

**Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War,
1861-1865
Department Historian's Report
Crowne Plaza Philadelphia Hotel, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania
June 27-30, 2024**

To Department President Ellen Higgins, Officers and Members assembled for the 111th Department of Pennsylvania Convention, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865, at the Crowne Plaza Philadelphia Hotel, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, I submit the following report of the Department Historian.

In 2023, nine of Pennsylvania's twelve tents submitted history reports to the Department. They are noted in numerical order according to date of charter.

Tent 23, the Madaleine Gilbert Tent, Sharon

TENT 23 HOLDS THE SIGNATURE HONOR of being the longest-lived tent in Pennsylvania. They celebrated their 100th anniversary in style on April 23, 2023, at the Tara Country Inn in Clark, PA. Lunch attendees included then Department President Linda Kao and various other DUVCW State officers. The State of Pennsylvania, itself, was represented by Representative Parke Wentling of the 7th District. He presented the Tent with a legislative proclamation. One of the program highlights was having each member of the Tent personally read the biography of their Union Veteran. This brought the reason for the DUVCW's existence into sharp focus for the attendees. The celebration was amply covered by the local press who had a photographer/reporter in attendance.

In other news, Tent 23 participated in the Farrel, PA, Veterans' Day Parade, and the Allied Orders Department of Pennsylvania Encampment at Altoona, PA.

Tent 32, the Hannah Moore Tent, Franklin

No report submitted.

Tent 50, the Mammy Ruggles Tent, York

No report submitted.

Tent 53, the Susan Lessick Tent, Harrisburg

THE PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY OF TENT 53 centered around honoring Civil War veterans and maintaining historic sites. They placed flowers and maintained the annual flowers at the Sons of

Union Veterans roadside marker for Mifflin and Snyder Counties. They also cleaned up the ground around the marker. They placed flags and flowers on their ancestor graves on Memorial Day.

Tent 55, the Salome Stewart Tent, Gettysburg

THE SISTERS OF TENT 55 TAKE PRIDE IN PLACE, annually maintaining a standard of excellence befitting the character of their iconic town. They made outstanding contributions in 2023 to Civil War era understanding and remembrance, and participated in activities that enriched the experience of visitors to the National Historic Military Park and GAR Headquarters.

The Victorian Dance Ensemble, consisting of sisters and other interested persons, served as demonstrators and floor managers at the Preservation Ball held in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg. The Ball raises money for the preservation of monuments at Gettysburg. The sisters held Victorian dance classes at a local school, designing and sewing period gowns for the students to wear while performing. Sisters also demonstrated dance at the Gettysburg Visitor Center on Decoration Day.

The Tent took their talents beyond the boundaries of Gettysburg on several occasions. The most notable was a group of sisters giving deportment lessons at the Mother Elizabeth Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg, Maryland. They also participated in the Veterans Day program at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg.

All things Gettysburg and honoring the Union Veterans of that conflict will remain the foundation of Tent 55's existence, with countless activities. In the spring, they took complete responsibility for cleaning old headstones at the GAR Cemetery. Several sisters marched in the Gettysburg Memorial Day Parade in period dress, while others participated in the wreath laying ceremony. Early fall found the Tent assisting the HGAC with their Historic Preservation Barn Tour. The Sisters hosted a Remembrance Day Tea in November that feted visiting sisters and other guests from throughout the area. Six sisters marched in the Remembrance Day parade in period costumes, and one participated in the Song and Stories of the Civil War at Christ Lutheran Church.

Always supportive of the DUVCW organization and the Allied Orders, Sisters of the Tent held a program at the gravesite of their namesake Salome Stewart in Evergreen Cemetery and were active participants in the annual Encampment of the Allied Orders, Department of Pennsylvania, which was held in Altoona, PA, in June.

Tent 56, the Ruth F. Barnhart Tent, Pleasant Unity

THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE YEAR for Tent 56 was the adoption and restoration of the Old Brush Creek Cemetery in Westmoreland County, PA. DUVCW sisters worked in conjunction with the John T. Crawford Camp #43, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Sisters of the Tent obtained a Historic Preservation grant from the National DUVCW. The money was used for purchasing supplies for stone cleaning, resetting compound for gravestones, along with topsoil and additional stone. Fifteen replacement headstones were placed on the graves

of Civil War veterans. Several of whom were direct ancestors of Tent 56 sisters. Other stones were cleaned and refurbished.

