994), 69-86.

<sup>12</sup> “A Word for Our Starving Seamstresses,” *Fincher's Trade Review*, 12 December 1863, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Rachel Filene Seidman, “Beyond Sacrifice: Women and Politics on the Pennsylvania Homefront During the Civil War.” Ph.D. diss, Yale University, 1995, 133.

<sup>14</sup> “Petition,” Hannah Rose to Simon Cameron, August 1, 1861, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Records of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, Box 798 (old), e.225.

<sup>15</sup> “A Meeting of Female Operatives in the Arsenal,” *North American and U.S. Gazette*, 4 September 1861, 1.

<sup>16</sup> An 1863 *Harper's Weekly* cartoon, for example, lambasted contractors as parasites living off poor soldiers' wives. Among other images, the cartoon portrays the contractor's wife—who is rotund in comparison to the soldier's wife—shopping for fineries. The criticism is aimed simultaneously at the contractor for his exploitative business practices and at his wife—and by extension other middle-class women—who ought to show more restraint. “Service and Shoddy—A Picture of the Times,” *Harper's Weekly*, 24 October 1863, 677.

<sup>17</sup> “Commendable Movement,” *North American and U.S. Gazette*, 27 July 1863, 1. Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 119-123. The original order came from Pennsylvania Congressman William D. Kelly to Colonel G. H. Crosman, Assistant Quartermaster, in charge of the Schuylkill Arsenal. In the end, this was largely irrelevant to the seamstresses, as they

held Crosman responsible. Colonel G. H. Crosman to Captain George Martine [sic?], July 20, 1863, NARA, RG 92, Box 1004.

<sup>18</sup> “Petition,” Anna Long et al to Edwin Stanton, July 29, 1863, NARA, RG 92, Box 798 (old), e. 225. For background on labor relations in Civil War-era Philadelphia, see Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 119-123 & 136-141.

<sup>19</sup> Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 45-67.

<sup>20</sup> Bucks County Board of County Commissioners, Minutes of the Board of Relief, PHMC, Manuscript Group (MG) 4.

<sup>21</sup> Mifflin County Relief to Families of Civil War Soldiers, PHMC, MG 4.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes for June 1864, Bucks County Board of County Commissioners, PHMC, MG 4. See similar entry for Mary Kinsey, wife of William, Minutes for December 1863.

<sup>23</sup> Giesberg, *Army at Home*, 45-67.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Mary Raivley to H.H. Gregg, October 30, 1865, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, RG-19.29, Box 26.

<sup>25</sup> Officers were more likely to be shipped home. Embalming was irregular, so families were anxious to find the remains before identification became impossible. Gary Laderman, *Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799-1883* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 117-120.

<sup>26</sup> Curtin's order no longer exists, but there is a collection of letters from family members seeking reimbursement at the Information about this program was gleaned from letters of application, such as Mrs. William Brazer's who referred to the reimbursement amount and Barbara Burger's that mentions a notice in the local paper. Mrs. William Brazer to Col. H.H. Gregg, Chief of Transportation and Telegraph, December 4, 1865, PSA, RG-19.29, Box 27. Barbara Berger to Mr. Bergner, December 23, 1865, PSA, RG-19.29, Box 27.

<sup>27</sup> Drew Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 149.

<sup>28</sup> “Our Dead President in Philadelphia,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 24, 1865, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Sworn testimony of Susan Wunder, Henry Wunder Pension File, January 14, 1864, February 1, 1864, PHMC, RG-2: CIVIL WAR PENSION FILE, 1861-1864.



Circa 1870 wreath of brown, gray, and white hair, mounted on white cotton material and surrounding a tintype of a young woman inset in a hand-grained deep shadow-box frame, acquired by The State Museum in 1965.

PHMC The State Museum of Pennsylvania (65.60).

# THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA AND THE CIVIL WAR



By Barbara J. Mitnick



The League House, between Broad and  
15th Streets, c. 1910 postcard.

The Union League of Philadelphia.



**DECEMBER 27, 1862**, began as an ordinary Saturday in a city located at the crossroads of a war-torn nation. Philadelphians on both sides of the secession and slavery issues were living side by side, walking the same streets, dining in the same clubs, and conducting business in the city's financial institutions and commercial establishments. Just six weeks earlier, searching for a place "where true men might breathe without having their atmosphere contaminated by treason," a small group of pro-Union men had established The Union Club of Philadelphia, with articles of association stipulating "unqualified loyalty to the Government of the United States and unwavering support of its measures for the suppression of the Rebellion."<sup>1</sup> By late December, after recognizing a need to encourage even stronger support, they went on to found The Union League of Philadelphia, the first association of its kind in the nation, with the more resolute purpose of using "every proper means in public and private" to aid the Union cause.<sup>2</sup> The mission would become a grand success. The Union League of Philadelphia's proud contributions of determination, intellect, and treasure provided crucial aid to President Abraham Lincoln and the Northern forces. The nation that had declared its independence in the League's home city 89 years earlier was saved.



Before the war, a significant number of Philadelphians had strong Southern family, business, and educational affiliations. The city, as described by writer, historian, and Republican politician Alexander McClure, was “a great emporium of Southern commerce”—an important source for goods highly prized by Southern customers. Conversely, the city’s manufacturers relied on the importation of raw materials from Southern vendors—in particular, lumber, turpentine, and cotton.<sup>3</sup>

state his belief in the “incalculable blessing” of slavery and his hope that if there was to be a division of the Union, the line of separation should “run north of Pennsylvania!”<sup>4</sup>

The audacious attack on Fort Sumter by Confederate forces on April 12, 1861, quickly raised the level of Union support among Philadelphians, as well as escalated acts of rebellion in the city by Southern sympathizers. While Philadelphia’s pro-Union newspapers kept the public informed, local Copperhead

calling for 75,000 troops, to which loyal Philadelphians, including later founders of the Union League, replied by declaring their “unalterable determination to sustain the Government in its efforts to maintain the honor, the integrity, and the existence of our national Union.”<sup>6</sup>

Within this context of war, destruction, and local tension, prominent Philadelphians began a process that would fundamentally change the course of local history and that



**At the time of President Abraham Lincoln’s election in the fall of 1860, Philadelphia, and, indeed, the whole of Pennsylvania, remained bitterly divided over issues related to slavery and civil rights.**



Nevertheless, at the time of President Abraham Lincoln’s election in the fall of 1860, Philadelphia, and, indeed, the whole of Pennsylvania, remained bitterly divided over issues related to slavery and civil rights. When meetings in late 1860 and early January 1861 failed to resolve the national crisis, many Southern sympathizers continued to argue for a settlement that would avoid war while permitting the continuation of slavery. Pennsylvania Supreme Court associate justice George W. Woodward even went so far as to

publications such as the *Palmetto Flag* (named for the state flag and symbol of South Carolina), which had debuted in early April, continued to espouse Southern positions.<sup>5</sup> On April 15, only three days after the fall of Sumter, angry mobs filled the streets of Philadelphia; some began to attack the *Palmetto Flag’s* offices. Indeed, local diarist Sidney George Fisher recorded that “several well-known persons, who had openly expressed secession opinions, had been assaulted in the streets.” On the same day, President Lincoln issued a proclamation

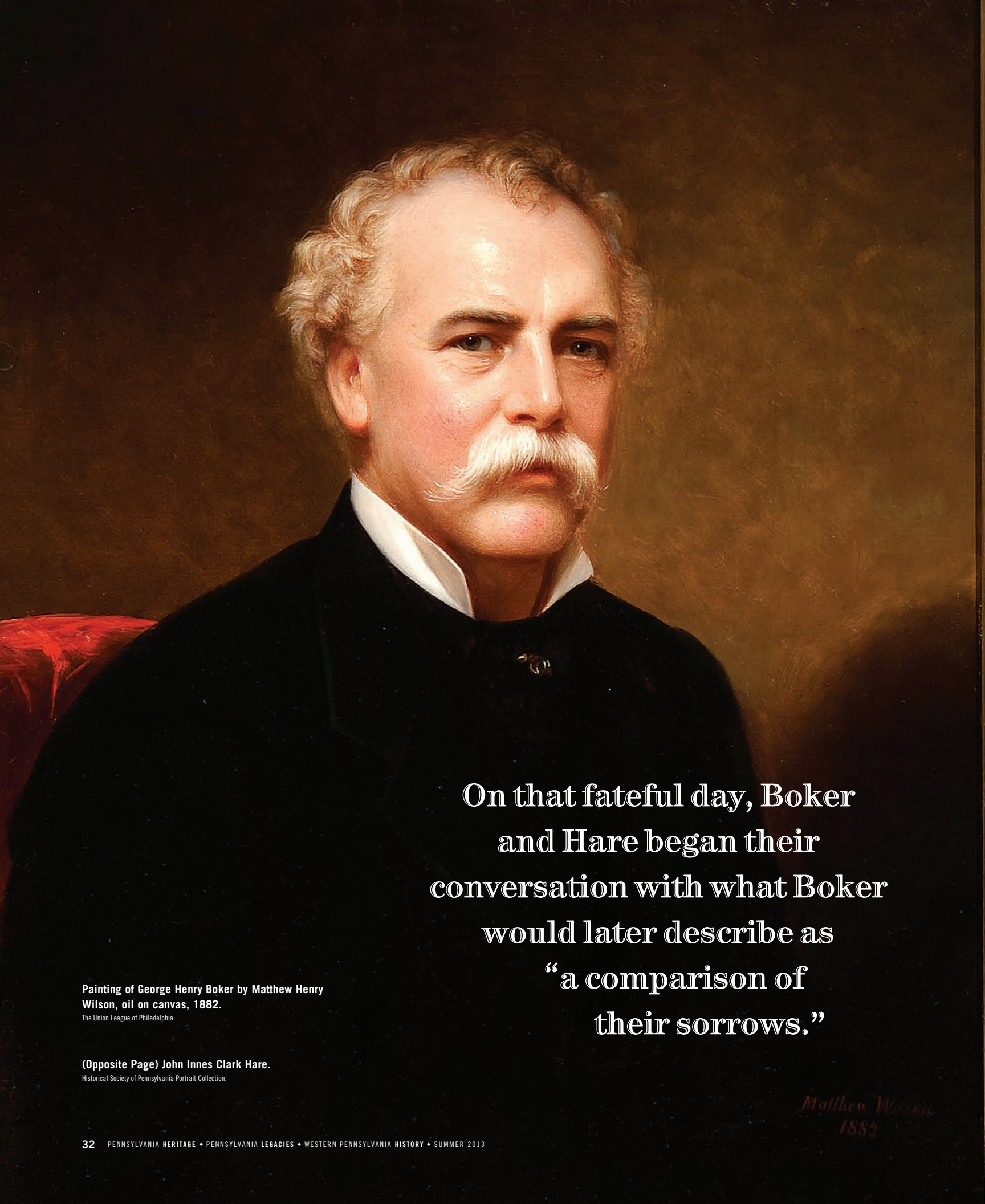
of the nation. For it was in November 1862 that lawyer, poet, playwright, patriot, and (later) diplomat George Henry Boker and Pennsylvania’s eminent jurist Judge John Innes Clark Hare met by chance “in” Seventh Street and began a conversation that would result in the founding of The Union League of Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup>

After graduating from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), George Boker studied law but resolved to focus his attention on poetry, literature, and



Photograph of Abraham Lincoln taken  
by Mathew Brady, February 27, 1860.  
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, 3a09102u.

*Brady.  
N. Y.*



On that fateful day, Boker  
and Hare began their  
conversation with what Boker  
would later describe as  
“a comparison of  
their sorrows.”

Painting of George Henry Boker by Matthew Henry  
Wilson, oil on canvas, 1882.  
The Union League of Philadelphia.

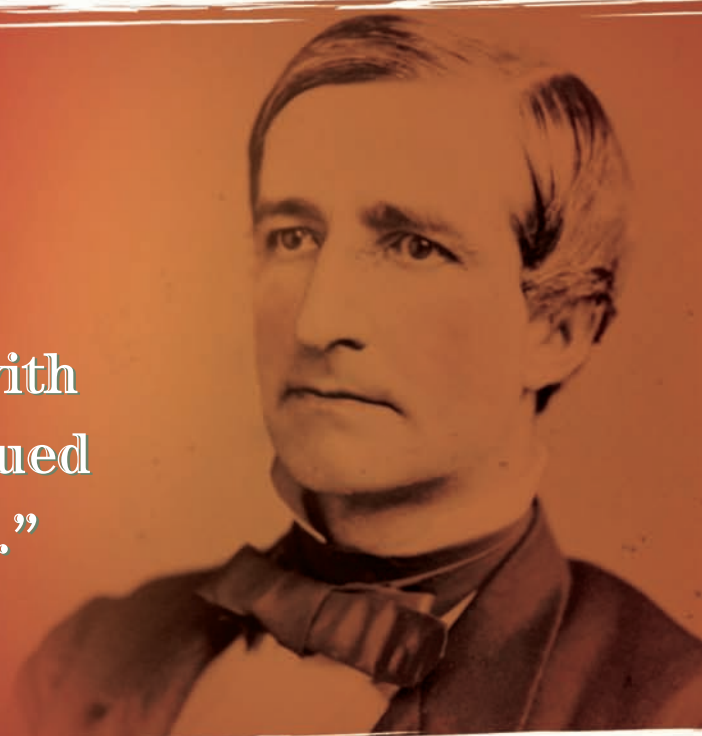
(Opposite Page) John Innes Clark Hare.  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania Portrait Collection.

*Matthew Wilson  
1882*

☆☆☆

Judge Hare particularly  
expressed his displeasure with  
“men, who were almost leagued  
with the Southern traitors.”

☆☆☆



playwriting. By 1860, he had become an ardent opponent of slavery and a supporter of the policies of Abraham Lincoln; he would soon defend the president's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Boker had also begun to use his considerable literary talents to circulate his political philosophy. In "Ad Poetas," published in the city's *Daily Evening Bulletin* in September 1861, he produced a lyrical counterpart to Lincoln's call to arms as he encouraged "the heroes of our holy cause" to reunite the union of American states. Judge Hare was a prominent Philadelphian who had enjoyed a career as a professor of law and an appointment as associate judge of the District Court of Philadelphia.<sup>8</sup>

On that fateful day, Boker and Hare began their conversation with what Boker would later describe as "a comparison of their sorrows." Both men understood that the dire

wartime situation had weakened support for the Union, as clearly demonstrated by the recent defeat of Republican candidates in the 1862 midterm congressional elections. Judge Hare particularly expressed his displeasure with "men, who were almost leagued with the Southern traitors ... walking with high heads among our people, openly exulting in our discomfiture, and eagerly waiting for the day of our utter overthrow." He ruminated about withdrawing from "social relations" with disloyal men and organizing a society of loyalists into a "Union Club" that would "positively" exclude those deemed disloyal "from the meetings of the proposed club by the strongest enactments of the articles of association." "Warmed with the zeal of fresh conviction," Boker immediately took the proposal to the nearby office of Morton McMichael, publisher of the *North*

*American*, where he was sure he would find a receptive audience. Widely known for his oratorical and publishing skills, McMichael would later gain fame for his government and civic service, which came to include a term as mayor of Philadelphia from 1866 to 1869 and the presidency of the Union League from 1870 to 1874.<sup>9</sup>

Invitations, although deliberately unsigned due to the current danger, were sent to a select group of men by attorney Benjamin Gerhard to attend a gathering at his Fourth Street home (reportedly on November 15), which he covertly described as "a meeting of loyal men, for a patriotic purpose." Although serious issues were on the agenda, little was accomplished until the second meeting, when a standing committee consisting of McMichael, Hare, Boker, Gerhard, and Charles Gibbons submitted four articles of association naming

☆☆☆

The goal was to organize  
loyalists of every political  
persuasion who shared one  
all-important objective:  
the salvation of the  
American Union.

☆☆☆



the new organization “The Union Club of Philadelphia” and limiting its membership to 50 men who would declare “unqualified loyalty to the Government of the United States and unwavering support of its measures for the suppression of the Rebellion.”<sup>10</sup> During the new organization’s next five meetings, members exhibited increasing enthusiasm for the “cause” as well as “hatred and alarm” directed at disloyal men. At the same time, McMichael also kept up the momentum in his *North American* editorials by praising Lincoln’s preliminary announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, condemning slavery, and railing against secession.<sup>11</sup>

Word of the Union Club’s mission quickly spread, as evidenced by the increasing number of attendees at its meetings. Organizers resolved to expand the club’s membership to further popularize their principles, and, as Boker later recalled, the group moved toward including “in one great association all the patriotic citizens of Philadelphia who might choose to participate in our movement.”<sup>12</sup>

Finally, on December 27, at the home of Philadelphia physician J. Forsyth Meigs, The Union League of Philadelphia was born (its new designation, “League,” likely related to its common definition as a compact or agreement for promoting mutual protection and common interests). The goal was to organize loyalists of every political persuasion who shared one all-important objective: the salvation of the American Union. Its articles of association, more aggressive than those of the Union Club, called for members to use “every proper means in public and private” for that purpose.<sup>13</sup> Political arguments related to other national issues of the day, such as the tariff, popular sovereignty, and the Homestead Act, would be put off to a later time. It is not surprising, therefore, that the initial list of the more than 250 men who signed on to the League’s purpose between December 27, 1862, and January 10, 1863, would include members of both major political parties as well as those of undetermined affiliation. The Union League did not originate as a Republican club, but as one that would begin and continue to serve the dedicated pro-Union positions of members of all parties.<sup>14</sup>

In early January 1863, as the Union League was digesting the news of Lincoln’s final issue of the Emancipation Proclamation, it began to organize its administrative structure. Unlike the Union Club, which had met in the

**(Left) Statue of Morton McMichael by John H. Mahoney, 1882, bronze, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.**

The Union League of Philadelphia.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

## A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever, free; and the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit: ARKANSAS, TEXAS, LOUISIANA, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans,) MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth,) and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[L. S.] Done at the CITY OF WASHINGTON this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President:

*Abraham Lincoln*

*Wm. A. Lincoln*

Secretary of State.

A true copy, with the autograph signatures of the President and the Secretary of State.

*Geo. W. Nicolay*

Priv. Sec. to the President.

Emancipation Proclamation, 1863, signed by President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward. This copy is one of 48 autographed printings by Frederick Leypoldt in Philadelphia for Charles Godfrey Leland and George H. Boker for sale as fundraisers at the Great Central Sanitary Fair held in Philadelphia in June 1864.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania Treasures Collection.

955 Vol. 2  
**THE  
 PLANTER'S ALMANAC**  
 FOR  
**1864.**

**THE ANATOMY OF MAN'S BODY AS GOVERNED BY THE TWELVE  
 CONSTELLATIONS ACCORDING TO ANCIENT ASTROLOGY.**



**THE TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC.**

- SPRING SIGNS.**  
 1. ♈ Aries, or Ram.  
 2. ♉ Taurus, or Bull.  
 3. ♊ Gemini, or Twins.
- SUMMER SIGNS.**  
 4. ♋ Cancer, or Crab fish.  
 5. ♌ Leo, or Lion.  
 6. ♍ Virgo, or Virgin.

- AUTUMN SIGNS.**  
 7. ♎ Libra, or Balance.  
 8. ♏ Scorpio, or Scorpion.  
 9. ♐ Sagittarius, or Bowman.
- WINTER SIGNS.**  
 10. ♑ Capricornus, or Goat.  
 11. ♒ Aquarius, or Waterman.  
 12. ♓ Pisces, or Fishes.

