

The King of Prussia Gazette

Preserving Upper Merion's Past to Enlighten its Future

Volume II, Number Two

Summer 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Michael Morrison

Our New Home

Earlier this year, we were notified by e-mail that the room we were using in the Upper Merion Township Building to archive our photographs, artifacts, and manuscripts was going to be turned over to Rose Hykel as the new Tax Collector's office. Township officials were happy to extend us the use of the room until the fall, but we decided that the most convenient time for us to leave was in April.

Fortunately, we maintain an excellent relationship with Father James Evans at Christ Church Old Swedes, and it was he who first suggested the move, and extended an invitation to use a portion of his office for our work. So, on April 2, we packed up our treasures and moved to the church, where we were literally welcomed with open arms. Father Evans and many of the volunteers from the church congregation have rearranged the office and added a desk for us to work. There is also a small library where we can keep our collection of books and manuscripts where they will not be exposed to the harmful effects of daylight.

All said, it has been a seamless transition, and we look forward to unpacking so as to begin filing and conserving our ever-expanding collection to share with our membership. On behalf of the membership, we extend our thanks to Father Evans, the vestry, and the congregation at Christ Church Old Swedes for their kindness and hospitality, and we look forward to a long and productive relationship.

In each issue, it is my pleasure to recognize someone who has proven they have an interest in preserving our rich local history. No one cares more about maintaining our historic presence in the community than Carl Schultheis and Joan Kellett. Carl was the fabric that held this society together over many uncertain years, and Joan's loyalty to the community is that of legend. Both are to be commended for their undying support and dedication, for without them, Upper Merion would be a lesser place.

The King of Prussia Historical Society, the Tricentennial Committee, and the Township Library are partnering with Christ Old Swedes Church to honor the Upper Merionites who made significant contributions during America's Civil War. This year being the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, it is most appropriate to remember those

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who sacrificed so much for our country during those troubling times. The event is planned for Saturday, June 29 at Christ Old Swedes Church. In the planning are presentations, re-enactments, a concert of Civil War era hymns and songs, and tours of the church and the graves of the veterans and citizens who supported the War. Refreshments will also be available in the Church Hall. *The requested admission fee is \$5 per person or \$10 per family, 100% of which go toward the preservation of Christ Church Old Swedes. Additional contributions are welcome.*



*Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863
and
the contributions and dedication of the citizens of Upper Merion during the war effort.*

The Town Crier—updates from the Society

OUR CHARTER MEMBERS

We acknowledge our Charter Members and thank them for their support: Emma Carson, Father James Evans, Dave and Marianne Furman, Frank Luther, Dr. Carl Schultheis, Raymond Doreian, and Van Weiss.



CONGRATULATIONS!

Our congratulations go out to Kush Gupta who earned his Eagle Scout Award in April. Kush prepared an audio tour of historic King of Prussia to help celebrate the Tricentennial. The King of Prussia Historical Society through Michael Morrison, Marianne Hooper, and Frank Luther assisted Kush in this project. Society member, Mark Sheppard of M&M Music Masters, narrated the tour.

Kush will be attending Johns Hopkins in the Fall.

INTERESTED IN WRITING?

The Society welcomes articles prepared by its members. Contact Frank Luther if you might be interested in writing and sharing an article for our publication.

OFFICE SPACE

Through the generosity of Father James Evans and the vestry at Christ Old Swedes Church in Swedesburg, The King of Prussia Historical Society now has office space in the church hall building. Representatives of the Society are available there every Tuesday morning from 10:00 to noon.

GETTYSBURG ANNIVERSARY

The Historical Society, the Tricentennial Committee, and the Township Library are hosting a special event on Saturday, June 29 at Christ Old Swedes Church to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 3-5, 1863 and to remember the contributions and dedication of the citizens of Upper Merion during the war effort.

COMMUNITY DAY AND PARADE

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 7, and come out! As part of the Tricentennial Celebration, you and/or your group are invited to march or watch from the sidelines, then head on over to Heuser Park for the rest of the festivities!