A beautiful dedication service was held on Memorial Day, replete with remarks from distinguished guests, period dress on participants, the placing of National Colors and memorial flowers on grave sites, the reading of remembrance biographies of veterans buried in the cemetery, a wreath laying ceremony, music provided throughout by the Blue and Gray Brigade of the 11th Pennsylvania Volunteers, concluding with a firing squad salute and the performing of TAPS.

The wreath and gravesite flowers were provided by Tent 56. In addition, Mr. Bill Bray was presented with a DUVCW Historic Preservation Pin. Bray was the one individual most responsible for the cemetery restoration, working with the Veterans Administration on the acquisition of the new stones, personally placing them, and coordinating the groups involved in the dedication service.

Tent 56 intends to continue supporting restoration projects at the cemetery which are ongoing.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS included group study sessions to fulfill requirements for the National DUVCW Dedicated Daughters Program, and a field trip/meeting to the Westmoreland County Courthouse in Greensburg to view the Civil War monument, the seasons rooms, and other exhibits. The County celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2023. The Tent Historian continued monthly reports entitled “The 160th Year Remembrance”, which chronicled the events of the Civil War with reference to the regimental activities of tent ancestors. DUVCW JROTC awards were presented to Cadets at Connellsville Area High School, Ligonier, and Albert Gallatin High Schools. Assistance was given to TREA (The Retired Enlisted Association) in their Operation Santa Claus program. Sisters donated money and gave of their time hosting at two celebrations at the Southwest Pennsylvania Veterans Homes. Sisters attended the Allied Orders Dept. of Pennsylvania Encampment (several holding State offices) and were docents throughout the year at the GAR Espy Post Civil War Room/Museum at the Carnegie Library in Carnegie, PA.

Tent 58, the Mary Morris Husband Tent, Philadelphia

TENT 58 REPRESENTED OUR STATE'S SIGNATURE CITY throughout Eastern Pennsylvania in a variety of service activities and events during 2023. The commitment and fortitude of the sisters is truly impressive.

SERVICE INITIATIVES covered a wide spectrum supporting living veterans and honoring those who have passed. Examples of their service: making of memorial wreaths, mailing cards to veterans, volunteering at food distribution centers, ministering at “grief share” at church, volunteering to help manage a local cemetery and at local history society, participating in the Stamps for the Wounded Program and introducing the program to other organizations to begin endeavor on their own, helping with raffle baskets for St. Vincent de Paul Society, collecting phones for Cell Phones for Soldiers charity, contributing to Purple Heart clothing drives, and making goodie bags for deployed soldiers.

Of particular interest in the service category was the sisters' involvement with the Outreach Program at the GAR Civil War Museum and Archive in Philadelphia. They both coordinated and made presentations for that endeavor. In addition, they volunteered at the museum itself recording museum inventory, inventorying GAR Post records, and serving as tour docents.

IN ADDITION TO THEIR SERVICE, Tent 58 represented the DUVCW in a long list of memorial and patriotic events. The most notable were Decoration Day at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, wreath laying at Gettysburg Remembrance Day, participation in Wreaths across America, and the Anna M. Ross graveside Memorial Day service at Lawnview Cemetery in Rockledge, PA. Members marched in the Gettysburg Remembrance Day Parade and the Memorial Day Parade in Doylestown, PA. Sisters also attended other Memorial Day and July 4th parades.

A unique activity was the Tent's participation in the Revolutionary Run at Washington Crossing State Park.

And, as always, Tent 58 was present at both the DUVCW Department and National Conventions.

Tent 60, the Annabell Vorse Clark Tent, Lewisburg

No report submitted.

Tent 61, the Susanna Cook Tent, Somerset

THE SISTERS OF TENT 61 spent a busy year in service to their community, in patriotic endeavors to honor their forefathers and other veterans, and in support of their comrades in affiliated organizations.

