

# The Bugle



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

Fall 2008  
Volume 18, Number 3

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*New Museum and Visitor Center  
Gettysburg National Military Park*

*"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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## Monument Clean-Up

The Camp Curtin Historical Society will hold its fall clean-up of the 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry Monument site at Gettysburg on Sunday, October 26. Volunteers are needed to pick-up trash that has accumulated during the summer tourist season. Please gather at the Peace Light Memorial at 1:00PM. Bring trash bags and gloves are suggested. The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table will also be cleaning-up around their nearby monument. Afterwards, the two groups will have a talk on the battle. For more information, contact Jack Thomas at 717-766-1899.

## Educational Outreach

Need a speaker? Presentations are available for schools and organizations on a variety of Civil War topics, often include displays of artifacts. Email [campcurtin1861@aol.com](mailto:campcurtin1861@aol.com) or telephone 717-732-5330 for a copy of our educational outreach brochure.

## Pemberton in Harrisburg

In the last issue of The Bugle, an article examined "Pennsylvania's Generals in Gray," men from the Keystone State that "went South" and joined the Confederate Army. John Pemberton, originally from Philadelphia, ultimately became a Lieutenant General and is most known for surrendering Vicksburg to Grant on July 4, 1863.

Pemberton also has a connection to Harrisburg. In the spring of 1861, he commanded a battery of the 4th U.S. Artillery, serving in the western plains. With the firing on Fort Sumter, Pemberton led his men back east and passed through Harrisburg on April 17 on the way to Fort McHenry in Baltimore. Pemberton resigned his commission a few days later and offered his services to the Confederacy.

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**Cover:** *The Gettysburg National Military Park's new Museum & Visitor Center was partially opened in the spring but its official grand opening and the unveiling of the Cyclorama was marked by a series of special events from September 25 to 28.*

## Camp Curtin Historical Society and Civil War Round Table

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# Civil War Days Bigger and Better Than Ever

The Camp Curtin Historical Society's annual Civil War Days were moved from Fort Couch to nearby Negley Park this year and the move proved highly successful. The change of location gave us more space for activities, a pleasant shaded area for the reenactors, and more parking for the public. Negley Park was part of Fort Washington in 1863. The change in location, coupled with some excellent public relations in the local media, more than doubled our visitation, with over 600 people visiting on June 21 and 22.



Cooper's Battery (*above*) returned to present their informative program on Civil War artillery. Visitors toured the camp and talked to the cannon crew and civilians to learn about life during the Civil War.

During the day, the big picnic pavilion was filled with Civil War artifacts, including weapons, newspapers, photographs, and civilian items. Interestingly, the picnic tables used to display the framed newspapers allowed visitors to sit down and actually read the news accounts of what happened in the Harrisburg area in the summer of 1863. Among the photographs were several stereoviews and many families took the opportunity to see the 19th century in three dimensions (*above*).



On Saturday evening, the Victorian Dance Ensemble (*above*) presented a Civil War dance. About sixty people attended and learned to have fun 1860's style. The Ensemble members had no trouble at all enticing folks of all ages out onto the dance floor and teaching them the formation dances of the era. As the sun set and the dance concluded, there were many disappointed sighs from those who wanted to continue dancing.

After the dance, about 150 people gathered for the night firing of the cannon – the largest attendance ever for this spectacular sight.

On Sunday afternoon, Jim Schmick (*below*) gave a lecture on the Harrisburg area in the Civil War. By the end of the weekend, we had exceeded all expectations in terms of attendance and sales. Thanks to everyone who helped to run the event and to everyone who attended.



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.

# Gettysburg's New Museum Brings

The new Gettysburg Museum & Visitor Center, nestled between the Taneytown Road and the Baltimore Pike, is hidden from view from most points on the battlefield. The huge new building is designed to handle the approximately two million people that tour the battlefield each year. Its large lobbies, bus drop off area, expanded bookstore, and café are a great improvement over the old visitor center.

