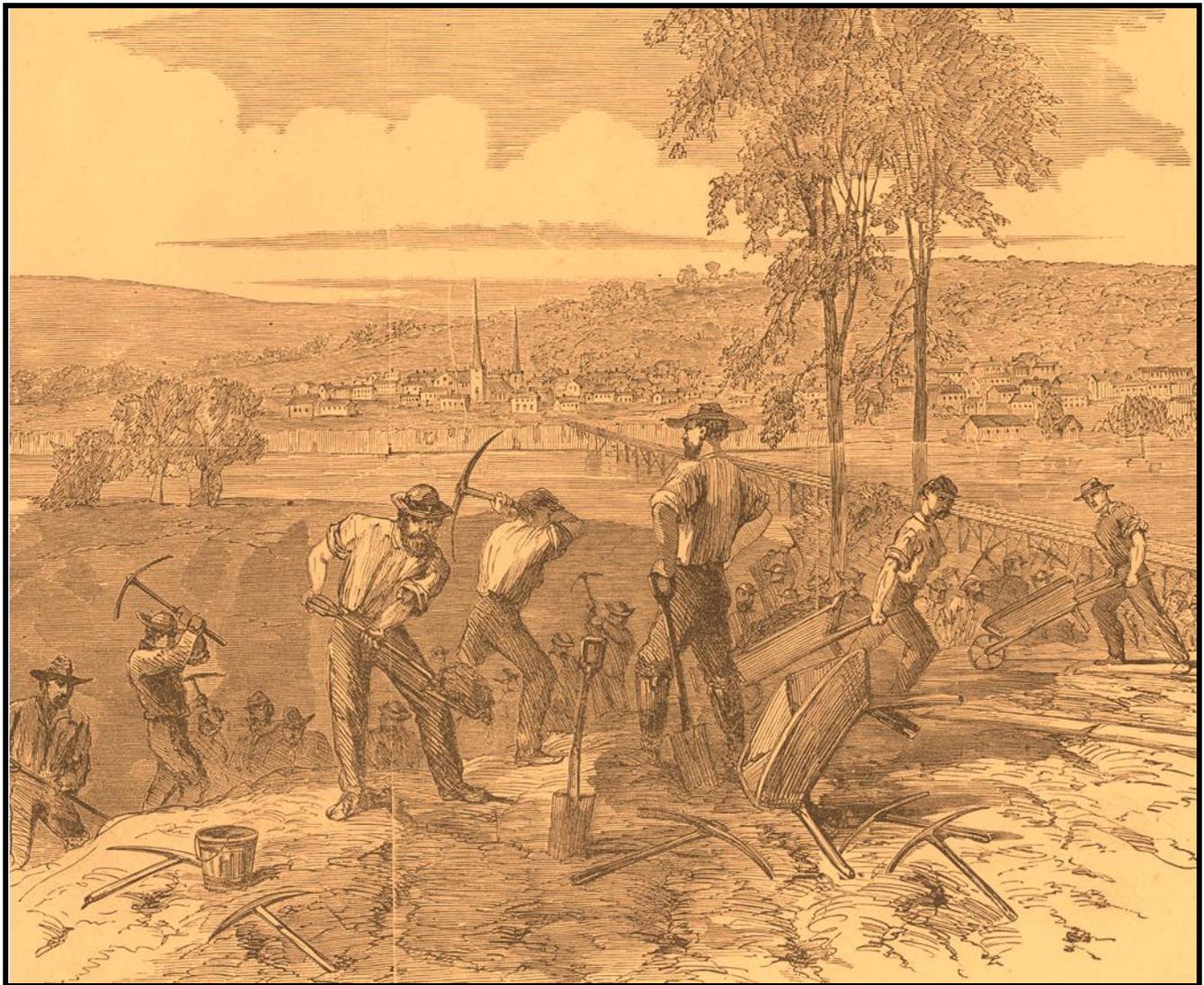


The Bugle



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

Fall 2011
Volume 21, Number 3



*Building Fort Washington during the
Confederate Invasion of Pennsylvania
June 1863*

