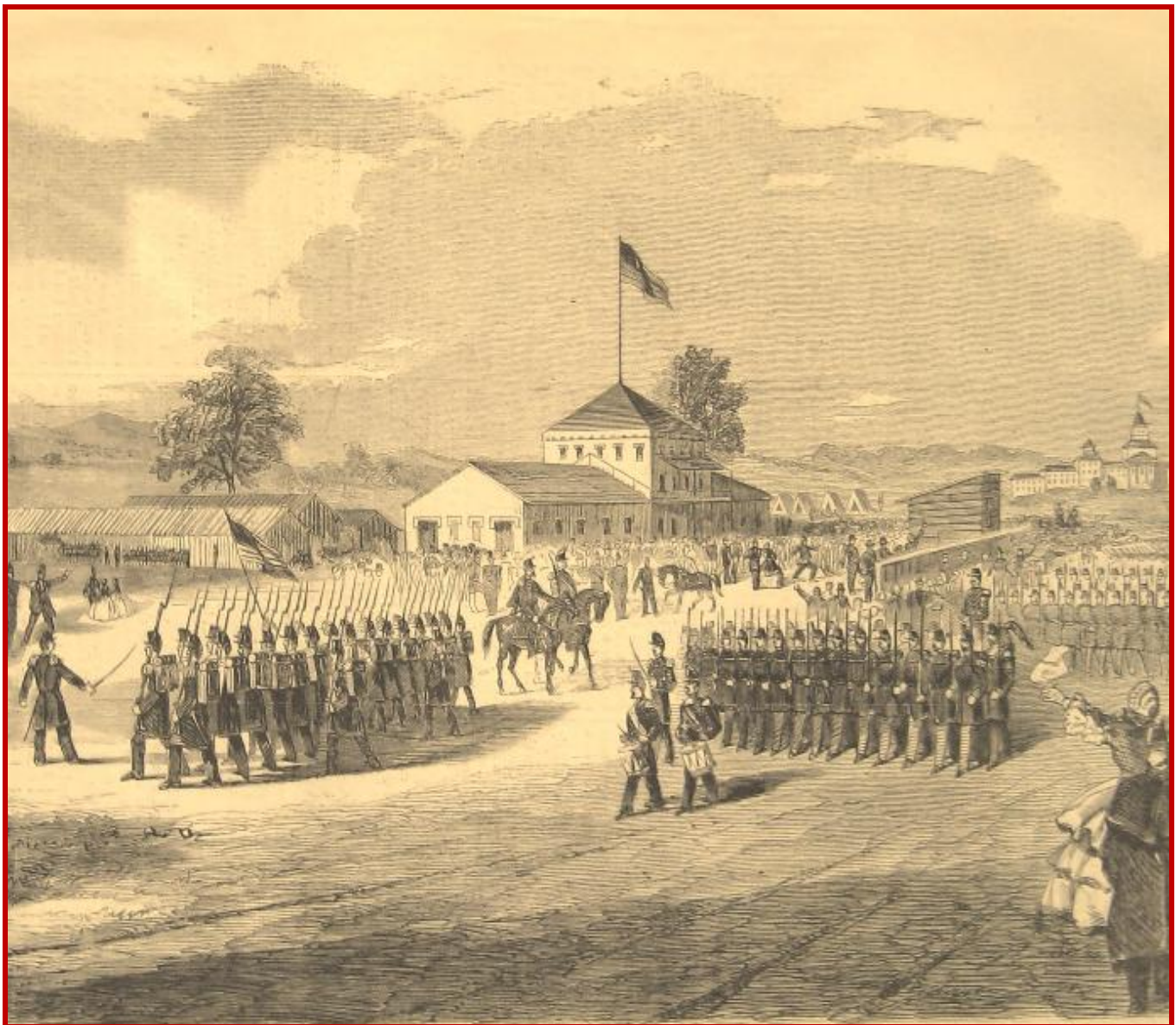


# The Bugle



Quarterly Journal of the  
Camp Curtin Historical Society  
and Civil War Round Table, Inc.

