

SWAMP ANGEL II

NEWS



VOL 30, NO.4

BUCKS COUNTY CIVIL WAR MUSEUM AND ROUND TABLE

JAN. FEB. MARCH 2022

NEWS AND NOTES

Happy New Year to all Round Table members and friends. We hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and we are looking forward to a better year in 2022. Just a note, we had two successful programs in the fall to close out the season. In late October, we had the Haunted History Tour. The tour began at the Library/Museum with stops at the James Lorah Home and then the Doylestown Cemetery. It was a wonderful evening and a crowd of over sixty people had a fun time. The first Sunday in December was the Annual Holiday Luncheon. Food was delicious and special awards were given to Dick Neddenriep and George Hoffman. Special thanks to Allie Brand for organizing the luncheon and decorating the Library/Museum for the holiday season.

Here is a list of some of our winter season events

Tuesday, January 4th – “Miss Clara Barton – The Life & Legacy of an American Icon.” Portrayed by Ms. Carolyn Ivanotti.

Tuesday, February 1st – “Lt. Col. Arthur Fremantle and Her Majesty’s Coldstream Guards.” This discussion will be led by Mr. Eric Lindblade.

**** **Special Note** **** **Our first two meetings for 2022 will be Zoom Meetings.** There was some concern by members about coming out on cold winter nights for meetings. To be on the safe side, we have decided to start the new year with Zoom Meetings. A note will be e-mailed to all members as to how to join in for these interesting discussions.

A book discussion and review is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 1st** and in April we plan to be back in the newly renovated Borough Hall for our monthly meetings. As always, the meetings will be scheduled for the **first Tuesday of the month, beginning at 7pm.**

A special note to a long time member of the Round Table, Mr. Gerry Mayers. Gerry and James Lamason just completed a book about the Civil War. *Into the Vortex of Fire* is a work of historical fiction that follows the exploits of the 11th New Jersey Volunteer Regiment and their actions at the Battle of Gettysburg. Books are available for purchase at the Library/ Museum, the Doylestown Bookstore as well as Amazon.

We continue to have a steady flow of visitors at the Library/Museum on Saturdays. We are in need of additional docents to help and volunteer. If you are able to help out once a month it would be of great value to the round table. Please consider and let Jim Donovan or Mike Campbell know of your interest. You are helping the organization! Volunteer—a good way to start the new year.

A BIG THANK YOU to our sponsors -- C&N Banking in Doylestown, Milham Insurance of Doylestown and W.E. Boger & Associates CPA of Doylestown. We appreciate their help and support throughout the year.

Message from the President

Hello my fellow round table members.

Hope you all had a Happy and Safe Holiday season.

I just want to say it was great seeing our members at the annual Holiday Luncheon in the Museum. Good food and conversation was enjoyed by all.

On October 30th in conjunction with the James-Lorah House we hosted a Halloween tour of the house and the Doylestown Cemetery. I would like to thank Allie Brand and Mike Campbell for their work in making this event happen. I would also like to thank Jaye Drukas for helping with the crowd, Bill Hamill for the cemetery tours, James Grimes for handling the refreshments and Marilyn Becker for attending to the Museum. This joint venture will help expose the round table to the community. We are looking to work with other historical societies to get us more exposure.

In order to keep our members safe and warm during the winter months we have decided to hold our monthly meetings via zoom. The meeting invitations will be sent out prior to the meetings.

The board is planning several projects in the coming year. One of them is to improve the court yard so we can host events and bring in more tourism to the Museum and community. With that said we are looking for help from our membership. If anyone knows someone who can grind tree stumps at a reasonable price please let us know. Also, if anyone has experience with grant writing please reach out to Allie or myself

Be safe and be well.

Jim Donovan



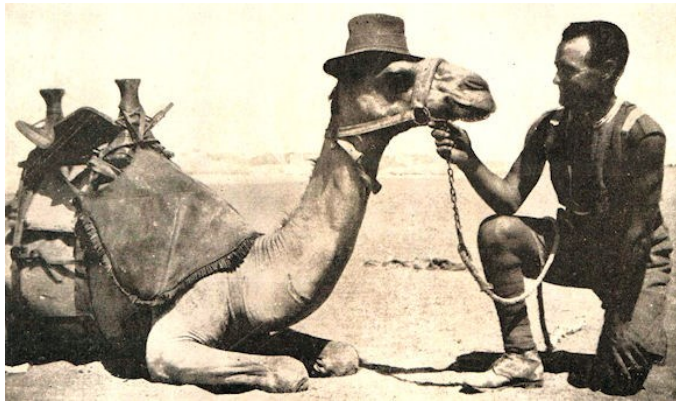
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The Camel Corps

By Marilyn Becker



At times, the west was regarded as a desert area, so it doesn't seem unusual that this kind of area would be successful for camels instead of the usual mules and horses. Thus the proposed experiment to see how the camels could possibly be a successful contribution to the west, due to their special characteristics.

Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War during the 1850's was in favor of the concept. Davis thought that because they needed little water and could exist with less vegetation, that they would do well in the far west, so he set aside monies for the start of the United States Camel Corps. They also could carry heavier loads and had better endurance than horses and mules. The first shipment arrived in Indianola, Texas, on April 29, 1856, the second shipment arrived in 1857 and they were herded to Camp Verde, an army post near San Antonio. The only drawback to the use of the camels was their bad temperament and smells. Also, the horses and mules feared the camels and would stampede when around the camels.

In 1855, Major Wayne left New York City to procure camels. Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Malta and Tunisia were stops in which they secured 33 camels. They also bought saddles and covers. They hired camel drivers also and proceeded back to Texas. Lt. David Dixon Porter sailed again to gain more camels. They returned with 41 camels. In 1857, the camels were used in experiments in a wagon road connecting Fort Defiance, New Mexico Territory, to the Colorado River. Twenty-five camels were part of the trip. Other experiments were tried with the camels, notably how they handled the lack of water. They of course outdid the mules and horses.

An African Dromedary camel, that had been hurt in shipment was bought by a Mississippi planter and named Douglas and was placed in service. A lieutenant named William Hargrave of Company B gave Douglas to Colonel William H. Moore of the 43 Mississippi in 1862. Douglas carried instruments and knapsack for the band. He served with General Sterling Price in the Luka campaign and went with the regiment to Vicksburg where he was killed by a sharpshooter. Old Douglas has a marker at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Vicksburg in an area which is

dedicated to the 43 Mississippi Infantry.

The experiment of using camels as pack animals was not adopted by the army although the camels did prove successful in handling their assigned job well. The Civil War happened and caused a break in the experiment and the camels ended up being sold at auction after existing as the Camel Corps for the years 1856-1866. At the beginning of the experiment, thirty thousand dollars had been set aside for this experiment.

Various films and television shows feature episodes of the camel experiment-Southwest Passage, Maverick, Have Gun Will Travel and Death Valley Days.

The 43rd Mississippi Infantry Regiment was a voluntary Confederate organization. This regiment was active from August 1862 to April 1865. The 43rd was engaged in about 14 battles, among them 2nd Corinth, Vicksburg, Kennesaw Mountain, Chickamauga, and Atlanta. It's first battle was Luka. The 43rd Mississippi under General Joe Johnston took part in the surrender of the Army of Tennessee on April 26, 1865. Colonel William Hudson Moore, Colonel Richard Harrison, Lt. Colonel Columbus Sykes and Lt. Colonel James O. Banks served as commanders of the regiment. Both Colonel William Harrison Moore and Lt. Colonel W. Leigh were killed at 2nd Corinth.

Sources: The Camel Regiment A History of the Bloody 43rd Mississippi



Women's History Month



In March, the Bucks County Civil War Museum and Roundtable is celebrating Women's History Month at the Museum on Broad Street. Women who were outstanding in their contributions to the Civil

War effort are featured at the *Women in the Civil War* display at the museum.

Please visit and enjoy testing your knowledge about their contributions. In addition, there will be a special quilt on display that month also. We look forward to seeing you at the museum and think you will enjoy the display.

"I don't know how long it has been since my ear has been free from the roll of a drum. It is the music I sleep by and I love it." -Clara Barton

“Principles Breathe the Truest Democracy” Doylestown Newspapers on the Eve of War