**EQUINOXES AND SOLSTICES.**

	D.	H.	M.
Vernal Equinox,	20	2	14 M.
Summer Solstice,	20	11	56 E.
Autumnal Equinox,	22	2	20 E.
Winter Solstice,	21	9	7 M.

(Beginning of Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter)

Cover of the *Planter's Almanac*, published by The Union League of Philadelphia, 1864.  
 Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

"The New Union League House,"  
*Philadelphia Daily Evening Bulletin*, May 5, 1865.  
 The Union League of Philadelphia.





In an attempt to gain access behind enemy lines, the Union League ingeniously sponsored the publication of a pamphlet disguised as the *Planter's Almanac for 1864*, which actually included information encouraging Southern soldiers to desert.



homes of its members, the new Union League would require a headquarters to contain a reading room and an assembly area. The first "League House" (as the headquarters would eternally be known) was the Hartman Kuhn mansion at 1118 Chestnut Street. Only two years later, after recognizing the need for more space, Philadelphia architect John Fraser was commissioned to design a larger headquarters to be constructed on a newly acquired site on Broad Street. Fraser's magnificent Second Empire building was completed in May 1865. Although President Lincoln had been expected to attend the dedication, it was not to be, for he had been tragically assassinated just one month earlier.<sup>15</sup>

The first Union League president was the much-admired attorney general of Pennsylvania William Morris Meredith, who in 1849 had served as President Zachary Taylor's secretary of the treasury. Also in this early period, George Boker, the new League secretary, understanding that "the first effect" of the League was "to awaken a spirit of imitation" in what he called "faithful offspring," set about encouraging other groups to form similar organizations. Within

two months, largely on the Philadelphia model, the New York Union League Club was founded, with articles requiring "a profound national devotion" and a desire to "strengthen a love and respect for the Union." The Boston Union Club was also established that spring with noted orator Edward Everett as its first president. Others were organized elsewhere, but few would survive beyond the Civil War.<sup>16</sup>

Although just in its infancy, the Union League of Philadelphia quickly financed and provided the manpower for three major undertakings: a Board of Publication to disseminate pro-Union literature to be paid for through voluntary subscriptions; a Military Committee to organize fighting regiments and cavalry; and the accumulation of funds, men, and materiel to defend the city of Philadelphia from Southern invasion.<sup>17</sup>

No doubt, members of the new Union League Board of Publication understood the value of pamphleteering as a successful means of propaganda in the American Revolution as well as in several foreign wars.<sup>18</sup> Thus, during the Civil War, the organization believed it could inspire the pro-Union opinion of loyal Americans as well as the efforts of the

Northern forces. For safety considerations and to prevent confiscation behind enemy lines, pamphlets were often distributed with no reference to League sponsorship. They praised the Union army and addressed subjects including the impact of slavery on the nation, the employment of African American soldiers by George Washington and Andrew Jackson in previous wars, and the history of American liberty. In an attempt to gain access behind enemy lines, the Union League ingeniously sponsored the publication of a pamphlet disguised as the *Planter's Almanac for 1864*, which actually included information encouraging Southern soldiers to desert.<sup>19</sup>

The board's most active publication period during the war took place from April to October 1863, when it supported the reelection of Pennsylvania's Governor Andrew Curtin. The following December, George Boker was able to report that "there is scarcely a post-town, from Maine to California, that has not received a package of our publications."<sup>20</sup> By October 1868, the League had created and distributed about 4.5 million copies of 145 pamphlets and 44 lithographs and posters.<sup>21</sup> Other organizations were helpful and active in

similar enterprises, but none approached the output and scope of the Philadelphia Union League, nor its ultimate impact.

In Boker's first annual report, he noted the creation of a magnificent Union League gold medal that was presented to President Lincoln on August 26. Silver counterparts were additionally awarded to members of the president's cabinet and to outstanding military and naval commanders.<sup>22</sup> The beginning of another significant practice was initiated when

volunteers. At the same time, Mayor Alexander Henry ordered business closures and urged all residents to join the defense effort. The Home Guard was activated, and citizens and clergy alike began to dig protective entrenchments. The leadership of the Union League assembled an emergency fund of \$80,000, a sum that originally included money for "a grand national celebration" for the League's first Fourth of July, which it appropriately curtailed. Boker also reported on a new

additional men and entrenchments for the city would not be necessary, for after a three-day battle, Pennsylvanian George G. Meade and the Union army had repelled Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg. In November 1863, President Lincoln dedicated a national cemetery at the Gettysburg battlefield in what has come to be remembered as one of the finest speeches in history—one that by 1917 would be inscribed in its entirety on the walls of the Union League's Lincoln Memorial Room.<sup>25</sup>



**Lincoln praised the Union League in an impromptu speech as “an organization free from political prejudices and prompted in its formation by motives of the highest patriotism.”**



the League began to acquire paintings and sculpture as well as manuscripts, books, and important relics of the war. These traditions have continued to the present day.

By June 1863, along with all Philadelphians, League members feared a possible invasion of Pennsylvania by General Robert E. Lee and the Confederate army. Additional troops were needed; the city council voted a sum of \$500,000 to raise enlistments, provide equipment, and pay three-month city

Supervisory Committee for the Enlistment of Colored Troops begun by League members, a committee that had the moral support of the organization.<sup>23</sup>

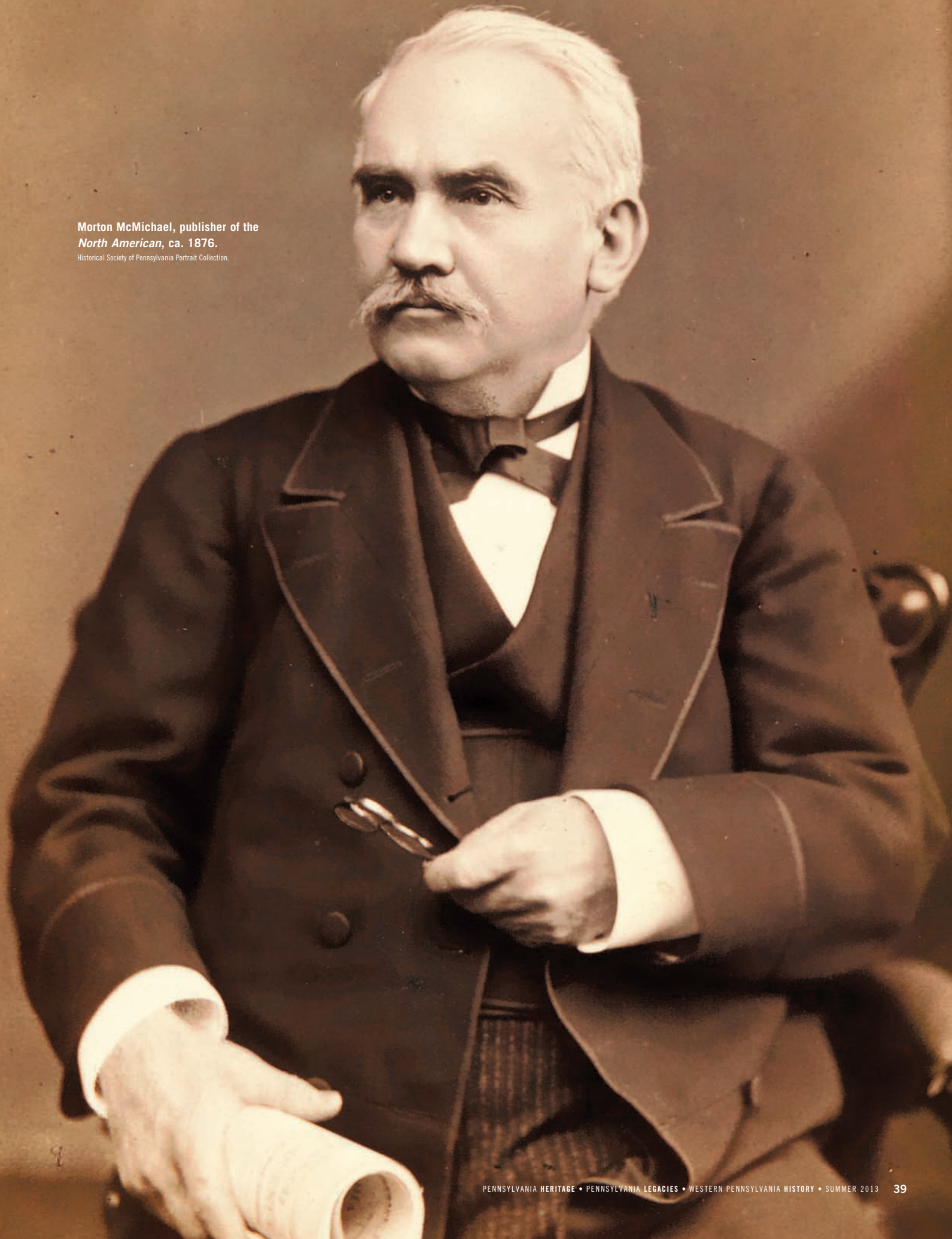
The League also organized a Board of Enlistments, advertising bounties of from \$35 to \$300, the highest in the city. In little time, it raised more than \$100,000 to provide funding for 10,000 men and would ultimately support nine regiments and one of cavalry.<sup>24</sup> Fortunately, by July 4, it was clear that

Despite the growing public discontent with the length and casualties of the war, in January 1864 the Union League unanimously passed a resolution of support for the president, which McMichael published in the *North American*, and championed Lincoln's reelection in its newspaper, the *Union League Gazette*, which had a print run of some 560,000 copies. In June, Lincoln made his only visit to the Union League when he and Mary Todd Lincoln visited the city's Great Central



Morton McMichael, publisher of the  
*North American*, ca. 1876.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania Portrait Collection.





Painting of Abraham Lincoln by Edward Dalton Marchant, oil on canvas, 1863.

The Union League of Philadelphia.

Sanitary Fair. At a grand reception, Lincoln praised the Union League in an impromptu speech as “an organization free from political prejudices and prompted in its formation by motives of the highest patriotism.”<sup>26</sup>

By early 1864, the Union League had begun to receive some well-earned accolades for its support during the war. In February, a notable example came from the pen of Lincoln’s second secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, in a letter to Secretary Boker acknowledging his receipt of a League Silver Medal. Stanton praised the “labors” and the “the unflinching courage of the Union League of Philadelphia” that “contributed no small share” to what was beginning to be seen as an ultimate Northern victory. Years later, Pennsylvanian Simon Cameron, Lincoln’s first secretary of war, stated his belief that “this Union League, under

God, did more than any civil organization in America to put down the Rebellion.”<sup>27</sup>

The war ended on April 9, 1865, just over three years and three months after The Union League of Philadelphia’s founding. On April 22, a week after the tragic assassination of Lincoln, League members met and followed his funeral cortege along with some 30,000 Philadelphians. By July, George Boker wrote one of his most significant poems, “Our Heroic Themes,” to eulogize the humble character of the martyred president.<sup>28</sup> At the end of the year, in the League annual report, Boker wrote of the end of the war, declaring “the Rebellion is no more. It died hard, it died justly, it died, as all good men desired that it should, by the edge of the sword.” He left his readers with hope for a lasting peace, stating that it “was secured by no terms or compromises with the traitors; by not yielding

of a single principle of policy or of conscience involved in the contest; by no injudicious permission to the conquered to revive the old abuses of their social system; and thus, in the midst of a mis-called peace, to plant in the land the seeds of another gigantic war.”<sup>29</sup>

Since the successful completion of this first mission, the sense of civic responsibility inherent in the Union League survives in the continuing patriotism of its members as well as its devotion to pursuing election reform, humanitarian efforts on behalf of city residents and immigrants, financial and manpower aid and assistance for all of the nation’s wars, and educational support for young people and adults. In recent years, these goals have been accomplished primarily through the establishment and outreach of the League’s Abraham Lincoln Foundation, along with other significant League initiatives, most recently The Sir John Templeton Heritage Center. For all of these efforts and more, The Union League of Philadelphia was honored during its sesquicentennial in 2012 as the #1 City Club in the nation.<sup>30</sup> ★

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**Barbara J. Mitnick** is chief contributor and general editor to *The Union League of Philadelphia: The First 150 Years* (2012).

☆☆☆

**Boker wrote of the end of the war, declaring  
“the Rebellion is no more. It died hard, it died  
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☆☆☆

<sup>1</sup> George H. Boker, *First Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Union League of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1863), 4. For the articles of association of the Union Club of Philadelphia and the subsequent founding of the Union League, see Barbara J. Mitnick, “The Founding,” in *The Union League of Philadelphia: The First 150 Years*, ed. Barbara J. Mitnick (Philadelphia: Union League of Philadelphia, 2012), 19–47, and esp. 29–30.

<sup>2</sup> For the Articles of Association of The Union League of Philadelphia, see Mitnick, *The Union League*, 33–35 and fig. 2.21.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Kelly McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1905), 1:467. See also Frank Taylor, *Philadelphia in the Civil War: 1861–1865* (Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, 1913), 9–10, and Mitnick, *The Union League*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 14, 1860. See also Oliver H. G. Leigh et al., *Chronicle of the Union League of Philadelphia 1862–1902* (Philadelphia: William F. Fell, 1902), 31, and Maxwell Whiteman, *Gentlemen in Crisis: The First Century of the Union League of Philadelphia, 1862–1962* (Philadelphia: Union League of Philadelphia, 1975), 8.

<sup>5</sup> See Winnifred K. MacKay, “Philadelphia During the Civil War, 1861–1865,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 70 (1946): 6, 8. See also Mitnick, *The Union League*, 51–52.

<sup>6</sup> April 15, 1861, entry, “The Diary of Sidney George Fisher, 1861,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 88 (1964): 80. For the response to President Lincoln’s proclamation, see *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 15, 1861.

<sup>7</sup> See George Boker, *A Memorial of the Union Club of Philadelphia: Proceedings of a Meeting of the Union Club of Philadelphia Held at the League House, December 27, 1870* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871), 13–15.

<sup>8</sup> For George Boker, see Edward Sculley Bradley, *George Henry Boker: Poet and Patriot* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1927), and Oliver H. Evans, *George Henry Boker* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984). For “Ad Poetas,” see *Philadelphia Daily Evening Bulletin*, September 19, 1861. The poem was later published in George H. Boker, *Poems of the War* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864), 133–35. For Judge John Innes Clark Hare, see William Draper Lewis, *American Law Register* (1898–1907) 54 (1906): 711–717.

<sup>9</sup> Boker, *Memorial*, 13–15. For McMichael, see Robert L. Bloom, “Morton McMichael’s *North American*,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 77 (1953): 164–180.

<sup>10</sup> Boker, *Memorial*, 16–17, 19–20.

<sup>11</sup> Boker, *Memorial*, 20–21. See also McMichael’s *North American* editorials published on September 19, October 4, November 6, and November 18, 1862.

<sup>12</sup> Boker, *Memorial*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> See Mitnick, *The Union League*, 33.

<sup>14</sup> See Edward S. Mawson broadside of original members of the Union League in the archives of The Union League of Philadelphia. Subsequent to the printing of the broadside, identification of the political party of each was noted by hand, but its accuracy is in question.

<sup>15</sup> George Parsons Lathrop, *History of the Union League of Philadelphia, from its Origin and Foundation to the Year 1882* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1884), 38. For the architectural history of the League House, see “The League House from the Second Empire to the Beaux-Arts,” in Mitnick, *The Union League*, 77–111.

<sup>16</sup> Boker, *Annual Report* (1863), 5. For the New York Union League, see Union League Club of New York, *Report of Executive Committee, Constitution, By-Laws, and Roll of Members* (New York: Union League Club of New York, 1864). For the Boston Union Club, see the diary of Edward Everett, February 4, 1863, in the Edward Everett Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>17</sup> See Mitnick, “The Union League and the War to Preserve the Union,” in *The Union League*, 49–75.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Freidel, ed., *Union Pamphlets of the Civil War, 1861–1865*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 1:1.

<sup>19</sup> *The Planter’s Almanac for 1864* (Philadelphia: Ling and Baird, 1864). The pamphlet also included Lincoln’s Amnesty Proclamation, stating conditions for receiving rebel deserters.

<sup>20</sup> Boker, *Annual Report* (1863), 7.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of the number and significance of the Union League pamphlets, see Mitnick, *The Union League*, 61–67.

<sup>22</sup> Boker, *Annual Report* (1863), 12.

<sup>23</sup> See MacKay, “Philadelphia During the Civil War,” 32–33, and Boker, *Annual Report* (1863), 8–9.

<sup>24</sup> See Mitnick, *The Union League*, 67–71.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of the Union League’s Lincoln Memorial Room, see Robert Wilson Torchia, *The Collections of the Union League of Philadelphia: Portraits of the Presidents of the United States*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Abraham Lincoln Foundation of the Union League of Philadelphia, 2005), 44–48, and Mitnick, *The Union League*, 151–153.

<sup>26</sup> *North American*, January 12, 1864. For Lincoln’s remarks, see Roy P. Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 7:397.

<sup>27</sup> For the Cameron and Stanton correspondence, see the Archives of The Union League of Philadelphia.

<sup>28</sup> Boker delivered “Our Heroic Themes” to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard University on July 20, 1865. See also Boker, *Our Heroic Themes: A Poem* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1865).

<sup>29</sup> George H. Boker, *Third Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Union League, of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1865), 3.

<sup>30</sup> This designation was awarded by the Platinum Clubs of America.

# Behind the Scenes of the **ALLEGHENY ARSENAL EXPLOSION**

by Tom Powers and James Wudarczyk

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At the outbreak of the Civil War, America's industries were concentrated in the northeast. Pittsburgh, blessed with the natural resources of coal, oil, and water, and crisscrossed by rails, was becoming the continent's premier manufacturing center.<sup>1</sup> Amidst this industrial might, and contributing its own output, was the Allegheny Arsenal three miles upriver from Pittsburgh in the growing village of Lawrenceville.

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After construction of the Arsenal in 1814, manufacturers and suppliers multiplied in the area; by 1860, there were iron works to the west, oil refineries to the east, and a burgeoning tanning industry north across the Allegheny River along the cross-state Pennsylvania Canal. Lumber floating downriver from central Pennsylvania gave a steady supply of firewood for furnaces, not to mention bark for the tanneries. In the middle of the river, Herr's Island (now Washington's Landing) was a way station for livestock moving between Chicago and New York City, bringing animals for the tanneries and meat processors. This bounty of resources helped the Arsenal make ammunition of all types and sizes, and leather accoutrements for horse-driven vehicles. The Arsenal also stored artillery and contributed to technological advancements, most notably, experiments in casting techniques for large cannon by Major Thomas Rodman.<sup>2</sup> It was certainly advantageous for the Arsenal to be just two miles downriver from Fort Pitt Foundry, located in today's Strip District.

OPPOSITE: Kate McBride display at the Heinz History Center.

Photo by Tom Powers.

THIS PAGE: A c. 1868 print by W.T. Purviance of the Allegheny Arsenal gate house on Butler Street.

New York Public Library, Robert N. Dennis Collection of Stereoscopic Views, g91f309\_074fu.