INFO ABOUT UPPER MERION

Is there a question you have about some aspect of the township's history? You can submit your question to us at info@kophistory.org and we will provide an answer in a future issue.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that our mailing address has been changed to:
King of Prussia Historical Society
612 General Scott Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Attn.: Frank Luther

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the King of Prussia Historical Society is to preserve and interpret the history of Upper Merion Township as relevant to its various neighborhoods of Gulph Mills, Gypsy Hills, Croton Woods, King of Prussia, Valley Forge, Abrams, Belmont, Town Center, Swedesburg/King Manor, Henderson, and Swedeland, as well as the areas of Rebel Hill, Port Kennedy, and Hughes Park. The Society's goal is to stimulate public interest and to support the township's heritage through educational programs and public events focusing on preserving the past and shaping the future.

MEETINGS

Members and friends of the King of Prussia Historical Society are invited to regular meetings nine times a year. No meetings will be scheduled in July, August, and December. A topic dealing with local history will be presented following a brief business meeting. Meetings will be held at 2:00 in the Upper Merion Township Building.

An "Annual Meeting" will be held each January. The purpose of this meeting will include the election of Directors and Officers, the reporting of the business of the Society, and for any other objectives that may be deemed necessary.

During this Tricentennial year, the Society's meetings are being coordinated with the Speakers Series meetings scheduled for the township's 300th anniversary celebration.

VOLUNTEERS

The Society benefits greatly by the knowledge and expertise of dedicated and capable volunteers whose efforts enable all of our varied activities, from coordinating our public programs to working with our archives and managing our publications and our website.

We are always looking for new people to step up and to take on new projects. If interested, please come to a meeting and talk to us or contact us by electronic or conventional mail.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Student/Senior (65+)	\$35.00
Individual	\$40.00
Family Household	\$50.00
Patron	\$125.00
Charter	\$250.00



The Gettysburg Cyclorama painted by Paul Dominique Philippoteaux

"THEN I AM PERFECTLY SATISFIED..." : SAMUEL K. ZOOK

Samuel K. Zook was born in Tredyffrin, Chester County on March 27, 1821 to David and Eleanor Zook. As a small child, he and his family were forced to move to Valley Forge to live with his maternal grandmother. The history of Valley Forge, the tradition of George Washington's winter encampment there during the American Revolutionary War, and the heroic tales of George Washington and his own father, who was a major in the Revolutionary War, had a strong impact on him and sparked Samuel's interest in the military. He became a lieutenant in the Pennsylvania militia at the age of nineteen as well as an adjutant in the 100th PA regiment.

Zook became a proficient telegraph operator and worked on crews to string wires as far west as the Mississippi River. After moving to New York City, he became the superintendent of the Washington and New York Telegraph Company and made several discoveries in electric science. In New York City, he also joined the 6th New York Governor's Guard (militia) regiment and had achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel by the time the Civil War broke out.

At the Battle of Fredericksburg, he had his horse shot out from under him and was momentarily stunned, but managed to lead his men to within sixty yards of the Stone Wall, one of the farthest Union advances of the battle. His brigade suffered 527 of the 12,000 Union casualties that night. General Hancock praised Zook's attack for its "spirit". Zook wrote afterward, "Now by God, if I don't get my star, I'm coming home." He was promoted to brigadier general in March 1863.

Despite his successful promotion, however, the battle of Fredericksburg affected him deeply:

I walked over the field, close under the enemy's picket line, last night about 3 o'clock. The ground was strewn thickly with corpses of the hero's who perished there on Saturday. I never realized before what war was. I never before felt so horribly since I was born. To see men dashed to pieces by shot & torn into shreds by shells during the heat and crash of battle is bad enough God knows, but to walk alone amongst slaughtered brave in the "still small hours" of the night would make the bravest man living "blue". God grant I may never have to repeat my last night's experience.

—Samuel K. Zook, letter to E. I. Wade, December 16, 1862

(Continued on page 4)

PICTURE THIS!

