

THE PAMPLIN TELEGRAM



FIELD DISPATCHES

Community Engagement



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Pamplin Historical Park
& The National Museum
of the Civil War Soldier

6125 Boydton Plank Road
Petersburg, VA 23803
877-PAMPLIN (877-726-7546)
www.pamplinpark.org



Questions? Comments? Contributions
to the newsletter? We'd love to hear
from you! Please email us at:
memberservices@pamplinpark.org



LETTER FROM THE FRONT

Update from Pamplin Historical Park

It is interesting to read the class rolls of West Point graduates in the years leading up to the Civil War. Of the West Point graduates from the classes of 1833 through 1861, 977 were alive when the Civil War began. Of these men, 259 (26%) joined the Confederacy and 638 (65%) fought for the Union. Eight did not fight for either side. Thirty-nine graduates from these classes who had come to West Point from Southern states fought for the Union and 32 who had come from Northern states fought for the Confederacy. In this latter category were two members of the Class of 1836, Confederate General Danville Ledbetter, born in Leeds, Maine and Union General George Henry Thomas, born in Southampton County, Virginia. In an odd way they both contributed to a Union victory in one battle of the war - the Battle of Missionary Ridge fought in Chattanooga, Tennessee in late November of 1863.



Confederate General Danville Ledbetter

Danville Ledbetter was a very good student at West Point, graduating third in his class. He transferred from the 1st U.S. Artillery to a coveted position in the Army Engineers soon after graduation. After twenty years of service, he resigned his commission to become the chief engineer of the the State of Alabama in 1857. Choosing to follow his adopted home state and the Confederate cause, he entered service in the CSA in 1861, as a major in the army's regular engineers. He was sent to Mobile, Alabama, to oversee the construction of defenses. He soon became acting chief of the Confederacy's Engineer Bureau. Leadbetter was promoted to brigadier general in 1862, and began his Western Theater service.

George Henry Thomas graduated a respectable 12th in the Class of 1836, six places behind his best friend and roommate, William T. Sherman. After receiving three

brevet promotions during Mexican War and a near death experience from a Comanche arrow in 1860, Thomas made the difficult personal decision to stick with the Union cause at the outbreak of the Civil War. Serving with distinction as a wing commander in the Army of the Cumberland, Thomas earned everlasting fame as the "Rock of Chickamauga" for his stout defense against high odds at that battle in northwest Georgia.



Union General George Henry Thomas

On November 25, 1863, following failed attempts by Sherman to flank Confederate forces on Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga, General Grant ordered General Thomas to send the Army of the Cumberland up the middle. After capturing defenses at the base of the ridge, the Union forces found themselves in a bad spot, they could not stay defenseless at the bottom of the hill. So, the men decided on their own, without orders, to continue the charge up the hill. They soon found themselves in a safe zone created by the slope of the ridge. The last Confederate defensive lines had been put on the top of the ridge instead of the military crest. They had been put on the wrong spot by General Danville Ledbetter. The impetuous Union charge and victory at Missionary Ridge became legend, the siege of Chattanooga ended and Confederate forces retreating into Georgia.



Jerry Desmond
Executive Director

ATTENTION TO ORDERS!

Pamplin Historical Park News & Events

“Research is at the Heart of What We Do”

Several years ago a couple of historians conducted a survey to gauge the public's connections to history. They sought to learn how history influences people's daily lives and hopes for the future. The survey also inquired where people preferred to get their history and who they found most credible to dispense knowledge of the past. The researchers found that traditional history instruction from a textbook in school often left people unenthused about the subject. However, learning history at places like museums and historic sites rated much higher. The more engaged people were with history, the more useful they found it. In addition, those sites that helped the public think their own way through the past were deemed more reliable and relevant.

Being an interactive and engaging living history site we take the trust the public places in us very seriously. We go to great lengths to base the programs that we present in primary source evidence. We also fortify our work with the latest in historical scholarship. Does that take an enormous amount of effort? Yes! Is it worth the cost in resources of time, energy, and funds? Yes, indeed!