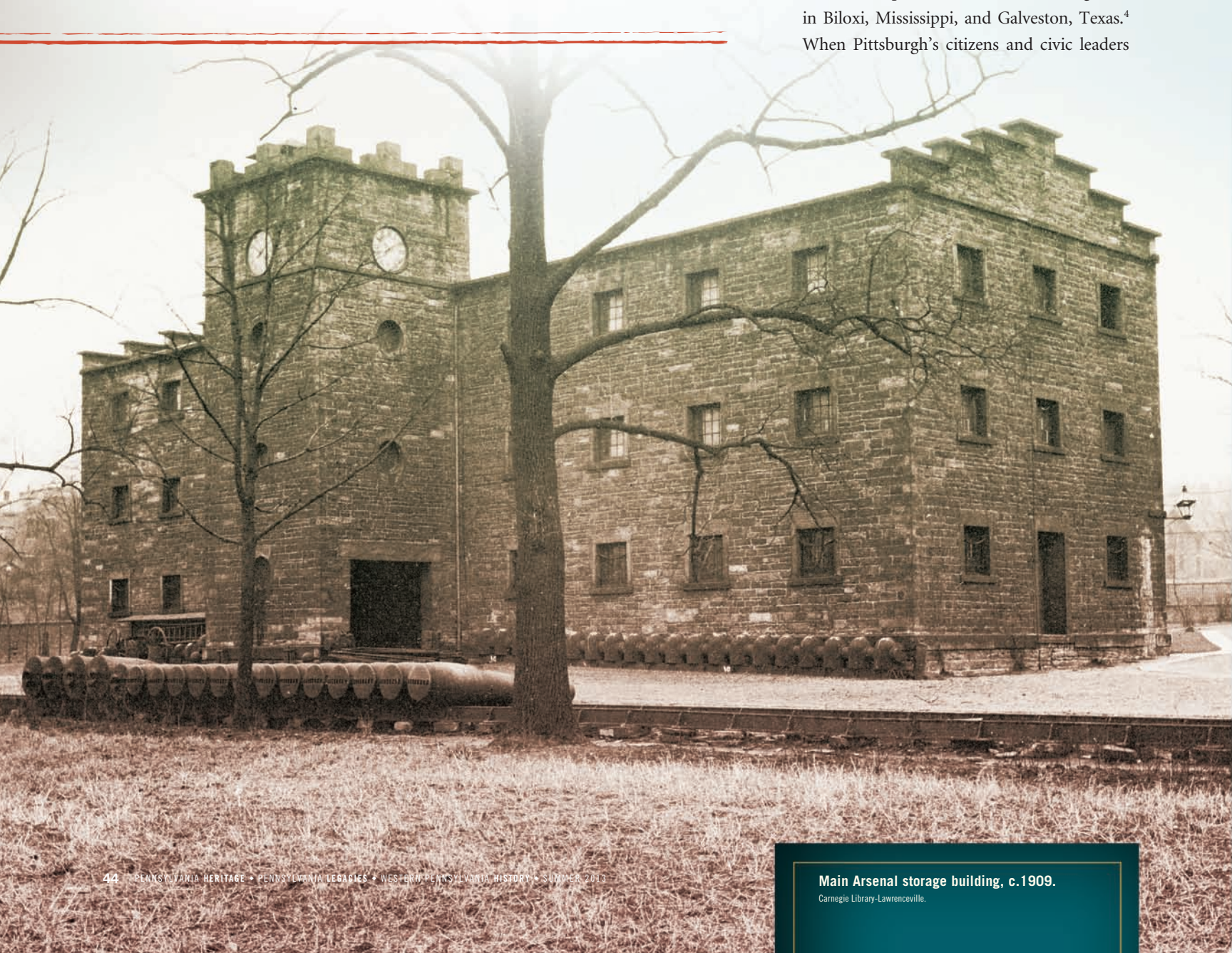
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On September 17, 1862, while the battlefield of Antietam was swallowing thousands of casualties from both sides of the bloody conflict, three disastrous explosions ripped through one of the Arsenal's laboratories where cartridges were being loaded, killing 78 persons, almost all of them teenage girls and women.

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When tragedy struck the Arsenal in 1862, dozens were killed and the neighborhood was devastated, yet the citizens of Pittsburgh rallied to resume production of war materials for the Union Army. In the days and decades since, there has been no lack of theories and finger-pointing as to the cause and who was to blame. This study looks at the theories and explores which is the most likely scenario that sparked the largest loss of civilian lives during the Civil War.

By 1860, as sectional tensions flared, the Allegheny Arsenal was caught up in the escalation. That December,<sup>3</sup> commander of the Arsenal, Major John Symington, received orders to ship 100 cannon to forts being built in Biloxi, Mississippi, and Galveston, Texas.<sup>4</sup> When Pittsburgh's citizens and civic leaders



balked at the apparent collusion with Southern sympathizers, the order was rescinded.<sup>5</sup> Though that shipment would certainly have been welcomed by the South, both sides would need far more ordnance than the amount involved in the controversial shipment once war broke out a few months later.

As the conflict escalated, the Arsenal struggled to meet munitions quotas. The recently promoted Colonel Symington also had personnel problems that would add to the disaster to come. He gave this account of the situation in an October 2, 1861, letter to his superior, General James W. Ripley:

Matches were discovered among the bundles of cartridges prepared to be packed, in one of the rooms. The strictest investigation failed to detect the offender. Stringent measures were then resorted to and the boys searched on going to work, and leaving, which still continues. The offense has, however, since repeated in the same room. And as the perpetrators could not be discovered, all the boys employed in the room, over twenty in number, were on each occasion, discharged, and have not been re-employed. It was hoped, as some two weeks passed since the last occurrence, that the malicious spirit has quelled, but yesterday, a similar attempt at mischief was discovered in the same room. That the offender did not belong to the room, is thus made evident and I have discharged all the boys at work in that portion of the laboratory, and will supply their places with females.<sup>6</sup>

A year later, the Arsenal employed approximately 950 workers to load cartridges and artillery shells, fill canisters with grapeshot, manufacture leather accouterments, and build gun carriages and caissons.<sup>7</sup> Of those, 186 worked in the laboratory.<sup>8</sup> The Borough of



1905 postcard of Arsenal Gate.

Collection of Tom Powers.

Lawrenceville (it would be annexed by the City of Pittsburgh in 1868) was a factory town, with rows of two- and three-story worker's houses within walking distance of the borough's "anchor" factory, the Allegheny Arsenal. In addition to the skilled jobs the Arsenal required, the many simple manual labor jobs it offered were ideal for untrained immigrants to get a start in this new country. Helping to augment the income of a skilled head of the household, it was not uncommon for several younger members from the same family to be employed at the Arsenal. This fact made the coming catastrophe all the more tragic.

On September 17, 1862, while the battlefield of Antietam was swallowing thousands of casualties from both sides of the bloody conflict, three disastrous explosions ripped through one of the Arsenal's laboratories where cartridges were being loaded, killing 78 persons, almost all of them teenage girls and women.<sup>9</sup> Many of the Arsenal's employees

were of Scots-Irish descent and Gaelic names make up a large percentage of the explosion's casualty list.<sup>10</sup> Also on that list are 11 pairings of surnames, attesting to the fact that many local families had multiple losses.

The most accepted theory is that a horse's hoof or the iron rim of a wagon wheel struck a hard stone that set off the deadly spark.<sup>11</sup> It could also be argued that a combination of negligence by the government, the workers, and Du Pont<sup>12</sup> (supplier of gunpowder to the Arsenal) all played some role in the deadly mishap. New investigation for this article allows us to piece together the likeliest chain of events. The isometric drawing on page 47 is based on information gleaned from the 1859 Ordnance Department Report.<sup>13</sup> The illustration leaves off



the roof for clarity, especially since the report did not elaborate on the height of the roof or if it was peaked or flat, only that it was made of zinc. Given that most military buildings of the time had peaked roofs for air circulation, this was probably the case here.<sup>14</sup>

For the positioning of the rooms, we follow the drawing submitted by Arsenal laboratory superintendent Alexander McBride to the

Pittsburgh coroner's inquest into the explosion.<sup>15</sup> McBride's original drawing is lost, but the September 20, 1862, issue of the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* reproduced it using the limited illustrating resources of letterpress movable type.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the proportions of the buildings in the McBride plan do not quite match up with the dimensions given in the 1859 Ordnance Department Report.<sup>17</sup> What the McBride plan gives us aside from a general footprint of the three structures involved are number and letter diagram key indications for the room descriptions and location of the first explosion. The isometric illustration uses McBride's diagram key to be consistent with the testimony given in both the Pittsburgh coroner's inquest and the U.S. Army inquest. All references in both investigations used McBride's key.

According to the 1859 secretary of war report, the L-shaped engine building (Room #13, #14, and #15) housed a force pump and boiler that provided heat to the main laboratory by two pipes containing steam. When the feed pipe entered the lab, the pipe was branched off into five pipes that radiated heat in each room in the building. This version of radiated heat predates the steam radiator still found in many buildings today.<sup>18</sup> It is quite possible that the L-shaped engine house survived the explosion or was rebuilt. A similar footprint appears on an 1875 map<sup>19</sup> and continues to appear on subsequent maps up until the 1914 property map.

There was no reference as to the exact dimensions of the shed "A" or the wardrobe "B." Both of those structures were probably built by Arsenal employees later from scratch, so for this illustration, their sizes are estimated. All structures shown were built of wood frame. The porches on both the laboratory and engine house were approximately three feet off the ground and had roofs.<sup>20</sup>

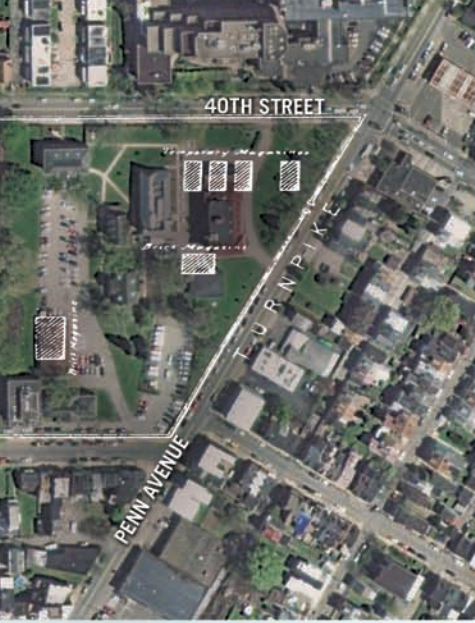
The following timeline, keyed to the drawing, is based on testimony from the two trials and McBride's diagram key. The times are approximate.

**2:00 p.m.** — Joseph Frick is shown in his wagon on his way back from delivering ten 100-pound barrels of gunpowder. Three were first dropped off at Room #1. Next, five barrels were placed on the porch near Room #12, and the last two barrels were each placed by the L-shaped building at the entrances of Rooms #13 and #14.

Upon returning to Room #1, there is a strong possibility that a spark generated from Frick's front right, iron-rimmed wagon wheel or from one of his horse's iron shoes created a blaze from spilled gunpowder on the stone roadway. That would have transmitted to the porch and ignited the three barrels he had delivered earlier. At Room #1, attendant Robert Smith was killed instantly. Frick was blown from his wagon but survived; one of his two horses was badly burned.<sup>21</sup>

Upon returning to Room #1,  
there is a strong possibility  
that a spark generated from  
Frick's front right, iron-rimmed  
wagon wheel or from one of his  
horse's iron shoes created a  
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on the stone roadway.

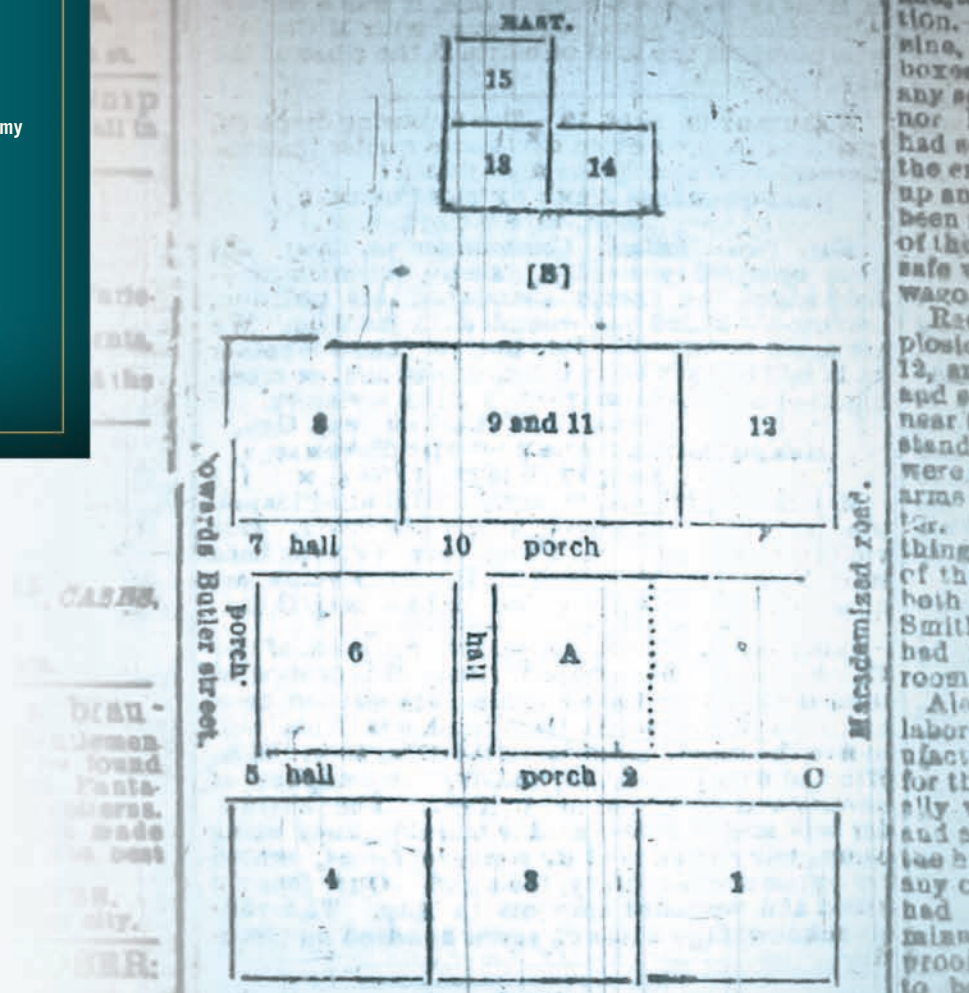




Aerial map taken in 2012 overlaid with 1875 U.S. Army map of the Arsenal.  
DigitalGlobe.

Pittsburgh Dispatch, McBride's drawing, 1862.  
Tom Powers' photo taken from microfilm.

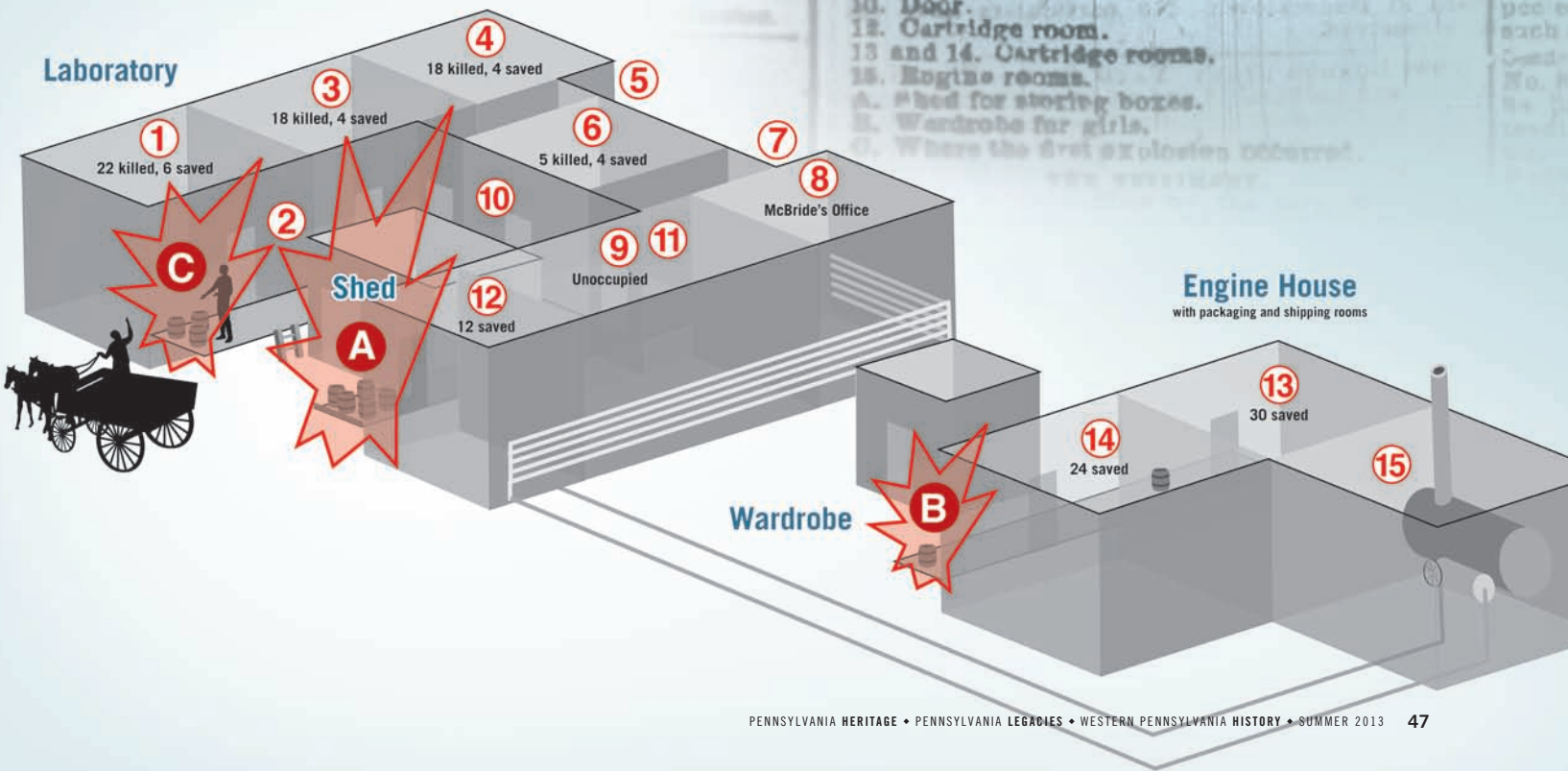
Isometric illustration of explosion site.  
Image by Tom Powers.



1. Cartridge room.
2. Door.
3. Cartridge room.
4. Cartridge room.
5. Door.
6. Cap cylinder room—small girls.
7. Door.
8. Field ammunition—shells filled.
- 9 and 11. Field ammunition.
10. Door.
12. Cartridge room.
- 13 and 14. Cartridge rooms.
15. Engine rooms.
- A. Shed for storing boxes.
- B. Wardrobe for girls.
- C. Where the first explosion occurred.

2:05 p.m. — Fire created by the first explosion “C” worked its way around the courtyard and ignited the five barrels of gunpowder delivered earlier by Frick to create a greater, more devastating explosion that destroyed the entire building, killing many in Room #3, #4, and #6. Workers who went back in the laboratory after the first explosion were killed by the second.<sup>22</sup>

2:06 p.m. — A third explosion quickly followed at the L-shaped building,<sup>23</sup> probably caused from flames created by the second explosion igniting one or both of the just-delivered barrels.



