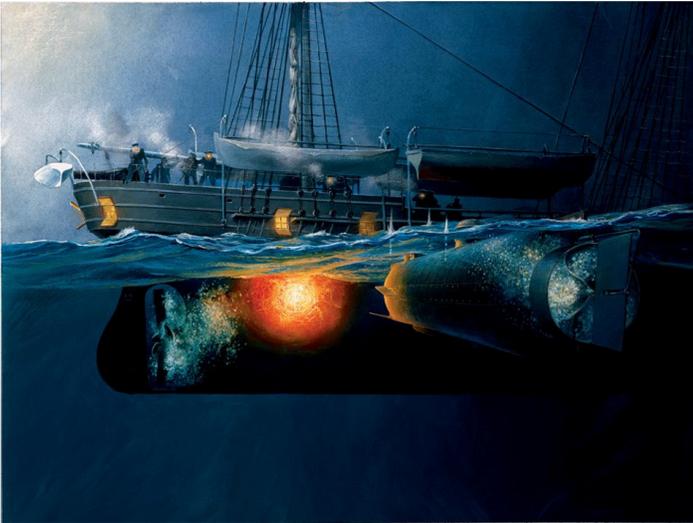


150th Anniversary of the American Civil War



Cape May County Civil War Round Table Newsletter November 2013

2013 Meeting Schedule

21 November: Mike Kochan will be making a presentation on the *Hunley*. **Refreshments:** John Burke

12 December: 6 – 8 PM Refreshments: Potluck

CMCCWRT Officers for 2013

President: John Burke
40 Secluded Lane, Rio Grande, NJ 08210
609-408-8238 = NEW PHONE NUMBER
jwburke@comcast.net

Vice President: Lou Bishop Jr.
21 Schoolhouse Ln, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
609-463-9277 or 741-5438
southwilriseagain@aol.com

Secretary: Pat Munson-Siter
42 Franklin Ave., Villas, NJ 08251-2407
609-287-5097
ladysymitar@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Jim Marshall
202 Bartram Ln., Ocean City, NJ 08226
609-602-3243
jim@jimocnj.com

Business Meeting October 2013

President Burke is still recovering from his surgery. Treasurer Marshall brought the meeting to order. We saluted the

flag and held a moment of silence for those standing in harm's way to protect us and our country.

The first order of business was to present the slate of officers nominated for 2014. They are:

President: Marty Runner
Vice President: Lou Bishop
Treasurer: Jim Marshall
Secretary: Pat Munson-Siter

If anyone else would like to volunteer to become an officer (for example, we normally have a 1st and 2nd VP), please contact Jim Marshall and let him know of your interest.

Treasurer Marshall presented his report. Motion made to accept it and file for audit; passed. Hard copy available if anyone wants to see it.

Jim also reported that our website has been updated, and has been transferred to a new server, as the old one has gone out of business. He has also started a FaceBook page. You can search FaceBook for "Cape May County Civil War Round Table" to find it and ask to join. It is currently a closed site; Jim must approve membership for those interested in joining it.

Marty Runner has designed and produced a new Round Table flyer. There will be stacks of them at the next few meetings; if you want to post any or pass them out, please pick some up.

December meeting will hopefully be early in the month so as to not interfere with members' Christmas plans.

Reminder that we need to set up our meeting schedule with those in charge of the Jury Room for next year.

Several members will be attending and participating in the Cedar Creek re-enactment this weekend.

Mike Houdart received several books and other items from Mrs. Kay Berry to be used for book donation auction.

3 guests were present at the meeting tonight.

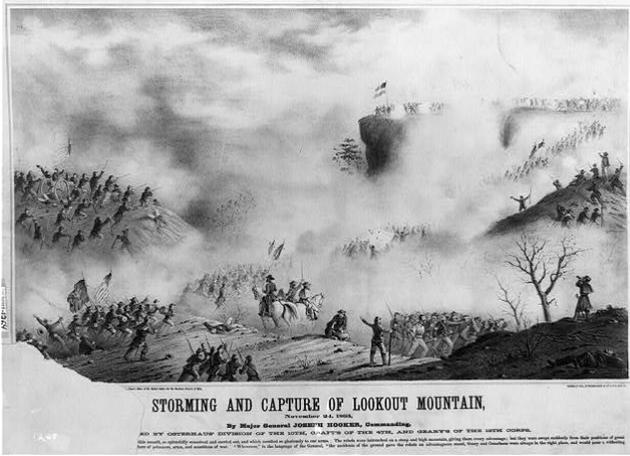
Bob Heinly announced that MAC has several new programs that may be of interest, including several on period music.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned so the presentation could begin.