The basis of any program that we present is research. Our staff has received training—both through formal education and professional experience—in how to properly source documents, corroborate material, contextualize subject matter, and synthesize information. All of our educational and interpretive efforts receive thorough vetting. We are fortunate to have the resources that allow us this ability. On hand in our collections are thousands of artifacts and historical documents that provide much of the evidence we use to tell our stories of the past. Similarly, a robust on-site research library informs us through the latest historical scholarship and published primary source accounts. The influence of these resources are clearly evident in the programs we present to the public. Whether we are working on a tailored tour, a school-age program, a special event talk, or a general audience encounter interpretation experience, research is always the foundation.

We sincerely appreciate the confidence that the public places in museums and historic sites like Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier. We respect their willingness to come to us to better understand the past and we will continue to do everything possible to maintain their trust.



*Tim Talbott
Associate Director of Education,
Interpretation, Visitor Services
& Collections*

TOP RAIL

Park Programs & Exhibits

We were very pleased with the results of our Dollar Days promotion during the summer. Our walk-in attendance at the Park was up 123% over the same period in 2017. Visitation in August was the best of the decade so far, up 162%. It was especially nice to see so many family groups and local area residents enjoying the museum and grounds.

We were also excited to break another attendance record as Dr. James "Bud" Robertson spoke to a crowd of eighty-five at the September meeting of the Petersburg Civil War Roundtable. His speech about the relevance of the Civil War today was well-received. The Roundtable

University of Maryland, Dr. Jennifer Murray of Oklahoma State University, Dr. Lesley J. Gordon of University of Alabama, Dr. Margaret Creighton of Bates College, Maine, Dr. Catherine Clinton of University of Texas at San Antonio, Dr. Barbara Gannon of University of Central Florida and Diane Monroe Smith.

The Symposium begins on Friday night with a reception at the Park where attendees and speakers can meet and enjoy refreshments. Saturday is filled with lectures and opportunities to purchase published works by the speakers for autographs and participation in a silent auction. Sunday will feature additional speakers and a

Time Period	Walk-in Attendance	Total Attendance
August - 2018	Up 162%	Up 93%
Summer - June, July, August - 2018	Up 123%	Up 54%
Yearly - January to August - 2018	Up 64%	Up 13%

meets the first Thursday of each month (except June-August) at the Education Center at the Park at 7:00 PM. Our speakers for the rest of this year include Dr. Brian McKnight, the Director of Appalachian Studies at UV Wise (October), Emmanuel Dabney, Petersburg National Battlefield (November) and Jonathan Noyalas, the Director of the McCormick Civil War Institute at Shenandoah University.

Finally, we do have spots still available for the 22nd Annual Civil War Symposium: First Ladies of the Civil War on October 19-21, 2018. This year's symposium features a first ever all-female award-winning speaker panel of leading Civil War historians from across the country. The speakers are; Dr. Anne Sarah Rubin of

panel discussion to include Dr. Françoise Bonnell, Director of the U.S. Army Women's Museum at Fort Lee, VA. For more information go to our website at <https://pamplinpark.org/event/22nd-annual-civil-war-symposium-first-ladies-civil-war-history/> or call toll free at (877) PAMPLIN.



Jerry Desmond
Executive Director

BEHIND THE LINES

In-depth in the collections

One of the most exciting aspects of working in a museum is when you have the occasion to collaborate with other history professionals and enthusiasts (nerds). Often times this means coordinating the loans of items to and from other institutions for special exhibits; last year Pamplin Historical Park was able to provide Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Park with items belonging to Sterling Price for an exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of the general and governor's death, and in the coming year the Park will similarly be aiding the Virginia Museum of History and Culture and the American Civil War Museum in Richmond with upcoming special events. Other times collaboration looks like digging through archives for primary source evidence to support a historian's research for upcoming books and scholarly articles.



Just recently, the Park had the amazing opportunity to collaborate with two museums simultaneously: the Hampton Roads Naval Museum and the Mariners' Museum. Joseph Miechle and Don Darcy of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum approached Pamplin Historical Park regarding the possibility of studying a rare piece on exhibit in the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier: a Coston Signal Flare Gun. The Coston Gun is a handheld device in which flares are loaded and ignited via percussion cap. Originally put into use by the United States Navy at the outbreak of the civil war to send messages from ship to ship at night, it was soon after adopted by the Army as well as an effective means of quick communication over long distances.