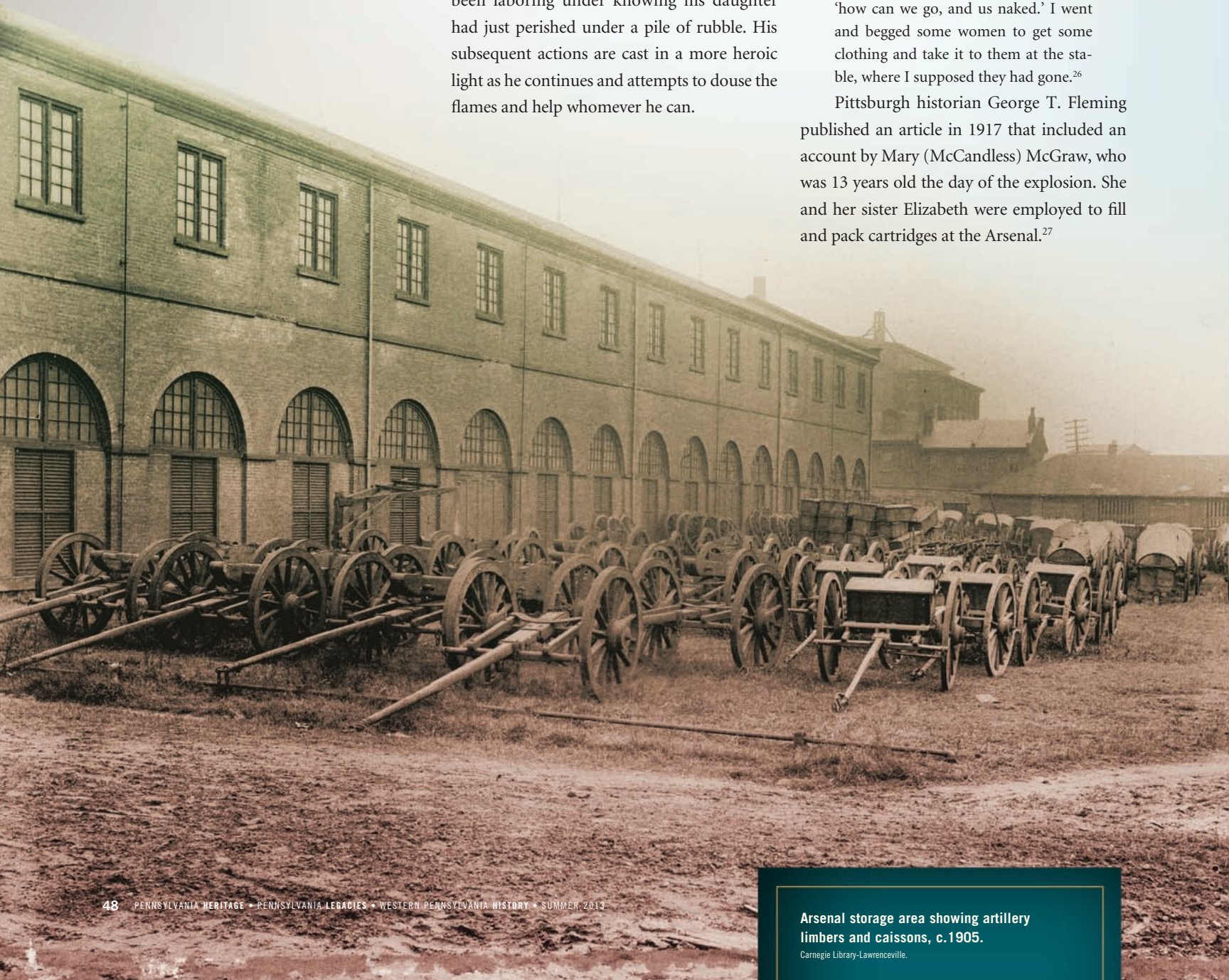
Superintendent McBride, who was in his office in Room #8 during the first explosion, performed heroically despite knowing his own daughter Kate had surely perished when the roof collapsed on Room #6. From his account given in the *Pittsburgh Daily Post* during the Pittsburgh coroner's inquest, McBride states that at the start, "I heard a noise apparently on the porch, and rose to ascertain the cause; I heard a scream a half minute afterwards; looking in the direction of the sound, I noticed the wall falling towards me into the room."<sup>24</sup> He continued:

I got on to the window at the end of the room; fell out, and having got out of the dust or flame, returned along the side of the laboratory to room #6, to seek my daughter; got on to the porch and met Joseph E. Bollman with a girl on his arm coming out. At the same time, I saw the ceiling of room #6, falling on the floor where the children were. The flames and dust forced me back. Mr. Bollman let down the child he had upon the porch, and near the fence I saw a girl bewildered, with her clothes burnt off.<sup>25</sup>

What Superintendent McBride does not reveal in his matter-of-fact account at the inquest are the emotions he would have been laboring under knowing his daughter had just perished under a pile of rubble. His subsequent actions are cast in a more heroic light as he continues and attempts to douse the flames and help whomever he can.

I returned on to the porch, entered room #12 for a bucket, which was always there, but found no water in it. I saw Mr. Geary in room #14, and tried to get the windows and doors of #13 and #14 closed. I succeeded partly, and then went down to the pond with the bucket to get water, hardly knowing for what I wanted it. I got the water and returned through the fence. I met another girl in the same condition as the other, and threw the bucket of water upon her. I passed around a shanty near the pond where we kept empty boxes, and found Annie Shook and Annie Sibley, with their clothes burned, trying to crawl through the fence.... One of them said, 'how can we go, and us naked.' I went and begged some women to get some clothing and take it to them at the stable, where I supposed they had gone.<sup>26</sup>

Pittsburgh historian George T. Fleming published an article in 1917 that included an account by Mary (McCandless) McGraw, who was 13 years old the day of the explosion. She and her sister Elizabeth were employed to fill and pack cartridges at the Arsenal.<sup>27</sup>



There was a great hurry for ammunition on account of the battle of Antietam, then being fought, and orders from Washington were to rush ammunition with all possible speed to the front.

My sister and I walked to work from our home at Penn Avenue and Seventeenth Street that morning as usual. It was payday. I was a bundler in Room 13. The morning passed quickly. We did not stop for lunch at 12 o'clock on account of the rush. This proved a lucky circumstance. We were permitted to go to lunch at 1 o'clock and before returning to work were paid our wages. This deviation from the usual routine and the fact that it was payday saved many lives.

At 2 o'clock another girl and I were the only persons in Room 13. The other girls were in another building getting their pay and in the yard. Suddenly there was a terrific roar; the earth seemed to

split apart. The girl with me jumped through a window and I followed her, alighting on top of her in some grass behind the building. I lifted her to her feet and we started to run towards Butler Street. As we ran, there was a second explosion, and before we reached the street a third one.

Looking around we saw the building we had just left being torn to pieces. My sister escaped in some manner. She has never been able to tell just how. I was a nervous wreck for several weeks and so terribly shocked that night that I had to be held in bed by force.<sup>28</sup>

The first explosion wrecked the laboratory; the second and third explosions wrecked the packing and shipping building. Forty-five of the dead could never be recognized, their bodies having been so terribly mutilated and burned.

## Investigating the Tragedy

The first investigation into the incident was conducted by Coroner John McClung, who impaneled a jury on the very evening of the explosion. At nine o'clock the following morning, the jury assembled in the Lawrenceville borough council chamber, where they took testimony.<sup>29</sup> Witness Rachel Dunlap, who was taking a break on the porch of Room #12 when the gunpowder was sparked, confirmed wagon driver Joseph Frick's testimony that a flame shot up from between the wagon wheel and his one horse's rear hoof. Her position was such that she was the only person aside from the unfortunate Mr. Smith who could have witnessed the ignition.<sup>30</sup>

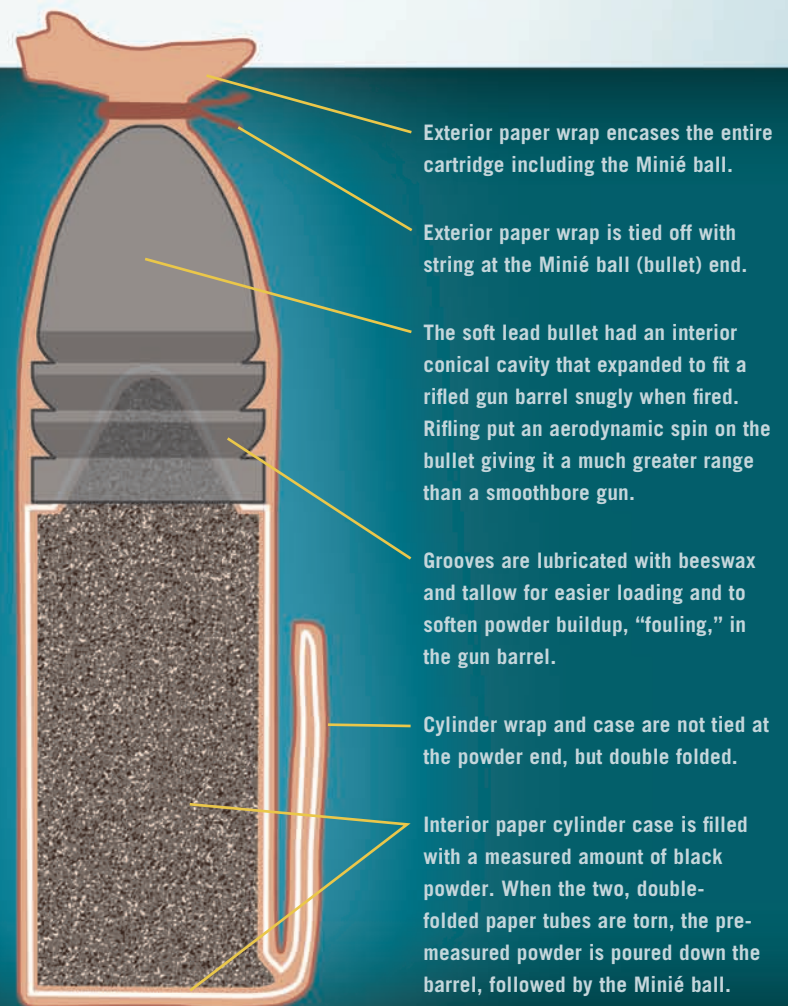
## The Cartridge

Although brass-jacketed bullets were invented in 1808 and refined in the 1830s, the technology had not advanced by the Civil War to mass-produce the bullets or the weapons that used them. Civil War soldiers were more familiar with a cartridge that had a pre-measured powder charge of gunpowder and a Minié ball bullet wrapped in paper. It was this kind of cartridge that was assembled by hand at the Allegheny Arsenal. By the end of 1861, the Allegheny Arsenal had produced almost 10 million small arms cartridges.<sup>1</sup> Each cartridge was hand-packed with black powder and wrapped in paper, leaving a residue of black powder all over the buildings and grounds. The Arsenal explosion of September 17, 1862, in hindsight, seems inevitable. It was not until after the Civil War that breech-loading metallic cartridges became the norm.

<sup>1</sup> Dean Thomas, *From Round Ball to Rim Fire* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1997), 41.

Illustration of the makeup of a Minié ball cartridge.

Image by Tom Powers.





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Furthermore, the majority believed the explosion to be caused by neglect on the part of Colonel John Symington, Lieutenants J. R. Edie and Jasper Myers, and the gross neglect of laboratory superintendent Alexander McBride and his assistant James Thorp.

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Although the government posted safety rules, there is evidence that these standards were not adequately enforced. For example, Elias McClure, employed in the laboratory ammunition rooms, testified that Superintendent McBride preferred the gunpowder that spilled on the floor be gathered up and not swept out onto the roadway, but he never enforced that rule.<sup>31</sup>

As to the condition of the roadway, witness William Baxter testified, "I have quarried a good deal of stone. The stone on the roadway at the Arsenal grounds was as

dangerous for striking fire as any I know. It was a hard bastard stone, with a good deal of iron, taken out of the same quarry out of which I have worked."<sup>32</sup>

At the conclusion of the inquest, the split jury resolved that the accumulation of vast quantities of gunpowder and other explosive materials in and near the United States magazine buildings as a great public wrong, unwarranted by any exigency of the service and fraught with imminent peril to the whole community. Furthermore, the majority believed the explosion to be caused

by neglect on the part of Colonel John Symington, Lieutenants J. R. Edie and Jasper Myers, and the gross neglect of laboratory superintendent Alexander McBride and his assistant James Thorp.<sup>33</sup>

John W. Riddle, foreman of the coroner's jury, and James B. Hill were of another opinion on the matter. They wrote, "From so much of the foregoing finding as imputes negligence to Colonel Symington and Lieutenants Myers and Edie, we utterly and entirely dissent. The testimony, in our judgment, clearly discloses that the sad disaster is to be attributed to a disregard by the Superintendents of the wholesome and stringent orders of Colonel Symington, and we are unable to find anything in the evidence criminating either of his Lieutenants."<sup>34</sup>

John Symington, a military officer, did not have to cooperate with a civilian inquest. But being eager to discover the cause of the great tragedy, he willingly agreed to assist and made his staff available for the proceedings.

The colonel was livid when he heard the findings of the coroner's inquest and immediately called for a military inquest.<sup>35</sup> Beginning October 15, 1862, and after extensive examination and testimony, its tribunal ruled that Symington had not acted improperly and no blame for the disaster could be laid upon him.<sup>36</sup> The tribunal concluded that "the cause of the explosion could not be satisfactorily ascertained, but that possibly it may have been produced by the young man Smith, (deceased) having jumped upon the

powder barrels which may have had powder dust upon the heads.”<sup>37</sup>

By trying to place the blame on the deceased Mr. Smith, the tribunal discounted the testimony of wagon driver Frick (consistent with his testimony at the coroner’s inquest) and never called his corroborating witness, Rachel Dunlap. Colonel Symington, who acted as the court’s prosecutor, made a serious effort to discount Frick’s testimony, especially in calling witnesses to defame his character.<sup>38</sup>

Additional information came from the colonel’s testimony at the Pittsburgh coroner’s investigation about the Du Pont Company, which required the recycling of empty barrels.<sup>39</sup> Superintendent Alexander McBride had previously reported on leaky barrels with loose lids that had resulted

from reusing them.<sup>40</sup> The testimony of both Symington and McBride seems to imply that defective barrels could have accounted for powder being shaken onto the roadway while in transit, thus making the road a fuse for the explosion. No further investigation was made, perhaps because Du Pont was the largest manufacturer of gunpowder for the Union, or simply because the military wanted to close the books on the tragedy so it could resume wartime production.

It is worth noting that this was not the only such explosion during the war. Du Pont suffered 11 separate blasts at its plant in Wilmington, Delaware, killing 43 men.<sup>41</sup> At the Confederate States Laboratory in Richmond, Virginia, 31 women and two men were killed

on March 13, 1863.<sup>42</sup> And 21 women were killed at the Washington, D.C., arsenal on June 17, 1864.<sup>43</sup>

In the aftermath of the explosion, it is evident in a letter from Symington’s replacement, Major Robert H. K. Whiteley, that he worried about further incidents: “The capacity of two presses at this Arsenal is to produce 40,000 bullets per diem ... which is about one-fourth of the quantity consumed daily.” But he warned, “The manufacture of small arm cartridges must stop for want of storeroom shortly unless relieved by issue. I have eight million at this moment stored in a leaky frame shed, by no means safe from accident by fire.”<sup>44</sup>



**Arsenal parade ground fountain, c.1905.**  
Carnegie Library-Lawrenceville.

## List of Those Killed in the Arsenal Explosion

This list of names of the explosion victims from Arthur Fox's book, *Pittsburgh During the American Civil War*<sup>1</sup> was compiled from local newspapers, notes from the John Carnprobst collection, notes from Jean Morris (The Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society), and notes from James Wudarczyk.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur B. Fox, *Pittsburgh During the American Civil War 1860-1865* (Chicora, Pa.: Mechling Bookbindery, 2002), 121-123.

- |                 |                     |                    |                    |                    |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ager, Elizabeth | Burkhart, Catherine | Donnell, Sarah     | Hanlon, Sidney     | Mahrer, Adaline    |
| Algeo, Mary     | Clare, Bridget      | Donnelly, Mary     | Heeney, Mary       | Manchester, Ellen  |
| Amarine, Mary   | Clowes, Emma        | Douglas, Magdalene | Heslip, Hester     | Markle, Elizabeth  |
| Baxter, Hannah  | Collins, Mary       | Dripps, Mary       | Jeffrey, Mary      | Maxwell, Elizabeth |
| Bishop, Barbara | Colston, Melinda    | Dugan, Catherine   | Johnson, Mary      | Maxwell, Sarah     |
| Bollman, Joseph | Cranan, Mary        | Fleming, Nancy     | Jones, Annie       | McAfee, Ella       |
| Bollman, Mary   | Davison, Agnes      | Foley, Catherine   | Kaler, Catherine   | McBride, Kate      |
| Brady, Rose     | Davison, Mary       | Fritchley, Susan   | Kelley, Margaret   | McCarthy, Maria    |
| Brown, Ella     | Dillon, Ann         | George, Sarah      | Laughlin, Uraiah   | McCreight, Susan   |
| Burke, Alice    | Dillon, Kate        | Gilliland, David   | Lindsay, Elizabeth | McKenna, Ellen     |
| Burke, Sarah    | Donahue, Kate       | Hammill, Virginia  | Lindsay, Harriet   | McKenna, Susan     |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | McMillan, Grace    |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | McWhirter, Andrew  |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | McWhirter, Mary A. |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Miller, Catherine  |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Miller, Phillip    |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Murphy, Mary       |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Neckerman, Melinda |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Nugent, Alice      |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | O'Rourke, Margaret |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Riordan, Mary      |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Robinson, Martha   |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Robinson, Mary     |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Robinson, Mary S.  |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Ross, Nancy        |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Rushton, Ella      |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Shepard, Eleanor   |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Shepard, Sarah     |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Shook, Elizabeth   |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Slattery, Ellen    |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Slattery, Mary     |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Smith, Robert      |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Truxall, Lucinda   |
|                 |                     |                    |                    | Turney, Margaret   |



Memorial monument in Allegheny Cemetery.

Photo by Tom Powers.



The Arsenal's oldest existing building.

Photo by Tom Powers, 2013.

The Civil War was the heyday of the Allegheny Arsenal; within a few years, manufacturing ceased. By 1875, the Ordnance Department was decommissioning the Arsenal and recommended that it be sold and its contents relocated.<sup>45</sup> However, the recommendations were never acted upon and the Allegheny Arsenal served as a supply depot and infantry outpost until 1906, when it was designated the “Pittsburgh Storage and Supply Depot of the United States Army.”<sup>46</sup>

Two years later, the Arsenal grounds were home to a U.S. Bureau of Mines testing facility.<sup>47</sup> After a flurry of activity during World War I, the Arsenal was sold in 1926<sup>48</sup> at public auction to Howard and Clifford Heinz, who built warehouses on its parade grounds for their growing ketchup and condiments company.<sup>49</sup> A school was built there too, and today it is easy to miss the four buildings that remain of the original Allegheny Arsenal.

History buffs and the curious still visit the site, as they have from the start. Eleven days after the explosion, Reverend Richard Lea of the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church preached about the tragedy. His church was

directly west of the laboratory, close enough that its windows were blown out. Lea’s sermon, based on a verse from the Gospel of Matthew, “Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come,”<sup>50</sup> spoke about the Arsenal now receiving a steady stream of visitors.

Lea told of a woman, dressed in black, riding the horse-drawn trolley on Butler Street. When another woman in black boarded, a shriek of recognition was exchanged and both knew the other’s destination. One took out a large daguerreotype and said, “There is my once happy group, all burned but that one.”<sup>51</sup> Everyone in the trolley gathered around to view the photo, even the conductor. At the gatehouse, the guard knew that the two disembarking women would be asking him the same questions that so many others were asking, most just curious, but some with the faint hope of hearing something about their lost ones. Day after day, the guards patiently answered as best they could, repeating stories that offered little hope, just tragedy and sadness. ☆

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**Jim Wudarczyk** is a longtime member and former president of the Lawrenceville Historical Society. He has previously written about the Allegheny Arsenal in his book, *Pittsburgh’s Forgotten Allegheny Arsenal* (Closson Press, 1999). Jim has a bachelor’s degree in education from Edinboro University.



THE ARSENAL.



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Lea told of a woman, dressed in black, riding the horse-drawn trolley on Butler Street. When another woman in black boarded, a shriek of recognition was exchanged and both knew the other's destination. One took out a large daguerreotype and said, "There is my once happy group, all burned but that one."

