

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

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General & Mrs. Grant—CWRT

Another in the string of sultry days greeted the nearly thirty-five who came to the Wednesday evening combined-meeting of the Greenville Local History Group and the Civil War Round Table (grumble, grumble, it's been nearly three weeks of the wet or hot-humid weather) (and during this writing, another streak of hotter and still humid weather started). Our GLHG regulars included: Christine Mickelsen, Walter and Donna Ingalls, Ron Golden, Stephanie Ingalls, Mary Heisinger, David & Judy Rundell, Tim & Judy Adams (getting to be regulars), Bette Welter, Bob & Marie Shaw, Evelyn Jennings, and Don & Deb Teator. Also present were Albie Hulick, Curt Cunningham, Janet Nelson, Ken Storms, and a handful or two of others who usually come out for Civil War Round Table, and a few more that were new to both. The Large Community Room was comfortably full looking.

Of course, the topic of the evening was the attendance of General U. S. Grant and Mrs. General Julia Dent Grant, re-enacted by Walter Smythe and Anastasia Martin. Their calling card is scanned for this newsletter; however, it being a hot night, they came in their "summer" clothes.

It was a loose, informal structure for the evening, with the General talking about other roles he plays; over to Mrs. General

who discussed one of her favorite topics—the Morgan horse; back to the General (from the first person perspective) about personal background and reminiscing about the war; and finally a collaboration with a short repartee about their relations with Mary Lincoln.

The General's re-enactor, Walter Smythe, started playing Major Kirby Smith (later a full general, I thought), a Confederate, who attended West Point and fought in the Mexican War, as did many other Ameri-



cans. So, when the Civil War (War of Northern Aggression, according to one side) erupts, friends face off against friends, fellow officers face off against fellow officers.

Then Mrs. General Grant took the spotlight for a while, highlighting her affection of, and the importance of, the Morgan horse—the War Horse of the Civil War, as she called them. She listed the names of several famous horses, especially Philip Sheridan’s Rienzi, later re-named Winchester because of Sheridan’s heroic ride from Cedar Creek to Winchester just in time to stave off the Confederate attack, and Sheridan was able to make it in time because of Rienzi.

Rienzi was big for a Morgan, 16 hands high, saw battle at Perryville, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, Cold Harbor, Winchester, and more. Rienzi was wounded three times but survived the war. In fact, Rienzi was present at Appomatox, and eventually retired at Chicago.

Mrs. General mentioned the terrible toll the Civil War took on horses, and not just in battle. Ignorance of horse care, especially watering horses immediately after being heated, caused colic and the deaths of too many horses.

The General re-entered, and segued the role of horses in military operations, particularly mentioning Napoleon.

And on to the personal story:

- quartermaster in Mexican War, the detailed work serving him well later
- good at foraging (get what you can before burning and killing), followed well later by Sheridan in the Shenandoah, and Sherman in his March to the Sea
- stays at Detroit, Sacketts Harbor, Oregon
- worked at tannery, hated the smell, and could not eat red meat
- the train ride to, and the beauty of, West Point

- Fort Putnam across from West Point
- \$28 per month pay as cadet
- silly looking uniforms
- graduated 1843 from West Point, lower half of class
- Julia Dent was roommate’s sister
- Julia Dent from Missouri—a south state
- James Longstreet (later a Confederate general) was best man at his wedding
- important battles at Fort Henry, Fort Donalson
- Unconditional Surrender (Ulysses Simpson, United States)
- importance of railroads, and military strategy
- wore a dirty uniform at Appomatox
- did not take Lee’s sword
- signed generous parole papers
- some conflict with Mrs. Lincoln
- even more conflict between Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. General
- Mrs. General may have sung some Rebel songs at Holly Springs
- Julia traveled to Civil War camps
- one son dropped cannonball on foot
- General would often bring officers back for Sunday dinner (the cook was Mrs. General)
- General’s tightwad sister
- Mrs. General buying a red & white hat (oops, a Rebel color)
- Grant’s Memoirs
- Julia’s memoirs

And finally, General and Mrs. General had some fun poking polite fun of Mrs. Lincoln.

Anyone expecting a lot of Civil War battle tactics and highlights might have been disappointed but I suspect our audience of mostly non-geeky historians found the personal sides and stories to be entertaining and an insight to characters who generally are broad-brushed into superficial icons.

Anyone interested in more Civil War material should attend the Round Table's meetings on the second Wednesday of the month (almost every month). Just show up, or contact Mary Heisinger. (The August meeting is still tentative.)

Also, Windham's Centre Church will be the focal point of the 150th Anniversary Commemoration (Civil War), with music, encampments, programs, demonstrations (and ice cream!). Two major musical programs should be entertaining. For more information, contact Mary or check Windham's website. (first weekend of August)

Reminders:

Our **August 12** meeting returns to the usual second-Monday-of-the-month. The program will be a slide show of Town of Greenville History, with about 100 older photographs illuminating what Greenville is, or used to be. A few of the slides will repeat from last year's show that emphasized Greenville, but this year's show will emphasize more of Freehold and Norton Hill.

A note about subscriptions. The four digit number on the mailing label indicates the year's last two digits, and number of month, of end of subscription. So, 1307 means 2013 July is the end of the paper subscription. A \$10 check made out to Don Teator, and sent to 3979 Rt 67, Freehold, 12431, will continue the subscription for a year.

Those of you getting the newsletter by email can continue to do so at no cost.

Anyone who wants to review newsletters from this year and last can log on to www.dteator.com and click on GLHG Newsletters. (updates usually about the same time as email.)

More info about the September meeting will be announced as details are firmed up. And October's meeting might include the unveiling of the 2014 Calendar. That leaves November, probably a share session, to finish the year. Where is the year going?

Also included are a couple of photos that might show up at the August meeting.

Take care,





The Transition Years — cars & horses cross pathways at Sutton's Garage, Freehold



John I. Ver Planck, with his store in Norton Hill, just before its 1969 demolition