Spring 2011  
Volume 21, Number 1



*Camp Curtin 1861*

*"The field upon which we now stand will be known as classic ground, for here has been the great central point of the organization of our military forces. When my administration of public affairs will have been forgotten and the good and evil will be only known to the investigation of the antiquarian, Camp Curtin, with its memories and associations, will be immortal."*

- Governor Andrew Curtin, 1865

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## The Bugle • Spring 2011, Volume 21, Number 1

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### Cover

After the firing on Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. Almost immediately, men from throughout Pennsylvania converged on Harrisburg to offer their services and it became apparent that a military camp would have to be established in the area. Camp Curtin was established north of the city at the Dauphin County Agricultural Society's Fairgrounds. The May 11, 1861, issue of Harper's Weekly illustrated newspaper featured a picture of troops drilling at the camp. The picture is somewhat fanciful in that the troops are fully uniformed and wearing tall leather French-style shakos that were popular with pre-war militia. The picture may have been a propaganda piece to encourage the North and intimidate the South as to how prepared Pennsylvania was to defend its borders and preserve the Union. The full text of the article, reported:

### **CAMP CURTIN, HARRISBURG. PA.**

*WE publish herewith, from a drawing made on the spot, an illustration of Camp Curtin, a rendezvous of the Pennsylvania Volunteers. At this place Governor Curtin is understood to have collected some eight or ten thousand volunteers, and more are flocking in daily—horse, foot, and artillery. A large number of experienced drill-sergeants are busy from daylight till dark drilling the men, who go through the unaccustomed labor with cheerfulness, and only ask to be led forward. A gentleman who has just returned from Harrisburg writes as follows respecting the other camps of the Pennsylvania troop[s].*

*This State has in the neighborhood of seventeen thousand already in the field, and thousands more begging for the opportunity of marching. They have full six thousand stationed at Camp Scott, near York, under the command of Generals Wynkoop and Negley. There are twenty-six hundred at Camp Slifer, near Chambersburg, under the command of General E. A. Williams, one of the officers of the Pennsylvania volunteers in the Mexican War, who has Colonel J. J. Patterson for his aid. Scattered along between Elkton, Perryville and Philadelphia are six thousand more, and there are one or two regiments from Ohio near Lancaster, with some twelve hundred United States troops at Carlisle Barracks.*

## **Camp Curtin** **Historical Society and** **Civil War Round Table**

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# The First Weeks of the War

The firing on Fort Sumter plunged the nation into Civil War. President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion:

## **A PROCLAMATION.**

*Whereas, The laws of the United States have been for some time past and now are opposed, and the execution thereof obstructed, in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in the Marshals by law :*

*Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, in virtue of the power in me vested by the Constitution and the laws, have thought fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth, the Militia of the several States of the Union, to the aggregate number of 75,000, in order to suppress said combinations, and to cause the laws to be duly executed. The details for this object will be immediately communicated to the State authorities through the War Department.*

*I appeal to all loyal citizens to favor, facilitate, and aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity, and the existence of our National Union and the perpetuity of popular government, and to redress wrongs already long enough endured.*

*I deem it proper to say that the first service assigned to the force hereby called forth will probably be to repossess the forts, places, and property which have been seized from the Union, and, in every event, the utmost care will be observed, consistently with the objects aforesaid, to avoid any devastation, any destruction of, or interference with property, or any disturbance of peaceful citizens in any part of the country; and I hereby command the persons composing the combinations aforesaid to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within twenty days from this date.*

*Deeming that the present condition of public affairs presents an extraordinary occasion, I do, hereby, in virtue of the power in me vested by the Constitution, convene both Houses of Congress. The Senators and Representatives are therefore summoned to assemble*

*at their respective chambers at twelve o'clock, noon, on Thursday, the fourth day of July next, then and there to consider and determine such measures as, in their wisdom, the public safety and interest may seem to demand.*

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

*Done at the City of Washington, this fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-fifth.*