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<sup>1</sup> *Hammond's American History Atlas* (Maplewood, N.J.: C.S. Hammond & Co., 1958), A-21.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur B. Fox, *Pittsburgh During the American Civil War 1860-1865* (Chicora, Pa.: Mechling Bookbindery, 2002), 140-142.

<sup>3</sup> *1860-1861 Orders for Supplies*, Allegheny Arsenal Logbook, December 22, 1860.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur B. Fox and John Carnprobst. "The Allegheny Arsenal," *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, February 1, 1998, Focus, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *The War of the Rebellion, a Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), Series 3, Vol. 1, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Colonel John Symington to General James W. Ripley, Allegheny Arsenal Records, National Archives, Philadelphia, Pa., October 2, 1861, 275.

<sup>7</sup> Fox, *Pittsburgh During the American Civil War*, 116.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>9</sup> "Appalling Disaster!," *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 18, 1862, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Fox, *Pittsburgh During the American Civil War*, 121-123.

<sup>11</sup> "Pittsburgh Arsenal Explosion," Report No. 1434, 3.

<sup>12</sup> John Carnprobst, "A Federal Case: Part Two of Four Parts," *The Gun Report*, May 1964, 17.

<sup>13</sup> Secretary of War John B. Floyd, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for 1859*, submitted to the 36th Congress, 1st Session, Document No. 2 (Washington D.C.: George Bowman, 1860), 1120-1121.

<sup>14</sup> United States Surgeon Generals Office, *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion (1861-1865)*, Part 3, Volume 1, Chapter 12, "On the General Hospitals," ventilation illustration (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 945.

<sup>15</sup> "The Arsenal Catastrophe—Investigation Before the Coroner's Jury—Testimony of the Witnesses, &c.," *The Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle*, September 19, 1862, 3.

<sup>16</sup> "The Allegheny Arsenal Disaster," *The Pittsburgh Dispatch*, September 20, 1862, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Secretary of War John B. Floyd, 1120.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> United States House of Representatives, *Executive Documents Printed by Order of the House of Representatives*, 45th Congress, 2nd Session, Volume 5, Report of the Chief of Ordnance, No. 1, Part 2, Volume 3, Appendix M, Map of Allegheny Arsenal (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), Map No. 16.

<sup>20</sup> *Transcript of the Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry to Investigate an Explosion at the Allegheny Arsenal Lab on September 17, 1862, Convened on October 15, 1862 under Order 288 of the Adjutants Generals Office*, Record Group 153, Courtmartial Records, National Archives, Mid Atlantic Region, Philadelphia, Pa., 93.

<sup>21</sup> *The Pittsburgh Dispatch*, September 20, 1862, 3.

<sup>22</sup> "A Direful Calamity," *The Pittsburgh Daily Post*, September 18, 1862, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> "The Arsenal Catastrophe — Coroner's Investigation," *The Pittsburgh Daily Post*, September 20, 1862, 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> George T. Fleming, "Arsenal Blowup Recalled by Big Blast — Eddystone Disaster Rivalled by Holocaust Here — September 17, 1862," *The Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, April 22, 1917, sec. 5, 2. Mrs. McGraw gave the account to Fleming on the occasion of a memorial unveiling at Arsenal Park on September 24, 1913.

<sup>29</sup> *The Pittsburgh Daily Post*, issues of September 20, 23, 25, and 29, 1862.

<sup>30</sup> John Carnprobst, "A Federal Case: Part Two of Four Parts," 16.

<sup>31</sup> Carnprobst, "A Federal Case: Part Three of Four Parts," *The Gun Report*, June 1964, 14. It should be noted that during the Military Inquest, Elias McClure's veracity was called into question. He had been dismissed from the field ammunition room (rooms 9 and 11) for disorderly conduct and sent to another area in the Arsenal. *Transcript of the Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry*, 90-92.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>33</sup> "Pittsburgh Arsenal Explosion," *Reports of Committees for the House of Representatives for the First Session of the Forty-Seventh Congress, 1881-1882*, Report No. 1434, 1-3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>35</sup> John Carnprobst, "A Federal Case: Part One of Four Parts," *The Gun Report*, April 1964, 9; National Archives, Record Group 156, Ordnance Department, Allegheny Arsenal, Letter Book, October 1, 1958, to February 28, 1863.

<sup>36</sup> *Transcript of the Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry to Investigate an Explosion at the Allegheny Arsenal Lab on September 17, 1862, Convened on October 15, 1862 under Order 288 of the Adjutants Generals Office*, Record Group 153, Courtmartial Records, National Archives, Mid Atlantic Region, Philadelphia, Pa.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-61.

<sup>39</sup> Carnprobst, "A Federal Case: Part Two of Four Parts," 19.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Jack Kelly, *Gunpowder: Alchemy, Bombards, and Pyrotechnics: The History of the Explosive that Changed the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 199.

<sup>42</sup> "Terrible Explosion," *The Richmond Enquirer*, March 14, 1863.

<sup>43</sup> "Further particulars of the terrible explosion at the arsenal," *The Washington Star*, June 17, 1864.

<sup>44</sup> Dean Thomas, *From Round Ball to Rim Fire* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1997), 41.

<sup>45</sup> *Executive Documents Printed by Order of the House of Representatives*, 45th Congress, 2nd Session, Volume 5, Report of the Chief of Ordnance, No. 1, Part 2, Volume 3, Appendix M (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 597.

<sup>46</sup> "The Allegheny Arsenal No Longer Post for United States Infantry," *The Pittsburgh Press*, August 17, 1906, 11.

<sup>47</sup> "Wonderful Experiments Are Being Performed on Old Arsenal Grounds," *The Pittsburgh Press*, December 14, 1908.

<sup>48</sup> "Army Supply Depot to Be Sold by United States," *Pittsburgh Sun*, August 16, 1926.

<sup>49</sup> "Picturesque Gateway of Arsenal to be Preserved as Memorial," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 11, 1935, Second Section, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Matt. 24:42 (King James Version).

<sup>51</sup> Reverend Richard Lea, *Sermon Commemorative of the Great Explosion at the Allegheny Arsenal at Lawrenceville, Penna., on September 17th, 1862, Preached by Rev. R. Lea, Pastor of the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church, September 28th, 1862* (Pittsburgh, PA: W.S. Haven, 1862). Reprinted in a 15-page program for the May 27, 1928, dedication of the new monument to the Arsenal victims in Allegheny Cemetery. Reprinted by John Carnprobst in "A Federal Case: Part Four (Conclusion)," *The Gun Report*, July 1964, 22.

# ALL'S FAIR

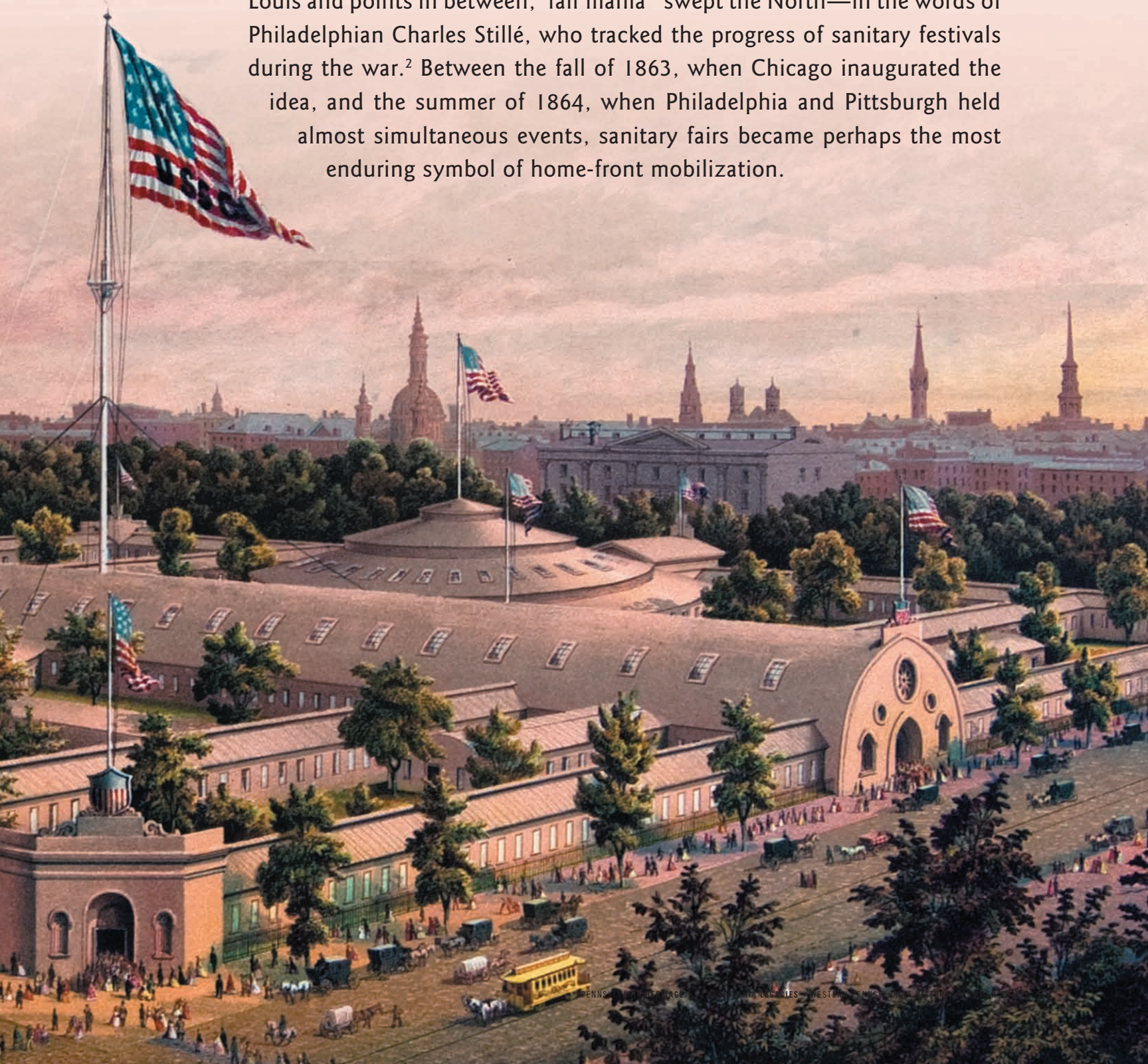
## PHILADELPHIA AND THE SANITARY FAIR MOVEMENT DURING THE CIVIL WAR

By Richard S. Newman

Buildings of the Great Central Fair. Lithograph by  
James Queen, printed by P.S. Duval & Son, 1864.  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



**F**or three weeks in June 1864, Philadelphia hosted the “Great Central Fair,” one of the largest fundraising bazaars of the Civil War. Hundreds of thousands of people—roughly 29,000 per day—attended the event, which raised over a million dollars for the United States Sanitary Commission.<sup>1</sup> Much more than a massive fundraiser, the fair was part and parcel of a reform surge all along the Union home front. From Boston to St. Louis and points in between, “fair mania” swept the North—in the words of Philadelphian Charles Stillé, who tracked the progress of sanitary festivals during the war.<sup>2</sup> Between the fall of 1863, when Chicago inaugurated the idea, and the summer of 1864, when Philadelphia and Pittsburgh held almost simultaneous events, sanitary fairs became perhaps the most enduring symbol of home-front mobilization.





Badge worn at the Retail Grocery Department, Great Central Sanitary Fair, June 1864.

United States Sanitary Commission  
Philadelphia Branch Collection,  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

No city held a more impressive fair than Philadelphia. Looking back after the war, Jane Hoge, a Chicagoan partly responsible for the first sanitary fair, noted that Philadelphia deserved to sponsor the longest, most elaborate, and in many ways most important fair. After all, the City of Brotherly Love was the republic's founding city, and it had long remained a vital center of art, benevolence, commerce, and medicine. With its Great Central Fair, Philadelphia staged an exhibition whose aesthetic qualities matched its grand history.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, the fair also became a living embodiment of Civil War tensions. While the fair's very success depended on women, some men worried that women had overstepped their bounds. More ominously, the Great Central Fair marginalized abolitionists, extending nary an invitation to racial reformers who might have spoken about the great emancipation war—certainly a strange thing in the birthplace of the American anti-slavery movement. Like the war itself, the fair was grand but not always consistent.

Philadelphia's sanitary fair took shape against a backdrop of Union-wide civic mobilization. As battle loomed in June 1861, benevolent men and women met with army officials and politicians about creating a civilian commission that would tend to sanitary matters in both soldiers' camps and hospitals. Noting that the British experience in the Crimean War had illustrated the perils of infection, disease, and soldiers' ill-health, sanitary reformers pledged to monitor warriors' well-being and recovery. The U.S. Sanitary Commission was born.

With local and state auxiliaries spreading throughout the Union over the next two years, the Sanitary Commission became perhaps the largest single benevolent organization the United States had ever seen. The Philadelphia branch was a vital link in the chain, raising money and spreading the word about wounded soldiers' needs. In a February 1863 visit to

the city, Henry Bellows, head of the Sanitary Commission, touted Philadelphia's key role in the battle for soldiers' health.<sup>4</sup> The exigencies of war pressed hard on Union soldiers and their families, he maintained, who required ever more support beyond the battlefield. Bellows asked Philadelphia, like other Union strongholds, to give more. The following year, when Union armies bogged down outside of the Confederate capital of Richmond, sanitary officers echoed Bellows's call for more goods, money, and aid from the home front.

Beyond normal fundraising efforts, what could citizens do? One answer had already come from Chicago, where a group of women organized a sanitary fair in the fall of 1863. Drawing on women's long tradition of holding anti-slavery and sewing fairs, female Chicagoans raised thousands of dollars for the Sanitary Commission, proving in the process that fairs were more than leisure diversions: they could be potent vehicles of voluntary benevolence during wartime. Other cities soon followed suit.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, bolstered by a friendly spirit of boosterism, Union cities began competing with one another to raise the most money and supplies. Boston, Cincinnati, and New York all bragged that they had outdone other cities. New York's success galvanized Philadelphians. With New Yorkers "running almost wild" about their "Metropolitan Fair" (which raised more money than any exhibition), a Philadelphia paper challenged locals to rise above Gotham as a sanitary capital.<sup>6</sup> Even when the Great Central Fair began taking shape in the winter of 1864, civic leaders goaded Philadelphians to action by referring to other successful bazaars. Calling out to every Philadelphian from the press to the pulpit and the farm to the factory, fair organizers asked local citizens to do something heroic for the Union soldier.<sup>7</sup>

Once planning for the event began, Philadelphians responded with a sense of vigor and purpose. But launching the Philadelphia fair was no simple matter. In January 1864,

Great Central Sanitary Fair volunteer wearing ribbons from the Floral Committee, Historical Autographs display, and *Our Daily Fare* refreshment area.

Horace Howard Furness Collection of the Great Central Fair, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

By 1864, women's home-front heroism was heralded from New York to St. Louis. In Philadelphia, women ran refreshment saloons, worked at hospitals, raised funds, and helped outfit sanitary trains, wagons, and ships destined for the battlefield.

there was still no broad agreement on staging such an exhibition. A key push came from a delegation of Chicago women, who worked with local women to bring Philadelphia around. Soon after, an executive committee of worthies took shape, headed by banker John Welch. By March, planning was well under way, with a flurry of handbills, newspaper articles, speeches, and circular letters touting the fair as the most important nonmilitary event of the summer. Exploiting Philadelphians' longstanding commitment to charity, fair organizers asked citizens to do more than merely remember the men on the battlefield. As a handbill aimed at "Florists, Horticulturalists and Seedmen" put it, all citizens should donate funds to aid "our brave soldiers" who sacrificed their lives to "protect our home."<sup>8</sup> A circular from the Agriculture Committee observed that "agriculturalists" and farmers—who sent a high proportion of men to the army—had a special "duty" to support "the gallant soldiers" fighting for the Union. Patriotic farmers could contribute not only by donating cash but by giving "products of the field, stockyards, the garden, the dairy and the household." Whether "grains," "eggs," or "oxen," rural dwellers had key resources for the Union cause.<sup>9</sup>

With similar missives aimed at workers, financiers, bakers, and others, the planning committee of the Great Central Fair built momentum right through the summer.

Over 100 committees oversaw details large and small. In his history of the fair, Charles Stillé, a member of the Executive Committee charged with recording the city's good deeds, compiled a catalogue of committee members that ran over 50 pages long!<sup>10</sup> There was a "tide of benevolence" washing over the Union, *Our Daily Fare*, the cleverly named periodical covering the bazaar, proclaimed after opening ceremonies on June 7.<sup>11</sup>

Despite such broad support, women remained perhaps the fair's most committed organizers, planners, and logisticians. Nevertheless, the idea that women would rise to the level of co-organizers of the Great Central Fair was a sticky issue. Stillé observed that the mere concept of establishing "the ladies committee" proved to be a "delicate" matter. Some men worried that women would transcend their normal (read domestic) sphere. This dispute harkened back to the very origins of the Sanitary Commission. When women approached Northern leaders in 1861 about spearheading sanitary reform, doctors in the Army Medical Bureau thought women might meddle in the serious business of medicine and war.<sup>12</sup>

Without women, however, sanitary reform would have fallen flat. By 1864, women's home-front heroism was heralded from New York to St. Louis. In Philadelphia, women ran refreshment saloons, worked



at hospitals, raised funds, and helped outfit sanitary trains, wagons, and ships destined for the battlefield. Validation of their essential role came from no less a figure than Henry Bellows, who hailed women as indispensable sanitary reformers.

With that thought in mind, Stillé applauded a decision by fair organizers to let women serve as co-chairs of many committees. The official term was "cooperation," meaning that men supervised men, and women supervised women. Thus, Mrs. John Cresson provided "energetic management" to the Children's Clothing Department, while Mrs. Coleman Jacobs offered "indefatigable zeal" to the "Sewing Women." While these roles epitomized domestic spaces as women's true home, others went a bit further. The "Department of Labor, Income and Revenue," headed by a man and a woman, raised roughly a quarter million dollars during the fair—one of the event's largest single revenue sources. Two of nine members of the "Committee of Organization"—a subcommittee whose goal was to induce everyone in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware to donate one day's wages to the fair—were women. The "Editorial

View of the main corridor of the Great Central Sanitary Fair, 1864.  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania Photograph Collection.



