

Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War,
1861-1865
Department Historian's Report
Grand Hotel, Altoona, Pennsylvania
June 22-25, 2023

To Department President Linda S. Kao, Officers and Members assembled for the 110th Department of Pennsylvania Convention, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865, at the Grand Hotel, Altoona, Pennsylvania, I submit the following report of the Department Historian.

In 2022, all twelve of Pennsylvania's tents submitted history reports to the Department. The overwhelming majority of those had maintained or furthered an impressive variety of patriotic, instructional, and civic activities.

Tent 23, Sharon: The Madaleine Gilbert Tent rebounded from a down period of some years by impressively increasing membership and beginning activities anew.

The most notable was a public event they hosted at Oakwood Cemetery in Hermitage, PA, in June 2022, where they demonstrated how to clean a headstone. The demonstration was led by sisters of the Tent. They cleaned the headstone of Civil War Army Sgt. Sylvester Freeborn Barker, Co. A, 76th PA. Regiment. Sgt. Barker is the Great-grandfather of both the President and Sec./Trea. Of Tent 23. Among those in attendance was PA Department President Linda Kao.

The Tent hosted local author Cynthia Crytzer at a meeting held in Brookfield, Ohio in August 2022. The author had written A Civil War Husband, a book based on letters of her G-great Grandfather Thomas D. Nelson of the 100th PA "Roundheads". That same month Tent 23 was represented at the DUVCW National Convention in Gettysburg by the Secretary/Treasurer of the Tent.

Tent 23 commemorated the holidays by sending over 200 greeting cards to veterans.

Tent 32, Franklin: Another tent struggling with diminished membership is Hannah Moore. The Tent President and her family were basically responsible for the Tent's accomplishments in 2022.

The President and her husband placed flowers on two soldiers' graves, one located in Pioneer Cemetery and the other in Graham Cemetery. This continues a thirty-year tradition.

During the Memorial Day ceremony in Franklin Park, a wreath was placed on the Civil War Cross.

Tent 50, York: The Mammy Ruggles Tent reports that they do keep an ongoing historic record of newspaper clippings and photos but there have been no entries for some time.

A Tent member attended the annual Veterans Breakfast sponsored by local VFW posts. Another volunteered to assist the local Salvation Army post with its fundraising event, a Fabric Fair.

Tent 53, Harrisburg: The Susan Lessick Tent had no outside activities to report.

Tent 55, Gettysburg: The Sisters of the Salome Stewart Tent continue to be a Tent to emulate with their unceasing activity.

In February 2022, the Tent officially honored several departed sisters including their recent past treasurer, Sister Valerie Fisher. At the same event, Sister Eileen Hoover, former owner of the Cashtown Inn, spoke about the Inn's history from circa 1797 through the Civil War era.

In March 2022, a visit was made to the Covenant School in Harrisburg to teach sixth graders a lesson in dance history, particularly the dances of the 1860s.

Several members of the Tent attended the May 2022 dedication of the Thaddeus Stevens Statue in front of the Adams County Courthouse. They wore period dress. That same month, several sisters in period dress marched in the Gettysburg Memorial Day Parade.

June 2022 found the Tent honoring their namesake at a graveside service, followed by a picnic at the home of one of the sisters. That same month several sisters attended the Department Convention/Encampment at Williamsport, PA.

Five sisters attended the DUVCW National Convention in August. The convention was held at their homesite of Gettysburg. The Tent assisted the Department in hosting this national celebration.

In September, two new duvs were initiated into Tent 55.

Several Tent members assisted Historic Gettysburg Adams County with their barn dance fundraiser in October 2022. HGAC owns the GAR Hall and allows Tent 55 to meet there rent free. The sisters organized the silent auction, decorated the hall, and helped set up and take down. The two duvs were inducted into Tent 55 at the dance.

Tent 55 held a Remembrance Day Tea on November 18, 2022. Sisters from other tents in town for Remembrance Day were invited. Thirty-seven sisters signed the guest book, including National President Lynne Gallaudet Dolan. Several tent sisters also marched in the Remembrance Day Parade.

Tent 56, Pleasant Unity: The Sisters of Ruth F. Barnhart continue to place an emphasis on history and honoring our soldiers, past, present, and future.