Respectfully reported,

Patricia A Munson-Siter, CMCCWRT Secretary





Civil War Calendar for December

		1860
December	20	South Carolina secedes
No major events		
		1861
December	11	Union army crosses Rappahannock River into Fredericksburg
	13	Battle of Fredericksburg
	31-Jan 2	Battle of Stone's River (Murfreesboro) (TN)
No major events		
		1863
December	15-16	Battle of Nashville
	21	Savannah occupied by Union troops



Civil War Related Events in December 2013

- 1 **VA** Living history, "Christmas in Camp," camps and demonstrations plus house tours at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim in

- Fairfax. Noon-4 pm. Free. 703-591-0560.
- 1 **VA** Open house, fee-free day at the Museum of the Confederacy in Appomattox. Santa visit plus ornament workshop. 10 am-5 pm. www.moc.org
- 5 **MD** Discussion, "Children and the Civil War" at the USG Library, the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. 7 pm. Free. shadygrove.umd.edu/news/9967
- 5 **DC** Book talk and reception, "Lincoln's Citadel: the War in Washington, DC," at President Lincoln's Cottage in Washington. Talk at 6:30, reception at 6 pm. \$10/lecture, \$10/reception. lincolncottage.org
- 6 **VA** Lecture and tour, "Victorian Christmas Traditions," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. 3 pm. \$5. www.moc.org
- 7 **VA** Car caravan tour, "Applejack Raid," begins at the Petersburg National Battlefield visitor center. 9:30 am-4 pm. Free with park admission. Reservations required: 804-732-3531 extension 205.
- 7 **VA** Living history, "Christmas on the Farm" at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War/New Market Battlefield State Park in New Market. 10 am-4 pm. Free with park admission. www.vmi.edu/newmarket
- 7 **MD** Illumination, the 25th anniversary of the 23,000-candle driving tour through the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Tour begins 6 pm. Visitor center and most park roads closed at 3 pm. Free. Donations welcome. Rain, wind date: Dec. 12. nps.gov/anti
- 7 **PA** "An Evening with the Painting," special two-hour, after-hours view of and talks about the Gettysburg Cyclorama. 5 pm. \$20/adult. Tickets: gettysburgfoundation.org
- 8 **VA** Living history, "A Civil War Christmas," camps and decorations at Mt. Zion Historic Park in Aldie. 4-7 pm. Free. 703-327-9777.
- 8 **VA** Holiday open house, music and refreshments at the Appomattox Court House National Historical

- VA
 Park. Free. nps.gov/apco
- 10 VA
 Lecture, "Lock, Stock and Barrel: Exploring the Technology and Use of Civil War Small Arms," at Hanover Tavern, 13181 Hanover Courthouse Road, Hanover. 7 pm. hanovertavern.org
- 11 VA
 Lecture and tour, "Victorian Christmas Traditions," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. 3 pm. \$5. www.moc.org
- 11 VA
 Talk, "Native Americans and the Confederacy," at Baine's Books and Coffee, 205 Main St, Appomattox. 12:15 pm. Free. www.moc.org
- 12 MD
 Lecture, "Siege of Petersburg," at the Carroll Community College in Westminster. 6:30-9:30 pm. \$39. Details: 410-386-8100.
- 13 VA
 Talk, "The Art of Surviving," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. Noon. Free with admission. www.moc.org
- 14 MD
 Museums by Candlelight in Frederick County. Music, living history, special exhibits and more. National Museum of Civil War Medicine open noon-7 pm. Free. www.visitfrederick.org
- 14 VA
 Living history, "Christmas in Camp," camps and Christmas traditions at Fort Ward in Alexandria. noon-4 pm. \$2 donation. 703-671-7350.
- 14 VA
 "Christmas During the Civil War," Civil War Santa, tours and treats at the Dabbs House Museum, 3812 Nine Mile Road, near Richmond. 1-4 pm. Free. 804-652-3409.
- 14 MD
 Living history, "The Legend of Civil War Santa," with period decorations at the Surratt House Museum in Clinton. noon-4 pm. Free with admission. www.surratt.org
- 14-15 VA
 Living history and tours, "Christmas at Liberia," in Manassas. manassasmuseum.org
- 15 VA
 Christmas open house with tours and living history at the Miller-Kite House (Jackson's headquarters), 310 E Rockingham St, Elkton. Noon-4 pm. Free. 540-578-3046.