Committee,” which helped produce *Our Daily Fare*, comprised 20 people, divided evenly between men and women. “They performed their duty, if we are to judge by the results, with great discrimination and judgment,” Stillé wrote in a nod both to women’s contributions and their savvy way of handling controversies over wartime work.<sup>13</sup>

Cooperative leadership signified more than a compromise over gender relations. It also highlighted the concept of national unity. Hovering over the various planning meetings, circular letters, proclamations, and reports leading up to the fair was the ghost of disunion and discord. Though recognizing that political disagreements were endemic to democracy, fair planners sought to distinguish politics from patriotism. Thus, the fair took shape “in the interest of *no* party, radical or conservative, Republican or Democratic, administration or anti-administration.” Of much greater importance was the cause of the “national soldier,” who needed nourishment,

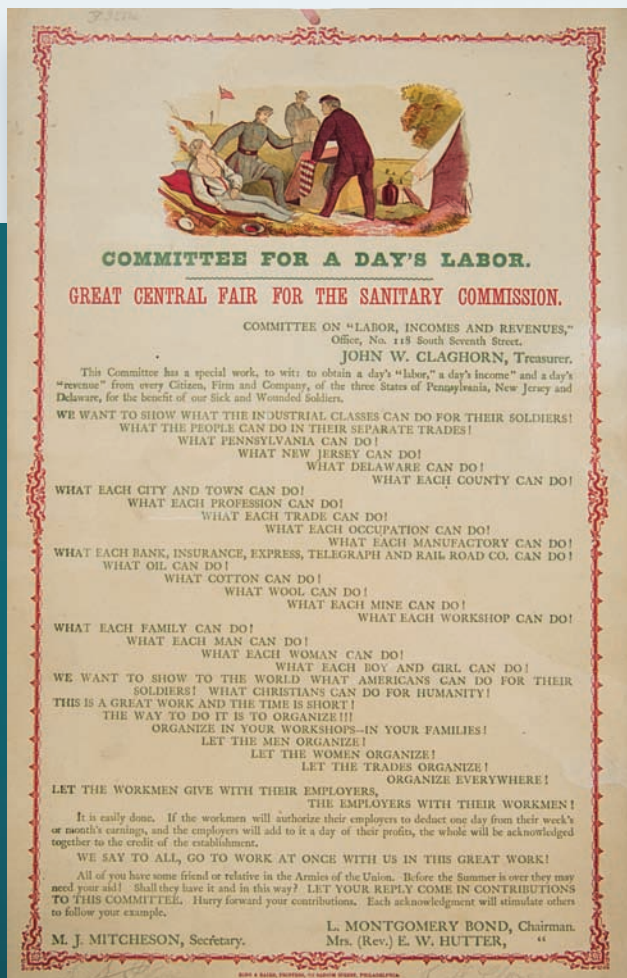
medical supplies, and copious amounts of love, aid, and comfort. Fair organizers asked all those dedicated to Union soldiers to put aside political differences and join the cause.<sup>14</sup>

When the exhibition opened, the fairgrounds themselves became a monument to national unity. Laid out in Logan Square, the grounds offered a commodious home to the weeks-long sanitary bazaar. As Jane Hoge observed, Logan Square provided “a spacious public park, whose broad walks seem to have been created for the buildings of the fair, and whose lofty forest trees lent their leafy branches for ornament and shade to the waiting and departing multitudes.”<sup>15</sup> Hoge delighted in the pleasing “aesthetic” environment of the Philadelphia fair. The layout underscored the importance of cleanliness, beauty, and both bodily and civic health. Indeed, where other fairs had utilized churches, lecture halls, and various makeshift buildings, the Great Central Fair arose as a gleaming new city. Local architects and builders had hastily created dozens of new structures, walkways, and thoroughfares. An impressed Hoge stayed 10 days and walked away

dazzled. In its voluntary “vastness, its completeness, and its unity,” the Philadelphia fair was a “living embodiment of the zeal of a patriotic people for its ideal—a government of universal freedom, of civil and religious liberty.”<sup>16</sup>

Art, agriculture, commerce, education—these building blocks of American liberty found representation in the very layout of the fair. Arranged as a square grid, bounded by Race and Vine at the southern and northern ends and by 18th and 19th Streets on the east and west, the fairgrounds contained roughly 200,000 million square feet of exhibit space and promenades. In the middle, the Horticultural and Restaurant Departments provided pleasing diversions, while the edges of the square contained an art gallery, Children’s Department, Machinery Department, cabinetry and furniture displays, and a bevy of other sections testifying to the Union’s productive might. The avenues bisecting the fairgrounds featured a seemingly endless array of tables with donated goods, curiosities, trophies and vases, historic relics, and other material designed to raise funds.

Union Avenue, the central artery, was a marvel in and of itself. Nearly three football



Cooperative leadership signified more than a compromise over gender relations. It also highlighted the concept of national unity. Hovering over the various planning meetings, circular letters, proclamations, and reports leading up to the fair was the ghost of disunion and discord.

Broadside for the Committee for a Day's Labor, 1864.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania Poster and Broadside Collection.

fields long and over 60 feet wide, it featured a series of Gothic arches that soared above the landscape below. The result was a cathedral-like effect that Stillé compared to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Instead of frescoes depicting God and nature, Philadelphians marching along Union Avenue enjoyed real trees that prospered beneath the graceful arches. For fairgoers, here

Emancipation Proclamation took effect and stranger still in the onetime home of legendary abolitionists Anthony Benezet and Richard Allen. But abolitionists were not invited to speak about slavery's demise, nor did they appear in order to espouse equality. With a network of black abolitionists—including William Still, Robert Purvis, and Octavius

City draft riots worried Philadelphians. Trying to stay true to the ideal of unity, organizers shied away from an issue—abolitionism—sure to stir up ill-will among some white Philadelphians. Indeed, when not buried, race and abolitionism manifested themselves in worrisome ways. Hospitals for wounded black soldiers were segregated from white ones, and



By March, planning was well under way, with a flurry of handbills, newspaper articles, speeches, and circular letters touting the fair as the most important nonmilitary event of the summer.

Bill of Fare for maizena, or cornstarch products, at the Great Central Sanitary Fair, 1864.

United States Sanitary Commission Philadelphia Branch Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

was yet another reminder of American power and ingenuity.<sup>17</sup>

Yet there was one area of concern, at least for reformers: the fair's marginalization of abolitionism. While allusions to the new wartime motto of union and freedom could be found on the fairgrounds—visitors could purchase signed copies of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Children's Department had a note on the wall declaring "all for freedom and freedom for all"—black and white abolitionists were conspicuously absent. This was strange enough in the days after the

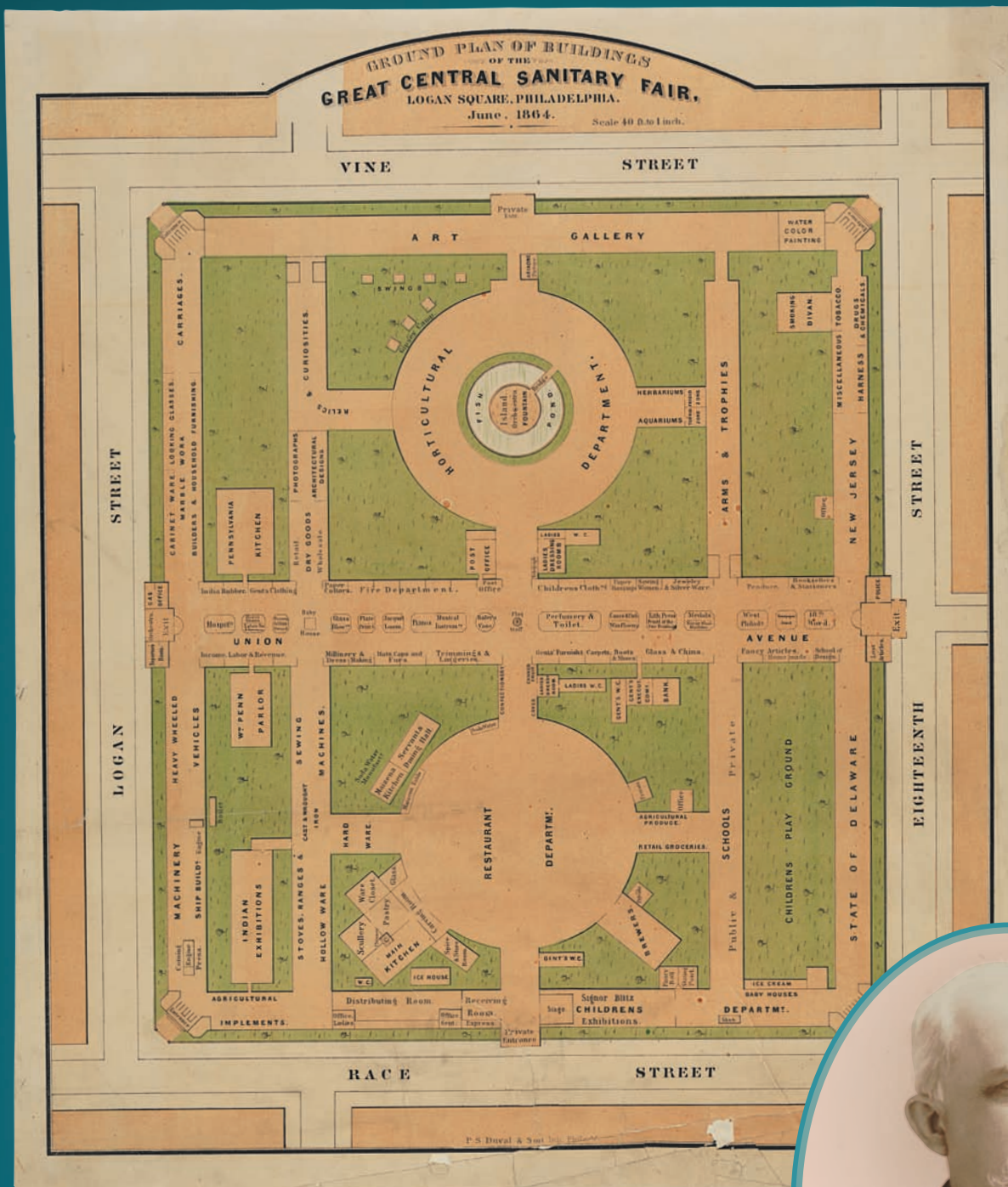
Catto—located in Philadelphia, it would not have been hard to find such a speaker. But they were shut out. One distressing sign of the times was the hiring of minstrels as entertainers. In Cincinnati, by contrast, abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison were asked to write on behalf of the sanitary fair.<sup>18</sup> But not in the City of Brotherly Love.

In Philadelphia, the legacy of antebellum race riots clearly impacted fair organizers' understanding of civic unity. Indeed, the tragic burning of Pennsylvania Hall in 1838 and the more recent example of the New York

African American women found it easier to sponsor their own sanitary fair in December 1864.<sup>19</sup> This would not be the last time that a major Philadelphia exposition whitewashed race reform. At the Centennial Exposition of 1876, African American reformers were again pushed to the side.<sup>20</sup>

If one set of absences haunted the fair, a significant presence enlivened it: President Lincoln, who visited on June 16. Though planners hoped he would launch the fair, Lincoln demurred, focusing instead on the Richmond campaign and the upcoming

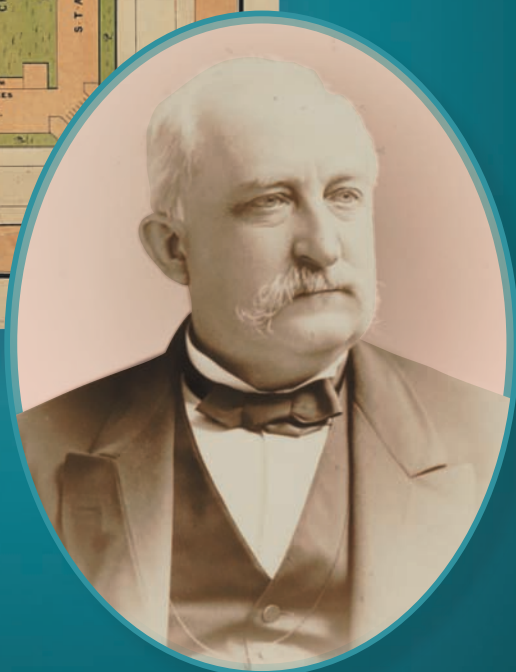




Ground Plan of Buildings of the Great Central Sanitary Fair, June 1864. Lithograph by P.S. Duval & Son.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Nearly three football fields long and over 60 feet wide, Union Avenue featured a series of Gothic arches that soared above the landscape. The result was a cathedral-like effect that Stillé compared to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



Charles J. Stillé, corresponding secretary of the executive committee of the Great Central Sanitary Fair.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania Portrait Collection.

Republican convention in Baltimore. When he did come, Lincoln found loyal Philadelphians eager to see their commander in chief. Arriving just before noon, the president moved north along Broad Street, where he was cheered by groups of firemen. Turning east on Chestnut, he stopped at a recruiting station for black soldiers, where he was saluted as a hero. After checking in at the Continental Hotel, Lincoln took a carriage out to Logan Square, where John Welsh greeted the president amid burgeoning crowds. Although fair officials doubled the price of tickets that day, throngs of people longed to see Lincoln.<sup>21</sup>

After touring exhibits, Lincoln offered an informal address. Linking home and battlefronts, he acknowledged both the sacrifice of Union soldiers and the spirit of voluntarism evident at the fair. Indeed, for Lincoln, the fair offered convincing proof that democracy would not only survive the war but thrive in it. By supporting the Union cause so “freely,” citizens upheld that pillar of democratic union: voluntary participation. In a heartfelt call and response moment, an emboldened Lincoln asked fairgoers if they would “freely” support a war that might last years longer. If men and supplies were still needed, he asked, “Will you give them to me?” “Yes!” the crowd shouted. As Lincoln learned again in Philadelphia, voluntarism was a powerful force for Union.<sup>22</sup>

During his wartime presidency, Lincoln gave roughly 100 speeches, the majority of which were impromptu remarks linking a particular event to the cause of Union. At

the Baltimore Sanitary Fair in 1864, Lincoln saluted soldiers’ sacrifice on the battlefield while also highlighting black military bravery; at the Washington Fair, he hailed women’s reform efforts.<sup>23</sup> In Philadelphia, Lincoln’s remarks about the power of home-front benevolence followed a brisk tour of the fair’s myriad departments and stalls. After viewing sewing machines, clothing, relics, foodstuffs, and more, he was dazzled by citizens’ contributions to soldiers’ health and recovery. Looking at an army of citizens whose donations were still piling up, he may also have recalled sectional battles of days gone by, when proto-secessionists boldly asserted that Northern mudsills (or average working men) were little better than wage slaves. At the Philadelphia fair, Lincoln found more proof than ever to the contrary. In the troubling early summer of ’64, when stalemate defined the eastern battlefront, Lincoln was cheered again and again by Northern volunteerism

and productivity. When at last he spoke, Lincoln honored a mighty democracy in action. Interestingly, noted orator Edward Everett had the ill-luck to speak alongside Lincoln that day (as he had at Gettysburg the previous fall); few people cared to write down his words. Again, Lincoln had captured the moment almost perfectly.

When the fair closed on June 28, Philadelphians took a collective bow. But they remained attentive to the task of sanitary

First issue of *Our Daily Fare*,  
June 8, 1864.

Horace Howard Furness Collection of the Great Central Fair,  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

**OUR DAILY FARE**

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No. 1. PHILADELPHIA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8. 1864.

**THE FAIR MOVEMENT IN THE LOYAL STATES.**

THE history of the great enterprises so successfully conducted in various parts of the country, and popularly called “Sanitary Fairs,” forms one of the most curious, instructive, and characteristic chapters of American life. Schemes for raising money by the voluntary contributions of the people, for the relief of those who have suffered on the battle-field, have not been uncommon in other countries and in former wars. The great unflinching, popular instincts of patriotism and humanity have often been successfully appealed to. Thus, in modern times, in the early days of the French Revolution,

Free Press, was to establish in the cathedrals a depot, where the patriotic gifts of the people for the relief of the defenders of the country and their families were received with all the pomp and ceremony of imposing religious forms.

These displays of popular enthusiasm, however, were wholly unlike the grand movements we have been called upon to witness here. They were short-lived and spasmodic, due only to the excitement of the hour, and wholly destitute of the calm, constant, persistent character which has been so striking a peculiarity of our American benevolence directed towards the same great object, while they sink into utter insignificance when con-

returned to his home. Our Fairs, then, are not due to any fresh or exciting cause, which has temporarily aroused popular sympathy. They must be considered only as a new mode of developing that sympathy, a mode substituted for the regular, normal, steady outflow of feeling which has already contributed more than fifteen millions of dollars for this special object, through the various regularly organized channels for the relief of the army.

It is worth while to trace for a moment the progress of this wonderful scheme of benevolence, as it has hitherto flowed in its course towards the army. The great practical difficulty which presented itself in the outset to thoughtful men, was not to excite popular be-


Civil War envelope depicting the United States Sanitary Commission aiding a wounded soldier on the battleground.

Civil War Envelope Collection,  
Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

IIA. Office 1323 Chestnut Street



reform: aiding more soldiers, outfitting more hospitals, and spreading the gospel of home-front benevolence through the war's end. As for the fair, when the temporary structures came down and Logan Square returned to normal, it moved into the realm of civic memory. Though eclipsed by the subsequent fame of the Centennial Exposition in 1876, the Great Central Fair remained a touchstone of voluntarism and patriotic action for years to come.

Charles Stillé noted that the fair was indeed a most beautiful event, one with “manifold attractions.” But for him, the true measure of the fair’s importance was its ability to display the “animating spirit” of the Union cause. Like Lincoln, he saw “patriotism and holy charity” as the “twin sisters” of the Civil War. On the home front, no less than the battlefield, the Union faithful fought for an ideal: democratic freedom. “Long after everything material connected with the Fair shall have mouldered in the dust,” Stillé concluded, “the influence of the patriotic impulse awakened [in the people] shall remain.”<sup>24</sup> But so too did questions linger about the wartime reality of egalitarianism—of just who belonged to that democratic union home-front citizens mobilized so mightily to save. 

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<sup>1</sup> See The Library Company of Philadelphia's online exhibition, “John A. McAllister's Civil War: The Philadelphia Home Front,” at <http://www.librarycompany.org/mcallisterexhibition/section6.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Stillé quoted in *Our Daily Fare*, June 9, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Currie Hoge, *The Boys in Blue; or, Heroes of the “Rank and File”* (New York and Chicago, 1867), 386–87.

<sup>4</sup> *Speech of the Rev. Dr. Bellows, President of the United States Sanitary Commission: Made at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, Tuesday Evening, Feb. 24, 1863* (Philadelphia, 1863), 1–9.

<sup>5</sup> See Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston, 2000), esp. chap. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Undated newspaper collage, box 1, John A. McAllister's Sanitary Fairs Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia.

<sup>7</sup> John Welsh and Executive Committee, circular letter, March 15, 1864, box 1, McAllister's Sanitary Fairs Collection.

<sup>8</sup> 1864 circular from the “Committee on Florists, Horticulturalists and Seedmen,” box 1, McAllister's Sanitary Fairs Collection.

<sup>9</sup> “Appeal of the Committee on Agriculture,” ca. spring 1864, box 1, McAllister's Sanitary Fairs Collection.

<sup>10</sup> See the “Appendix” of committees and volunteers at the end of Charles J. Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Held at Philadelphia, June 1864* (Philadelphia, 1864).

<sup>11</sup> *Our Daily Fare*, June 8, 1864.

<sup>12</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 20.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 36–37, 40.

<sup>14</sup> John Welch et al., circular on the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair under heading “United States Sanitary Commission,” March 1, 1864, box 1, McAllister's Sanitary Fairs Collection.

<sup>15</sup> Hoge, *Boys in Blue*, 338.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 388–389.

<sup>17</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Brandon Boynton, *History of the Great Western Sanitary Fair* (Cincinnati, 1864), 421, 430.

<sup>19</sup> See the circular by the women of St. Thomas' African Episcopal Church, “Fair, for the Sick & Wounded Soldiers!” Dec. 1864, Library Company of Philadelphia. See also “Confronting Race,” in the Library Company's John A. McAllister's Civil War exhibit: <http://www.librarycompany.org/mcallisterexhibition/section7.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Gary Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of American Memory* (Philadelphia, 2002), 266–272.

<sup>21</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 135–137.

<sup>22</sup> Lincoln's speech is available on the Dickinson College House Divided website at <http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/25129>.

<sup>23</sup> See Lincoln's speech at the Baltimore Sanitary Fair, April 18, 1864, online at <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1067>.

<sup>24</sup> Stillé, *Memorial of the Great Central Fair*, 9–10.

THE  
"WAR HISTORY"  
OF  
CORPORAL  
FUNK

By Matt Masich

A bitterly cold February rain fell all morning on the Yankee soldiers' log huts outside Fredericksburg, Virginia. It had rained all night, too, and before that was snow. A lanky, red-haired 21-year-old corporal, Jacob B. Funk, kept dry in his tiny log "palace," sitting by the fireplace in the winter quarters he shared with a few of his comrades from Company A of the 62nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

It was a far cry from the balmy day in July a year and a half earlier when he had enlisted amid the patriotic fervor of the opening days of the Civil War. The gloomy weather mirrored the Army of the Potomac's spirits at the start of 1863. Hope for the Union cause had ebbed to its lowest point, morale battered by a string of defeats.