This tombstone is found in Christ Old Swedes Church in Swedesburg. It commemorates one of Upper Merion's volunteers who served in the Civil War. This soldier entered the army as a lieutenant in Company I, Fifty-First Pennsylvania volunteers. Col. John Hartranft, afterwards

Governor of Pennsylvania, was commander. He was engaged in the battles of Roanoke Island, Camden, second Bull Run, Chantilly, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, Jackson (Mississippi), Campell's Staddon, the siege of Knoxville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania. On the 12th of May 1864, he was fatally wounded by musket shots in the thigh and arm, carried from the field into Fredericksburg, and placed in the upper story of a factory, where he remained for four days. He was later moved to the officers' hospital in Georgetown, where he lingered until June 7, 1864. Whose body was brought home and interred in the cemetery of old Swedes Christ Church in Upper Merion on June 12, 1864?

(Answer on page 7)

**"THEN I AM PERFECTLY SATISFIED..."**

(Continued from page 3)

At the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, Zook's brigade fought in the defensive line around the Chancellor Mansion where his men suffered 188 casualties. Disabled again by rheumatism, he left on medical leave for Washington, but rejoined his brigade at the end of June to march into Pennsylvania for the Gettysburg Campaign.

On July 2, 1863, the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Brig. Gen. John C. Caldwell's division, including Zook's brigade, was sent to reinforce the crumbling III Corps line that was being assaulted by the Confederate corps of Lt. Gen. James Longstreet. Zook was directed toward the Wheatfield to reinforce the brigade of Col. Régis de Trobriand and to fill a gap near the Stony Hill. On horseback, Zook led his men up the hill, which attracted the attention of men from the advancing 3rd and 7th South Carolina Infantry regiments. He was struck by rifle fire in the shoulder, chest, and abdomen, and taken behind the lines for medical treatment at a toll house on the Baltimore Pike.

At Gettysburg he was in command of his brigade and received the wound which cost him his life. A minie ball entered the left side of the stomach, perforating his sword belt, and lodging in the spine. He was taken to a house about half a mile in the rear of the field. On Friday morning he was taken two and a half miles further to the rear, to a farm house abandoned by its occupants, where he died at a quarter before five in the afternoon. He was cool and composed to the last. About fifteen minutes before his death he turned and quietly asked the doctor---after hearing those who had bid him hope---about how long he had to live. A little while previously he had requested his aid, Lieutenant Favill, to ascertain and let him know how the action was going. The latter officer reported that the bands had been ordered to the front, the flags were flying, and the enemy in retreat. "Then I am perfectly satisfied," said the General, "and ready to die."

He died from his wounds on July 3. His body was initially shipped to New York City, where he would lie in state in the Governor's Room at City Hall. His father requested his son's remains be shipped back to his hometown, which they were. He was interred at Montgomery Cemetery in Norristown in February of 1864 near the grave of General Hancock.

One of his soldiers in the 57th New York later characterized Zook as "a good disciplinarian; he hated cowardice and shams; had no patience with a man that neglected duty; was blunt, somewhat severe, yet good hearted ... a born soldier, quick of intellect, and absolutely without fear".

On October 9, 1867, the War Department announced Zook's posthumous promotion to brevet major-general for "gallant and meritorious services at the Battle of Gettysburg". A monument still stands near the Wheatfield Road in Gettysburg to commemorate the spot where Zook was mortally wounded.

The funeral took place on Monday afternoon, under the auspices of the Committee on National Affairs. The body was laid out in state in the Governor's room in the City Hall, contained in a most costly rosewood coffin, secured with diamond shaped silver nails, and otherwise elegantly decorated with flowers and flags. On the lid of the coffin were the sword, sash, belt, and cap of the deceased General, besides a beautiful wreath of flowers, encircling a silver plate containing the following inscription:

BRIGADIER GENERAL
JAMES K. ZOOK, U. S. V.
Killed in action, at Gettysburg, July 2, 1863.
Aged 41 years.