"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

The Bugle • Fall 2011, Volume 21, Number 3

Civil War Symposium October 1

The Camp Curtin Historical Society and AMART - Association of Mid-Atlantic Civil War Round Tables – have joined together to present the 2011 AMART Civil War Symposium, 9:00AM to 4:00PM - Saturday, October 1, 2011, at the U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center, 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle, Pa. We will have four outstanding speakers and attendees will have an opportunity to visit the new AHEC exhibit Visitor and Education Center exhibit "A Great Civil War, 1861: The Union Dissolved" and a living history encampment portraying "Entering Winter Camp."

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

8:00-9:00AM - Registration & Continental Breakfast, with fruit juices, pastry, yogurt, coffee, & tea. During this time, the Visitor and Education Center exhibit, "A Great Civil War, 1861: The Union Dissolved," will be open to AMART attendees (it will not open to the public until 9:00AM).

9:15-10:15AM - **Dr. Richard J. Sommers**, Senior Historian, Army Heritage Center, speaking on *South-Central's Celebrated Soldiers: Civil War Generals from Our Part of Pennsylvania*

10:30-11:30AM - **Robert Lee Hodge**, Civil War preservationist and historian, speaking on *Remembering "The War of the Rebellion"*

11:30AM-1:45PM - Lunch on your own from the food vendors at the living history encampment and an opportunity to see the demonstrations and special exhibits

1:45-2:45PM - **Scott L. Mingus, Sr.**, author of seven books on the Civil War, speaking on *Flames Beyond Gettysburg: The Confederate Expedition to the Susquehanna River, June 1863*

3:00-4:00PM - **Jeffrey D. Wert**, author of nine Civil War books, speaking on *The Army of Northern Virginia From the Seven Days to Gettysburg*

Registration form is available on our website at www.CampCurtin.org or telephone 717-732-5115 for information.

Cover - Our cover depicts citizens of Harrisburg building Fort Washington in Bridgeport (Lemoyne) in June 1863, from Frank Leslie's Newspaper. The Susquehanna River and Harrisburg are in the background. This fort was the major defensive position guarding Harrisburg but Confederate troops advanced only as far as present-day Camp Hill on June 29 and fought a large skirmish at Sporting Hill, subject of our main article in this issue, in present-day Hampden Township on June 30, 1863.

Camp Curtin Historical Society and Civil War Round Table

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The Real Battle of Sporting Hill: Part II *by Cooper H. Wingert*

Sporting Hill Vignettes

In *The Real Battle of Sporting Hill: Part I*, three Vignettes were discussed – Vignettes I and II pertaining to parts of the First Phase, and Vignette III pertaining to the majority of the Second Phase. In *Part II*, Vignette IV pertains to the end of the Second Phase and the entirety of the Third Phase of the Battle, while Vignettes V and VI pertain to other relatively unknown parts of the battle.

Vignette IV: The Artillery Closes The Battle

As the Battle progressed, Ferguson still had a howitzer and a three inch ordnance rifle from Jackson's Kanawha Horse Artillery concealed in Gleim's Grove.¹ Ferguson considered the arrival of the 37th NYSM as just another attack upon his skirmish line. He believed that Couch's Department would have shown some artillery by now, and sought to find it, or take advantage of its absence.

Jackson's gunners, under the command of Senior 1st Lt. Randolph Blain, a VMI graduate, opened fire on Cox's companies north of the Carlisle Pike. Cox's men were more exposed than others, as they were lying in Samuel Eberly's corn fields. The first shell was right on target near the center of Cox's line, but was too high, landing behind the New Yorkers, near present-day Lighthouse Drive.² The Tribune correspondent, present within Cox's ranks, reported:

*a louder explosion than had yet occurred was heard in the distance, and whirr came a shell directly over our skirmishers, and over the battalion, and exploded just beyond-a beautiful line shot, but a little too high. Things began to look serious as the shell was followed quickly by two round shot . . .*³