PATRIOTIC EVENTS WERE PARAMOUNT to this Tent. They placed a wreath at the Antietam National Military Cemetery on Memorial Day Weekend and placed flowers on Civil War soldiers' graves at four other cemeteries. They also participated in services at the cemeteries. They placed a wreath at a Chambersburg cemetery in June. Members participated in the Remembrance Day weekend events in November, including the parade, ball, tea, and Woolson Monument event.

The tent held a Veterans Breakfast at Central City, PA, on December 9, and sponsored Wreaths Across America that same month, conducting a ceremony involving the DUVCW, SUVCW, Girl Scouts, the State Representative, State Congressman, and County Commissioner. The ceremony was held at the Shade Church in Somerset County. Members placed the wreaths at three local cemeteries.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS EVENTS to serve their community. The first was attending the Scholarship and Endowment Fund Appreciation Brunch in April at Gettysburg College and presenting an award to a student. They volunteered at Somerset Historical Center giving tours to elementary school students about early settler life every week in May. They helped clean cemetery stones in August in Bedford County, participated in the Somerset County

Community Band performing patriotic songs for various community groups throughout the year and at a nursing home in December. A member also held a genealogy fair at Penn Highlands Community College in October.

TENT 61 ALWAYS ENDEAVORS TO SUPPORT THEIR COMRADE SISTERS in the DUVCW and other members of the Allied Orders. They attended the Lincoln Luncheon on February 18; the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Madeline Gilbert Tent #23 on April 23; the PA Department Convention and Encampment June 22-24 in Altoona; the Baker mansion tour held during said convention; and the 132nd DUVCW National Convention in Oklahoma City, OK, July 19-23. They served on various national committees and as officers.

Tent 62, the Katherine Wilson Curtin Tent, Boalsburg

THE IMPRESSIVE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES engaged in by Tent 62 can be broadly categorized into three areas: Allied Orders (not only GAR affiliated organizations, but the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Civil War Roundtable, and other heritage groups); Patriotic Instruction, both in-house with the Daughters and at events open to the public; and Cemetery Services (restoration, maintenance, and remembrance).

ALLIED ORDERS.

A representative of the Tent attended the JPS Gobin Camp 503 SUVCW and Auxiliary 503 PA Department Lincoln Luncheon at the historic Front Street Station in Northumberland, PA. Another led the Bellefonte "Women of Influence" Walking Tour for the Fort Antes DAR members.

Sisters shared an informational booth with the Bellefonte Chapter DAR at the Memorial Day Celebration in Boalsburg, the town known as the birthplace of the holiday. Necklaces, candy, and airplanes were given out. Photo opportunities with six-foot cardboard standups of President Lincoln and General Grant were displayed.

Fort Antes DAR hosted Tent 62 at the Moss House on Main Street in Jersey Shore, PA. The sisters enjoyed a presentation on the historic building of the town, followed by a luncheon.

Multiple sisters participated in the Annual Allied Orders Encampment/Convention at the Altoona Grand Hotel, supporting the State Dept. as officers and in fundraising. Of note, a celebratory reception was held for Tent 62's own Linda Kao who ended her Presidential term at the convention.

A joint meeting was held with the Bellefonte Chapter of the DAR at the Milesburg Museum & Historical Society in September. The original plan of thanking and honoring the DAR chapter for their purchase of a flagpole for the cemetery was enhanced by the visit of DUVCW PA Department President Ellen Higgins who extended greetings to both organizations.

Tent members regularly attended local history programs offered by the Centre County Civil War Roundtable and the Big Springs Spirits "History Pubs" talks throughout the year. Sisters typically wore their badges and DUVCW clothing to represent the Tent.

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION.

Reverend Dr. Nancy Hale presented the program "For Honorable Living and Hopeful Dying, Union Chaplains in the Civil War", sponsored by Tent 62 at the Bald Eagle Valley Community

UMC, Bellefonte. The event was open to the public. 26 were in attendance, including three new members of the Tent who were installed following the meeting.

The April Tent meeting was held at the Milesburg Museum & Historical Society. Members were treated to a tea party and tour of the museum which occupies the Hannah Green Meeting House, circa 1793.