PICTURE THIS! Answer



Elizabeth Holstein Shainline married George, son of William and Maria Bisbing of Upper Merion Township on December 13, 1849. During the war, George W. Bisbing entered the army as a lieutenant in Company I, Fifty-First Pennsylvania volunteers. Col. John Hartranft, afterwards Governor of Pennsylvania, was commander.

Bisbing was in the battles of Roanoke Island, Camden, second Bull Run, Chantilly, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, Jackson (Mississippi), Campell's Staddon, the siege of Knoxville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania. At the battle of Antietam, his regiment, with the Fifty-First New York, held the bridge over the creek under a terrific fire of artillery. While on the bridge, Lieutenant Bisbing's sword was struck by a piece of shell and broken in half, but he was able to escape serious injury. He was promoted to the rank of Captain at Camp Reno, Newbern, North Carolina in June, 1862. On the 16th of July, 1863 he was wounded at Jackson, Mississippi. After recovering from his wound, he participated in all of the battles in which his regiment was engaged. On the 12th of May 1864, he was fatally wounded by musket shots in the thigh and arm, carried from the field into Fredericksburg, and placed in the upper story of a factory, where he remained for four days. He was later moved to the officers' hospital in Georgetown, where he lingered until June 7, 1864. His body was brought home and interred in the cemetery of Old Swedes Christ Church in Upper Merion on June 12, 1864. His tombstone was inscribed: "Never truer soul/Than his sped to his goal./Whose legend marked our roll, "slain at his duty".

On Sunday, June 7, as Captain Bisbing lay dying in the officers' hospital, his wife, sitting by him, was watching the ebbing away of his life. Suddenly rousing up, his voice, which had previously been faint and feeble, rang out in a startlingly clear, loud tone. "Lieutenant! Lieutenant!" A wounded lieutenant lying near him answered, "What is it, Captain?" He replied, "I am not calling you. It is Lieutenant Colonel Schall. I saw him fall and thought the way he was lying perhaps he was dead." His wife tried to soothe him by saying, "The colonel was all right," and the captain sank back exhausted on his pillow. But a few moments passed, and the same words were repeated in the same clear tone, "Lieutenant! Lieutenant! and again he was soothed and became quiet. Now fully conscious that death was near, the brave soldier, in a the message, that "he gave his life freely for his coun-

try." Then commending his wife and children to God's loving care, in two hours he peacefully passed away.

When Mrs. Bisbing returned home with her husband's body to Upper Merion, she learned that Lieutenant Colonel Schall had fallen, as the Captain had described two days previously, shot through the neck at Cold Harbor. His body also was brought home for burial, and was interred in Montgomery Cemetery in Norristown on the day preceding the Captain's funeral.

Bisbing's tombstone inscription:
*Never truer soul
 Than his sped to his goal.
 Whose legend marked our
 roll, "slain at his duty".*



Photo, courtesy of Mike Bertram

Samuel K. Zook Monument at Gettysburg.

**TO THE MEMORY OF
 SAMUEL
 KOSZIUSKO ZOOK
 BREVET MAJOR
 GENERAL U.S. VOLS
 WHO FELL MORTALLY
 WOUNDED AT OR NEAR
 THIS SPOT WHILE
 GALLANTLY LEADING
 HIS BRIGADE IN BATTLE
 JULY 2ND 1863
 ERECTED BY GEN. ZOOK
 POST NO. 11 G. A. R.
 NORRISTOWN, PA
 JULY 25TH, 1862**



THREE YEARS IN FIELD HOSPITALS

by Anna M. Holstein

(The following excerpts are taken from Chapter Two in Anna M. Holstein's *THREE YEARS IN FIELD HOSPITALS*, published in 1867 by J. B. Lippincott & Company, Philadelphia.)

INTRODUCTION

This simple story of hospital scenes, and the unpretending sketches of the few brave soldiers to which they allude, is arranged from the meager notes which were hurriedly written at the time they occurred, when there was not the most remote idea of ever preparing them for publication.

The events of the war are "graven as with an iron pen" upon my memory. To preserve some slight memento of them for friends at home, was the primary object of these notes: to gratify the same persons are they now grouped together.