- 15 VA
 Walking tour of Fort Boykin, Confederate fort on the James River at 7410 Fort Boykin Trail near Smithfield. 3 pm. Free. 757-357-0115.
- 21 VA
 Special programs, "A 19th-Century Christmas at Ellwood Manor," at Ellwood near the intersection of Routes 3 and 20 west of Fredericksburg. 9 am-2 pm. Free. fowb.org
- 29 VA
 Living history, artillery demonstrations at the Petersburg National Battlefield. 1-4:30 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete
- 31 PA
 Gen. Meade Birthday Ceremony and living history at his grave in Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. Noon. Reception and tour follow. Free. thelaurelhillcemetery.org

New Kunstler Ornament now available



Kunstler 2013 Christmas ornament image

The 18th edition of the popular Mort Kunstler Christmas ornament series is now on sale. This year's piece is "Before the Ball," depicting a scene from the Army of Northern Virginia winter camp in Culpeper (VA). Sale of the ornaments benefits Timber Ridge School in Winchester (VA). timber-ridge-school.org/help/2013-ornament.php



Lincoln and His Admirals, by Craig L. Symonds

GERALD J. PROKOPOWICZ
[Volume 31, Issue 2](#), Summer 2010

Craig L. Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp. 448.

In 1952, T. Harry Williams published what he described in his introduction as "the only work that treats of Lincoln as a war director." In *Lincoln and His Generals*, Williams portrayed Lincoln as "a great war president, probably the greatest in our history, and a great natural strategist, a better one than any of his generals." Williams thus brought to a climax the trend toward the favorable reinterpretation of Lincoln's military reputation that had begun after the First World War with Colin R. Ballard, *The Military Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (1926), and Frederick Maurice, *Statesmen and Soldiers of the Civil War: A Study of the Conduct of the War* (1926). While previous writers had praised Lincoln as superior to all of his generals until he found Ulysses S. Grant, for whom he wisely stepped aside, Williams went a step farther and argued that even Grant was second to the president, "who, by his larger strategy, did more than Grant or any general to win the war for the Union."^[1] Williams's book was a popular success, selected by the Book of the Month Club, and its interpretation of Lincoln as a brilliant commander in chief has prevailed for almost sixty years.^[2]

To write a book that invites comparison with the quality and influence of *Lincoln and His Generals* is no small task, but that is what Craig L. Symonds has done with *Lincoln and His Admirals*. To make the connection clear, Symonds begins his introduction with a discussion of Williams's work, in which he notes that Williams (in common with James McPherson and everyone else who has since written about Lincoln as commander in chief) essentially ignored Lincoln's role as commander of the United States Navy. Where Williams claimed to be the first to write about "Lincoln as a war director," Symonds is the first to use Lincoln's management of the naval war to illustrate "the emergence and growth of Abraham Lincoln as a wartime commander in chief" (ix). Considering the thousands of titles that have appeared about Lincoln since 1952, one imagines that the author, a noted naval historian with a longstanding interest in Lincoln, must have pinched himself more than once during the writing of this book at the thought that no one else had yet addressed such an obvious topic.

Of course, the reason why we don't already have a shelf full of books on Lincoln as a navy man is that Lincoln did not spend every day of his administration consumed with naval matters, as he did with the fate of the Union's armies. Symonds gets around this difficulty in two ways. The first is to concentrate on those episodes in the war when naval operations did take center stage. He begins with a chapter on Fort Sumter that shows Lincoln blundering his way forward into the unfamiliar responsibilities of a commander in chief, creating confusion by disregarding the chain of command, and encountering a complete and astonishing lack of cooperation and communication between the army and navy. At the same time, Symonds presents Lincoln as displaying the patience and flexibility that would continue to serve him well throughout the war. In subsequent chapters dealing with the institution of the blockade and the Trent affair, Symonds emphasizes Lincoln's willingness to listen to advisors and to

adjust his course according to circumstances. As Ballard and Maurice wrote favorably of Lincoln's insistence on civilian control of the military in the aftermath of World War One (when war had been left to the generals with disastrous results), and as Williams wrote in the shadow of World War Two and another great war president, so it is possible to see in Symonds's praise of Lincoln's pragmatism a subtle criticism of the more ideologically driven decision-making of administrations in our time.