In February 2022 all members were provided with a concise history of the tent's founding in 1965, noting the biography of its namesake Ruth Barnhart, the charter members, and sisters who went on to become Department Presidents. The history was provided by the Tent Secretary. That same month the Tent Historian gave a lecture at the Andrew Carnegie Free Library in Carnegie, PA, entitled "Copperheads, Gunners, and Spies: Ohio Democrats in Mr. Lincoln's War." The talk was based on her (Sister Ruth Webster) historical novel "The Ramsey Legacy" which details the exploits of her ancestral cousins.

JROTC Cadets were honored with the DUVCW pin and certificate during April and May of 2022. The Tent's Patriotic Instructor chaired the activity at high schools in Uniontown and Connellsville, PA.

A wreath was laid by the Tent at the Union Cemetery of Fayette County (Oak Grove) in honor of the 286 Civil War soldiers interred there. Seven additional veteran and church groups participated in the Decoration Day ceremony.

The Allied Orders GAR Encampment/Convention was held in June 2022 at the Genetti Hotel in Williamsport, PA. Tent 56's own, Sister Maureen Snowden, presided over the convention as Department President for Pennsylvania. The Tent hosted the President's Reception, held Chief of Staff fundraisers, and organized various raffles to support the convention financially. Most Tent officers attended the convention.

In August, two members of the Tent attended the DUVCW National Convention in Gettysburg. Sister Sharon Harkcom was in charge of the State organizing committee, and elected to National Office at the convention, as Junior Vice-President. Sister Ruth served as the Delegate at Large. And Tent 56 also hosted breakfast in the hospitality room.

In October, the Tent applied for a DUVCW Historic Preservation monetary award to help fund the restoration/cleaning of fallen and weathered stones in the Old Brush Creek Cemetery in Ardara, PA. It is the resting place of 11 Revolutionary War veterans and 18 Civil War veterans (including those of Tent 56 ancestors). The tent intends to adopt the cemetery in conjunction with a local American Legion post.

The Tent "celebrated" Christmas by honoring veterans. They distributed Christmas cards through the Pittsburgh Veterans Administration.

Throughout the year, the Tent Historian continued writing the monthly "160th Year Remembrance" and distributing it to all members. It chronicles the events of the Civil War, personalizing them to the ancestor soldiers and regiments of the membership. Honor was given to ancestor Pvt. George Washington Householder, 125th PA Infantry, who fell 160 years ago at the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862.

Another on-going project of the Tent is to photograph the attendees at every meeting held by the tent, as well as outside activities participated in. This will provide a photographic history.

Tent 58, Philadelphia: The Mary Morris Husband Tent from Pennsylvania's largest city contributed to the overall work of the department in a fitting manner. Tent members were constantly involved in honoring veterans, educational pursuits, and furthering the organization.

Memorial Day activities included: making and placing seven wreaths at National Cemeteries in Baltimore, MD, and Richmond, VA; adopting Old Salisbury Cemetery in Salisbury, NC; laying of a wreath at Silent Century at Laurel Hill Cemetery; participating in an honor ceremony and wreath laying at Octavius V. Catto Memorial in Philadelphia; and attending the Anna M. Ross graveside service at Lawnview Cemetery in Rockledge, PA.

Tent 58 collected and mailed stamps for the Stamps for the Wounded Program. They then introduced the program to senior citizen groups and assisted them in continuing this endeavor on their own. The sisters placed flags at the graves of veterans and family members in Bethlehem, PA, and visited Nisky Hill Cemetery in Bethlehem to honor the Civil War veterans who were members of the J.K. Taylor GAR Post 182.

In the educational realm, Tent 58 began an outreach program to speak to senior citizen groups about the DUVCW and GAR Civil War Museum and Archive in Philadelphia, showcasing artifacts. They visited a youth group in Philadelphia to show them artifacts from the same museum and introduced the Stamps for the Wounded Program. Sisters volunteered at the GAR Civil War Museum and Archive on a continuing basis, assisting visitors with research about their ancestors, and working weekly on Post records to organize and prepare for digitization. They wrote articles for the GAR Museum and the Delaware Valley Civil War Roundtable. Sisters represented both the GAR Civil War Museum and the Delaware Valley Civil War Roundtable at the Historic LaMott Day at Camp William Penn.