*Abraham Lincoln.*

*By the President*

*William H. Seward, Secretary of State.*

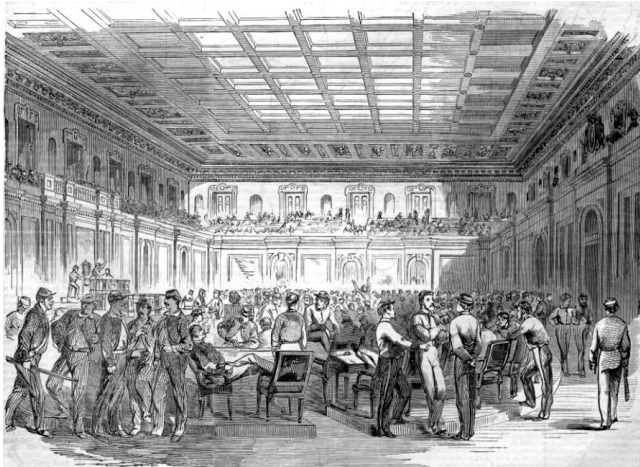
Initially, the militia was called for ninety days, not because Lincoln thought the war would be short (although he and many others hoped so) but because under the system of “checks and balances,” the president could only call state troops into federal service for a limited time without the authorization of Congress. Incredible as it may seem, Congress was not in session during the secession crisis and firing on Fort Sumter. As part of the Proclamation, Lincoln called Congress into session on July 4, 1861, and would eventually obtain authorization for three year volunteers.



Each state was allocated a portion of the call based on population. Being a populous state, Pennsylvania was expected to provide 14,000 men. By the end of April, the Keystone state would actually send about 25,000 men off to war.

Pennsylvania had the distinction of rushing the first troops to Washington and they would forever thereafter be known as “The First Defenders.”

These five companies of pre-war militia – Allen Infantry of Allentown, Logan Guards of Lewistown, National Light Infantry and Washington Artillerists of Pottsville, and Ringgold Light Artillery of Reading – entrained at Harrisburg on April 18, 1861, just three days after Lincoln’s Proclamation. They passed through Baltimore and faced an angry pro-Southern mob as they transferred from one railroad station to another. When the First Defenders reached Washington, they were a great morale boost to the city on the edge of the Confederacy and Lincoln is said to have shaken the hand of every man. The troops were quartered in the U. S. Capitol but did not engage in any hostile action during their time of service.



Several times during the war, troops were quartered in the U.S. Capitol and other government buildings.

Ironically, the First Defenders were accompanied by Battery H of the 4th U.S. Artillery, commanded by Lt. John Pemberton, during their trip from Harrisburg to Washington. The battery had been serving in the west and was moving to Washington. Upon arriving in the capital and having faithfully discharged his duty to bring his troops east, Pemberton resigned from the U.S. Army and joined the Confederate Army, rising to the rank of Lieutenant General. Ultimately, he would command Vicksburg and surrender to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant on July 4, 1863.

Shortly after Lincoln’s call for volunteers, Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin instructed Brigadier General Edward Williams of the State Militia to take control of the grounds of the Dauphin County Agricultural Society, located in

what was then the northern outskirts of Harrisburg. The camp was between Reel’s Lane on the north, the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks on the east, Maclay Street on the south and Fifth Street on the west. It was originally to be called Camp Union but when Major (later Brigadier General) Joseph Knipe (above) officially opened the camp on April 18, he proclaimed it to be “Camp Curtin.”

On April 19, the day after the First Defenders passed through Baltimore, the 6th Massachusetts met another larger mob of Southern sympathizers as they moved from the President’s Street Station to the Camden Station. The mob attacked the troops with bricks, stones and a few pistol shots.



Massachusetts troops travelling to Washington were attacked by a mob in Baltimore, Maryland.

The soldiers responded by firing into the crowd and a brawl ensued. The soldiers finally arrived at the Camden Station and took the train to Washington. Four soldiers and twelve civilians were killed in the riot and others on both sides were wounded. Numerous anti-Union plots were reported in Baltimore to sever the railroad lines and take over federal facilities but never materialized. The Maryland legislature convened a special session to consider secession but remained in the Union.