Symonds's second strategy for writing a comprehensive narrative of Lincoln's growth as a commander, when naval matters were not always foremost in his mind, is to tease out some less obvious ways in which naval events influenced Lincoln's thinking. The most prominent example of this is the Emancipation Proclamation, the central act of Lincoln's administration. What did Lincoln's admirals have to do with it? Symonds shows that the navy provided a model of African Americans serving their country alongside sailors of European descent; he describes the refugee camps that formed along the coast wherever the navy established a beachhead, particularly in the Carolinas and Georgia, creating pressures that led Lincoln simultaneously to consider emancipation and colonization of the slaves (to strategic places where navy ships could fill their coal bunkers, not incidentally); and he details the role of Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, along with other cabinet members, in the timing of the proclamation. Taken together, these elements are not enough to persuade the reader that emancipation would not have happened but for the navy (nor does Symonds ever claim that to be the case), but they are enough to keep the narrative moving, showing how Lincoln came to make the key decision of his presidency without entirely losing the nautical focus of the book. Symonds wisely does not push the strategy beyond its limits, as there are some aspects of Lincoln's presidency that Symonds simply describes (for example Lincoln's wartime Reconstruction policies) with no pretense that they were somehow connected to naval affairs.

Symonds's integration of political events into his narrative provides more context than Williams did in his purely military account. Symonds also appears more restrained than Williams in his evaluations of the officers Lincoln had to manage, but he achieves this in part by standing on the shoulders of Williams (and others) in making direct comparisons between many of Lincoln's admirals and generals. Admiral Samuel Francis DuPont, for example, began the war as a professionally trained, energetic captain with a brilliant reputation who was expected to do great things, but who instead made a habit of calling for reinforcements and proved reluctant to attack in the face of what he perceived as unfavorable odds. By portraying him as the saltwater version of George McClellan, Symonds implicitly attaches to DuPont the same negative baggage that Williams (who was unreservedly critical of McClellan) assigned to the Young Napoleon. Symonds uses the same shorthand to criticize Admiral David Dixon Porter, who "shared many of the same strengths—and weaknesses—of Joe Hooker" (188). When Admiral Charles Wilkes, whose rash actions toward the British-flagged ships Trent and Peterhoff entangled Lincoln in two international crises, tried to plead his case directly to the public in violation of naval procedure, Symonds compares his situation

to that of General John A. McClernand in 1863. Admiral David Farragut plays for Symonds the same starring role, as a competent, apolitical, loyal war-winner that Grant did for Williams, although Farragut's record of holding important commands almost from the start of the war lacks the drama of Grant's gradual emergence. By the time Symonds describes Admiral Louis M. Goldsborough, who commanded the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron at Hampton Roads in 1862, as "not physically impressive" (148) and acting "as if his primary function was to ensure the efficient maintenance of the fleet rather than to attack the enemy" (156), the reader is tempted to jump up like a game show contestant and shout "Henry Halleck!" sparing the author the need to make that particular comparison explicit.

Symonds also follows Williams in his uniformly favorable interpretation of Lincoln, which in most cases is amply justified by the record. Symonds observes, for example, that under the Constitution Lincoln was the only person in the country who could give orders to both generals and admirals, and that whatever interservice cooperation developed during the war was largely due to his leadership, both by direct command and by example. Symonds credits Lincoln's visit to the Peninsula in May 1862 as galvanizing both forces into action and leading to the capture of Norfolk and the destruction of the Merrimac, although he discounts the story that Lincoln made a personal reconnaissance of the enemy shoreline, noting that the only eyewitness account of this alleged adventure was written sixteen years later and not corroborated by anyone else who would have been there. At times, however, the book could benefit from more critical distance. When David Hunter proclaimed freedom for slaves in South Carolina in 1862, Symonds contradicts himself by writing that "Lincoln saw that he had no choice" but to void the order, "although not everyone in the Cabinet agreed" (162). Lincoln may have been in a difficult position, but he clearly had a choice. Later, Symonds does a splendid job of untangling the complexities of the controversial reopening of the cotton trade late in the war, showing how naval officers became involved with treasury agents and private entrepreneurs, but he assigns Lincoln no blame for the ill-fated Red River expedition that followed, in contrast to the enthusiasm with which he lauds Lincoln for his role on the Peninsula. Like Williams before him, Symonds portrays a Lincoln who overcomes a few early missteps and thereafter can do no wrong.

The ultimate question regarding a book called *Lincoln and His Admirals* has to be whether it lives up to the classic reputation of *Lincoln and His Generals*. The quality of its writing certainly approaches the extraordinarily high standard set by Williams (with the exception of the repeated misuse of the word "bemuse").^[3] In terms of the conceptual sophistication with which it integrates political and naval affairs, it clearly surpasses its distinguished predecessor. It has more and better maps. As Williams did, Symonds stays true to his focus on personnel and policies, not operations (the promotion to rear admiral of Samuel Phillips Lee occupies most of a chapter, while the battle of Mobile Bay and the sinking of the *Alabama* get one paragraph apiece). Both authors found a new approach to the Lincoln story, but Williams had the advantage of writing almost sixty years

(and thousands of Lincoln books) earlier, when untouched topics were easier to come by, so the point goes to Symonds.