*Mrs. H.
UPPER MERION,
Montgomery County, Penna., October 1, 1866.*

We remained at home only long enough for Mr. H. to recuperate sufficiently to bear the fatigues of travel. While he was still unfit for the journey, the great battle of Gettysburg, July 1st, 2d, and 3d, 1863, was fought; within one week after it, we were on our way hither; reaching the town late in the evening, spent the night upon the parlor floor of one of the hotels; with a satchel for pillow, slept soundly. In the morning went to the Field Hospital, where we were most warmly welcomed by our old friends of the second corps. The wounded, at that time, lay just where they had been placed when carried from the battle—friend and foe resting together.

*"Beside a stricken field I stood;
On the torn turf, on grass and wood,
Hung heavily the dew of blood.
Still, in their fresh mounds lay the slain,
But, all the air was quick with pain,
And gusty sighs, and tearful rain."*

We soon found where and how to resume work, which we had so lately left off: a tent was promptly prepared for our use; it was not many hours until the "diet kitchen" was in full operation; with the large and valuable supplies taken on with us, the "institution" moved on in a wonderfully smooth, efficient manner. To aid in relieving the suffering among these wounded men was the "Germantown Field Hospital Association" formed; I mention it here because this was the first point where it came prominently into notice. They sent as their representative the well-known

this was the first point where it came prominently into notice. They sent as their representative the well-known rector of one of their churches, Rev. B. W. Morris; his services as chaplain are gratefully remembered by many in these eventful times. An incalculable amount of good resulted from this new "Association:" to me was given the great pleasure of distributing the articles which they contributed; and, until the close of the war, appeals for money or hospital comforts ever met with a ready, cheerful response, and an abundant supply of all that was needed. They afterward became one of the most valuable aids to the "United States Sanitary Commission" to be found in Pennsylvania.



The scenes around Gettysburg were horrible in the extreme: the green sod everywhere stained with the life-blood of dying men; the course of the fearful struggle marked by the "ridges" which furrowed the ground until one great hillock would be pointed out where hundreds, perhaps, had sternly fought and bravely fallen. To persons unfamiliar with such things, as sad a sight as any are the heaps of blood-stained clothing, the shattered muskets, the discarded knapsacks, disabled cannon and caissons, and the innumerable heaps of slain horses which literally cover the hard-fought field.

For a few weeks, the events daily occurring in the hospitals were most painful; they might be summed up, briefly, to be: fearfully wounded men; nurses watching for the hour when suffering would cease, and the soldier be at rest; parents and friends crowding to the hospital, hoping for the best, yet fearing the worst; strong men praying that they might live just long enough to see, but once more, wife, or child, or mother.

After this battle, relief came promptly; it was upon our own soil, and the "great heart of the people" was stirred to its very depths, when they knew that among us thousands of our countrymen lay with ghastly wounds,—men who had stood as a "living wall" between us and the foe, to save our homes from rebel rule.

All of home luxuries that could be carried, were lavished with an unsparing hand by a now deeply grateful people. ...

These days have left their impress upon all who were actors in them. Now, on this calm morning upon which I write, there comes thronging before me a vast array of forms and faces that I had thought forgotten. "Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise!"—and so the swiftly changing scenes appear. ...

While the hospitals remained in the woods, the number of deaths daily was very large; as soon as the removal to the clover-field was accomplished, where all were in the sun, the change for the better was very decided; the night after, only two deaths occurred. During the few weeks the wounded remained there, my notes were too hurried and unsatisfactory for reference; they merely repeat that one and another has passed "to the land of rest."

Large numbers of rebel wounded, numbering thousands, were left in our corps hospital; and though attended by their own surgeons, they neglected them so shamefully that it was an act of common humanity to provide better treatment for men helpless and suffering,—prisoners as they were. One of our surgeons volunteered to undertake the duty of attending them, and others were detailed for that purpose. Their condition when captured was so filthy that the task of waiting upon them was a revolting one.