By Mike Campbell



December of 1859 was frightfully cold. “The Schuylkill River frozen over for a hundred miles,” read one paper, permitting hockey to break out on the Wissahickon. In Doylestown, the children slid across the ice ponds cut into the face of Chapman Hill, while in a quiet town far away, the local Ladies Aid Society buttoned up against the chill, and prepared for their annual Christmas Festival, to be held this year at Sheads & Buehler’s Warehouse, Gettysburg. All along the avenues downtown, across the state, children filled the toy shops and candy stores. Handmade wooden and paper mache toys from Germany, flipped onto U.S. markets by wholesalers in Nuremberg, had become a popular gift of late, while the hot item in every house that year was a Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machine, the first chain-stitch, single-thread model to hit the shelves. In Doylestown the streets rang with prosperity. The Bucks County Bank will yield a 4% dividend for the year, and Mahlon Yardley, a Republican, will be elected to the PA State Senate, a triumph for the cause of free labor in the swing district. Hard at work in their Doylestown offices, both W.W.H. Davis, editor of the Doylestown Democrat, and Enos Prizer, editor of The Intelligencer, knew that away from the “chief thoroughfares, much thronged in the afternoon,” that the days of lighthearted politics-as-usual were numbered. Described as “men of energy and enterprise,” The Democrat and the Intelligencer would remain friendly, even as the political divide between them grew numberless with shadows. In the fall, widespread voter dissatisfaction over the Buchanan Administration’s Kansas Policy had cleared the way for Democratic defeat. Much to The Democrat’s chagrin, Bucks County began to lean Republican. Shortly thereafter, Samuel Ingham, a former member of Andrew Jackson’s cabinet, Davis family mentor, and “an old school

Democrat,” switched parties at The Intelligencer’s urging. Frisky on the hunt, The Intelligencer even went so far as to refer to Abraham Lincoln, in its 1860 victory editorial as the “Jackson of the Times.” Over at The Democrat, W.W.H. Davis would spend Christmas of 1859 fighting Democrats in his rear as much as Republicans in his front. In a long war with President Buchanan over political spoils - his father, ex-Congressman John Davis, a party to the Van Buren era feud - the Davis family would spend a cold Thanksgiving, politically speaking, with the Davis boys backing Henry Foster’s bid for Governor, and brother-in-law, Judge Ulysses Mercur, backing upstart Republican Andrew Curtin. As the 1860 election bore down, The Intelligencer would debut a fifty cent campaign subscription, backing Lincoln and Curtin, and The Democrat would go full force for Stephen Douglas, having been struck by the same vision regarding how to avert war as George McClellan. Apprehensions aside, Doylestown was lucky to have such talent. When the worst came to worst, the papers of Doylestown never flinched in the face of secession, and they never lost their sense of humor about their jobs either. According to The Sunbury Gazette: “The editors of Doylestown are a very clever set of fellows... A few days ago, the editors of the ‘Intelligencer’ gave an organ grinder five cents to perform in front of the ‘Democrat’ office for the amusement of Captain Davis.” We are left to wonder at Captain Davis’ response. Separated on W. Court Street by only a dwelling, there was little chance for defense in a war of pranks. Davis tells us of publishing in that era, “I tried my ‘prentice hand’ at the editorial oar... teaching at Portsmouth, VA (1842/44)... Theo Fisk was the editor of the Old Dominion, the leading Democratic newspaper of that section. He had occasion to go home and left me in charge of the editorial department... But that was only a temporary matter... I took to it in earnest at Santa Fe, NM (1853/57), where I talked to my readers in two languages and kept a Rocky Mountain wildcat in the paper as a pet.”

BCHS Papers Vol II & IV; The Intelligencer 1804-2004 (James); Public Ledger (Philadelphia); The Times (Philadelphia); Pittsburgh Daily Post



DID YOU KNOW?

So what happened with the prisoners at Cahaba Prison at the end of the Civil War? Most of them were transferred by steamboat to Vicksburg, MS. Some prisoners from Andersonville ended up in Vicksburg as well. There were about 4700 Union prisoners in Vicksburg waiting for a transport to take them back home. On April 24, 1865, 2000 soldiers boarded the Union paddle steamer Sultana. More than half of them had been at Cahaba Prison. The Sultana had faulty boilers and a legal capacity for 376 passengers. On the night of April 27, 1865, three of the four boilers exploded and the Sultana sank. Three quarters of the men aboard died. The tragic and turbulent events that marked April 1865 --- the end of the Civil War, Lincoln's assassination and the capture of John Wilkes Booth, overshadowed the sinking of the Sultana. A large number of the prisoners are buried at the Memphis National Cemetery.



Living History Scrapbook 2021

Photos courtesy of Jim Damon and Doreen Barton



READER CHALLENGE!

One of the articles in this edition of the Swamp Angel was about Cahaba Prison in Alabama. Let's see if you have heard of the Confederate prison in Salisbury, NC and some of the issues that Union prisoners had to live with.

1. The Salisbury Prison compound included one large building. What had it been before the war?

- A. Tobacco Warehouse
- B. Furniture Center
- C. Cotton Factory
- D. An Old Hotel

2. Early in its existence, Salisbury Prison was remembered for two excellent features that made life there comfortable. What were they?