Pennsylvania's War Governor, Andrew Curtin's, birthday was commemorated at the Eagle Iron Works at Curtin Village on April 22nd. A picnic pavilion was decorated in a patriotic theme with displays of pictures of the Governor as well as Tent namesake, Katherine Wilson Curtin. Tent President Cheri Banks, dressed in a Civil War gown, participated with a Governor Curtin reenactor to cut the birthday cake.

A Tent representative participated in a local television broadcast on ABC 23 Fox 8 where she shared the history of Boalsburg's Memorial Day celebration and the Civil War soldiers buried at the Boalsburg Cemetery. The broadcast was televised from the Boal Mansion ballroom.

Tent 62 displayed a tri-fold photo presentation of Tent activities and events along with membership material at the Grange Fair Emporium in August. A reference book of Civil War soldiers buried in Centre County was displayed for easy access. The display was available to the public for ten days.

A series of Bellefonte Walking Tours of "Women of Influence" was offered by Tent sister Karen Hazel. The hour-long tours included storytelling and historic points of interests on the lives and work of over ten local women.

In Civil War period dress, the sisters participated in the Eagle Iron Works and Curtin Village Apple Festival, offering tours of the Curtin Mansion and assisting with the cider press and apple butter production. Later in the year, sisters participated in the Curtin Mansion Christmas Pop-up Photo event dressed in historic-themed dresses.

The Tent sisters traveled to Clinton County on a fall foliage history tour of Loganton. Two sisters shared the history of their Loganton families and led a visit to the Logan Mills Covered Bridge and Mills. The Tent then visited the Sugar Valley Historical Society. The Tent President shared a biography of Civil War Chaplain Rev. Solomon LM Conser, who is buried at the Loganton Lutheran Cemetery.

At the Tent's Veteran's Day Luncheon, the sisters celebrated two of their own. Sisters Becky Crossley and Luann Yohn shared their personal military service with the group and made a presentation on women in war—about the women throughout history who have been involved in American conflicts since the Revolutionary War either in fighting, in nursing and healing, or in communications.

Several Tent sisters participated in the Leadership Centre County community leadership program. They were present for a walk through the Boalsburg Cemetery to visit the Three Ladies of Boalsburg statue led by Matt Maris, local teacher and historian. Maris shared the historical significance of the statue which commemorates the first ever Memorial Day celebration and the sacrifices that local men made during the Civil War. Tent sisters shared information about the Tent and the DUVCW to attendees. The event was covered in the State College, PA, newspaper.

Throughout the entire year Tent Sisters traveled to Shippensburg University's Fashion Archive to continue stabilizing (sewing) the 1881-1887 purple dress worn by Katherine Wilson Curtin, the Tent's namesake. Over 65 hours were spent in this endeavor.

CEMETERY ACTIVITIES.

May 13—gathered at the Union Cemetery in Bellefonte to participate in the annual "clean-up day".

June 18—planted flowers at the cradle graves of Harvey Mann’s family’s children at the Union Cemetery.

July and August—researched the graves of six Centre County families’ children’s graves for a future “Angel Tour” at the Union Cemetery.

October 5—participated in the Centre County United Way Day of Caring by cleaning tombstones of various historic families including cradle graves of children at the Union Cemetery, Bellefonte.

November 3 – December 15—installed a Tent-themed Christmas Tree and donation box at the Titan Market, Bellefonte. Donations from passers-by were collected to support the tent’s on-going tombstone cleaning efforts.

December 14—placed wreaths on the graves of over 40 Civil War veterans buried in Union Cemetery, Bellefonte, and those of Governor Curtin, First Lady Curtin, and her brothers, who were also Civil War veterans.

Summer thru Fall—cleaned tombstones at the Union Cemetery in Bellefonte and the Advent and Treziyulny Cemeteries in Milesburg.

Tent 63, the Marie Tepe Tent, Connellsville

The Marie Tepe Tent had no activities to report.

Tent 64, Clara Barton Tent, Ebensburg

TENT 64 KEPT TRUE TO THEIR MISSION of supporting local veterans and honoring those who have passed. They participated in Wreaths Across America and sent holiday cards to the patients at the Veterans Administration Home in Altoona. Sisters also attended the Allied Orders Dept. of Pennsylvania Encampment, where they held State office.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Ruth Ann Ochs Webster
Historian, Department of Pennsylvania