Sons of Confederate Veterans
Battle of Sharpsburg Camp #1582
“The Sharpsburg Sentinel”

Volume 11, Issue 8

The Sharpsburg Camp and the SCV denounce racism, racial
supremacists, hate groups, and any group or individual that
misuses or desecrates the symbols of the Confederate States or
the United States.

“Youth’s Hour of Glory”

Commander’s Notes

I want to thank Rhea Von Brandenburg for a very fascinating talk on a
subject that is not discussed too much, “Embalming and Funeral
Practices During the Civil War” at our July meeting. If you missed
the meeting, you truly missed a very fascinating speaker.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 3rd, 2016, 7:00 P.M.,
Sharpsburg Town Hall, 2nd Floor, 106 East Main Street, Sharpsburg,
MD. Our guest speaker will be author and journalist Calvin Goddard
Zon who will be presenting a talk on his book, “Divided We Fall: The
Confederacy's Collapse from Within, A State-by-State Account”.

As you are probably aware Compatriot Bill Howell passed away on July 20, 2016. While health issues
prevented him from attending meetings he was committed to the Sons of Confederate Veterans and proud of his
Southern heritage. On July 3rd he invited many of his friends and the entire Camp to celebrate a Southern
Independence Day with a party at his house. Approximately ten Camp members and their guests attended this
event. We feasted on steam crabs, BBQ Chicken, and corn on the cob while listening to a great Southern Rock
Band. His party will be our final memory of his unique Southern style. Always a gentleman. During the party
Bill insisted that the band play “Dixie”. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

As this newsletter goes out, the SCV National Reunion in Dallas, TX has ended, so as news from that is
forwarded to the camps, we’ll be sure to get that info out to all of our members.

At our September meeting we’ll be having Mr. Dan Toomey give his presentation on “War Came by Train”.
He will be coming up from Baltimore and because of his popularity he commands a speaker fee of $100.00. If
anyone would like to make a donation to this, please kindly donate at our August meeting or send a check
payable to the “Battle of Sharpsburg Camp #1582, SCV and mail to:

Camp Commander Michael Wasiljov
213 Pangborn Blvd.
Hagerstown, MD 21740-5044

I try not to have too many speakers that require a fee, but the more popular ones who travel to give their talks
are able to get it because of their popularity.
Now on a personal note, does anyone have access to a bucket or lift truck? A month ago, I was attempting to replace the line on my 20 foot flagpole which I have in front of my house and the line snapped. Haven’t been able to fly any flags for the first time in over a decade and I just don’t feel right. If you can help, please either call or email me.

I want to thank each and every one of you for being a member of the SCV. Remember, this is your camp and I encourage all of you to participate fully.

Yours in the cause,

Michael David Wasiljov
Commander
Battle of Sharpsburg Camp #1582
Sons of Confederate Veterans
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MINUTES

The July 6, 2016 meeting of the Battle of Sharpsburg Camp #1582 was held at Sharpsburg Town Hall. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with 10 members and Friends and 8 guests in attendance. Commander Wasiljov opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag and the Salute to the Confederate flag. The invocation was given by Chaplain Toby Law.

- A special thanks to Compatriot William Howell. His Southern Celebration on July 3rd was a huge success. We had at least eight Camp members and several relatives attend this event. As promised there was plenty of good food and drink. We were entertained by a Southern Rock Band “Just Us” and “Dixie” was played on a regular basis. A first class celebration from a first class Compatriot! Thanks Captain Bill for making this a wonderful day to be Southern born. Even the weather cooperated!
- Compatriot Jim Kilby presented to the Camp our “wish list” of items. Thanks to his efforts and contributions, our Camp now has a new flag stand, laptop computer with projector and antivirus protection against any Yankee bugs. A tip of the kepi to Jim Kilby.
- A swearing in ceremony was conducted for our newest Sons of Confederate Veteran member, William “Will” Dempsey Johnson II. He was admitted based upon the service of his Confederate ancestor, Private Joseph H. Matheny of Company A, Sixth Virginia Infantry Regiment. Sadly Private Matheny died while being held as a prisoner of war at Camp Elmira, New York. It is an honor to welcome Compatriot Johnson into our Camp.
• It was announced that the Camp received an acknowledgement from the Hospice of Washington County for a monetary donation which was made in memory of Marjorie Bikle, wife of Compatriot William C. Bikle.