Meanwhile in Pennsylvania, Governor Curtin realized that Pennsylvania was subject to attack since it was bordered by the Confederate state of Virginia (the part that is now West Virginia) and Maryland, which at the time was of questionable loyalty to the Union. Curtin asked the legislature

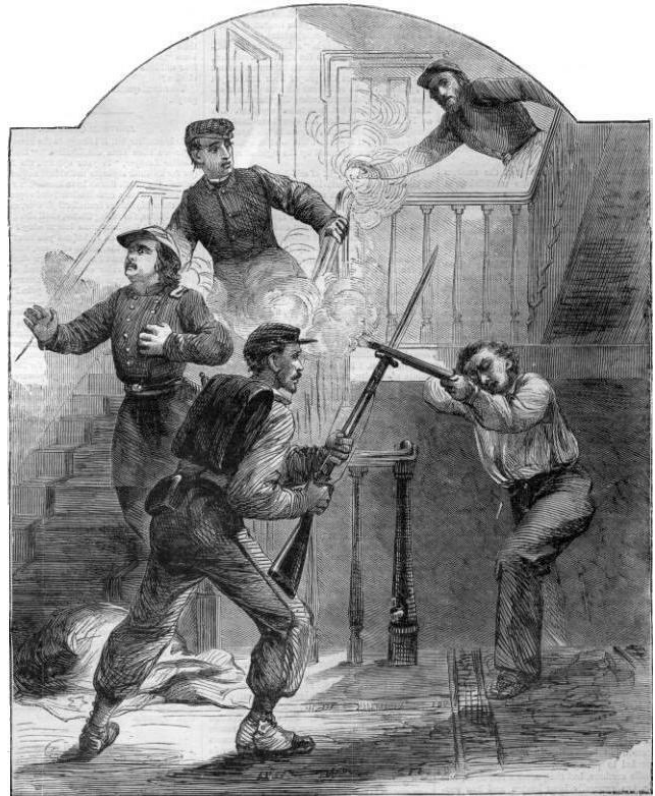
for authorization to organize fifteen three-year regiments called the Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps (PRVC or "Reserves") to protect the state. These units were designated the 1st through 15th Reserves. Thirteen of the regiments were to be infantry, one was artillery and the other was cavalry. They were primarily to be a "home guard" but the law also authorized the Governor to offer the troops for federal service, if needed. After the disaster at First Bull Run, the Reserves were federalized and ultimately became part of the Army of the Potomac.

Up to the firing on Fort Sumter, only seven states had seceded from the Union (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas). When Lincoln called for the 75,000 volunteers to help invade the South, Virginia voted to leave the Union on April 17, followed by Arkansas on May 6, North Carolina on May 20, and Tennessee on June 8. The Confederacy now had eleven states and the capital was moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond Virginia.

When Virginia seceded from the Union, the Gosport Navy Yard (now Norfolk Naval Base) was vulnerable to attack. To prevent its capture and the loss of ships, facilities and supplies, it was ordered to be destroyed by the U.S. Navy on April 20. Among the ships in the yard was the steam frigate U.S.S. Merrimack, which sank in shallow water before it completely burned. When the Confederates occupied the base, they began the work of raising the Merrimack and converting it into the ironclad C.S.S. Virginia. The following year, it would make history in a battle with the U.S.S. Monitor.



The U.S. Navy scuttled its own ships at Norfolk to prevent their capture but the Confederates raised the Merrimack to create the ironclad Virginia.



Col. Elmer Ellsworth was shot while pulling down a Confederate Flag at the Marshall House in Alexandria, Virginia.

On May 24, Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth of the New York Fire Zouaves was the first Union officer to be killed in the Civil War. Ellsworth led his regiment into Alexandria, Virginia. As his troops entered the town, Ellsworth saw a Confederate Flag flying above the Marshall House. Ellsworth entered the hotel, climbed to the roof and tore down the flag. As he returned with his prize, he was shot and killed by the hotel owner, James Jackson, who was himself killed by Francis Brownell, one of Ellsworth's men. Brownell later received the Medal of Honor for his action.