All of our wounded that could bear transportation were forwarded, as rapidly as it could be done, to hospitals in Pennsylvania and Maryland. By the 7th of August there still remained three thousand, who were moved into tents at the United States General Hospital on the York Turnpike; when our corps hospital was merged into this, we removed there; I remained as its matron until the close.

While the wounded were being brought in from different directions, a rebel was placed in a tent of Union men; one of the number protested against having him among them. As they seemed to pay no heed to his objections, ended by saying that "he enlisted to kill rebels, and certainly as they left him there, his crutches would be the death of him—he could use them, if not the musket." The attendants, finding the soldier was in earnest and the rebel in mortal fear of him, good humoredly took him among his own countrymen. In opposite extremes of the camp this same scene occurred: two men protesting that they "enlisted to kill rebels," and would not have them

under the same shelter.

About one-third of the camp were rebels; this proportion was almost uniformly kept up; rebel ladies from Baltimore and other places were permitted to come and wait upon their own wounded; as matron, it was part of my duties to attend to the distribution of delicacies, etc.; I have waited upon them hour after hour, as kindly as I ever did upon our own loyal men. All of this was before I had among those who were starved in Southern prisons; after having seen them, the task might have been a difficult one. The orders were imperative in the hospital: no difference was permitted in the treatment of the two. ...

In the "Union tent," as it was called, standing alone in a rebel row, I found a boy of seventeen, wounded and "sick unto death," whose wan, emaciated face, and cheerful endurance of suffering, at once enlisted my sympathy. He was the son of a clergyman in Maine; and in answer to inquiries about his wound, told me, with a feeling of evident pride, that "early in the day his right leg was shattered and left upon Seminary Hill, and he carried to the rear; that the stump was doing badly; he had enlisted simply because it was his duty to do so; now he had no regret or fear, let the result be as it might." I wrote immediately to his home, to tell them he was sinking rapidly; my next briefly stated how very near his end was; there were but a few days more of gentle endurance, and the presentiment of the child we had so tenderly cared for proved true—when, with murmured words of "home and heaven," his young life ebbed away—another added to the many thousands given for the life of the nation. One week after his burial his father came; with a heart saddened with his great loss, said that his eldest had fallen at "Malvern Hill," the second was with the army at Fernandina, and Albert, his youngest born, slept with the heroes who had made a world-wide fame at Gettysburg. They were his treasures, but he gave them freely for his country.

Another, the only child of a widowed mother, from Montgomery County, Penna., lay from July until October, calmly bearing untold agony from a wound which he certainly knew must result in death; yet his one anxious thought, constantly expressed, was: "Mother, do not grieve; it is best, and right; bury me with my comrades on the field." So, at sunrise one bright autumn morning, his soul went up to God,—the casket which had held it, we laid to rest among the nation's honored dead in Gettysburg Cemetery.

This bereaved mother, who gave her all for her country,—her eldest upon Antietam's hard-fought field, Willie at Gettysburg,—with the thousands of others who have made the same precious offering, are names to be gratefully remembered and cherished while the record of this war endures.

...

In September, while the hospital was still crowded with patients, a festival was given for their amusement. The surgeon in charge, with the other officers, entered heartily into the plan. The Christian Commission took an active part in completing the arrangements, soliciting and obtaining abundant supplies of fruits and delicacies from friends in Philadelphia; to this were added contributions from the town and adjoining counties, making a grand feast of good things. The day selected, proving bright and balmy, tempted many, who had not yet ventured outside their tents, into the open air, hoping they might be able to participate in the promised enjoyments. The streets and tents of the hospital had been decorated with evergreens, and everything on this gala day had a corresponding cheerful look. Hospital life, with its strict military rule, is so wearisome and monotonous, that what would be the most trivial pleasure at other times and places, is here magnified into a matter of great importance. ...