• The Camp has received from Headquarters the War Service Medal for Walter William “Wes” Evans. This medal and certificate reflect his service in the Army with service bars for Vietnam, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf. We hope to make this presentation in the near future.

• Collection for the Annual dues for the Friends of the Battle of Sharpsburg Camp has started. We have 6 Friends. Membership for this associate membership is $20 per year. At this time I am happy to report we have received 4 renewals.

• Annual Dues collection officially started at the meeting. Membership renewal for the National and Camp is a total of $35. Life Members will pay $5 toward the Camp dues. Please remember that the fiscal year ends July 31, 2016. The National allows for a “grace period”. Given the current collection process we will accept payments until October 5, 2016. That will be a meeting night. Any payments received after that time will require an additional late fee of $5. The National has implemented new collection procedures to eliminate errors and to improve the renewal process on both the Camp and National level. Should you have any questions regarding your dues please feel free to contact the Adjutant.

Please make your check payable to the BATTLE OF SHARPSBURG CAMP #1582 SCV. They should be mailed to:

Jan Hiett
921 Dewey Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21742

Chaplain Toby Law offered the benediction and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

SPEAKER FOR JULY 6, 2016

Our speaker for the July meeting of the Battle of Sharpsburg Camp #1582 was Funeral Director Rhea Von Brandenburg. Ms. Brandenburg presented “Embalming and Funeral Practices During the Civil War.” She not only shared her knowledge but brought along many tools of the trade. As standard practice Commander Wasiljov forwarded a photograph and description of her presentation to The Herald Mail. It appeared in the July 15th edition.

Preservation techniques for embalming date back to ancient Egypt. It was not until the Civil War that there became a need to preserve the dead. Prior to the war most families buried the dead themselves within a day or two of death. Thus, there was no need for an undertaker’s service other than for the
purchase of a coffin. For the most part, the family of the deceased dressed the body and placed it into a coffin. The body would be placed in the “parlor” for visitation generating the term “funeral parlor.” Ironically, most undertakers had other professions. With the wooden coffin the undertaker would sell his wares which he made as a cabinetmaker or furniture-maker. As metal coffins were introduced similar metal working tradesmen became undertakers. Undertakers also had to perform various tasks such as removing, transporting and preparing the dead for funerals. Prior to the war embalming was performed mainly to preserve the body for the purpose of medical studies. Preserving cadavers for medical schools was an important business since doctors needed cadavers for training purposes at medical colleges. Experimentation with various preservatives attributed to many medical students deaths. Contact with the toxic embalming solutions during dissection caused these deaths. There were two methods of preserving a body during this time that did not involve embalming. The first method included ice being placed in a coffin that housed an ice chamber and a drainage system. The second method was encasing the body in an air-tight container. Both of these methods could delay composition for an extended period of time. In the late 1850’s various chemicals were added to the deceased to what we now know were microorganisms responsible for decomposition. That process was called arterial embalming. This became the standard method of embalming. Embalming became necessary as it was not permissible to transport a corpse unless it was properly embalmed. Interesting enough embalming was used on the first causality of the war despite the rarity of its use! On May 24, 1861 Col. Elmer Ellsworth went to remove a Confederate flag flying from a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia. For his trouble a secessionist shot and killed him. His body was removed to the Washington Navy Yard. Dr. Thomas Holmes visited President Lincoln and offered to embalm Ellsworth for free. Washington papers covered the funeral at the White House and noted the natural appearance of the body. Based upon this publicity, Dr. Holmes’s reputation as a successful embalmer and undertaker was established. Dr. Holmes, with his techniques, became known as “the father of modern embalming.” Holmes as a New York City coroner in the late 1850’s had the opportunity to pursue his own investigations and experiments into embalming fluids. Upon gaining fame Dr. Holmes began selling his embalming fluids for $3 per gallon. Some of his ingredients were secret. Like other embalmers of the time he relied on creosote and mercury to help preserve the dead. With so many soldiers dying far from home there became a need to preserve the dead so that they could be brought back home to be buried. With money to be made in this new field many of the new embalmers were of questionable character, as were the preservation products they sold. Surgeons and pharmacists, aware of the profits made from embalming traded in their medical instruments. Therefore, it became the task of the men with medical training to become the embalmers, which as noted was performed by chemical injection. Neither side was prepared for the causalities of this war. Initially, there were no system for the recovery of a body. The silent dead were buried by soldiers or civilians in the area as quickly as possible. If time permitted their burial places were marked with crude wooden headboards. Often it was impossible to identify the remains which has resulted in many unmarked graves in both Union and Confederate cemeteries. Draining of the blood from the deceased was not part of the process at that time. But on the other hand with the nature of war-time injuries “father time” and gravity took care of the draining process. With such a large market in death, many undertakers and embalmers followed the armies awaiting for another chance to set up shop. Pre-paid mortician services were also offered to those soldiers that could afford that luxury. Thanks to Rhea Von Brandenburg of the Rest Haven Cemetery for her information talk on a much ignored subject.
ADJUTANT COMMENTS