After firing a round of shell the Kanawha Artillerymen switched to two rounds of round shot. Cox's men were helplessly exposed, yet the skirmishers of Company B were much safer, as they were too close to the barn for the artillerymen to fire at them without the risk of friendly fire. Cox's men picked up their rifles and fled into Samuel Eberly's Wheatfield south of the Carlisle Pike. Col. Aspinwall, meanwhile, kept his men to their line. As Cox's disordered battalion passed to his rear, Aspinwall ordered Cox to form on the left of his line. Probably Ewen, Aspinwall, or Cox conceived the idea to attack Jackson's Battery. Cox received the order and began to march his men toward the guns. The

Kanawha Artillerymen only had to bark out a few shots to find Cox's men scrambling back to their lines and laying down. One New Yorker recalled that the shells "now began to fly fast and thick."⁴

The Confederate artillery opened fire with shell upon Companies A and C, 22nd NYSM in Snavely's woods shortly after they had frightened the frail men under Cox. A member of Company A recalled that the artillery fire "was aimed too high, so that the shells, although making a great noise in the woods and showering down many leaves and branches from the trees, did no harm."⁵

The Confederate artillerymen then began to fire randomly around the battlefield. One shell burst in the ranks of the 37th, wounding three enlisted men. Again the Kanawha Artillerymen shelled Samuel Eberly's Wheatfield south of the Carlisle Pike. A member of the 22nd NYSM recalled that the shells "burst and tore up the ground, but passed over the regiment." Five men from the 22nd were slightly wounded from Blain's fire. In its entirety, the shelling wounded eight New Yorkers.⁶

This shelling, with nothing to respond to it, demoralized the New Yorkers in every way possible. They could not take this much longer. To Ewen's men, it was a shooting range, except they weren't the ones with the guns.

As disaster descended, a rumbling was heard in the rear of the New Yorkers – it was the 1st Section of Landis's 1st Philadelphia Light Artillery. The Battery was commanded by Captain Henry D. Landis, and the Section by 1st Lt. Samuel Clarke Perkins, a renowned Philadelphia lawyer.⁷

Gun #1 unlimbered in a cornfield northwest of the Eberly Farm, its target being the Moses C. Eberly Barn. Gun #2 unlimbered on a southerly extension of Eberly's ridge in the Carlisle Pike, its target being Jackson's Battery in Gleim's Grove. As Gun #1's crew was loading, they loaded the rifle-shell fuse first. Luckily, Lt. Rufus King rode up and reigned in his horse, giving them a quick lesson in Artillery, as the Battery had never fired projectiles before. King allowed them to pull the lanyard, and they proved their aim excelled their load, hitting the barn dead center. A New Yorker best recalled what happened next, "The first shell burst in the barn with such effect that instantly its two great doors were swung open and a

swarm of Confederate skirmishers came rushing out and made for the woods [Gleim's Grove], where the main body was posted."⁸

One New Yorker recalled the first shot fired by Gun #1 in a more artistic manner. To the North and Northeast were large looming hills. The sky was shrouded by a thick smoke, indicative of the deadly work being done. The birds scurried through the sky to the northwest, in an attempt to free themselves from the danger of hurling shells. Lieutenant King sat to the left of the gun, and the officers shouted out commands. After the gun crew's feverish work was done, the piece was fired, and a large puff of smoke concealed the muzzle, as the shell flew through the air over the heads of the skirmishers.⁹ As the 16th Virginia scurried back through the fields to Gleim's Grove, the whole line erupted into cheers. The New York Tribune correspondent recalled that it was "with the utmost difficulty the men could be kept from cheering and thus revealing their position to the enemy."¹⁰

An artillery duel then settled in. Ferguson reformed his line in Gleim's Grove, posting his dismounted cavalry on the left and right and the artillery in the center. His horses were saddled in a swale to the rear of his position. Ferguson, still concerned that Couch's entire Department was in his front, believed that this was the artillery bombardment before the all-out infantry assault would come.¹¹