Among the few valued friends who regularly met in our tent, when the fatiguing duties of the day were over, was frequently discussed the propriety of placing upon some part of the field a flag, to manifest our sympathy and esteem for those who "here fought and won this great battle for our liberties." Some intimation of the plan proposed reached our friends at home, and directly we heard that a flag would be sent by persons residing in our immediate vicinity. To two of the ladies most active in procuring it, was given the pleasure of conveying it to Gettysburg. Many of the wounded knew when it arrived, and the arrangements being made to receive it; at their request, the flag (twenty-five feet in length) was carried through the streets of the hospital, then taken to "Round Top." All who could leave the hospital—officers, ladies, and soldiers—joined the procession. A large concourse of persons manifested, by their presence, the pleasure they felt in the event. Appropriate and eloquent addresses were delivered by David Wills, Esq., of Gettysburg; J. T. Seymour, of New York; and Surgeon H. C. May, of the 145th New York Vols.

Dr. May gave a graphic account of the battle as he saw it, describing in glowing words the many historic localities now before us; and, explaining the purpose which had brought there so large an assemblage, continued: "The occasion of our meeting together on this rock-bound, rock-capped hill, to-day, needs no explanation from me. The most rapturous bursts of eloquence, from the most gifted orator of the land, could not intensify your interest in the spot on which now we tread. When the golden rays of the rising sun lit up this elevation on the morning of July 1st, 1863,

lit up this elevation on the morning of July 1st, 1863, 'Round Top' was scarcely known beyond the few honest husbandmen who dwell beneath its shadow. When that same sun was setting behind the western horizon on the evening of July 4th, and again illumined the foliage now immediately over our heads, the name of 'Round Top' was on the tongues of millions all over the land. It has been in contemplation, for some weeks, by a few friends at the General Hospital, to erect a national flag on the summit of 'Round Top,' constituting, as it docs, one of the flanks of the Federal position, and its elevation being so singularly located that the flag could be seen for miles in every direction. The desire was simply expressed, a short time since, to a circle of patriotic ladies of a township of Montgomery County,—the immediate vicinity of 'Valley Forge,' of precious Revolutionary memory,—that they would contribute a flag for this purpose. Soon the word came back that the work was in progress; later still, that it was successfully accomplished. Willing hands from the hospital have prepared and erected this staff: and it is our delight and pride, to-day, to behold the beautiful folds of our 'Starry Banner' floating in the breeze from this hallowed spot, mid the booming of artillery and the sweet strains of music---a slight token of affection to the memory of our gallant comrades who 'sleep the sleep that knows no waking,' on every side of us." ...

...and the dedication of the National Cemetery.



Gettysburg National Cemetery, National Park Service

During the ceremonies of that day, we were so fortunate as to have a place directly in front and within a few feet of our now martyred President, and there heard distinctly every word he uttered of that memorable speech, which will last while the Republic endures. There was now, November, 1863, nothing more to be done at Gettysburg, and we gladly turned our faces homeward. Remained there but a few days, until—at the urgent request of the Sanitary Commission—I consented to call together the various "Soldiers' Aid Societies" throughout the State, and in these meetings to tell the ladies what I knew personally of the wants of the hospitals,—the best way of preparing delicacies for their use, the clothing most required, and so on. It was impossible to be an idler while this gigantic struggle was in progress. The current of swiftly passing events had, all unconsciously, drifted me to this point; I yielded to its force, and commenced this

additional labor as part of the work which came unsought. There was not the least recognition of self in any part of it; had there been, it would have been impossible to have gone on with it. While talking, the disagreeableness of the situation was all forgotten, and thinking only of far-off hospital scenes. ---the lonely, dreary couch of the wounded or sick man, uncheered by loving care of wife or child,—the weary tramp of the sentinel, or the wretched life of men in trenches, I could do nothing less than tell to other women the story that I knew so well,—of want, of suffering unparalleled, of bravery and endurance unequalled,—and then remind them how much was in their power to soothe and comfort those on battle-field, or hospital, by the preparation of articles for their use.