On the other hand, interpretively Symonds breaks no new ground; he shows Lincoln dealing with a different cast of characters, in a different setting (for example, getting seasick on a voyage through Chesapeake Bay to Fort Monroe), but encountering the same kinds of challenges and exercising the same excellent judgment that Williams described. Symonds succeeds in telling a comprehensive story of Lincoln's growth as commander in chief, but to do so he at times has to stray from his naval theme; the use of nautical phrases as section titles (from "1861: Getting Under Way" to "1865: Final Harbor") ultimately does not conceal the fact that there wasn't always something happening at sea or on the Western rivers to engage Lincoln's attention continuously throughout the war. Still, there has been a need for a full-length treatment of Lincoln's conduct of the naval side of the Civil War, and this fine book definitively fills that need. If it does not eventually achieve the classic status of *Lincoln and His Generals*, it will only be because Lincoln himself was a landlubber and the Civil War ultimately a land war.

Notes

1. *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York: Knopf, 1952), vii. ↗
2. See, for example, James M. McPherson, *Trial by Fire: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (New York: Penguin, 2009). ↗
3. See pages 67, 299, 325, and 348. Recently this malapropism has become alarmingly common among scholars as well as students. See, for example, Joan Waugh, *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 16.

57th Annual Gettysburg Remembrance Day Parade

A Dedication and Remembrance-Reflections of History: Hope and Healing Event

Saturday, November 23, 2013

Time: 1:00pm

150th Event

Join us in honoring the soldiers and civilians of the American Civil War in this special annual parade held in conjunction with the Gettysburg Address anniversary.

The parade will step off at 1:00pm from LeFever Street and follow the traditional route to Liberty Street, turning left onto Middle Street, left again onto Baltimore, and finally onto

Steinwehr Avenue. The parade will end at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

The annual event is sponsored by the Sons of Veterans Reserve, the Military Department of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Military units and civilians interested in participating in the parade should contact Brig. Gen. Henry E. Shaw, Jr., Deputy Commander SVR by calling 740-369-3722 or email hshaw@columbus.rr.com.



Genealogy Basics 101

I have been a genealogist since age 15 when I met my great half-uncle, James Herbert Dunlap, who was the family historian. He visited my family when we lived in Alexandria, VA for about 2 months while he conducted research in the National Archives, as well as areas where our family had once lived, like Baltimore and Boonsboro, MD. I got to accompany him on some of his research trips and later was tasked with helping copy the jumbo sized family tree charts for his history of his father, Dr. Albert Dunlap, and Dr. Dunlap's ancestors going back to the Mayflower. Dr. Dunlap served in the rank of assistant surgeon with the 3rd Maryland (Union) Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. Jim Dunlap also had helped my great grandmother, Anna Hyde Dunlap Hoke, prove her lineage to a Revolutionary War patriot, Jacob Hazen. While a private in the war, Jacob stayed active with the CT state militia and by the time of his death had earned the rank of Colonel.

Since then, I proved my own lineage back to Jacob Hazen (Anna did it back in 1923, far enough back that the Daughters of the American Revolution required that I reprove the descent) as well as my descent to Francis Cooke of the Mayflower. I have since also proved descent to Amasa Hyde, another Rev War ancestor, and there are 6 more I am working to prove at the moment. At one time was a member of Union Daughters of the Civil War (I have since let my membership in that organization lapse as there are no chapters of that group in New Jersey, and I was more than active enough in DAR, Mayflower Society, and the CWRT to keep me busy...)

Several people in the CWRT have indicated they would like to learn a little bit about researching their family history,

including several with their own Civil War ancestors. Thus I will be writing occasional articles on genealogy for the newsletter. You will hopefully understand that I will start out talking about the bare basics, rather than just going into researching Civil War patriots. A genealogist needs to prove their lineage with proper source documentation, more than just 'grandma says,' if the lineage is to be taken seriously.

At the next meeting I will have copies of a CD-ROM that will have lots of blank genealogy forms, as well as some hard copies I will hand out (use the hard copies as masters and make Xerox copies of them to work with.) Three of the most important will be a blank pedigree and a family history chart, as well as a documentation checklist. Also included on the CD-ROM will be lists of resources that you may find useful. In addition to filling them out the forms by hand, you can also fill them out using Adobe Reader on your computer. Some of them are from "Mid Continent Public Library." You can google the website and download forms from them direct as well if you don't want to wait; but some of the forms on the CD are my own, or from other websites than MCPL.