1st Section Landis Battery at Sporting Hill June 30 '63

The duel lasted from approximately 5:30 P.M. to shortly before six o'clock, as reported in local newspapers. Perkins' fire became more and more accurate with every shot, causing enough casualties to leave Captain Landis to believe his fire wreaked enough havoc in the Confederate ranks to have inflicted eight or ten killed, and fifteen to twenty wounded, which is a practical statement.¹²

"In a very short time their artillery was silenced," wrote one New Yorker.¹³ A shell had exploded wounding around ten men.¹⁴ Ferguson had had

enough. He began a withdrawal to lick his wounds at Carlisle. His cavalrymen gripped their saddles, his artillery limbered up, falling back to Carlisle. One shell from Perkins's section burst among the enemy.¹⁵

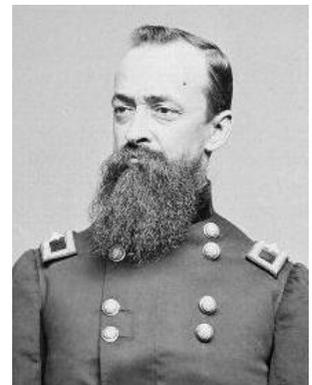
The Battle was over, except for a detachment of the 14th Virginia Cavalry Regiment at Mechanicsburg, which under Lt. Hermann Schuricht, accidentally distracted Ewen from pursuing Ferguson.¹⁶

Vignette V: The Skirmish of Sporting Hill

The Skirmish of Sporting Hill occurred on 28 June 1863, two days before the Battle of Sporting Hill. Brigadier General Albert G. Jenkins Virginian Cavalry Brigade had approached Mechanicsburg that morning. Jenkins, a soul of caution, detached three units, the 16th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, 36th Virginia Cavalry Battalion, and two guns of Jackson's Kanawha Horse Artillery to ride north on the Hogestown Road, and then proceeded west on the Carlisle Pike to within shooting distance of Oyster's Point (present-day Camp Hill).

As Ferguson approached the ridge which holds the Old Methodist Church he saw in front of him a large plateau, and three-fourths of a mile away he saw three Federal units arrayed on the eastern crest of Sporting Hill. These were the men of Brigadier General Joseph Knipe's Federal Militia Brigade. With him, Knipe had detachments of the 8th and 71st NYSM Regiments, and Elihu Spencer Miller's Philadelphia Battery.

Brigadier General Joseph Farmer Knipe (right), was a favorite among the New Yorkers. One New Yorker recalled that Knipe was, "a capable officer, but he did not spare the men; an object was to be accomplished, and all other things were secondary." The New Yorkers took Knipe's military tactics "in good part," and constructed some verses about him:



*Oh! General Knipe he was a beat;
Foot balls! Foot balls!
He marched us all 'till we had sore feet;
Foot balls! Foot Balls!¹⁷*

The only account existing of the condition of Knipe's line is the account of Confederate Artillery Lieutenant

Micajah Woods. Woods comments that the federals were concealed behind a “line of works.” No federal accounts have alluded to this, but perhaps there were entrenchments or a natural lay in the ground that presented itself as a line of works.¹⁸ Ferguson deployed two of Jackson’s pieces¹⁹ on the ridge that holds the Old Methodist Church, and opened fire with shell. The shelling lasted for about half an hour. Miller’s fire was over the heads of Jackson’s Kanawha Artillerymen, the closest shot to the battery wounding a horse. Jackson’s fire was equivalent to Miller’s fire. In the words of Miller, “the enemy’s guns opened upon us from so a great distance, however, they produced no effect.” Woods also recalled that General Jenkins was standing by, “witnessing the action nearly the whole time.” This seems unlikely, as Jenkins would have been in the town of Mechanicsburg at that time.²⁰

After half an hour, Knipe had had enough, and withdrew his command hastily to Oyster’s Point. Lt. Woods wrote that the federals left behind guns, hats, and other items they could not dispense of. When Knipe withdrew, Ferguson sent forward a dismounted detachment of the 16th Virginia Cavalry, who entered “the works” and reported several of Knipe’s men killed, though the federals left no record of this, and it is probably more boasting than truth.²¹

Lt. Woods recalled that the firing “proved eminently successful.” Not only was it successful, but the first firing of the New Kanawha Horse Artillery. After the shelling, Ferguson took position against Knipe at the Albright House, and fought from there on June 28-29. The shelling of Sporting Hill impacted the course of the events around Harrisburg, because, had it not occurred, Knipe would have been in Jenkins’s rear, and could have cut him off.

