



Save Historic Antietam Foundation

DECEMBER 2007

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Workday Photos

Heritage Festival

Nagle

Board Member Profile

Recent Contributors

**Save Historic
Antietam Foundation
(SHAF)**

The mission of SHAF is the preservation and protection of historic sites within the Antietam valley that are related to the Battle of Antietam, the Maryland Campaign, or other Civil War activity in the region. We will accomplish our mission through public education, solicitation of funds, promotion of protective easements and advocacy.

SHAF was incorporated in 1986. It is chartered in Maryland as a non-profit corporation and is exempt from federal tax by Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible.

President's Letter

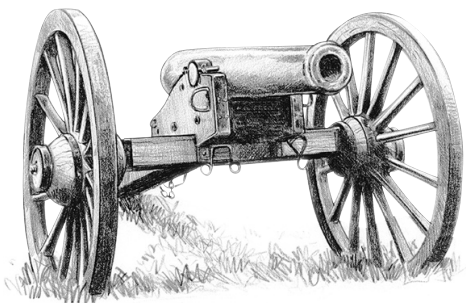
Dear Members,

Another year is coming to a close, winter is upon us, and it's time to add up our accomplishments for 2007. SHAF made a \$5,000 donation to the NPS for the new walking trails on the Piper Farm, donated \$2,500 to restore the Connecticut windows in the United Church of Christ in Sharpsburg, lobbied for preservation of the Shepherdstown Battlefield, and created a new website, SHAF.org (visit it now!) We hosted two work days and restored a large amount of open farm land at Burnside's attack and Bloody Lane. We continue to work with the owners of Shepherdstown Ford and are encouraged by their willingness to preserve the site. Our hospital and headquarters signs are aging and we are starting to replace them with new metal signs. These markers identify Antietam hospital sites near the battlefield for visitors and local residents as well.

It is also time to thank our board members. They do the administrative stuff, and all of us are unpaid volunteers. Our board members devote their time and money regularly to further SHAF's goals. We man the booth at Heritage Day in Sharpsburg, turn out for meetings, write and edit the newsletter, monitor dozens of local properties, and do numerous things that keep SHAF going.

Yet the Board would be the first to say that none of what we do would be possible without you. Yes, YOU! Your support, your donations, your letters, your faith in our cause, they all sustain SHAF. Antietam is the best preserved battlefield in the Eastern Theatre, perhaps in the whole United States. You've helped make that true and your support continues to improve it. You've helped the state of Maryland purchase scenic easements on nearly 5,000 acres around the battlefield. You've helped stabilize the Newcomer Barn. You've helped fund walking trails on the park. You've helped us buy land and houses, only to place easements and sell them again. You've done so much and we all are so grateful to you. Thanks for your support, thanks for your love of Antietam battlefield, and thanks for your faith in us. Happy Holidays!

Tom Clemens.
President, SHAF



SHAF Fall Workday 2007: Another Scene Restoration Project at Antietam

It was a dark and stormy night, . . .

No it wasn't that bad, but Saturday, November 10 did begin as a very overcast dreary day, with rain threatening at any minute. Nevertheless eight intrepid SHAF members met at 9:00 with four NPS Natural Resources workers for a rewarding day of scenic restoration work. Our task for the day was the removal of trees and brush along the fence line separating the historic Mumma and Roulette farms. This fence line runs from the Bloody Lane eastward to just above the Roulette house and divides the two properties. With as many as four chain saws running, we broke off to drag branches and sawn timber into a couple of huge burn piles. Don't think this is easy work; some of this stuff is heavy, and we occasionally had trouble keeping up with the guys who were cutting. But there were no complaints from our loyal laborers. The weather was just cool enough to make working more comfortable than standing around, and fortunately the rain moved off. In fact, by noon the sky was clearing. We worked until about 3:00 p.m. and were able to open up over 100 yards of fence line. This area is right in the middle of the field and conspicuous from the Visitors Center – visitors can view the whole Bloody Lane attack field from the Observation Room. When we were finished I could not resist driving up to the top of the hill to see the difference our labors had created. Needless to say, I went home with very sore arms and legs but with a newly-warmed heart. Working on these projects is a rewarding experience and I encourage anyone who is able to join us on our next work day.



Sharpsburg Heritage Festival

By Paula Reed



Caught in a rare group photograph at the Sharpsburg Heritage Festival on September 15th were a number of your SHAF Board of Directors. Pictured are (l to r) back row: Harry Smeltzer, Dana Shoaf, webmaster Brian Downey; front row: Don Macreadie, Bill Maharay, Paula Reed, Tom Clemens, John Nelson.