The death of this handsome young officer, who also happened to be a personal friend of President Lincoln, shocked the nation. His funeral was a national media event. Dozens of different memorial items were sold with his image, ranging from stationery to china and from sheet music to photographs.

Very quickly, however, Ellsworth's death would be overshadowed as thousands more fell in battle or died of disease. His "romantic" death was just the beginning of our nation's most costly war.

## Upcoming CCHS Events

**Mark your calendar and plan to attend!**

**More details will be included in next issue of *The Bugle*.**

*August 20, Saturday*

### **Camp Curtin Historical Society Picnic Fort Hunter Park, Harrisburg**

Free for members, their families, friends & guests. The Society will provide Chicken, Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Sausages & Buns and the cooks! You must sign-up so that we have enough food. We also need members to volunteer to supply side dishes, drinks, condiments, chips, pretzels, desserts, etc.

*September 11, Sunday*

### **Camp Curtin's "History Comes Alive" Tours of the Harrisburg Cemetery**

Visit the graves and hear the stories of numerous personalities who influenced local, state and national events in the 19th century. Visitors will learn about Lincoln's first Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, and Brig. Gen. Joseph Knipe, the man who named Camp Curtin. They will hear the story of the Confederates buried in Harrisburg, admire Maj. Gen. John Geary's beautifully restored monument, and see Mary Todd Lincoln's great grandfather's grave. The tours will visit more than two dozen "residents" of the cemetery. Display of Civil War artifacts and presentations by living historians, including the odd Victorian custom of picnicking at a grave. Adults - \$5.00 (CCHS Members - \$4.00) All children under 16 - \$1.00

*October 1, Saturday*

### **Association of Mid-Atlantic Civil War Round Tables (AMART) Seminars**

Hosted by the Camp Curtin Historical Society at the Army Heritage & Education Center, Carlisle. Speakers will include Dr. Richard Sommers, Jeffrey Wert, Scott Mingus and Robert Hodge. A small registration fee will be charged. AHEC will also be conducting a Civil War living history encampment throughout the weekend.

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*The Camp Curtin Historical Society and Civil War Round Table, Inc., is a non-profit corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Contributions are tax deductible under IRC Section 501c(3). The Society is properly registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State as a charitable organization. A copy of the registration and financial information may be obtained by telephoning toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

## GNMP Living History

The Gettysburg National Military Park always has the finest and most authentic living history units conducting programs under the careful supervision of certified black powder safety officers. Their educational programs are highly recommended for families. Programs are held at the Pennsylvania Memorial, Pitzer Woods, and Spangler Spring. Check at the Park Visitor Center for location and times of demonstrations. For more information about GNMP programs, visit [www.nps.gov/gett](http://www.nps.gov/gett).

*June 25-26*

20th Maine Infantry, 2nd US Sharpshooters  
2nd Maryland Infantry, 4th Maryland Artillery, 23rd  
Virginia Infantry