Vignette VI: Aftermath

Ferguson brought with him his wounded in wagons, but, he did not bring along his dead. The local farmers counted “some fifteen killed, and twenty or thirty wounded.”²² The New York Times Correspondent counted 16 Confederate dead, primarily within the foundation of the McCormick Barn.²³ The New York Times states after the war that there were fifteen killed and twenty-four wounded.²⁴ One source stated the casualties at 13 killed and 20 wounded.²⁵ Comparing the accounts of local newspapers with these accounts and more, the most adoptable number, is 10 to 15 killed, and 25 wounded. The Pennsylvania State Historical Marker places the casualties at 16 Killed,

and 20 to 30 Wounded. The federals, as previously stated, sustained three small-arms casualties and eight artillery casualties. Thus, the Pennsylvania State Historical Marker places the casualties for the federals at 11 in total.

After the Battle, the memories of the battle still rolled around the arsenals in New York. Lt. Ignatius Whelan of the 37th NYSM had a brother serving as an officer (possibly a courier) to Jenkins and Ferguson. After the war, the brother stated that, “it was supposed by the Confederates that they were opposed by Couch’s entire corps, and they therefore did not assume the offensive.” Many incidents like the latter occurred, but in time, these memories were “gone like the wind” with the passing of more and more Sporting Hill Veterans. Few men took time to chronicle their Sporting Hill experiences. R.W. Gilder of Landis’s Battery was a born writer, but passed away from heart disease before he was able to chronicle his war experiences. One person who likely saved the history of Sporting Hill is George Wood Wingate. Wingate served as a corporal in Company A, 22nd NYSM, and in several books struggled to promote his 22nd New York, and in the process also wrote some of the best accounts on the Battle of Sporting Hill.²⁶



After the Battle, Captain Asa Bird Gardiner (left), Captain of Company I, 22nd NYSM, was awarded the Medal of Honor on 23 September 1872 for, “conspicuous bravery and distinguished conduct during the Gettysburg Campaign, particularly in the action of Sporting Hill Pa., June 30, 1863, and in the defense of Carlisle, Pa., July 1-2, 1863.” (Photo from West Point Album-1875.8, USAMHI) After a committee was formed to investigate the awarding of several Medals of Honor, it was concluded that Gardiner did not earn the award. In February of 1917, Secretary Baker directed Gardiner to return his Medal to the war Department. Gardiner termed this, “a scandalous act.”²⁷

George W. Wingate, the “savior” of Sporting Hill’s history best summarized the battle:

*While this skirmish was of no particular account in itself, it is really historic. It was at the furthest northern point which was reached by the invaders, and marks the crest of the wave of the invasion of Pennsylvania.*²⁸