Corporal Funk in  
civilian clothing.  
Ken Turner Collection.



**"The shells came hissing over  
our heads, & taring [sic] up  
the earth in every direction, &  
bursting over us. I tell you it  
was a trying place."**

**~CORPORAL FUNK**

**F**unk was recovering from a bad cold, but his mood was lightened by the letter he had gotten from John Patton, an old schoolmate back home some two years his junior. At 10 a.m., with rain splashing outside, he started to pen his reply. Funk asked about the changes that had come since he went away—who had gotten married, and whether the teenaged Patton had been “paying respects to some one of our fair young maidens.”<sup>1</sup> Patton had asked about the soldier’s life, but Funk must have found it impossible to fit it all into a single letter.<sup>2</sup>

“John, I want you to give my love to all my old comrades in school,” Funk wrote. “Tell them that iff [sic] I am spared to get back I shall pay them a visit and tell them some good yarns about war that they will hardly believe.”

During the course of 1863, Funk sent his friend a 25-part serialized “war history,” chronicling in gritty detail what it was like to be in the middle of some of the most important fighting of the Civil War. It is a window into soldiering, with some surprises along the way.

Jacob Funk was born November 23, 1841, in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. His only known family member was a brother, William, who lived in Sewickleyville (now Sewickley) in 1864. Funk was apparently an orphan; in a letter to Patton, he mentioned receiving a parcel with a pound cake and dried beef from a “lady friend,” saying that “it makes me glad to know that though I am an orpahn [sic] I have plenty of friends ... I must say that for a

stranger I was beloved & respected by all.”

While on campaign in the Civil War, he wrote that the Rappahannock River in Virginia reminded him of the Youghiogheny River, to the east of his hometown of Fayette City, about 25 miles south of Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River.

Funk didn’t grow up in a religious household, but at 16 he sneaked off to the dedication of the new Little Redstone

Methodist Church, which still exists today. He converted and became a devout member of the church, often leading prayer meetings at home and during the war.

The Civil War began on April 12, 1861. On either July 4 or July 22 of that year,<sup>3</sup> Funk enlisted in Company A of the 62nd Pennsylvania in Allegheny City (now Pittsburgh’s North Side neighborhood). He was 19 when he volunteered, and at a height of



Colonel Sam Black, photographed at Cargo's studio in Pittsburgh, formed the 62nd Pennsylvania regiment that Funk joined. Black was killed in June 1862 during the Seven Days' Battles near Richmond, Virginia.

Kraus/Messick Collection.

six feet, one inch was one of the tallest members of his company. He is listed as having red hair, brown eyes, and a fair complexion. Though Funk carried the state flag later in the war, he entered his first campaign carrying a rifle.

The colonel who formed the regiment, Samuel Black, was a Pittsburgh native who fought in the Mexican War. Black had been territorial governor of Nebraska, a post he resigned to return to Pennsylvania to help put down the rebellion.

All across Pennsylvania, volunteer “home guard” companies came together to fight the secessionists when war broke out in April—so many, in fact, that many were initially turned away. But by Independence Day, Congress authorized the creation of hundreds more regiments. The 62nd Pennsylvania started recruiting at a massive Fourth of July celebration in Allegheny City and filled its ranks in a matter of weeks. Funk was one of more than 360,000 Pennsylvanians—about 17 percent of the total Union forces—who served in the Civil War.

The 62nd Pennsylvania’s first combat came on May 27, 1862, at the Battle of Hanover Courthouse, during the Peninsula Campaign near the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. Other elements of the 5th Corps had already begun the fight as Funk and his comrades marched to the front lines. The rebels were falling back, so Funk’s regiment pressed forward. They were astonished when they began to hear “volley after volley of musketry” behind them. They retraced their steps to come to the aid of Union forces that had been surprised by a Rebel attack. Funk’s brigade arrived in the nick of time to help them, driving the Confederates from the battlefield.

The next day, he walked over the scene of the battle and saw the dead being gathered for burial. He looked at the corpses, saddened to think “how many hearts and homes would be made miserable and desolate [desolate], but such is war. Men rush together to shoot each other down like so many dogs.”



All images of Jacob B. Funk were lost to history until spring 2013, when historian Ken Turner located a photo album showing many men of the 62nd Pennsylvania’s Company A. The origin of the album, found in a Pittsburgh attic, is unknown, but the discovery, especially of Funk, was astounding after so many years.

This photograph of Corporal Funk was taken in Philadelphia, likely between July and October of 1863 while he was recovering from his Gettysburg wound in Ward B of Satterlee U.S.A. General Hospital in West Philadelphia. The photographer, R. Richardson, placed an advertisement in multiple issues of the hospital’s newsletter during Funk’s time there, offering “pictures of every style at the lowest prices.” Funk mentions some recently taken photographs in a letter he wrote to his friend John Patton on October 20, 1863, shortly before he left the hospital. “[L]et me know to[o] if you got my Photographs as I have not yet heard from them & the man says he sent them,” he wrote. A “photograph album” was included in an 1864 list of Funk’s possessions.

Funk made the most of his stay in Philadelphia. “I have got acquainted with some People in West Phila[delphia,] one family of which are very kind,” he wrote on August 5, 1863. “I was at their House over night, & went to church with them Last Sabbath.” In the same letter, he mentioned teaching a class of boys at Sunday school. “[S]o you see it makes no difference where I go I always get something to do, & I have no objections to such work for it is very pleasant[.]”

By the next month, his Philadelphia friends had “become almost as dear as Brothers & sisters[.]” The other soldiers in his hospital ward were another matter. “I am Ward Master yet & have my hands full,” Funk wrote. “I have some very bad boys to deal with[;] they have been trying to get the upper hand of me but I guess I can keep up with them[.] I have had to report some of them for bad conduct.”

Funk’s gunshot wound healed quickly, and he rejoined his regiment at the end of October 1863.

Funk found himself standing alone and was about to retreat to keep up with his comrades when he heard regiment commander Lieutenant Colonel Hull calling for the boys to rally on the colors.



Lieutenant Colonel James C. Hull, Funk's Company A commander, took charge of the 62nd Pennsylvania after the death of Colonel Black. He died from injuries during the Wilderness Campaign in May 1864. A GAR Post in Pittsburgh was later named in his honor.

Ken Turner Collection.



There was a lull in the campaign until June 25, the start of the Seven Days' Battles outside of Richmond, which ended with the Union Army retreating after a week of hard fighting. The most decisive of the battles was Gaines' Mill, in which the Union 5th Corps was forced to retreat after a day of intense combat. Funk and the 62nd Pennsylvania were in the middle of the action.

Funk fired all the ammunition in the upper part of his cartridge box, so he sat down to refill it while rebel bullets flew over him "like so many bumblebees." In the heat of battle, Funk was separated from his regiment. After rejoining his comrades, the regiment gave the rebels one last volley before retreating. "There was nothing but a confused mass of men running in every direction," Funk said. Colonel Black was killed at the battle, and command of the regiment fell to Funk's company commander, James C. Hull.

The regiment had another bloody day on July 1 at Malvern Hill, the final battle of the campaign. The Union soldiers hit the deck as Rebel cannons fired at them, with shells bursting all around Funk. "I tell you, that is what tries [sic] a man's courage, to lay on the ground in front of the enemy & listen to the iron hail coming thick over your head, making you think every one would take your head with it," he wrote.

The Rebel infantry attacked. The 62nd Pennsylvania at first held its ground, but retreated and regrouped when more Confederates appeared on the right flank. A bullet struck Funk's rifle, cutting the ramrod in two and splintering the wooden stock before slamming into his full canteen, where the bullet stopped.

"I hardly knew what was up," Funk said. "The shock was like as iff [sic] someone had thrown a club at me."

He looked around for another gun, taking one from a wounded comrade. He fired another round before he heard the wounded color bearer cry for him to take the flag.

"I threw down my gun and took the flag & raised it up," Funk recalled. "I had hardly turned round when a bullet struck my left rist [sic], just missing the joint & entering at the back, lodged on the inside."

Funk called for someone else to take the flag before heading toward the rear, grasping his wrist with his right hand to stop the bleeding. He felt faint as he reached the hospital. A surgeon tried to remove the bullet, but "as there were others coming in worse than I was, he told me he had not time to take it out." Funk proceeded about a mile further before finding another hospital, where the bullet was extracted. In severe pain, Funk was given "a sip of brandy & then a little soup" before lying down to sleep on corn husks next to fellow soldiers who had lost legs or arms.

Funk spent a month recuperating in the Army hospital at Portsmouth, Virginia, before returning to his regiment at Harrison's Landing. His comrades were astonished to see him back—they had heard he would lose his hand. He hadn't, but Funk's wrist had not healed enough to use a rifle. He had already proven himself by rescuing the colors at Malvern Hill so he was made color bearer. Funk carried the state flag, which looked like the U.S. flag with the Pennsylvania state seal in the canton. The regiment also had another color bearer who carried the national flag.

The men chosen to carry the flag were the bravest and most reliable—and they had to be, as the color bearers stood at the front and center of the battle line. The bright banners were sometimes the only things visible through



**The flag Funk carried for the 62nd Pennsylvania regiment.**

Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee, 1985.006.

the thick gun smoke, so they were often the only way generals could track their regiments' progress amidst the confusion of battle, writes Michael Dreese in "Fighting and Dying for the Colors at Gettysburg" in *Civil War Times*.<sup>4</sup> "In the deadly close-quarters combat that ensued, the sight of the flag floating above the chaos steeled the resolve of the men," Dreese writes. "If the line gave way, the men usually could be counted on to rally around the

colors." Because the flag was so important to battlefield communication, not to mention as a symbol of the state and country, the enemy concentrated its fire on the color bearers, who suffered a much higher casualty rate than ordinary soldiers.

The Army of the Potomac followed the Confederates to the Rappahannock River, where it spent late November and early December camped at Falmouth, Virginia,

across the river from Fredericksburg. (Funk spelled it Fredericksburgh, with an "h" like Pittsburgh.) On December 11, the Union troops began to cross the Rappahannock on pontoon bridges to attack the Rebels. Funk's regiment waited two frosty nights for their turn, which came on December 13. Funk spent that morning watching the Union assault on Marye's Heights, where the Confederate forces, sheltered behind a stone wall, cut down successive waves of bluecoats.

West Phila. Oct 20<sup>th</sup> / 63

Mr John S Patton

Dear friend

I arrived safe in Philadelphia last evening being on the cars since 2 1/2 A.M. to 5 P.M. you may be sure I was glad when we got here. my fullough is up today & shall not report til tomorrow. I then expect to be traveling for the Regt I enjoyed myself very well while at home I had a very fine time in Allegheny & the country there. I have no news to write at present but think will have some the next time. John if you could lend me five Dollars til next Pay day I

would be very thankful as it took all I had to get back on so that I have none left I merely ask the favour if you can do so without infuring yourself. in writing direct to the Regt. I let me know to if you got my Photographs as I have not yet heard from them & the man says he sent them. The weather is very fine here today the sun shines very warm. things are going on as usual.

excuse my short letter & poor writing for this time give my respects to all inquiring friends I remain as ever your

Letters from Funk dated Sept. 8 and Oct. 20, 1863.

HHC Detre L&A, MSS 126.

At about 1 p.m., his division's bugle sounded, and the regiment crossed the river, passed through town, and set out for the open field that led to Marye's Heights. "As soon as we emerged from the town we were exposed to a raking fire from the rebel batteries," Funk wrote. "The shells came hissing over our heads, & taring [sic] up the earth in every direction, & bursting over us. I tell you it was a trying place."

The Union regiment ahead of them retreated in panic. "Some of our boys got scared & broke," Funk admitted. He found himself standing alone and was about to retreat to keep up with his comrades when he heard regiment commander Lieutenant Colonel Hull calling for the boys to rally on the colors. "I then stood my ground & taking my cap off I turned & called as loud as I could yell to rally on the colors," he said.

The regiment advanced in good order, despite the withering fire coming from the Rebels behind the stone wall. They laid down when they reached the front lines. While they were lying there, a man next to Funk was struck in the head by a bullet, killing him instantly. The regiment soon moved forward.

"I got up in front & gave two or three cheers & planted the flag & then sat down to keep from getting my pate taken off, for I tell you there were plenty of bullets hunting me," Funk remembered. "It is a pretty [sic] hot place beside the colors as the enemy always try to shoot down the flag, but they only put one hole through the flag the whole time."

His comrades fired over his head, one firing so close that the muzzle blast scorched Funk's neck. No Union soldiers reached the stone wall. When night fell, Funk's regiment slept on the ground behind a slight ridge where they had been pinned down, 30 or 40 yards from the Confederate lines.

"The ground was covered almost with dead & wounded," he said. "I had no blanket, & I thought I would freeze, having my knapsack in the town."

They hugged the ground all the next day

and night as well; the Rebels shot at anyone who raised his head. The regiment withdrew to town at about 10 p.m. and slept on the pavement for a few hours before retreating back across the river.

The dispirited Union Army spent December 1862 through April 1863 in winter camp at Falmouth. In January, Funk and Patton struck up their correspondence. Funk wrote most of his "war history" during the downtime.

The army resumed the offensive in late April. The Union forces suffered another defeat

If Funk and his comrades needed motivation, the defense of their home state surely provided it. The men gave three cheers as they entered the Keystone State, and they kept marching until 11 p.m., when they were about eight miles from Gettysburg. The troops awoke before dawn and resumed the hard march, arriving at the Union lines behind Cemetery Hill that morning.

At about 2 p.m., Funk noticed orderlies and aides running in every direction, and he heard the boom of cannon to the army's left. "The ball has opened," the soldiers exclaimed.

**"I got up in front & gave two or three cheers & planted the flag & then sat down to keep from getting my pate taken off, for I tell you there were plenty of bullets hunting me."**

at Chancellorsville in the opening days of May, though Funk's regiment did not have much role in the fighting. In June, the Union Army was again on the move, this time following Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army north through Maryland, marching as much as 20 miles a day. On July 1, the Union and Confederate armies collided at Gettysburg, the three-day battle resulting in a Union victory that turned the tide of the Civil War.

The 426 men of Funk's regiment were still marching on the first day of battle. Before they crossed the state line into Pennsylvania, Lieutenant Colonel Hull stopped the regiment to give a speech. It was vital the men do their duty faithfully now that they had reached Pennsylvania, Hull admonished. The men had seen many battles, but this was the first and only time they would fight on their native soil.

The Union 3rd Corps had advanced into the areas known as the Peach Orchard and the Wheat Field, where they were in danger of being overrun by the Rebels. The 5th Corps, including the 62nd Pennsylvania, was sent to the rescue. Funk's regiment was part of Colonel Jacob Sweitzer's brigade, which took up positions behind a low stone wall at the western edge of the Wheat Field.

Just as they arrived, the enemy unleashed a rebel yell and attacked the regiment to Funk's left, the 32nd Massachusetts. Sweitzer's brigade pushed back the Rebels, but Union troops elsewhere were faltering. The brigade was ordered to fall back across the Wheat Field to the woods to the east, only to be asked to cross the field again in a renewed Union attack.

This back-and-forth movement was typical of the fighting on Gettysburg's second

day. As historian Shelby Foote describes in *The Civil War: A Narrative, Vol. 2: Fredericksburg to Meridian*, “From Little Round Top to the northern edge of the wheat field, the fighting degenerated into a bloody squabble as regiment fought regiment, alternately driving and being driven.”<sup>5</sup>

The brigade marched into the Wheat Field, but the men soon realized that Confederates had moved into the woods behind them and to their right, cutting them off from the rest of the army. They had to fight their way out, engaging in fierce hand-to-hand combat.

“The battle now raged in all its fury as foe grappled with foe and the bayonet was freely used,” Funk penned. He heard a Confederate officer demand that the Yankees surrender, but a man from Funk’s company used the butt of his rifle as a club and smashed the Rebel’s head.

The regiment retreated, fighting all the way. The left flank was hurrying back to the main Union lines, but the right flank was entangled with the enemy. Funk knew the location of the flag was an important way to keep the regiment together, so he slowed down to wait for the right flank to catch up. Just then, he came upon some Rebel prisoners who had been captured a short time before.

In a brief but important passage, Funk relates a scene rarely recorded in Civil War narratives: “The bullets were falling like hail & the guard that had the prisoners ran and left the prisoners go when they immediately picked up guns and began to shoot our men.”

One of the prisoners leveled his gun at Funk and demanded he surrender the colors or be shot.

“I thought that was a rather saucy demand & I could not see the point,” Funk said. “I looked at him a moment then turning round I called out, ‘Some of you shoot that man.’”

There was only one other Yankee with Funk, but the spooked Rebel looked around to see if there were more coming. The momentary distraction gave Funk the chance to make a break for it.

“I took leg bail for security and increased the distance between him and me very fast,” he said. He ran toward his regiment, leaping over a stone wall with the flag.

“I then went straight ahead when directly I heard the report of a gun just behind me,”

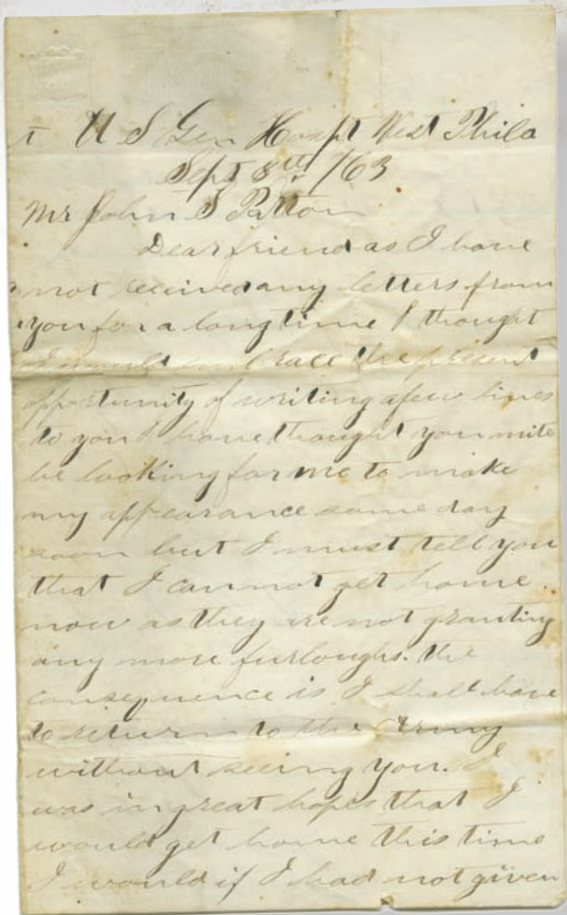
Funk said. “I just concluded that was for me and sure enough the ball struck my arm four or five inches from the shoulder passing under the bone and coming out in the chest near the arm pit.”

Funk called out for one of his comrades to take the state colors. He handed them off and hurried out of danger. Funk was lucky. Sergeant Isaac Osborn, the color bearer who carried the regiment’s national flag, was shot dead and his flag captured. The commander of the 4th Michigan, the Union regiment next to Funk’s in the Wheat Field, was fatally bayoneted while wrestling with the enemy over his flag.



James C. Thudhope, Company A, from Allegheny, Pennsylvania, was killed July 2, 1863, during the intense fighting in the Wheat Field at Gettysburg. This extremely rare one-quarter plate tintype shows him in *chasseurs* attire.

Ken Turner Collection.