National has instituted new procedures for the collection and disbursement of dues. These new measures should make the job of Treasurer and Adjutant easier. That will translate into a smoother collection process on the National level. Your prompt payment will insure your continued membership in the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Our Camp membership is now 36 members and 6 Friends. Retention of current members continues to be a priority. While it is important to recruit new members it is also important that we keep our current members. On the national level we have over 25,000 members in 850 Camps. Please make your payment a symbol of your devotion to the Cause! If there are any questions or concerns about the Camp please feel free to contact Commander Wasiljov.

In a recent SCV Telegraph Adjutant were instructed on the “official” method of collection for the annual dues. As National noted “we found our business model was outdated and not capable of handling the overwhelming stress placed upon it.” Considering the turmoil of last year the National staff should be commended for their efforts. Just from our Camp we had double the number of new members and a large number of reinstatements. So many reinstatements that there actually was very little policy and procedure to handle that issue. One surprising sentence in this Telegraph I found discouraging. National reported that “a lot of our mail was “lost” in the United States Postal Service system.” Which bring me to my current observation. Has anyone noticed that the “protective wrap” of our Confederate Veteran magazine has been modified. Until recent issues the wrap stated Confederate Veteran. It also feature the SCV logo on the front cover. Now the front wrap simply states Official Magazine of the SCV. Personal opinion, this change was implemented because members were not receiving their Confederate Veteran magazine. Could it be that the postal service hires individuals that feel they have the right to “regulate” which magazines their postal customers receive? Normally, that would be hard to image but in today’s world with the cultural cleansing and political correctness I would suggest that Confederate Magazines Matter. Just my opinion.

While doing research for this edition I ran across this description of Washington D.C. that attempts to describe that city during the War for Southern Independence. Upon further reading it is also applicable to the current situation in our capital city. Here is the description of the city. “Washington was one of the worst pestholes. Constitution Avenue was an open sewer filled with dead animals. The Potomac River was already so polluted that President Lincoln became ill from eating its fish. Garbage was eaten by pigs rooting openly in the streets. Hospitals had overflowing bedpans in the wares, and there were piles of trash on the ground.” By changing a few words this description could accurately describe the current state of our government and those that lead us.

By this time most of you are aware that Compatriot Bill Howell passed on July 20, 2016. Bill Howell and I were inducted into the Sons of Confederate Veterans on the same evening. As usual Commander Wasiljov forward our picture to The Hearld Mail for publication. I still have the copy of that picture above my desk. Bill’s Confederate ancestor was Pvt. Joseph Howell, Co. A, 24th Virginia Infantry. As Commander noted, Bill was not able to attend meetings because of health issues. He was able to attend a meeting several years ago to receive his War Service Medal for his service in the United States Army during the Vietnam Era but was unable to stay but a few minutes because of his pain. Just because he did
not attend meetings it did not mean that he was not an active Camp member. The truth is that Bill would call me on a regular basis to discuss the most recent newsletter or a current Confederate issue. Plus, he made several suggestions regarding topics for the newsletter. Displayed at a prominent location in his home was his War Service Medal and a certificate from the National Sons of Confederate Veterans for a contribution to one of their many Causes. Prior to his Southern Independence Day party he would call me several times per week inquiring about attendance and asking for suggestions. Those that attended his party recognized that Bill spared no expense in this celebration. After the party he called to tell me “how much he appreciated Camp members attending his party!” My last ing memory of him was his commanding order for the band to play “Dixie” just one more time. Somehow my little world will miss Bill Howell. Deo Vindice!!