SHAF planned and presented a four-part Civil War lecture series at the annual Sharpsburg Heritage festival on Saturday, September 15. In addition, SHAF members and friends manned a booth at the festival. A breezy bright day brought out a sizable crowd throughout the day along Mechanic Street just south of the town's square.

Just after noon and in front of SHAF's tent, two bands, the Confederate 2nd Maryland Fife and Drum Corps and the Union Pennsylvania Wildcat Regiment Band, faced off in a musical duel to the delight of the crowd. A variety of foods and crafts completed the displays while the lecture series provided historical information and background for attendees.

SHAF's lecture series featured four presentations beginning with the Reverend John Schildt who spoke on "Four Days in October: Lincoln's Visit to Antietam" at 9:30 am. The second lecture was by John Nelson at 1:30 PM. "The Sublimest Spectacle that Mortals Ever Gazed Upon: How Newspapers Covered the Battle of Antietam." At 2:00 PM Tom Clemens spoke on "Why Sharpsburg: Lee's Intentions in the Maryland Campaign." The fourth speaker was Dana Shoaf who presented "Odyssey of a Field Officer: John I. Nevin of the 93rd Pennsylvania Infantry" All the SHAF lectures took place in Christ Reformed Church which features newly restored historic stained glass windows funded in part through a donation by SHAF.

The day and evening were filled with other speakers in addition to SHAF's series, plus music, tours, demonstrations and exhibits.

Brigadier General James Nagle by Antietam BP Ranger John David Hoptak

Since the guns fell silent more than fourteen decades ago, tens of thousands of books have been written about America's Civil War. Historical journals and popular magazines with a sole focus on the war have flourished, and Civil War battlefields and historic sites are visited by millions each year. Scores of television documentaries and big-screen Hollywood films concerning some facet of the conflict have been produced. The Civil War remains the most studied aspect of American history, and there seems to be no satiating the fascination of not only Americans, but of folks worldwide, with the fratricidal struggle.

Yet, for all the books and magazines, and for all the films and documentaries, students of the American Civil War know that there remains a hidden history, filled with little-known engagements, forgotten episodes, and overlooked personalities. This article will explore the life and service of one such overlooked figure, who has seemingly dwelled in those vast halls of historical obscurity since the cessation of hostilities: Brigadier General James Nagle.

Born on April 5, 1822, in Reading, Pennsylvania, James Nagle received no formal military education, but from a young age he displayed an avid interest in martial endeavors. In 1840, after his family had settled in the Schuylkill County seat of Pottsville, eighteen-year-old James Nagle organized the Washington Artillerists, a militia company that he regularly drilled and actively maintained. With the outbreak of the Mexican-American War in 1846, Nagle volunteered the service of his company, which was mustered in as Company B, 1st Pennsylvania Volunteers. As its captain, Nagle led the company from the siege of Vera Cruz to the capture of Mexico City, seeing much action along the way. Mustered out in 1848, Nagle and his men returned to Pottsville, where an appreciative citizenry presented the young captain with a beautifully inscribed sword of which he was very proud. In fact, Nagle carried this sword throughout the Civil War, and can be seen holding it in most of his wartime portraits.

In the years before the outbreak of civil war in 1861, Nagle continued his trades as housepainter and wallpaper hanger and in 1852 was elected sheriff of Schuylkill County. Following the capitulation of Fort Sumter, Governor Andrew Curtin commissioned Nagle colonel of the 6th Pennsylvania Infantry, a three-month organization that served under General Robert Patterson in the Shenandoah Valley. In August 1861, Curtin authorized Nagle to raise a three-year regiment, which one month later was mustered into service as the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry, recruited almost exclusively out of Schuylkill County. Impressing his superiors with his military ability, Nagle was elevated to brigade command in April 1862, in the 9th Army Corps. He led his brigade at the battles of 2nd Bull Run, South Mountain, and Antietam, where his regiments were tabbed to assault the Burnside Bridge. His promotion to brigadier general eventuated in September 1862, being highly touted by both Generals Jesse Reno and Ambrose Burnside.

Personally courageous, Nagle was always in the thickest of the fray. He barely escaped capture at 2nd Bull Run, and at Fredericksburg, nearly lost his life to an artillery shell while leading his men toward the impregnable Confederate position at Marye's Heights. He was respected by his superiors, and beloved by his troops. In October 1861, he was presented a fine glass from his former soldiers of the 6th Pennsylvania, accompanied by a letter that testifies to Nagle's qualities as a military commander: "during the three months we served together, though inflexibly firm and persistently industrious in the performance and requirement of every camp and field duty, yet such was the kindness of your demeanor, and tender regard for the health, safety and comfort of your men, the we regarded you rather a friend and father, than a mere military commander."