- A. Barbecue Chicken and sweet tea for dinner
- B. Good water and shade
- C. Excellent medical care and haircuts once a month
- D. New socks and shoes every New Year

3. What event in August 1864 suddenly swelled the prison population of Salisbury Prison?

- A. By orders from Genl. Ulysses Grant, prison exchanges were stopped completely.
- B. The closure of several prison camps in the South
- C. Severe cases of Typhoid & Dysentery in a nearby prison caused a significant transfer of prisoners to Salisbury Prison.
- D. Rancid food and polluted water forced the closure of a nearby local prison.

4. Salisbury Prison was designed for 2500 prisoners. At what number did the prison population peak?

- A. 5000
- B. 6575
- C. 8123
- D. 10000

5. In February 1865, prisoners who could walk were marched out. Where did they go?

- A. Raleigh, NC
- B. Asheville, NC
- C. Richmond, VA
- D. Wilmington, NC

Bonus Question —

Col. Henry Henderson, commandant of Cahaba Prison attended Ohio Wesleyan. What famous person in baseball also went to Ohio Wesleyan?

- Joe Dimaggio
- Ty Cobb
- Branch Rickey

answers on page 6

Cahaba Prison --Hope and Humanity

By Bill Hamill

We have all read stories and have seen images of prisons from the Civil War. We know about the terrible conditions; a lack of food as well as medical supplies, disease and brutal conditions that were enforced. The most notorious prison was Andersonville Prison in Georgia. Deep in the state of Georgia, conditions there were extremely terrible. A stockade that opened in 1864, Andersonville was large enough to hold 10,000 prisoners. Open for just fourteen months, 45,000 Union soldiers were sent here during the war. At its peak, there would be 26,000 soldiers trying to survive in squalid conditions. 13,000 prisoners would die at Andersonville and the commandant Capt. Henry Wirz would be tried in court for war crimes and later executed.

Another prison we have read about is Libby Prison in Richmond, VA. Located on Tobacco Row in Richmond, it was a three floor building that was converted to a prison in 1861. It was a prison that primarily held Union officers. After the battle of Fair Oaks in May 1862, there were soldiers from the 104th Pennsylvania that made their way to Libby Prison. Notable among them were George Harvey and Jerome Buck, who are interred at Doylestown Cemetery. Libby Prison was described as "a three story former tobacco factory with sparsely furnished rooms that exposed prisoners to the elements."

Soldiers hated military prisons. Conditions were terrible, and in most cases, soldiers could count on dying a slow death. Confederate prison mortality rate was about 15.5%. Union prisons were at 12%. A notable exception to these horrific numbers was Cahaba Prison, located fifteen miles from Selma, Alabama. Cahaba had one of the lowest death rates of any Confederate or Union prison, mainly because of the humane treatment of commandant Col. Henry Henderson. Cahaba had a death rate of just 3%. Of the 5,000 prisoners that passed through it's gates, just 147 would die.

What was so different about Cahaba Prison? What made it so unique from other prisons during the Civil War? The story starts with Col. Henry Henderson. Born in Kentucky, and a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan, Henderson later attended Cincinnati Law School. He would become a Methodist minister. Because of his background, Henderson was aware and understood

Northerners. He assumed command of Cahaba Prison in July 1863 and pledged to run the prison with compassion as well as discipline and good order.

Cahaba prison was constructed at a partially built cotton warehouse. A size of 15,000 square feet, there were 250 timber bunks, with room for two. The stockade also had an unfinished roof that stretched 1600 square feet and exposed prisoners to the elements. There was a small outdoor cooking station as well. A twelve foot high wooden wall surrounded the prison. The official capacity of Cahaba was 500. When Henderson arrived, there were 660 prisoners with many sleeping on the dirt floors.

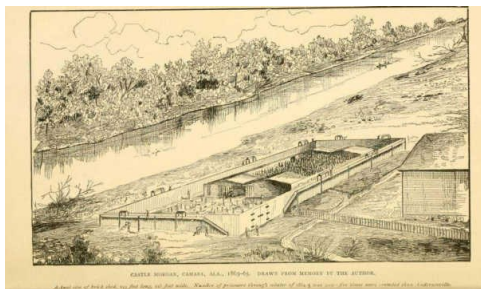
Henderson's first step was to improve sanitation. The drinking water was from an artesian well that emptied into an open gutter that flowed 200 yards through town before entering the stockade. Fortunately, Henderson had an ally at Cahaba, in R.H. Whitfield, surgeon for the prison. Whitfield said the water source was "subjected to the washings of the hands, feet, faces and heads of soldiers, citizens and negroes, buckets, tubs, spittoons, of groceries, offices, and hospital, hogs, dogs, cows and filth of all kinds from the streets and other sources." That made an impression and quartermasters were able to install pipes through town and the prisoners were blessed with clean water.