MOUNT VERNON DURING THE WAR

In my quest for something different to write about it occurred to me on a trip to Shepherdstown…I wondered what happen to Mount Vernon during the war? After all it was close enough to the United States Capital to be occupied by the Union army. Then again, George Washington was a Virginian and famous enough to be placed on the Great Seal of the Confederacy. Certainly, the South would not dismiss the importance of occupying his home. Again, as any realtor will tell you, it is location, location, location! So what happened at Mount Vernon and how was the home of our first president, George Washington, on the banks of the Potomac able to survive the war?

The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association gained possession of this home and property on February 22, 1860. The clouds of war were already gathering and sectionalism threatened the union. Fifty years after the death of George Washington’s Mount Vernon was in a state of complete disrepair. Ann Pamela Cunningham from South Carolina and her secretary, Sarah Tracy of New York made it their mission to save the historic home. Ann Cunningham’s mother wrote at that time, “I was painfully distressed at the ruin and desolation of the home of Washington and the thought passed through my mind: Why was it that the women of his country did not try to keep it in repair, if the men could not do it?” “It does seem such a blot on our country!” Five years after founding the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association, they raised $18,000 for a down payment in 1858. The ladies wrote letters to newspapers to bring in money. In 1853, the initial appeal was made to the “mothers and daughters of the South”. Latter in 1858 they even appealed to the “Children of the Public Schools”. Here is what was written about Mount Vernon. “Now this dear old house and farm of our Washington is running to rack and ruin; the paths are being run over with weeds; the house, his home is crumbling to pieces; the tomb is a disgrace”.

In April 1861 war erupted. Cunningham from South Carolina was prevented from returning to Mount Vernon for six years. Tracy remained with the ladies association and continued with her duties at Washington’s home. Simply providing enough food for the full-time help was impossible. She raised
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cabbages on the estate, drove a wagonload to market in the nation’s capital and Alexandria. She returned with much needed meat, salt and pepper. These trips continued with great danger throughout the war. Eventually, Tracy had no funds left to pay the workmen and all restoration of the house was abandoned. At the start of the war, the boat used to bring visitors to Mount Vernon was seized by the Union army and barricades throughout the region limited travel to the home. With limited access for the visitors, the regular income essentially ceased. Tracy kept her promise to Cunningham and managed to keep Mount Vernon a “national spot” free from armed conflict. She demanded an audience with General Winfield Scott. He agreed to forbid Union soldiers from entering the Mount Vernon grounds under arms. Tracy also received the same pledge regarding Confederate troops from the Virginia governor. Still Tracy was forced on a regular basis to meet with both armies to remind them of the agreements. This was especially true when officers were replaced with men new to the region. Soldiers of both armies were welcome to pay their respects to the father of our country so long as their weapons were left behind and their uniforms were removed or hidden from view. Flags were also forbidden on the property. Some soldiers even paid the admission fee of twenty-five cents. Of course, the soldiers often plead poverty. In many cases that was the truth! In 1864 the boat was reinstated for a time earning over three hundred dollars from the visitors. Some of this money gained from the admission fee and other monies were earned with the sales of potatoes, peaches, pears, tomatoes, cabbages, hay, photographs of Mount Vernon and handmade bricks. I am sure the later were real popular with the infantrymen. Nothing like carrying a pack with a brick to make your life enjoyable! At the end of the war the house and property were unscathed except for a few rattled windows during the Battles at Manassas. Cunningham traveled in November 1866 to meet with Tracy and her Vice Regents and staff for the first time in six years. The Ladies’ Association passed a resolution reflecting a new post-war optimism and expressing their appreciation to Tracy for her arduous duties under difficult circumstances. By 1866 thanks to a nationwide fundraiser the entire Mount Vernon debt of $200,000 was paid off. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association are the gold standard for preserving presidential landmarks.