The tens of thousands of words young Jacob B. Funk penned to his friend John Patton remind us that each of those casualties was a real person, a friend to others.

Funk made his way to a field hospital and was sent by train two days later — July 4—to a U.S. Army hospital in Philadelphia. He spent more than two months recovering there. As always, he quickly made friends, became a ward master at the hospital, and taught Sunday school at a local church. He was able to take a short furlough to visit Allegheny City, though it is unclear whether he was able to meet with his friend Patton.

Funk had volunteered for three years and was due to muster out of service in July 1864, but at Christmas 1863 he chose to sign up for another three years. On Christmas Eve, he wrote to Patton of his decision.

“Well John I suppose you will be surprised to hear that I am going to reenlist,” Funk said. “I am in for to see the war over if spared so long which I think will not be very long for I think the Johnnies [rebels] are pretty nearly played out.”

Funk asked his friend about the “spelling schools” back home—evening spelling bees

that doubled as social events for young people. “I would like to be at some of them,” he said. “I wish the war was over. I would like to be up there awhile to stir up some life among the young folks.”

Fate would have it otherwise.

In May 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant, now in command of all Union armies, launched the Overland Campaign against Lee’s army in Virginia. The 62nd Pennsylvania got through the brutal Battle of the Wilderness relatively intact, then advanced toward Spotsylvania Courthouse before being stopped by the Confederates.

On May 12, after a standoff of several days, a charge on the Rebels’ defensive positions was ordered up and down the Union line. The 62nd Pennsylvania’s assault failed, with 126 men wounded or killed. Regiment commander Lieutenant Colonel Hull was mortally wounded. Funk was shot in his right side, piercing his lung. He was among the wounded sent to Mount Pleasant Army Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he arrived on May 16.

“Patient continued to sink from the date of his admission,” his hospital treatment records said. “Palliative measures were used.” There was nothing doctors could do for him but ease his suffering.

Funk died on May 24, 1864, at 10:35 a.m. He was buried two days later in the rose garden of Robert E. Lee’s estate near Washington, D.C., which was soon dedicated as Arlington National Cemetery. He was among the very first soldiers

buried there. His brother William picked up his belongings, which included a pistol and belt, guitar, photograph album, and scissors.

Funk was one of 15,265 Pennsylvanians killed or mortally wounded in battle in the Civil War. Counting both Union and Confederates, more than 700,000 died before the war ended in 1865. Though each death was a personal tragedy for the loved ones left behind, most of the dead have passed from memory. The tens of thousands of words young Jacob B. Funk penned to his friend John Patton remind us that each of those casualties was a real person, a friend to others. ★

**Matt Masich** is a staff writer with *Colorado Life Magazine*. As a student at the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his B.A. in History, Masich transcribed the war correspondence of Jacob B. Funk housed in the Senator John Heinz History Center’s archives.

<sup>1</sup> The letters of Jacob B. Funk are housed in the Thomas & Katherine Detre Library & Archives at the Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, Pa. The letters quoted in this article come from that collection.

<sup>2</sup> John S. Patton papers c. 1851-1926 [manuscript]. Thomas & Katherine Detre Library & Archives at the Senator John Heinz History Center, MSS 126, Box 1.

<sup>3</sup> Funk’s enlistment is listed on documents from both those dates. According to Ken Turner, co-author of *The Civil War in Pennsylvania: A Photographic History* (2012) and writing a regimental history of the 62nd (in which his great-great-grandfather served), there was a range of dates because the regiment was organized under a federal mandate, rather than under state authority like most units, and it took time to sort out the resulting confusion. E-mail of March 26, 2013.

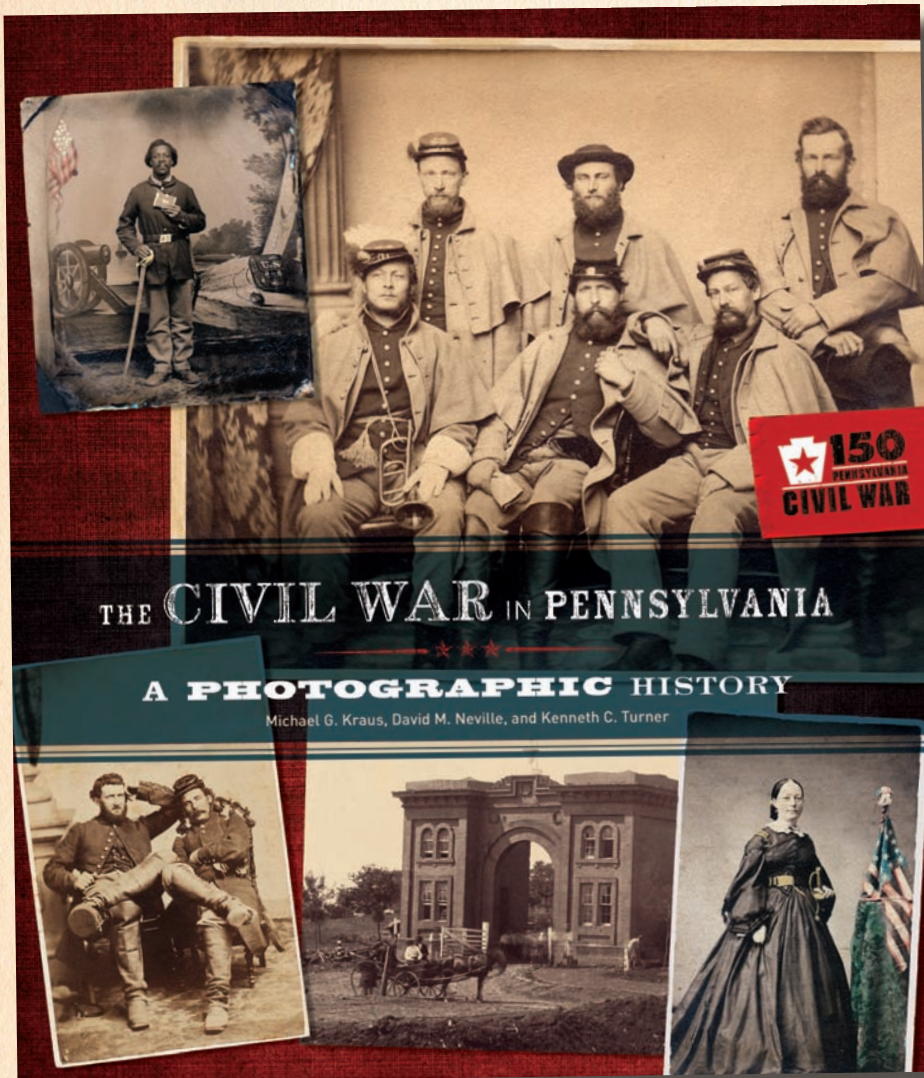
<sup>4</sup> Michael Dreese, “Fighting and Dying for the Colors at Gettysburg” *Civil War Times*, July 2007, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative, Vol. 2: Fredericksburg to Meridian* (New York: Random House, 1963), 507.

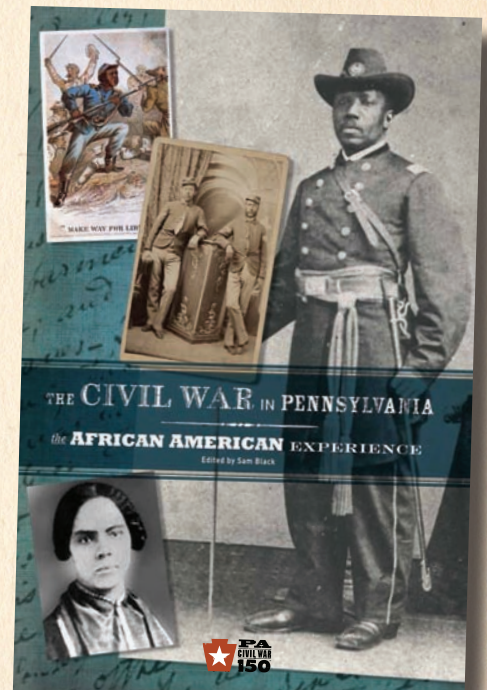


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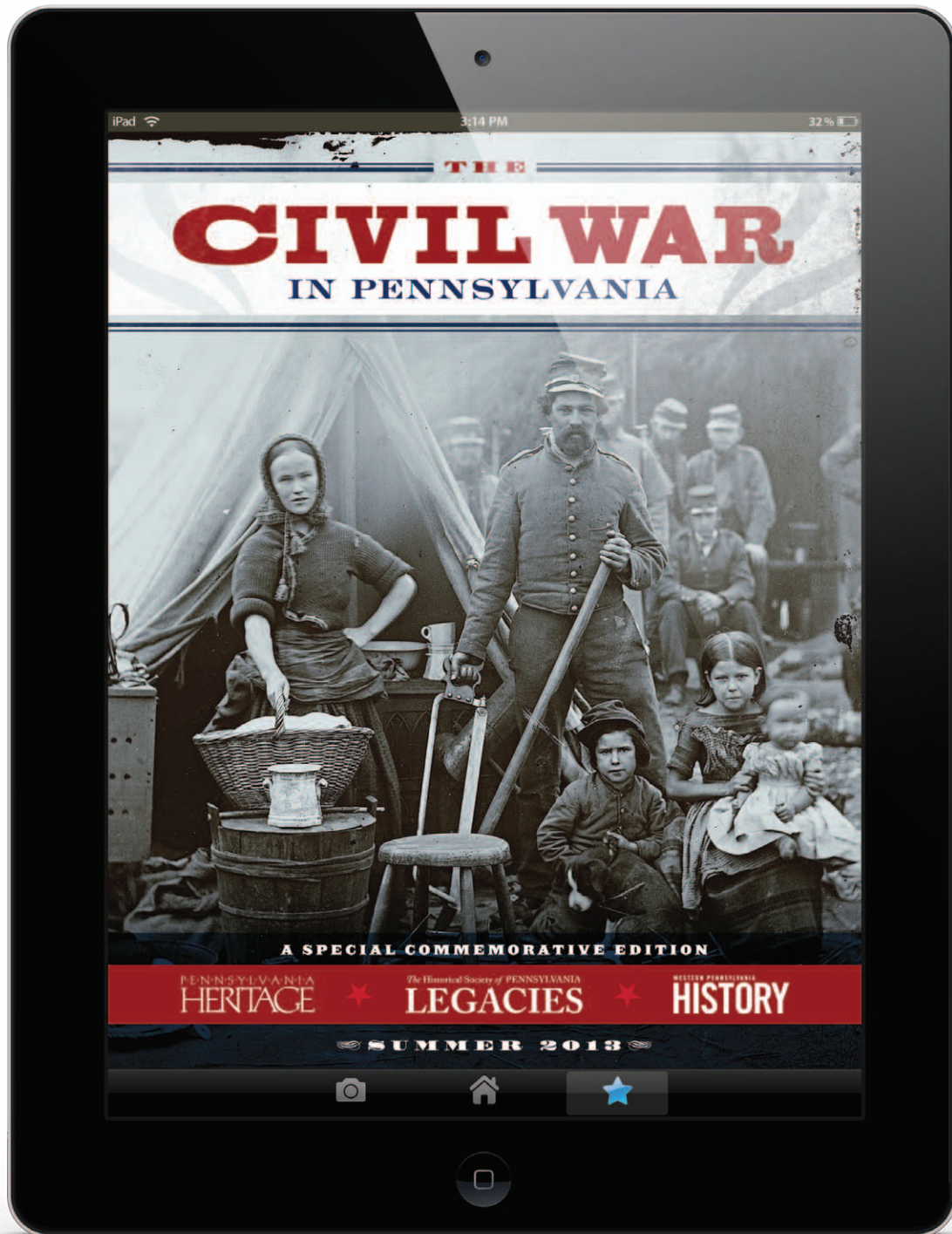
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*The Civil War in Pennsylvania* is a 500-square-foot exhibit that is traveling to more than 50 venues across the state. Developed by the Heinz History Center and PACW150, the exhibit features 3-D "life figures" of men and women who experienced different aspects of the war, including Strong Vincent (right), one of the heroes of Little Round Top. The State Museum of Pennsylvania features materials from *The Pennsylvania Civil War Road Show*, a multi-dimensional exhibition created by PACW150 that traveled the state in 2011–12.

PHMC.



United States Colored Troop reenactors gather on the steps of the Messiah Lutheran Church on November 5, 2010, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and to recognize the Pennsylvania Grand Review in Harrisburg of November 14, 1865.

Regiments from Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New York, Virginia, New Jersey, Ohio, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and South Carolina participated in the event.

Samuel Black, HHC.







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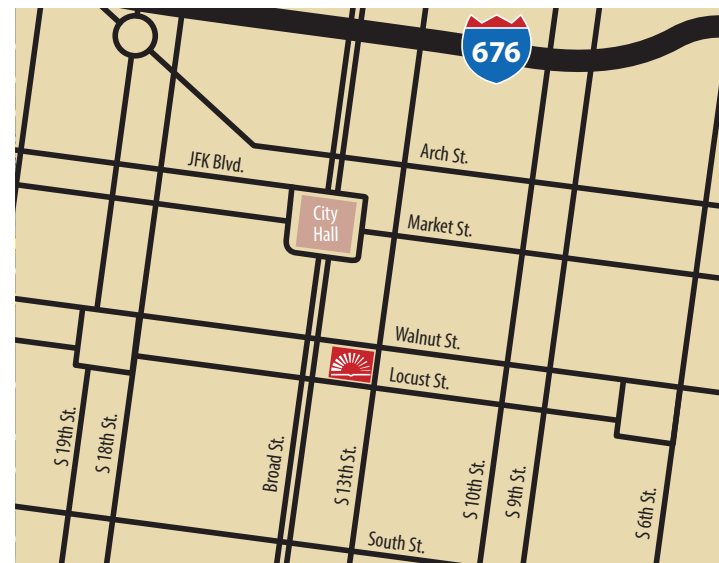
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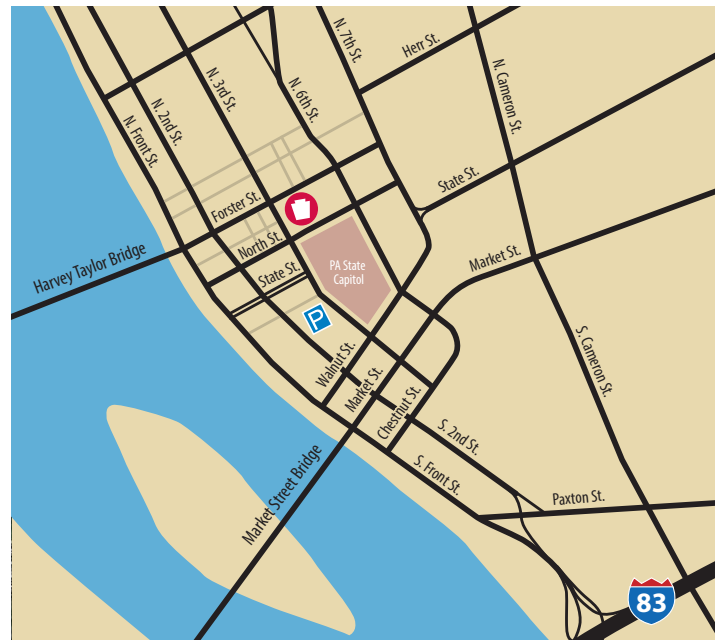
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**The State Museum of Pennsylvania, a popular attraction since opening in 1965.**  
PHMC Photo by Don Giles.





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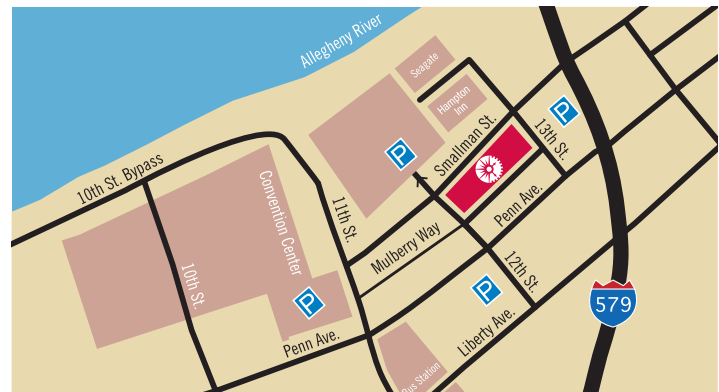
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Photo by Rachelynn Schoen.



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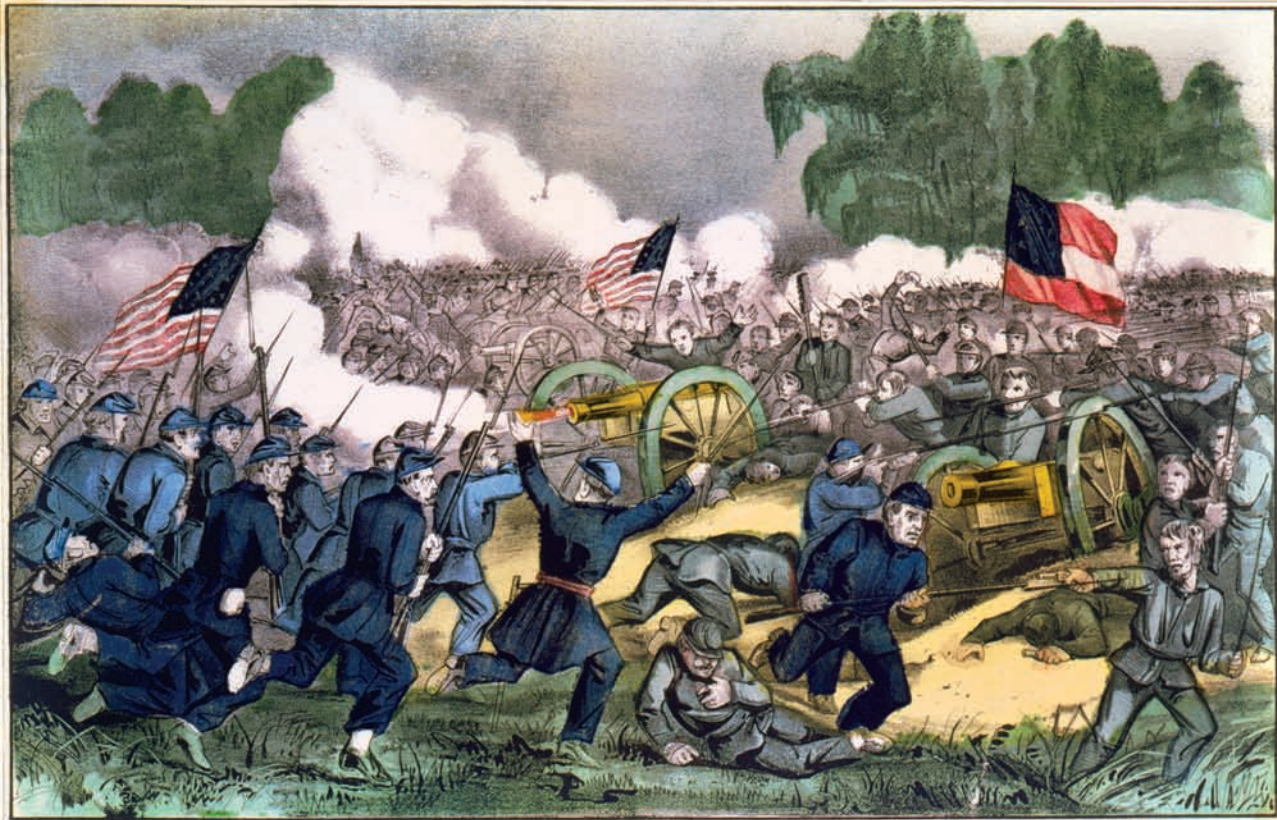
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