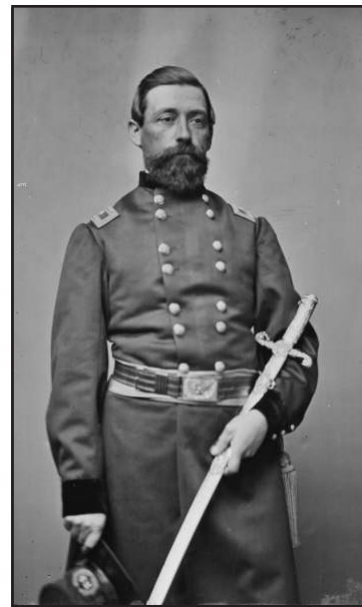
In the spring of 1863, Nagle began to suffer from the effects of

heart disease. Following his doctor's advice, he reluctantly tendered his resignation in May and returned to Pottsville. His immediate superior, Samuel Sturgis, forwarded Nagle's resignation with much regret. In a heart-felt letter, Sturgis wrote that through his "intelligence, energy, zeal and courage, and unassuming deportment, withal, Gen. Nagle has endeared himself to this command, and will carry with him the love and respect not only of those gallant troops he has led so often to victory, but of all who have had the good fortune to know him."

Nagle did not rest for long in Pottsville. With Robert E. Lee's men making their way north to Pennsylvania in June, he raised the 39th Pennsylvania Emergency Militia, which he commanded until August, after Lee's men were turned back at Gettysburg. The following year, Nagle recruited his fourth regiment of volunteer soldiers, the 194th Pennsylvania, a Hundred-Days unit, which was stationed in Baltimore during Jubal Early's raid through Maryland. Mustered out for the final time in November 1864, Nagle continued to suffer from his affliction, and on August 22, 1866, he passed away. He was just forty-four years of age, and left behind a widow and seven children.

James Nagle was, and remains, Schuylkill County's foremost citizen-turned-soldier. As a tribute and in memory of their beloved leader, the veterans of the 48th Pennsylvania raised money to have a statue of Nagle placed upon the regimental monument at Antietam. At the dedication ceremony, on September 17, 1904, the former surgeon of the 48th Pennsylvania, William Blackwood, reminded those in attendance that it was here, at Antietam, where Nagle received his promotion to brigadier general, and, said the feeble veteran, "never did a soldier win the distinction through a harder road, for his whole time of service this more than brave gentleman and splendid soldier devoted his every energy to the cause for which he left his home and family, and supported by his gallant men, he won imperishable fame."

With the passing of time, it seems that Nagle's fame has proved contrariwise. His statue at Antietam still stands; his gaze still transfixed toward the north. But there is something missing from the monument. When it was first unveiled over a century ago, there at his side was sculpted a bronze replica of that Mexican-American War sword, which he so highly treasured. That sword is now gone. When, or how, it disappeared, no one seems to know. And few realize it was ever there. Perhaps by restoring that sword, and having it replaced, we can, in turn, help restore Nagle's overlooked service, and help rescue him from those vast halls of historical obscurity.



SHAF's new and improved website is now up and running. Go to www.shaf.org for news on the foundation, the battlefield, the town, and other Civil War sites.

Board Member Profile: Harry Smeltzer

By Mary Abroe

Harry Smeltzer, newest director of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, joined the board in 2006. A residential real estate appraiser with his own business in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for the past eleven years, Harry has been an instructor at Pittsburgh's Realtor's Educational Institute over the same period; there he teaches courses in Valuation of Residential Properties as well as Certified Appraiser continuing education classes. Prior to 1996 he worked as an appraiser, financial planner and analyst, accountant, and auditor in western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and McKeesport) and nearby Weirton, West Virginia. When asked about the wellspring of his interest in history and the Civil War, Harry responds that "like every other kid in Pennsylvania, I went on a field trip to Gettysburg when I was nine or ten." That visit helped spark a fascination that eventually generated, among other things, his own Civil War blog and involvement in several on-line discussion groups as well as his current leadership role in SHAF. Regarding the Civil War, he calls himself "more of a big-picture guy" with multiple interests, including preservation, rather than one who focuses solely on commemoration and preservation.