NOTES

- ¹ Cooper H. Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", (Manuscript in possession of the Author), pp. 3-5
- ² George W. Wingate, *History of the Twenty-Second Regiment of the National Guard of the State of New York: From its Organization to 1895*, (NY: E.W. Dayton, 1896), pp. 195-196: Hereafter cited as, *Wingate, History of the 22nd New York*; Wingate, *The Last Campaign of The Twenty-Second Regiment, N.G., S.N.Y. June And July, 1863*, (New York: C.S. Westcott & Co. Printers, 1864), p. 11: Hereafter cit. as, Wingate, *Last Campaign*; Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", p. 6
- ³ Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*, pp. 195-196
- ⁴ *Ibid.*; Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", p. 6
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 195; "Famous Twenty-Second", *New York Times*, 28 June 1896; Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", p. 8
- ⁶ Frederick Phisterer, *New York In The War of the Rebellion: 1861 to 1865*, Vol. I, pp. 614, 637, (Albany, J.B. Lyon Co. 1912); Gettysburg Battle-field Commission, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg: Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments. . .*, (Harrisburg: W. S. Ray, 1904) 2 vol., Vol. 1, p. 171; *The War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union And Confederate Armies*, (Washington: U.S. War Dept.,) Vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 235: Hereafter cit. from Series 1, cit. as, *OR*,
- ⁷ Pleasonton, *Third Annual Report of Brigadier General A. J. Pleasonton, Commanding The Home Guard of The City of Philadelphia, To The Hon. Alexander Henry, Mayor For 1863*, (Phila.: King & Baird, 1864), p. 82, 88: Hereafter cit. as, Pleasonton, *Third Annual Report*;
- ⁸ *OR*, Vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 235; Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*, p. 196; Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", pp. 8-9; Jones, Woodruff, ed. Wingert, Cooper, H., *1st Philadelphia Light Artillery in the Army of the Susquehanna, 1863*, (Camp Hill, PA: C.H. Wingert, 2011), p. 10;
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 183
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 196
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 196; Wingate, *Last Campaign*, p. 12
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197; Pleasonton, *Third Annual Report*, p. 82; Jones, *1st Philadelphia Light*, pp. 10-11
- ¹³ Wingate, *Last Campaign*, p. 12
- ¹⁴ Jones, *1st Philadelphia Light*, p. 11
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*, pp. 196-197; "Famous Twenty-Second", *New York Times*, 28 June 1896; Pleasonton, *Third Annual Report*, p. 88
- ¹⁶ Schuricht, Hermann, ed., Wingert, Cooper H., *A Virginian in the Vanguard*, p. 13; *OR*, Vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 235
- ¹⁷ Francis, August T., *History of the 71st Regiment, N.G., N.Y.*, (New York: The Eastman Pub. Co. Inc., 1919), p. 260
- ¹⁸ Micajah Woods Papers, University of Virginia
- ¹⁹ Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", pp. 4-5; Historians have enjoyed debating the fact of whether one or two pieces were present during the shelling. The Author conducted a comprehensive study and came to the conclusion that a three-inch ordnance rifle commanded by Lt. Woods and a howitzer commanded by Lt. Randolph Blain were present.
- ²⁰ Micajah Woods Papers; Francis, *71st New York*, p. 263; Pleasonton, *Third Annual Report*, p. 72; Wingert, "The Artillery At Sporting Hill", p. 4
- ²¹ Micajah Woods Papers
- ²² Wingate, *Last Campaign*, 12
- ²³ Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*, p. 197
- ²⁴ "Col. Asa Bird Gardiner", *New York Times*, Oct. 31, 1897
- ²⁵ Moore, Frank, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, With Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1864), p. 20
- ²⁶ "Gen. Asa B. Gardiner Dies in 80th Year", *New York Times*, May 29, 1919; Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*, p. 197; Wingate authored the following: Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*; Wingate, *Last Campaign*; Wingate, *History of Company A & 22nd Regiment NGNY*, (New York: Styles & Clash, 1901)
- ²⁷ "Gen. Asa B. Gardiner Dies in 80th Year", *New York Times*, May 29, 1919; "Col. Asa Bird Gardiner", *New York Times*, Oct. 31, 1897
- ²⁸ Wingate, *History of the 22nd New York*, p. 196

Correction: After I wrote the article for The Bugle, I found several pieces of evidence that contradict my statement in the article printed that Col. M.J. Ferguson was in command for the Confederates. Rather, as I later found and have printed in my book, "The Battle of Sporting Hill: A History and Guide", it was Lt. Col. V.A. Witcher. - Cooper H. Wingert

CWT Launches New Preservation Campaign

To mark the sesquicentennial anniversary of the American Civil War and create a lasting legacy of that commemoration, the Civil War Trust announced an ambitious national campaign that will permanently protect 20,000 acres of battlefield land over the next five years. The Trust, which has already protected more than 30,000 acres in 20 states, recognizes that the war's 150th anniversary offers an unprecedented opportunity to encourage public support for a large-scale preservation initiative.