The Hampton Roads Naval Museum was interested in taking a 3D scan of the Coston Gun that could later be used to make a 3D printed copy. 3D scanning is a fantastically helpful new technology in the museum world. 3D scans provide more detailed and comprehensive imaging of the items in our collections than can be achieved with traditional photography, allowing us to inspect items from every angle digitally without needing to retrieve an item from storage and manually handle it, causing wear and tear on fragile artifacts.



3D printing takes things a step further. It creates faithful scale facsimiles that can be used as hands-on learning tools. Instead of only being able to passively observe artifacts through glass, 3D printed items have the ability to enrich visitors' experiences by being able to touch as well. Allen Mordeca from the Mariners Museum and President of the Tidewater Maritime Living History Association is hoping that the research and printings made will enable him to create a fully-functioning Coston Signal Flare Gun that can be used for living history demonstrations.

Pamplin Historical Park is proud to be part of an active community of individuals and institutions dedicated to studying and preserving history and educating the public. Knowledge is like money: to be of value it must circulate, and in circulating it can increase in quantity, and hopefully, in value. – Louis L'Amour



*Carley Elder
Admissions, Retail
& Collections Manager*

HUZZAH! HUZZAH!

Volunteer News

We know that everyone's time is valuable and we are very grateful that our volunteers choose to spend some of their time with us. We kicked off the summer season by showing our appreciation to our volunteers. We have several ways in which we try to recognize our volunteers and show our gratitude for all their hard work. We have the end of school season picnic, our volunteer spotlights, and the various volunteer field trips.

The picnic at the end of the school season is a way for the Park to recognize any new volunteers and celebrate the continuing support of the veteran volunteers. Each new volunteer, who "survives" the hordes of school children, is presented with a "Star Volunteer" pin they may wear on their shirt when they work. For every additional year that they are still around, the volunteers are given another pin with the number of years of service on it. Our volunteers who have been here awhile are acquiring quite a pin collection at this point.

Another way we try and acknowledge our volunteers is by showcasing them on our Facebook page. Over the course of the summer, we interviewed several of our volunteers both new and returners. We took their photo and wrote up a brief paragraph about why they like volunteering and what they enjoy in their free time. We posted these spotlights every few days on the Park's Facebook page so the community could get to know the wonderful people who take time out of their week to come support us.

The biggest thing we do to express our thanks to our volunteers is to take them on a field trip at least once if not twice a year. We try to pick a local historical (not necessarily Civil War) site and plan a half day trip. On June 20, around 20 volunteers made the short jaunt to Richmond for a behind the scenes tour of the Virginia Museum of History and Culture's Civil War collection. Many people met at the Park and carpoled up to Richmond, while the rest just met us there. The volunteers were treated to a wonderful tour of several of the galleries before being taken to the rare book room where they were shown some truly unique pieces. After the tour was concluded, those who wished, went out to lunch at a local spot for some delicious food and lively conversation. A good time was had by all! We are already planning the next one.



Every museum professional and patron knows that we cannot succeed without our volunteers. The time and energy they dedicate to our site is amazing! And all out of the goodness of their heart. That is why every year we try to take a moment, recognize all our volunteers, and let them know in some small way that we truly do appreciate all they have done for us throughout the year. It may only be a shiny pin or a half day field trip but it is a token of something much greater, our extreme gratitude to those who often go unnoticed. The year may not be over yet, but our volunteers deserve to be credited for all the work they have done thus far and all the great work they will continue to do.