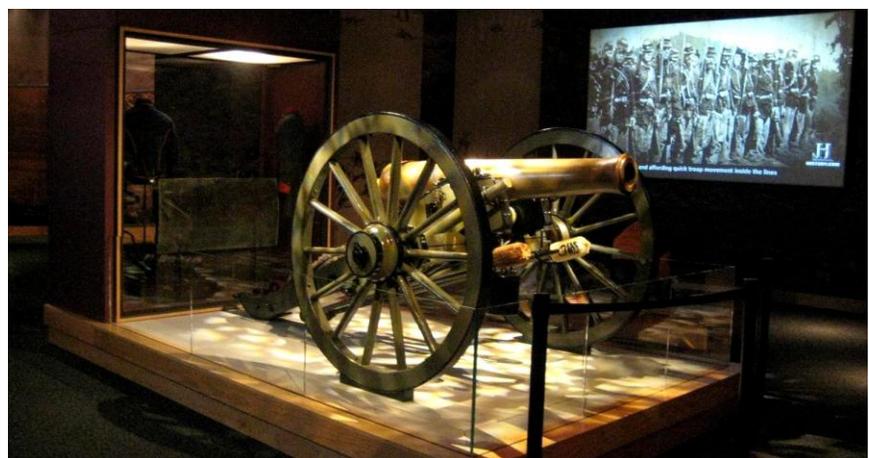
Unlike the old facility that had row on row of weapons in display cases, the new museum tells the story of the three days at Gettysburg and, perhaps more importantly, puts it into the context of the entire Civil War and American history.

The museum galleries feature much more information about the battle and the war. Exhibit captions, video presentations and interactive computer programs provide a wealth of information. Just outside the galleries is a research center with computer terminals that also have the gallery computer programs, but with more detail, and the capability of doing basic research about the Civil War.

In addition to covering the three days of the battle, the galleries also look at the invasion of Pennsylvania and the impact of the battle on the civilian population and the withdrawal of the armies.

**Middle:** Part of the exhibit on the prelude to Gettysburg includes the Leslie's drawing of the citizens of Harrisburg building Fort Washington.

**Bottom:** A fully equipped Napoleon gun is displayed in the second day gallery, while one of the many videos plays in the background.



# The Entire Civil War Into Focus



Several videos in the galleries bring history to life, using period photographs, artwork and quotes from soldiers and civilians. Previously neglected topics are examined, such as the causes of the war, the course of the war before and after the Battle of Gettysburg, and the ultimate outcome of the conflict that still resonate with us today.

Perhaps the most impressive part of the museum is the restored Cyclorama. The colors of the cleaned painting are now bright and vivid, the way they were when Paul Philippoteaux first painted the massive work. A missing section has been recreated and a foreground diorama has been added that enhances the optical illusion of depth as battle debris, roads, growing wheat and fences blend into the painting.



Some reviewers, mostly Civil War specialists, have criticized the museum for not just concentrating on the three days of the battle and displaying more artifacts. This view overlooks the basic mission of the museum to educate the general public that has very little knowledge of the Civil War. The new museum does an excellent job presenting Civil War history.



The Gettysburg Foundation and the National Park Service are to be congratulated on a museum that fairly presents the entire Civil War. No other museum, book, television show, movie or lecturer is likely to have a bigger impact on the public consciousness, which will ultimately inspire historic preservation.

**Top:** The flag of the 150th Pennsylvania Infantry dominates the first day gallery. **Middle:** Rare artifacts illustrate the Pickett's Charge gallery. **Bottom:** The museum lobby features two excellent videos on the weapons and tactics of the infantry and artillery.

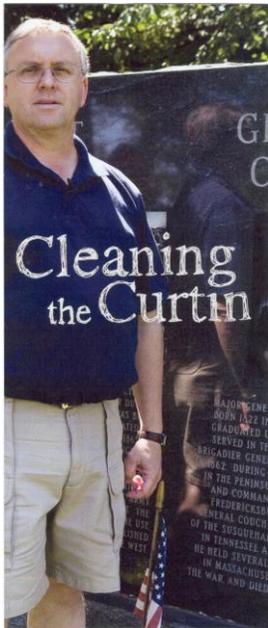
# More views of the new Gettysburg Museum



**Top Left:** A wall of faces of Union and Confederate soldiers who fought at Gettysburg can be researched in the computer room to discover what happened to each man. **Top Right:** Outside the museum galleries are several display cases with artifacts, including weapons, artillery equipment, insignia and musical instruments. **Middle Left:** The visitor center book store has been greatly expanded and now carries an extensive selection of books, video, and souvenirs. **Middle Right:** The refreshment saloon can provide a quick snack for those who spend all day at the museum. If a visitor read all of the exhibit captions and watched all of the videos, they could easily spend several hours in the museum. **Lower Left:** The temporary exhibit gallery currently displays Civil War letters. Note the battle-damaged musket. **Lower Right:** The research center allows visitors to learn more about what they saw and heard in the galleries and to research various aspects of the Civil War.

