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The Calling Card

The monthly e-newsletter of the Society for Women and the Civil War.

<http://www.swcw.org>

The Conference on Women and the Civil War

The Women of the Shenandoah Valley

July 24-26, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Society for Women and the Civil War continue to plan for our 21st conference, as we are hopeful that the current Covid-19 pandemic will have abated by then, and we can all gather safely in four months. Online registration remains

open: <http://www.swcw.org/2020-conference-registration.html>

Speaker Spotlight

With the 21st Conference coming up (<http://www.swcw.org/2020-conference-details.html>), we are highlighting the dynamic speakers and their topics. Our second “Speaker Spotlight” features the leader for our Friday afternoon tour:

Sarah Kay Bierle – *Author and staff member at the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust Tour – Civilian-Related New Market Battlefield Civil War Sites*

Background and Education – Sarah Kay Bierle graduated from Thomas Edison State University with a BA in History. She has written four books, including a non-fiction on the Battle of New Market. Sarah has spent the last six years exploring new ways to engage audiences with history, including blogging, coordinating history conferences, public speaking, living history, and advocating for historic preservation. She currently serves on staff at Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and works as the Managing Editor for Emerging Civil War.

How did you get interested in the Battle of New Market? In 2016, I visited New Market battlefield for the first time and felt a personal interest connected to the history of the VMI Cadets since one of my brothers had joined the military service and was at a military academy. I was also intrigued by the preservation and interpretation at New Market battlefield which highlights the Bushong Family, caught in the middle of the 1864 combat. This fit nicely with my studies about Civil War civilians and civilian/military interactions during the 1860’s. The opportunity to write the book on the Battle of New Market for the Emerging Civil War series provided a way to take a closer look at the military history and also weave in elements of the civilians’ story which truly are inseparable.

What has been your biggest victory in researching your topic? It has been exciting to see a nonfiction battle study for New Market researched and written by a woman hit the bookshelves! Yes, it’s traditional military history, but I worked to gently make the point that civilian and military history goes together.

Anything else you’d like to tell us about yourself or your topic? I can’t wait to meet

you all at the battlefield and use the accounts of civilian women to draw a vivid picture of what happened at New Market on May 15, 1864. I believe there's nothing that compares to standing where history happened; and we'll get to discuss family experiences and how civilians contributed to the memory of Civil War battles. Wear comfy walking shoes; but I promise we won't be hiking too far and there are shade trees!



Women's History Month

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has an ambitious goal for Women's History Month – to discover 1,000 places connected to women's history, and elevate their stories for everyone to learn and celebrate. What places have you encountered where women made history? They can be famous or unknown, protected or threatened, existing or lost. No matter their condition or status, these places matter; and the Trust is encouraging you to share them with the world. To participate, just send a photo of the place (or the woman), plus a short description to this link: <http://bit.ly/2U5wR8T> You can also check this link to look at the places and stories people have already submitted.

SWCW Membership Committee Report

Since 2018, our membership level has increased by 75%, with the expectation of a 100% increase by the summer of 2020. Contributing to this growth has been a holistic membership campaign which is based on three primary elements: publicity and recruiting by the entire SWCW team; regent maintenance of outreach to regional membership; and provision of value to our membership.

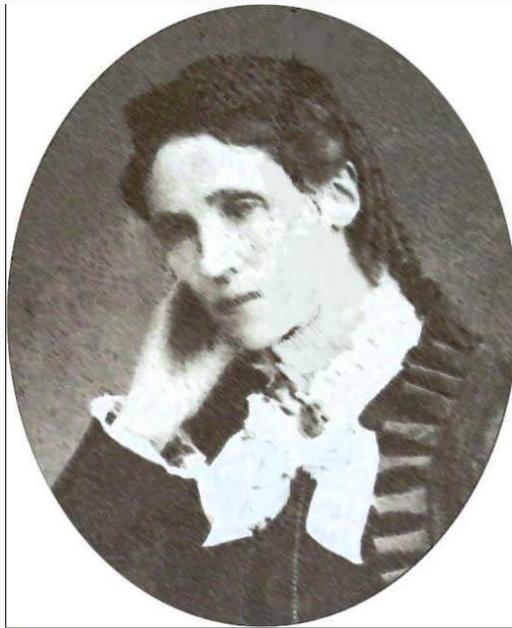
- Board members, regents and members speak to academic, round table and other organizations, as well as conferences, regarding women's service in the war and our mission to recognize their contributions. We make brochures and bookmarks available at events and historic sites. SWCW member authors note their SWCW membership in their credentials and flyleaf notes. Our publications, Facebook page and website contribute to recruiting as well as to informing our membership. The increase in our partnerships with other like-missioned organizations, to include the Civil War Roundtable – Congress and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation serves to promote the efforts of all of our organizational interests. The wearing of our logo clothing and use of our magnetic vehicle stickers make a further contribution.
- Regents use tools which we have developed for them to maintain contact with members in their regions.
- We have developed new programs which fulfill our mission, but also serve the needs of our membership and add value to our organization. These include the National Registry of Women's Service in the Civil War (NRWSCW) and author-support (mentoring new authors and assisting in publicity and marketing).

For its success in growth, SWCW owes a considerable debt of gratitude to our membership for its efforts and to our partner organizations for their assistance.

National Register of Women's Service in the Civil War

Woman of the Month:

Ella Elvira Gibson, Captain, Chaplain Corps,
US Army



Ella E. Gibson, also known as Ellen or Elvira Hobart, and as Ellen or Elvira Gibson, born 8 May 1821, was the US Army's first female chaplain. Her husband, Rev. John Hobart, served during the war as an Army chaplain for a Wisconsin infantry regiment. Initially, she served as an aid society worker, fundraiser, author of a popular soldier morale support booklet, nurse, and volunteer chaplain. In 1864, she was ordained by the Religio Philosophical Society of St. Charles, Illinois, which was a spiritualist denomination which rejected many orthodox Christian traditions. She then applied to serve as an official US Army chaplain. Despite rejection by Secretary of War Stanton, who did not want to establish a "precedent," she was encouraged by President Lincoln. On 22 November 1864, with the support of other ministers, of state officials, and of soldiers, she was elected to, and began service as, the chaplain of the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery. The Governor of Wisconsin had initially agreed to commission her, but later, following the lead of Secretary Stanton, reneged on his offer. It should be noted, however, that most Civil War-era army chaplains served without being commissioned. After the war, on 3 March 1869, Congress passed a joint resolution which retroactively authorized Hobart's right to receive the full pay and recognition of a US Army chaplain. A century after her 1901 death, the military appropriations bill of 2001, Public Law 107-107 (2002), posthumously granted her the rank of captain in the Chaplains Corps of the US Army.

Our thanks to Annette Rogers' 18 February 2020 presentation to the Los Angeles Civil War Roundtable, in which she addressed Civil War chaplains, which was attended by SWCW Board Member, Janet Whaley, for bringing Captain Gibson's service to our attention.

Civil War Digital Digest YouTube Channel

Since 2018, the Civil War Digest has operated a free subscription YouTube channel, with its home at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR419HGD33ONzup3c-WNPA> . Multiple episodes are presented, including those which address civilian topics.

Do you want to share information with other members and friends of the Society for Women and the Civil War? Send your notice to the editor of The Calling Card, DeAnne Blanton, at deblanton@gmail.com.



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