To support and further the mission of the DUVCW, Tent 58 members held Departmental and National offices and committee positions. They attended Department and National Conventions, participated in Wreaths Across America, and distributed information about joining the DUVCW to interested parties at the GAR Museum and Archive.

Tent 60, Lewisburg: The Sisters of Annabell Vorse Clark were involved in their community throughout the year, as follows.

The sisters attended a Ceremony of Remembrance for Jacob Sierer Boob (1845-1937). He was the last surviving Civil War Veteran of Union County, PA. The event was sponsored by Camp 503 SUVCW.

Tent 60 held a program to honor their own tent namesake who was a nurse during the Civil War and the last to return home after its cessation.

Sisters of the Tent joined in the America 250 PA Service Day at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. They packed 230 boxes of food for delivery to senior citizens.

On another occasion they joined with the Lycoming Daughters of the American Revolution to pack 173 boxes for senior citizens. This event was also held at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

Tent 60 participated in the Lincoln Commemorative Funeral Train reenactment at Elizabethtown, PA.

Sisters of the Tent walked in the Lycoming County Veterans Day Parade in Jersey Shore, PA.

They attended the Civil War historical program honoring the 147th Regiment of Snyder County, PA.

Members also attended a program at the national Civil War Museum about the Confederate Libby Prison in Virginia.

Finally, Tent 60 participated in Wreaths Across America 2022.

Tent 61, Somerset: The Susanna Cook Tent was extremely active throughout the year, continuing to represent the Dept. of Pennsylvania very well. The Tent participated in the following:

April 2022. Presented a DUVCW National Scholarship to a Gettysburg College student.

May 2022. Sisters volunteered at the Somerset Historical Society on various days giving school tours. The Tent placed a wreath at Antietam National Cemetery in Sharpsburg, MD. On Memorial Day weekend they attended services at three different cemeteries in Bedford County, PA, placing wreaths at each. They also participated in the Memorial Day event in Somerset, PA.

June 2022. Members attended the PA Department Convention in Williamsport, PA.

August 2022. At the DUVCW National Convention in Gettysburg, Tent 61 members were instrumental in organizing and running the convention for the host State of Pennsylvania. Sisters served as the National Registrar and Council 1. They conducted a Victorian Jewelry workshop, the duvs breakfast, and served on many committees.

November 2022 found Tent 61 heavily involved in the Remembrance Day activities in Gettysburg, including the Gettysburg National Cemetery program, the

Woolson Monument ceremony, the parade, and the ball held at the Wyndham to raise funds for Gettysburg monuments preservation.

December 2022. The sisters conducted a Veterans' Breakfast. Also, that month they placed 141 wreaths on veterans' graves through participation in Wreaths Across America.

Tent 62, Boalsburg: The Sisters of the Katherine Wilson Curtin Tent had an incredibly active year involved in community outreach and patriotic education and events. They never seem to stop and should be lauded by us all.

March 2022. Three sisters presented "Forgotten Women of Bellefonte, PA" at the Big Springs Spirit History Pub event. The hour-long presentation, which highlighted the Tent's namesake among others, played to a packed house and the Tent has been asked to repeat it at a future Central PA Civil War Roundtable meeting.

Fellow sister Gwen Carusone presented "Families of Curtin Iron Works—Durable People" at the monthly business meeting. The early families included those of Gwen's ancestors.

April 2022. Tent members participated in the Spring cleanup at the Union Cemetery, Bellefonte, PA, which contains 51 known Civil War soldiers' graves.

Tent President Cheri Banks and Dept. President Linda Kao participated in the Eagle Iron works and Curtin Village Easter Egg Roll and Easter Bonnet Parade. Both wore period dress and won prizes for their bonnets.

The Tent April meeting was held at Duffy's Tavern in Boalsburg to celebrate General Grant's 200th birthday. A full body stand up of General Grant was on display. A presentation of General Grant and Julia's love story was given by the President.