Campaign 150: Our Time, Our Legacy kicked off on June 30, with an event held at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, a key landmark of the Civil War's bloodiest battle, which occurred 148 years ago.

The project was announced by Civil War Trust chairman Henry Simpson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Battle Cry of Freedom* James McPherson, and the organization's newest Trustee, country music superstar Trace Adkins.

For more information about the new campaign, visit www.CivilWar.org.

Camp Curtin Descendant Brigade

Membership in the Camp Curtin Descendant Brigade is open to men, women and children (12 years of age or older) who are direct or collateral descendants of a soldier who passed through Camp Curtin from April 18, 1861 to November 11, 1865. Descendants of civilians who worked or volunteered at Camp Curtin are also eligible.

The application fee is \$25.00. Accepted members will receive a membership medal (above), membership certificate, and a one year membership in the Society. Subsequent dues will be \$15.00 per year.

Numerous Pennsylvania units passed through Camp Curtin as well as troops from Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, and the U.S. Regular Army. The Ladies Union Relief Association of Harrisburg is one of the civilian organizations that worked at Camp Curtin.

For more information and an application form, visit our website at www.CampCurtin.org or telephone 717-732-5330.

Pennsylvania Civil War Road Show

The "Road Show" is a 55-foot trailer with exhibits about the role of Pennsylvania in the Civil War that will tour the state's 67 counties during the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Many of the sites and stories contained in the exhibit were part of the Pennsylvania Civil War Trails Project. Our past president, Larry Keener-Farley, served as a historical consultant for the Trails Project. For more information about Pennsylvania's commemoration of the Civil War, visit www.pacivilwar150.com. September showings include:

September 2-4 Crawford County

Hosted by the Crawford County Civil War Round Table
Crawford County Fairgrounds, Meadville, Pa.

September 9-11 Clarion County

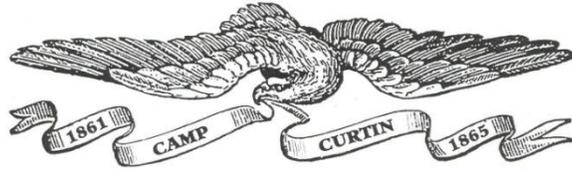
Hosted by the Clarion County Historical Society
Sutton-Ditz Museum & Memorial Park, Clarion, Pa.

September 17-19 Lancaster County

Hosted by the Ephrata Public Library in partnership with the Pa. Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Historical Society of the Cocalico Valley
Ephrata Public Library, Ephrata, Pa.

September 24-October 1 Columbia County

Hosted by the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau and the Bloomsburg Fair Association
Bloomsburg Fairgrounds, Bloomsburg, Pa.



*History comes alive at the
Camp Curtin Historical Society's*
Harrisburg Cemetery Tours
Sunday, September 11



All tours will leave from the Caretaker's House and be conducted by local historians.

12:30PM - James Schmick - Civil War History Tour

1:00PM - Bruce Horner - Harrisburg History Tour

1:15 - George Nagle - Anti-Slavery History Tour

2:30PM - Bruce Horner - Harrisburg History Tour

Visit the graves and hear the stories of numerous people who influenced local, state and national events. Notables buried in the cemetery include Simon Cameron, Lincoln's first Secretary of War, General Joseph Knipe, the man who named Camp Curtin, General and later Governor John Geary, and Mary Todd Lincoln's great grandfather. The tours will last about 90 minutes. Be prepared to walk over somewhat rough terrain.

**Display of Civil War artifacts and presentations by living historians,
including the odd Victorian custom of picnicking at a grave.**

**Capital Area Genealogical Society will provide assistance
and online resources for researching ancestors.**

Adults - \$5.00 (CCHS Members - \$4.00) All children under 16 - \$1.00

**The Harrisburg Cemetery is at the eastern end of the State Street Bridge.
For information telephone 717-732-5115 or email genjenkins@aol.com.**