Start with the pedigree first. There are several different pedigree charts to choose from. You start with yourself as person #1. Your father is #2, your mom #3, paternal grandfather is #4, and so on. Note that all men are even numbers, women are odd numbers. Each father is a number double that of the child. Therefore, if a child is #33, it is a woman and the father is #66, with the mother #67. I use these numbers on the folders I keep for each person as well. An individual's last / surname is usually in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. This is because sometimes it can be hard to figure out which name is a given name and which the surname; say, "Lloyd George," and the fact that in some lists and indexes, the last name may be listed first, and in other lists the opposite. If you write the name "Lloyd GEORGE" you know that GEORGE is the last name. Mind, sometimes the folks transcribing the records mix up the names, so if you don't find that ancestor as "Lloyd GEORGE" also look for records under the name "George LLOYD." Fill in all the dates and places that you know of, IN PENCIL to start with, as you may find some of the information you thought you knew may not be completely accurate.

The Family Group Chart is used to organize by family. I file them under the file folder # of the father. This sheet goes into more detail and has more space to put down the sources that you are using to document the facts of places, dates, events, etc. It is important to try and find what data you can on ALL the children of each couple, not just your immediate ancestors. Sometimes you can use those collateral relatives to find information on your ancestors that you can't find in other ways. One time I found an obit for one of my great great uncles, and it listed the relatives who came into town for the funeral – including my great great grandfather, who was listed as 'visiting from Illinois.' I hadn't even known he had lived in Illinois, and the information let to me being able to find more information on him.

The third chart is a documentation checklist. Make one for each ancestor. Put down not only the information, but also the

documentation sources you are using to prove that information. ***Genealogy without documentation is mythology***, is one of the mantras of a good family historian. Too often genealogists in the past have taken whatever they have found on their ancestors as truth, without bothering to document their sources. This continues with those folks who look up information on websites like ancestry.com, and copy anything they find there in other people's pedigree trees, without checking to see if there are sources listed. This is one reason 'real' historians often look down their noses at family historians, and I can't blame them. I have been helping one lady with her DAR application. For one of her ancestors there are at least 5 pedigrees on ancestry.com that list her. None of the five agree as to places, dates, etc. None have sources for the information listed. When we tried to email the people who put up those pedigrees, not one replied. I tell my students in class that when there are no images of actual source documents, take the information with a big grain of salt, and use it to try and find the actual documentation. Even views transcripts with skepticism, as typographical errors, misreading of handwritten documents, etc can affect the transcriptions. Even official indexes should be viewed as a stepping stone to finding the actual documents, as indexes usually do NOT include all the information found on the original documents.

Basic Vital Records

To start with, include Xerox copies of your own vital record documentation in your own file folder. At this point we are talking mostly about birth records and marriage records, which you should have on hand if you have gotten a driver's license in the last few years! With luck, you may have copies of those, as well as in some cases death records, for your parents as well, and put them into their file folders. Please note that in many cases, a vital record may cover more than one information point. A marriage record may well include the birth information on both people getting married, and sometimes their parents' names and even other information on their parents may be on the paperwork. Death records often include information on spouses, birth places and dates, and perhaps information on the parents as well.

Also, if you are ordering copies of vital records, include in the request that you want the COMPLETE RECORD, and that you need the documents for genealogical research. Ask for a simple marriage certificate, and the certificate signed by the officiant and witnesses, stating that so-and-so married so-and-so on such and such a date at such and such a place may be all you get. Ask for the complete record, and you usually get the entire marriage application, including the information the applicants wrote down on the application; far more information than shows on the certificate.

Types of Evidence

Data on such sources is, first, divided into two main categories. Those categories are:

- 1) Primary evidence – documentation made at the time of the event, by someone who experienced the event first hand. A death certificate is a primary source for anything to do with the death itself.
- 2) Secondary evidence – source documentation that has been recorded after, sometimes well after, the time of the event, by someone who may not have firsthand knowledge of the event. The names of the parents on a death certificate, or information as to birth date, is secondary evidence. And the further the event is from the time it is recorded, the more chances there are for the information to be incorrect, either through faulty memories, mistakes, or outright lies. I know of at least one case where someone, when giving information for a death certificate, when asked for his mother's birth date, accidentally gave his OWN birth date...

The next ways of categorizing documented evidence has more to do with the quality of the evidence, and how to evaluate the evidence. This is important as sometimes you may have two or more bits of evidence that may contradict each other.