*July 2-3*

Mifflin Guard  
Confederate Military Forces

*July 9-10*

Southern Gray C.S. Sharpshooters  
12th Alabama Infantry

*July 16-17*

1st Rhode Island Artillery, Battery B  
28th Virginia Infantry

*July 30-31*

General Hancock Society  
3rd Virginia Infantry

## CWT Honors Dancers

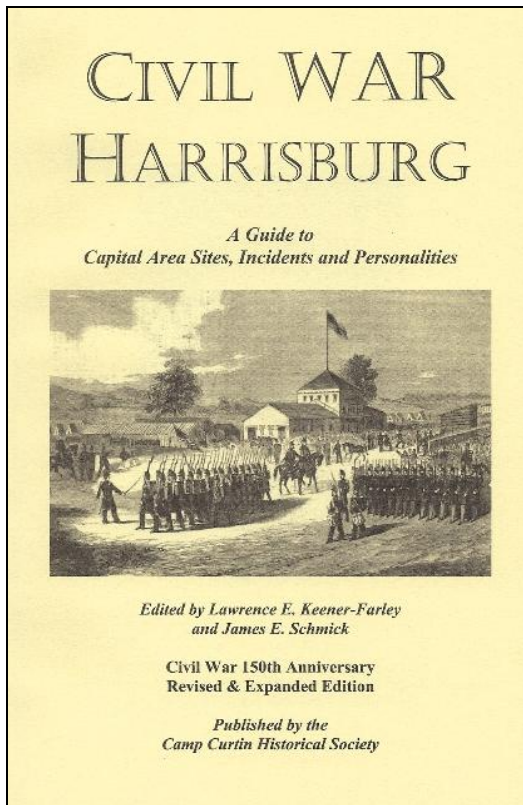
The Civil War Dance Foundation has been named the Civil War Trust's 2011 Reenactment Unit of the Year. This is the first time the award was presented to a civilian living history organization. The award is one of several presented by the Civil War Trust to individuals and groups in recognition of their support for Civil War preservation projects. The Victorian Dance Ensemble, CWDF's performing troupe, conducts balls, dance demonstrations, classes and living history programs throughout the mid-Atlantic region. In the last ten years, the dancers have earned over \$125,000 for various preservation and education projects. The VDE will conduct the dance at Camp Curtin's Civil War Days on June 18 and will present dance demonstrations at the Gettysburg Museum & Visitor Center on June 12 and August 20. For more information, visit [www.CivilWarDance.org](http://www.CivilWarDance.org).

# Civil War Harrisburg

## A Guide to Capital Area Sites, Incidents and Personalities

**NEWLY REVISED & ENLARGED - \$13.00 tax & postage included**

**SIXTY** new pages added to previous edition, including articles on the coming of the Civil War, pre-war Harrisburg, Prince Albert's visit, Union flags, weapons, insignia, and army organization, and profiles of Generals Knipe, Geary, Reno & Gorgas.



## Local History

**including:**

- ★ ***Lincoln's 1861 Visit***
- ★ ***Founding of Camp Curtin***
- ★ ***Harrisburg Home Front***
- ★ ***Local Camps***
- ★ ***Capture of Mechanicsburg***
- ★ ***Forts Washington & Couch***
- ★ ***Skirmish at Oyster Point***
- ★ ***Battle of Sporting Hill***
- ★ ***White Hall Orphan School***
- ★ ***Personality Profiles***
- ★ ***Pennsylvania Regiments***
- ★ ***U.S.C.T. Grand Review***

Published by the  
Camp Curtin Historical Society

Copies will be available at Camp Curtin Civil War Days June 18-19 at Negley Park, Lemoyne, Pa.

*To order by mail, make your check for \$13.00 payable to "Camp Curtin Historical Society" and mail to Camp Curtin Historical Society, Post Office Box 5601, Harrisburg, PA 17110*

# Camp Curtin Historical Society's **Civil War Days** **June 18-19**

**Negley Park, Lemoyne, Pa.**

**Camp open 11AM-5PM on Saturday, 11AM-3PM on Sunday.**

*Negley Park and the surrounding neighborhood were the site of Fort Washington, the largest fort defending Harrisburg in June 1863, as Confederates marched on the Capital. A 1/4 mile west of the park is Fort Couch, the only surviving Civil War military site in the Harrisburg area.*

**Artillery firing demonstrations by Cooper's Battery  
at 1:00PM, 3:00PM & 9:00PM Saturday and 1:30PM Sunday.**

**Displays of original Civil War artifacts.  
Presentations on local history, flags and weapons throughout both days.**

**Camp Curtin's newly enlarged tour book, *Civil War Harrisburg, A Guide to Capital Area Sites, Incidents and Personalities*, will be on sale.**



## **Civil War Dance at 7:30PM on Saturday.**

*This dance is for the public – Fun for all – Families welcome  
Period attire is **not** required – No experience is needed – Wear comfortable modern clothing  
Dances will be taught by the Civil War Dance Foundation*

**After the dance, there will be a spectacular night-time cannon firing!**

**Negley Park is located at 5th Street and Cumberland Road in Lemoyne.**  
*From Market Street in Lemoyne, go north on 5th Street, turn right and the park will be on your left.*

For information,  
email [CampCurtin@verizon.net](mailto:CampCurtin@verizon.net)



*Official Event*