# Spreading the Word About Local History

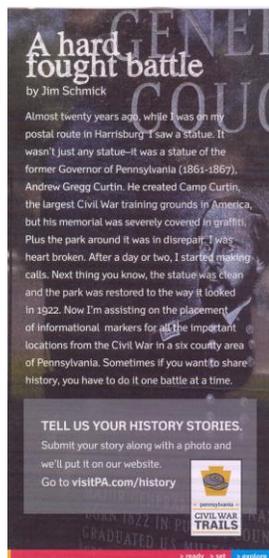
As several thousand Pennsylvanians opened their driver's license renewals, they were greeted by the smiling face of Camp Curtin Founding President Jim Schmick. The full color insert was part of the Civil War Trails Project and told the story of Jim's involvement in "Cleaning the Curtin" monument:



*Almost twenty years ago, while I was on my postal route in Harrisburg, I saw a statue. It wasn't just any statue – it was a statue of the former Governor of Pennsylvania (1861-1867), Andrew Gregg Curtin. He created Camp Curtin, the largest Civil War training grounds in America, but his memorial was severely covered in graffiti. Plus, the park around it was in disrepair. I was heart broken. After a day or two, I started making calls. Next thing you know, the*

*statue was clean and the park restored to the way it looked in 1922. Now I'm assisting on the placement of informational markers for all of important locations for the Civil War in the six county area of Pennsylvania. Sometimes if you want to share history you have to do it one battle at a time.*

Somewhat oddly, Jim was photographed in front of the Fort Couch Monument erected by the Society rather than the Curtin statue. For more information on the Civil War Trails project, see the website at [www.visitPA.com/history](http://www.visitPA.com/history).



In late June, Rob Dixon from ABC Channel 27 contacted Larry Keener-Farley, wanting information on what went on in the local area during the Gettysburg Campaign. Rob had some idea of the Confederates coming into the Harrisburg area but was not sure exactly how close they came to Pennsylvania's Capital. Larry spent an afternoon with Rob and a cameraman, taking them to the Rupp House, Peace Church, Sporting Hill, Oyster Point, Fort Couch and Fort Washington, and explaining the area's Civil War history. Larry also provided numerous period photographs and newspapers that were used to illustrate (above) the story. Rob especially liked the New York papers reporting the surrender of Mechanicsburg. The story ran for about three minutes on several newscasts.

## *Civil War Harrisburg Booklet Available*

By popular demand, *Civil War Harrisburg: Capital Area Sites, Incidents and Personalities*, edited by Larry Keener-Farley and Jim Schmick, has been reprinted in time for Christmas giving. To order your copy, send a check for \$10.00 made payable to Camp Curtin Historical Society, to CCHS, Post Office Box 5601, Harrisburg, PA 17110.



## **The Camp Curtin Historical Society**

*proudly presents*  
**Dick Simpson**  
*speaking on the*

### ***“The 2nd Vermont Brigade: Gettysburg Heroes”***

Dick Simpson is a Camp Curtin Historical Society member and the great-grandson of Aaron Wiley, who served in the 15th Vermont Infantry Regiment in the Brigade. Dick will tell the story of the Vermont Brigade that spent the first part of its enlistment in the defenses of Washington and was best known for having its commanding general captured in his bed by John Mosby. The Brigade was added to the Army of the Potomac as the Confederates marched toward Pennsylvania and its first real battle would be Gettysburg. By chance, the 2nd Vermont Brigade was placed just south of the copse of trees and faced Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863. As the Confederates neared the stone wall, the Vermont Brigade performed a textbook maneuver by wheeling out and firing into the flank of the enemy, becoming one of the main factors in stopping the Confederate advance and winning the Battle of Gettysburg.

**Join us for the slide-illustrated talk at  
2:00PM, Sunday, November 9, 2008  
at the Camp Curtin Memorial-Mitchell United Methodist Church  
2221 North Sixth Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania**

*This program is free and open to the public so bring a friend.  
Refreshments and social hour will follow the presentation.*

**For directions or information, telephone 717-732-5330  
(Email [campcurtin1861@aol.com](mailto:campcurtin1861@aol.com))**