Born and raised in McKeesport, Harry Smeltzer graduated from Penn State University (University Park) with a B.S. in finance in 1982. He also received a Master of Business Administration (with a marketing emphasis) from the Katz Graduate School of Business in Pittsburgh in 1989. With his lifelong residency in the Pittsburgh area, it is no big surprise that Harry holds season tickets for the Pittsburgh Pirates (that's him in the photo above taking batting practice at PNC Park); other pastimes and interests include working with his son's Cub Scout Pack and monitoring his own library of sixteen hundred-plus Civil War books, including one of his earliest acquisitions, the American Heritage Young Readers Golden Book of the Civil War (with its introduction by Bruce Catton).

Besides the previously noted, Civil War-related activities in which Harry is engaged, he belongs to the Western Pennsylvania Civil War Round Table and writes for *America's Civil War*. As part of his role as a contributing writer to the magazine, Harry will be writing book reviews



in brief in 2008. Like many Civil War enthusiasts, he has a family connection to the Civil War, in the person of his great-grandfather, John Smeltzer of Blair County, Pennsylvania. Born in 1846, John Smeltzer served in the 205th Pennsylvania, and was wounded at Petersburg. Perhaps unlike others, however, Harry learned of the ancestral connection very recently, long after becoming interested in the Civil War rather than having the personal link open that door.

In discussing his views on the current state of the preservation movement, Harry Smeltzer opines that today's preservationists sometimes are "too used to preaching to the choir." Here he emphasizes the need to be "more tactful" in explaining what we see as the merits of preservation to those, particularly landowners, for whom it might not be so clear. Along those lines, Harry believes that we preservationists need to be able to communicate to others in the general public (who remain unsure about why they should care and act accordingly) at least why they should care that preservation is important to us; without reaching that level of communication, he feels, it will be difficult to persuade these people to embrace preservation values.

Recent Contributors

ALICE & LARRY ARTHUR
WAYNE BLATTNER
KAREN SUSAN BROWN
DON CLEMENTS
JOHN T. COATES
CONSTELLATION ENERGY GROUP FOUNDATION
THOMAS & RITA DUNN
LAURENCE FREIHEIT
GEOFFREY G. GORSUCH
ROBERT GROELING
JACQUES HAGER
SUSAN M. HAUCK

PRESTON LAW
BOB LELAND
MATTHEW LOEWENSTEIN
RICHARD CHARLES MANCINI
JIM MCLEAN
JOHN J. MERLINO
JOHN MOORE
ORANGE COUNTY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
TIM & BETSY REISER
NORMAN SCHAEFER
FRANK SIEGEL

DOUGLAS A. SIKES
SHARON A. STAWSKI
BRAD TOOLE
JAMES P. WALSH
WESTERN RESERVE CIVIL WAR
ROUND TABLE
(IN MEMORY OF JIM ROGEL)
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	America's Civil War Antietam 140 th Special Issue	\$5.00	
	Civil War Regiments – Antietam Issues Paperback	\$12.00 or 2/\$20.00	
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	Stonewall Jackson Day by Day Paperback	\$10.00	
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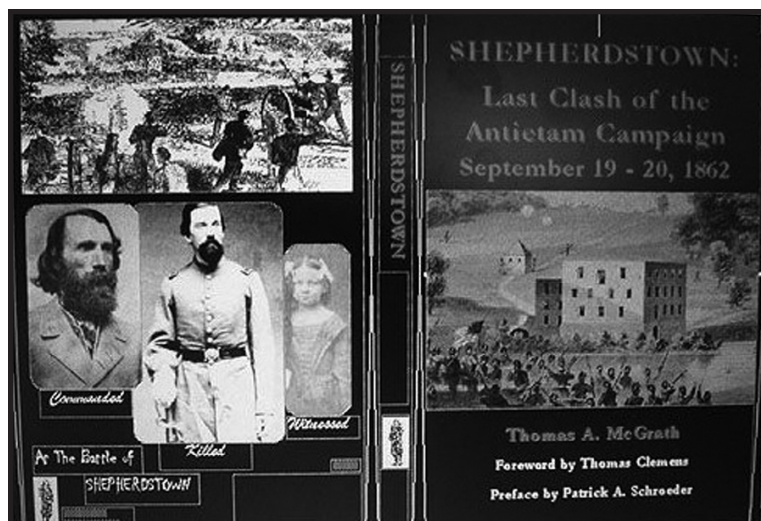
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Last Clash of the Antietam Campaign, September 19-20, 1862

A new book on the Battle of Shepherdstown, Shepherdstown: Last Clash of the Antietam Campaign, September 19-20, 1862 has been released. Written by Thomas A. McGrath with a foreword by SHAF president Dr. Thomas Clemens, the book can be ordered from the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association on their website, www.battleofshepherdstown.org <<http://www.battleofshepherdstown.org>> (click on SPBA Collectibles). A portion of the proceeds from each sale will go to the SPBA.

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