May 2022. The Tent helped create patriotic decorated grapevine wreaths for veterans buried at the Union Cemetery in Bellefonte. A proposal was made to the Milesburg Lions Club to request funds to purchase cleaning supplies to clean tombstones. And booth space was shared with the local DAR chapter at the Memorial Day Celebration in Boalsburg. Candy and trinkets were distributed. Photo opportunities with a six-foot cardboard standup of President Lincoln and General Grant were displayed.

June 2022. Members helped the Milesburg Museum and Historical Society to clean all 20 headstones at the Milesburg Cemetery.

Three sisters attended the PA State Convention/Encampment in Williamsport. The Tent was responsible for providing favors in honor of the guest speaker General Grant in addition to their usual contribution of a basket to the annual fundraising auction.

August 2022. Provided luncheon food at the DUVCW National Convention, with the sisters serving as hosts.

Shared a space at the Grange Fair Emporium to display a photo presentation of Tent activities and events along with membership material. A reference book of Civil War soldiers buried in Centre County was displayed for easy access. In the Grange Fair Parade, the Tent won the \$50 prize for best public float. The minivan float included signs, posters, balloons, and the stand-up Lincoln. Sisters in period dress walked the parade route and handed out candy. The Tent President pulled her grandchildren in a wagon.

September 2022. Tent 62 launched the “Women of Influence Tour”. It was an hour-long tour consisting of storytelling at historic points of interests throughout Bellefonte. Beginning and ending at the train station, the “tour” visited a café and two historic houses along the way. Multiple sisters took part in the research and development of the stories, all of notable women.

Mid-month found the Tent participating in “History Days” at the Ways Fruit Farm. The display included giveaways, mini-flags, toy Civil War soldiers available for a donation and “Flat Lincoln” paper dolls with Tent 62’s information printed on the back.

A picnic supper was held to celebrate Sister Linda Kao being the year’s Departmental President. After the dinner, a program was presented on Tent members’ ancestors who had fought at Gettysburg. Two of the sisters had walked the battlefield during the National Convention and photographed regimental monuments and informational plaques and gleaned information from park ranger guides.

In late September, sisters attended an informational booth at the Milesburg Car Show. Toy soldiers were sold, and photo opportunities provided with the stand-up Lincoln and Grant. The following day, Tent members taught the local chapter of the DAR how to clean tombstones with D/2.

October 2022. Participated in the Centre County United Way Day of Caring by cleaning tombstones of PA Governor Beaver and Mary Beaver’s son, Hugh, among others. Also cleaned tombstones at the Union Cemetery, Bellefonte.

Sister Karen Hazel’s article on “Adopting Cradle Graves” appeared in *General Orders #1*.

November 2022. Members of the Tent toured the Boalsburg Heritage Museum. The museum features information on the Tent as part of its Civil War display. Later in the month, members prepared holiday cards with special notes and holiday wishes for the local Red Cross Holidays for Heroes card drive (for active military).

December 2022. The last month of the year. But Tent 62 did not slow down. President Cheri Banks and PA President Linda Kao participated in the Curtin

Mansion Christmas Pop-up Photo event dressed in historic costumes. They sold ornaments, seasonal and patriotic note cards, hot chocolate, and baked goods.

The Tent decorated a Christmas tree as part of the local Festival of Trees held at the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology in Pleasant Gap. The tree was decorated with Lincoln pennies, top hats, and ribbons. DUVCW brochures were placed by the tree for passersby to pick up.

Finally, after a Christmas luncheon, Tent members traveled to the Union Cemetery and placed wreaths on the Civil War soldiers' graves.

Throughout the year, Tent 62 members donated 47.5 hours of work to the Shippensburg University's Fashion Archive in an effort to stabilize (sew) the 1881-1887 purple dress worn by Katherine Wilson Curtin.

Tent 63, Connellsville: The Marie Tepe Tent had no outside activities to report.

Tent 64, Ebensburg: Though small in numbers, the Clara Barton Tent continued to support their beloved veterans.

Two sisters attended the June 2022 State Convention/Encampment in Williamsport.

The tent was represented by one member at the August 2022 National DUVCW Convention in Gettysburg.

Holiday cards were sent to the patients at the VA home in Altoona in December 2022. The Tent also participated that month in Wreaths Across America in Ebensburg.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Ruth Ann Ochs Webster
Historian, Department of Pennsylvania