HONORING OUR HEROES
Our Camp is blessed with many unique individuals. That is what makes Southern men so interesting. Don Goodwin is an example of what belonging to the Sons of Confederate Veterans should mean. For many years he has taken his knowledge of the war and used it to honor Southern soldiers. Don will be the first to admit that he has taken the old-fashion route when it comes to research. No computer or e-mails for him! Working as a volunteer at the Monocacy Battlefield he has access to a great number of reference books and individuals that can help him with the modern methods of research. If there are Confederates buried in our region I will bet Don has been to their grave sites and has pictures and a written record of his visit. He has helped me in locating the graves of a number of my Confederate relatives and has been able to document their military records. I can’t thank him enough for his efforts. While he loves to explore new locations and look for lost Confederates, he also knows where all the dead Confederates are buried at many of the cemeteries. I spent several days with him flagging Confederate graves leading up to Decoration Day at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Frederick this past spring. Map in hand we went, Lewis and
Clark style, to each location on his chart to plant our flags. Don has also produced a list of unmarked Confederate graves at Mt. Olivet which are in need of grave markers. These sites have been forward to the Division for consideration.

So what does Compatriot Goodwin do on his vacation? This year’s visit occurred during June and resulted in numerous visits to cemeteries where Southern soldiers are interred. His itinerary included visits to cemeteries in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. Traveling with him were two Southern Crosses of Honor. The crosses were for his Great-grandfather O.P. Goodwin and his great-uncle Hezekiah Hotchkiss Goodwin. Both of these men survived the war after fighting with the 45th Arkansas Cavalry and were buried at the Rehoboth Baptist Cemetery in Moorefield, Arkansas. These Confederates now have a suitable markers for their service thanks to Don. During this tour he took the time to visit six of Mosby’s men, a favorite past-time of his. Plus, Don has visited and taken pictures of the final resting place of Benjamin Franklin Gordon, who was Compatriot Phil Reed’s ancestor’s commanding officer. Thankfully, Don reports that the conditions of the local cemeteries, both church owned and private, where our ancestors are buried are generally well-maintained. Some individual graves have Southern Crosses, some do not. That means there is work to be done! One cemetery in Columbus, Tennessee proudly displays numerous markers. What a good reflection of the Southern people of that region to remember those heroes. I guess at this point my prejudice is clear. While Don’s Confederate ancestors received their hero recognition, I believe Don for his many years of dedication in locating and honoring our veterans is the true hero of this story. God bless him for his efforts during this time where it is convenient to forget our past least we offend someone. Again, Deo Vindice!!

The red field represents the Blood of Christ.
The white border represents the Protection of God.
The blue “X” represents the Christian Cross of St. Andrew,
The first Disciple of Christ Jesus and Patron Saint of Scotland.
The 13 stars represent the 13 Southern States of Secession.
Thus, the message in the Confederate Battle Flag is:

“Through the Blood of Christ, with the Protection of God, we, the thirteen states are united in our Christian fight for liberty.”
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UPCOMING EVENTS

August 3, 2016, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.            Camp Meeting Sharpsburg Town Hall 106 East Main Street, (2nd floor) Sharpsburg, Md. Speaker: Calvin Goddard Zon “Divided We Fall-The Confederacy’s Collapse from Within”.

August 27, 2016, Saturday                      St, Mary’s Episcopal Church Abington, Md. Dedication of Iron Crosses. Call 410-461-7977 for more information.

August 27, 2016, Saturday, Noon               Annual Potomac River Crossing White’s Ford. Sponsored by the Norris Camp.

September 5, 2016. Monday                    Labor Day Parade at Gaithersburg. Color Guard event 11:00 a.m. formation.

September 7, 2017, Wednesday ,7:00 p.m.     Camp Meeting Sharpsburg Town Hall. Speaker: Dan Toomy “War Came by Train”.

September 17, 2016, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.        Clean up at the Maryland Monument at Benner’s Hill, Gettysburg, Pa.

September 24, 2016, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.        Howard County Monument Ceremony Sponsored by the Major General Isaac Ridgeway Trimble Camp # 1836.

Listed above are several Sons of Confederate Veterans events. Please consider attending these event and supporting the Cause. Further information about these events can be obtained by contacting the Adjutant of the Battle of Sharpsburg Camp #1582 at the Camp meeting, telephone 301-797-1021, or e-mail: bsc1582@aol.com.