- 1) Source: Original or Derivative = Original is something that has not been derived from an older source. A will is an original document; a transcription of it is derivative, especially if the transcription is an abstract that only includes those portions of the document that the transcriber considered important.
- 2) Information: Primary or Secondary = Primary is information recorded by someone who has/had firsthand experience of the event recorded. Please note that just because someone is a primary source doesn't necessarily mean the information is more accurate than a secondary informant. You also need to look at WHY the record was made, and who made it; was there a bias or reason to make the informant shade or color their testimony?
- 3) Evidence: Direct or Indirect = Does the document specifically state the name, place, date, etc, or is it implied? If there is a birth record that states the names of the parents, and the date of the birth, but doesn't name the child, then the birth record is direct evidence of the birth, but is not sufficient to directly prove that "Arthur" was the child born to those parents on that date.

I realize that this may sound complicated, but it really helps if you are looking at different, contradictory sources of information and are trying to figure out which one may be more accurate for which pieces of information.

Finding Vital Records

Vital records that you do not have in your family can be obtained from various vital records offices. For the moment, I'm going to address those records that have been recorded in the last

100 years or so, after the US Federal Government started requiring states to record and maintain birth, marriage, and death records. Even with that federal requirement, if your ancestor was born in a rural area, at home, etc there may not have been an official record. If you are not sure of the dates and/or places where such events took place, start looking at newspaper archives for birth announcements, wedding announcements, and obituaries.

Ancestry.com is one of the most commonly used genealogy websites. To start with, I suggest, if you have a library card, that you go to the public library and use their computers to access ancestry.com. Most libraries have a subscription to Ancestry Library Edition. It does not include a lot of the data bases you can access through paying for a full subscription, but it is more than adequate when you are starting out. These will include the social security death index, as well as death indexes from many states. The SSDI often includes birth date and place as well as death information. Just be aware that while the death date is usually correct, the 'death place' is actually the place the last social security check was sent to. I have one lady I was helping do some research. The SSDI listed her grandmother's death place as Cape May. Nothing in the Cape May County records. Found an obituary in the *Star and Wave* that said she was visiting her son in Camden when she died. Still nothing. Did a global search, and found the right name and the right death date in the PA death index – she had been sent to a hospital in Philly

when she got sick, and died there. Ancestry also has many marriage and birth indexes. When you print out these records, or save them to your computer, be sure and save and/or print BOTH the image of the original record as well as the transcription.

Another excellent – and free – source for online digitized documents and transcriptions is the LDS website, FamilySearch.org. They have lots of their own databases that are quite different from that of ancestry, but the same warnings and suggestions apply here.

Hopefully, finding dates and places through other sources will help you find the actual official records of those events from state vital records offices and so on. One of the best sources for information in how to obtain vital records from all the various states is www.vitalrec.com

Once you have started to fill out your charts, you will soon find out which events need documentation, or at least better documentation than what you have. And yep, there will be times when there are no official vital records available, and the information in obituaries, marriage records, census records, cemetery records, and the like will become the basis for determining that information. And we'll discuss that in later issues of the newsletter...