IN SERVICE TO HER COUNTRY: SARAH PRIEST

"When the first sounds of war were heard, and there dimly dawned the startling fact that traitors were imperiling the life of the nation, we all remember how thousands rushed to arms at our country's call, eager to proffer aid in this her hour of need. City, village, and country alike gave, as their first offering, their young men, the pride and strength of the land."

In her memoirs, *Three Years in Field Hospitals of the Army of the Potomac*, Anna M. Holstein continued, "I'd first that our quiet valley knew of the preparation for war, a company was being gathered from about our very doors... As the soldiers went out from among us, there came the yearning wish to lessen somewhat the hardships of their lonely camp life, especially when sick in hospital or wounded. ...With all loyal women of the land, I worked zealously in their behalf; worked, because there was irresistible impulse *to do, to act.*"

However, one of those who did wait upon the wounded was Sarah B. Priest who spent ten months at Sharpsburg nursing the victims of the Battle of Antietam. Sarah could stand among those who witnessed the vivid, dramatic images of Civil War nursing which spill from history books into the American psyche: Clara Barton, her apron soaked with blood, working tirelessly beside surgeons as they amputated arms and legs. Louisa May Alcott bringing water to crying soldiers, cradling their heads in her arms, scribbling as they dictated letters home. Sally Tompkins, a captain in the Confederate army, insisting on absolute cleanliness in the hospital she ran in Richmond, Va. Dorothea Dix and Mary Ann Bickerdyke defying male surgeons and administrators to make sure their nurses and patients got the respect and resources they deserved. Phoebe Pember doing the

same in the South, sometimes with the help of a pistol she kept in her pocket.

"The Civil War launched the profession of nursing in the United States," noted Jane E. Schultz, PhD, professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Indeed, the citizens of Upper Merion Township offered their talents, sacrifice, and service to the war effort, and the women provided for the nursing needs of the soldiers. Among the Upper Merionites was Sarah Priest, a volunteer nurse during the Civil War, buried in Old Swedes Church Burial Ground, Swedesburg.

Fought on September 17, 1862, near Sharpsburg, Maryland and Antietam Creek, as part of the Maryland Campaign, the Battle of Antietam, also known as the Battle of Sharpsburg, particularly in the South, was the first major battle in the American Civil War to take place on Union soil. It was the bloodiest single-day battle in American history, with about 23,000 wounded or dead casualties on both sides.

Sarah Priest spent ten months working at Sharpsburg. Through research, church members at Old Swedes learned that Sarah Priest probably suffered from what we refer to today as post-traumatic stress syndrome. Her family, however, apparently just thought she was crazy. Sarah lived out her days being what everyone thought was crazy, and her grave was never marked because her family was so embarrassed about her.

Although a stone marked the grave of Sarah Priest, who nursed soldiers during the Civil War, her gravestone only dated back as far as 2007, when the Daughters of the American Revolution decided it was time that Sarah's previously unmarked resting place be recognized. The Daughters of the American Revolution helped restore Sarah's dignity by surmising that she was buried near her family and giving her a proper stone memorial at last.

At a Grave Tales tour of the cemetery, with Civil War re-enactors, on October 10, 2009, church members discovered that a brass marker, which had been placed next to the stone, was also missing, the last time anyone remembered seeing them.

A new marker honors Sarah Priest's contributions to helping the sick, injured, and dying during the Civil War and her service to her country.



UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP IS CELEBRATING ITS TRICENTENNIAL!

JULY 2013-DECEMBER 31, 2013

SPEAKERS SERIES

Sponsored by the Tricentennial Committee, the Township Library, and the King of Prussia Historical Society.

Revolutionary Campaign GIS Style presented by Sean Moir
Sunday, October 6 at 2:00 in Freedom Hall in the Township Building

300 Years in a Sinkhole

A Musical play taking you on a journey through the Township's 300 year history.
October 25, 26, and 27 at the Upper Merion Area Middle School



**Check out [Upper Merion Township Tricentennial](#) on Facebook
and [Upper Merion Township Website](#) at www.umtownship.org for up-to-date information!
And check out the [King of Prussia Historical Society website](#) at www.kophistory.org.**



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