The prison hospital was a two story building, formerly a hotel that was called Bell Tavern. It served both guards and prisoners. Whitfield would treat both the same. Care was decent for Civil War standards.

In the fall of 1864 Cahaba Prison became the most overcrowded of Confederate prisons. Each man had only 7.5 square feet to call his own. In comparison those at Andersonville had 35 feet of space, but with squalid conditions. The main reason for the crowded conditions was that Union general Ulysses Grant had stopped all prisoner exchanges. By October 1864 Cahaba was holding 2151 soldiers, 600% over capacity.

In an effort to do something about the overcrowding in Cahaba, Col. Henderson bypassed the chain of command and proposed to the Union district commander Major General Washburn a special exchange for 350 men who were in poor and sickly condition. General Grant would deny the request.

Henderson persisted. Working with Washburn, they were able to make arrangements for a steamboat to sail up the Alabama River with needed supplies in December 1864. Supplies included 2000 uniforms, 4000 pairs of socks, 1500 blankets as well as medical supplies and mess kits. Lack of food was a significant issue.



Famous Quotation---

Col. Henderson, commandant of Cahaba Prison knew that boredom could kill men as effectively as disease. Henderson and his subordinates did what they could to keep the men's minds occupied. From Sergeant Melvin Grigsby of Wisconsin, prisoner at Cahaba "Every day on the arrival of mail, one of them would bring in a late paper, stand up on a box and read the news. In many other ways, such as procuring writing material and forwarding letters for us, they manifested such kind feelings for us..."

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Continued from page 5

Prisoners would barter with guards for food, exchanging their new clothing for something to eat. Henderson would report the prisoners “were left with the same scanty clothing and ragged blankets in a climate particularly severe in winter.”

Despite the best intentions of Col. Henderson, life at Cahaba prison was never easy. By the end of 1864, daily rations were down to twelve ounces of cornmeal, eight ounces of rancid beef and occasionally some bug infested peas. Rats infested the prison and became a plague. Rats burrowed through the warehouse and overran the cooking area. No prisoner escaped from lice. Illinois cavalryman Jesse Hawes said lice “crawled upon our clothing by day, crawled over our bodies, into the ears, even into the nostrils and mouths by night.” Constant outbreaks of fleas through the stockade were always an issue.

A natural disaster hit Cahaba Prison in March 1865. Heavy rain on March 1st, caused the Cahaba River north of town to overflow its banks and swept into the stockade. By nightfall, prisoners were waist deep in ice cold water. By this time, Col. Henderson was no longer in command having been replaced by Lt. Col. Sam Jones. The complete opposite of Henderson, Jones would not allow prisoners to reach higher ground outside of the stockade. Difficult, uncompromising, Jones was described by Jesse Hawes as “one whose record was a sickening blotch upon humanity.”

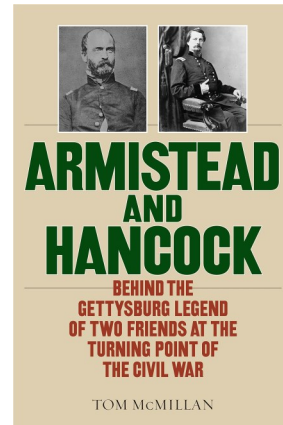
At the end of the war, prisoners were shuttled on steamboats with most prisoners taken to Vicksburg. Col. Henderson led a long and productive life. He became superintendent of public schools in Kentucky. He later returned to the ministry and served at the Jersey City Methodist Church. He passed away in Cincinnati in 1912. After the flood, the county seat was moved from Cahaba to Selma. By the turn of the century, Cahaba was a ghost town. Cahaba Prison had been demolished for its bricks.

Sources: *NY Times -- Disunion.* Peter Cozzens. Mr. Cozzens is a retired Foreign Service officer and the author and editor of seventeen books on the Civil War and the American West. Mr. Cozzens most recent book is *Tecumseh and the Prophet*, published in May 2020.

On December 17th Kitt Finch and Marilyn Becker spoke to Mrs. Chitjian's 8th grade class at OLMC. On behalf of the BCCWRT thanks to Christina Chitjian for inviting us and thanks to the students for their generous attention.



RECOMMENDED READING



A twin biography of two renowned Civil War personages, friends who found themselves on opposite sides of the first modern total war. ★★★★★

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Answers: 1.C 2.B 3.A 4.D 5.D Bonus Question C

SWAMP ANGEL II NEWS

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