*Christine Wuebker
Senior Education, Interpretation
& Volunteer Specialist*

RECRUITS & CONSCRIPTS

New Members to Pamplin Historical Park

Jordan Mock
Herbert Kirks
Travis Lee
John Lee
Daniel Lee
William Linton
Steven Zinn
John McAuley
Trey McCraw
Tracey La Rue
Katherine Loden
Christy Lumm

Upper Arlington, OH
Petersburg, VA
DeWitt, VA
Jetersville, VA
Dewitt, VA
Tyner, NC
West Lake, TX
New Market, AL
Malden, NC
Fredericksburg, VA
Sutherland, VA
Newport News, VA

Michael Altman
Baylor Blair
Katherine Blair
John Ashworth
Norman Harvey
Charles Reed
Dennis Williams
Keith McNure
Pam Holstrom
David Buck
Michael Grussom
David Young
Linda Brown

Richmond, VA
Seattle, WA
Snohomish, WA
Richmond, VA
Richmond, VA
Richmond, VA
Ft. Lee, VA
Smithfield, VA
Richmond, VA
South Prince George, VA
North Dinwiddie, VA
Manson, NC
Blackstone, VA

Welcome to the Regiment!



Join the Team!

Make a valuable contribution
to your museum while doing
something interesting and fun!

For more information contact
Volunteer Coordinator Christine Wuebker
at (804) 861-2408 or
cwuebker@pamplinpark.org.

COMING EVENTS



22nd Annual Civil War Symposium Oct. 19-21, 2018

The Symposium begins on Friday night with a reception at the Park where

attendees and speakers can meet and enjoy refreshments. Saturday is filled with lectures and opportunities to purchase published works by the speakers for autographs and participation in a silent auction. Sunday will feature additional speakers and a panel discussion. Symposium pricing is \$339.00 per attendee, which includes all lectures, the Friday night reception, two mid-morning coffee breaks, two lunches, and a Saturday night banquet. Pre-registration is required.



Symposium Tour Oct. 19, 2018 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

The tour features two world class museums including the U.S.

Army Quartermaster Museum and the U.S. Army Women's Museum. Tour attendees will enjoy a lunch on this active military base in one of the mess halls alongside active duty soldiers. A U.S. Army historian will also guide attendees through the fort's training trenches that remain from World War I, while sharing parallels between the Civil War and the Great War. Pre-registration and \$89 payment is required. Call (804) 861-2408 for more information.



Voices from the Shadows Oct. 26-27, 2018 7:30 pm & 8:30 pm

Join us for a Halloween themed

event Voices from the Shadows. Costumed guides portraying "agents of death" will lead participants by candlelight on a spine-chilling tour through the historic Tudor Hall Plantation and battlefield that were fought over generations ago. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 6-12.

BOARD OF EXAMINATION

Trivia Contest

Q: Colonel Alexander Bliss (1827 – 1896) of Massachusetts had an unremarkable career as a quartermaster in the Union Army. However, he came into possession of a rare item during the war. What was the item and where is that item located today?

You can win, too!

Submit your answer along with your name and address by October 31, to: triviacontest@pamplinpark.org. All correct responses will be entered into a drawing to select a winner. The winner will receive a \$25 gift certificate to The Civil War Store and will be mentioned in the next newsletter.

Last Issue's Q & A

Q: After his death on April 15, 1865, an item was found in President Lincoln's coat pocket that he might have acquired on his visit to Petersburg on April 3, 1865. What was the item?

A: When Abraham Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1865, he was carrying two pairs of spectacles and a lens polisher, a pocketknife, an oversize white Irish linen handkerchief with "A. Lincoln" embroidered in red cross-stitch; a sleeve button with a gold initial "L" on dark blue enamel, a brown leather wallet containing a five-dollar Confederate note which may have been acquired as a souvenir when Lincoln visited Petersburg and Richmond earlier in the month, and eight newspaper clippings, including several favorable to the president and his policies.

Given to his son Robert Todd upon Lincoln's death, these everyday items, which through association with tragedy had become like relics, were kept in the Lincoln family for more than seventy years. They were donated to the Library of Congress in 1937 as part of a gift from Lincoln's granddaughter, Mary Lincoln Isham. She was the first daughter of Robert Todd Lincoln.



Congratulations to **Charles Downs** of Clear Spring, Maryland! His answer was selected from all the correct answers to the last trivia question. Mr. Downs wins a \$25 gift certificate to The Civil War Store.