Cape May County Civil War Round Table

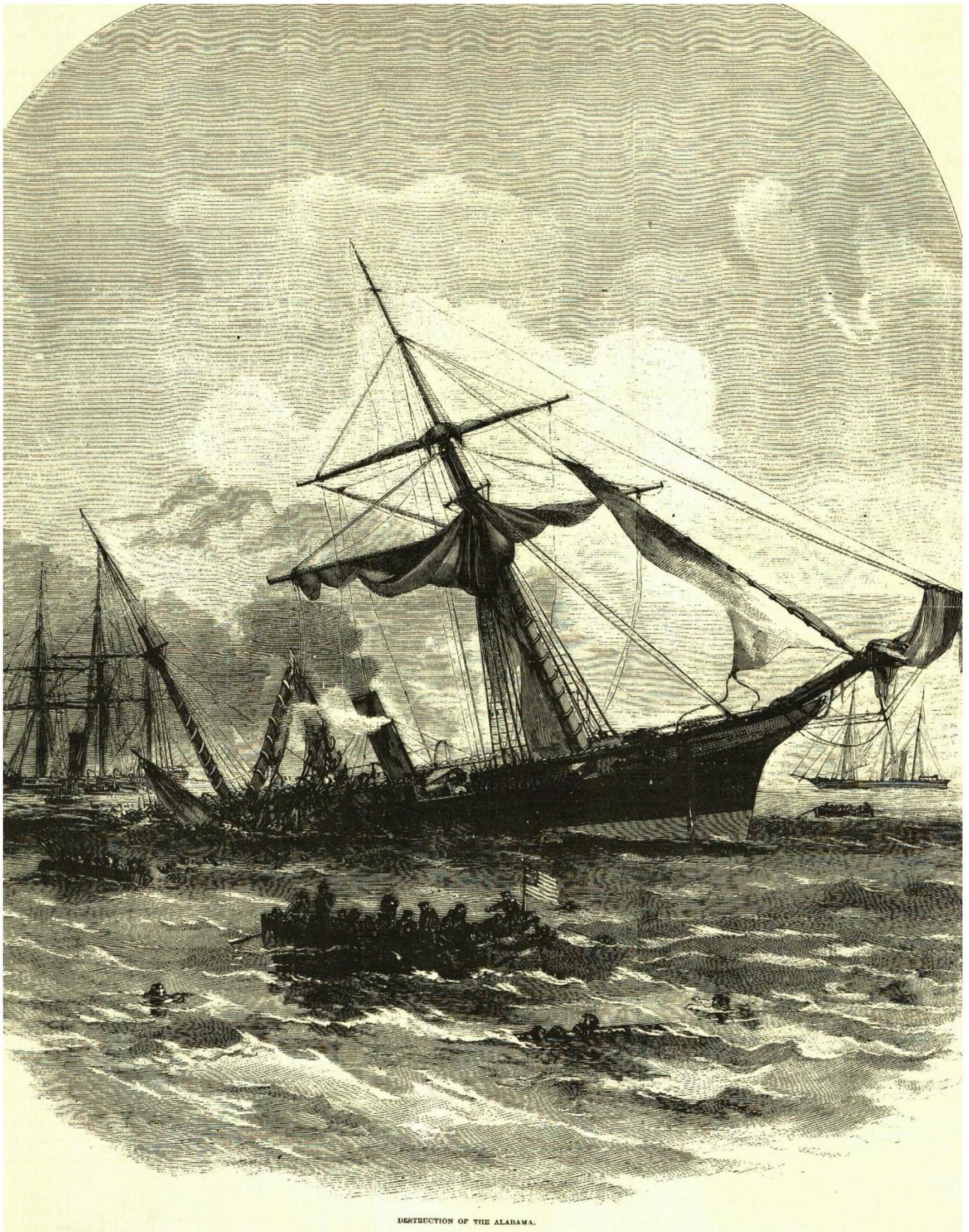
www.cmccwrt.com

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DESTRUCTION OF THE ALABAMA.

Civil War Lady, Joy Melcher Presents the 6th annual

2013 Gettysburg Remembrance Day Friday Military Ball

Friday, November 22, 2013 8p.m. to midnight

Limited Tickets Available \$40 ~ All Tickets Advance Sale Only ~ SOLD OUT LAST YEAR, ORDER EARLY!

Sponsored by CivilWarLady.net & CivilWarLady.com by Joy Melcher



Enjoy Jeff Trace & The Victorian Dance Ensemble as your Dance Master & Floor Managers!
Period Music by 22 piece Brass Beck's Philadelphia Brigade Band!

Tickets Selling Now!

We outgrew our former Ballroom ~ New Location!

Spacious Dance Floor ~ Plenty of Free Parking ~ no downtown traffic hassels ~ \$129 Hotel rate!

Eisenhower Hotel & Conference Center

No rushing to arrive for an expensive banquet ~ No long waiting for dance room to be 'flipped' ~ Immediate seating! Avoid the crush of downtown traffic ~ No parking hassle, No meters, No expensive dinner

Too tired after the long Saturday parade to Dance? Then start your weekend out at our lovely Ball on Friday!

Hotel Room Rate: \$129.00 per night for our Ball ticket holders!

Discount Hotel Rates for our Ticket Holders only! Double King Beds

I've just returned home from London with oodles of goodies for you!

Shop Civil War Lady Sutlery

Remembrance Day Weekend in Gettysburg!

Fri & Sat November 22 & 23 ~ 9 to 5 p.m.

Sunday, Nov 24 ~ 9 to noon

Upgraded our location to: The Inn of 1863 (Formerly the Holiday Inn)
516 Baltimore St., Gettysburg, PA 17325

Ball Gowns ~ Tea Gowns ~ Dinner Gowns ~ Corsets ~ Underpinnings ~ Wigs
Floral Headpieces ~ Coats ~ Sontags ~ Hoods ~ Bonnets ~ Gloves



Shop early for best selection!



For Information & Tickets:

www.GettysburgBall.com

Checks: CivilWarLady/PO Box 186/Osage IA 50461

For phone info: 712-310-9383 or joymelcher@hotmail.com