

THE CALLING CARD – JULY 15, 2020



The Calling Card

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

<http://www.swcw.org>

July 15, 2020

News of Note

Encounters With History Program:
The Hospital Woods Today: Camp Letterman at Gettysburg
with Licensed Battlefield Guide Sue Boardman

This all-day event, which includes lunch, will be held on December 5, 2020, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Ford Education Center at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center. Morning lectures will tell the history of Camp Letterman Hospital and how it operated, followed by an afternoon tour of the original 80+ acre footprint of the hospital. This event is limited to 25

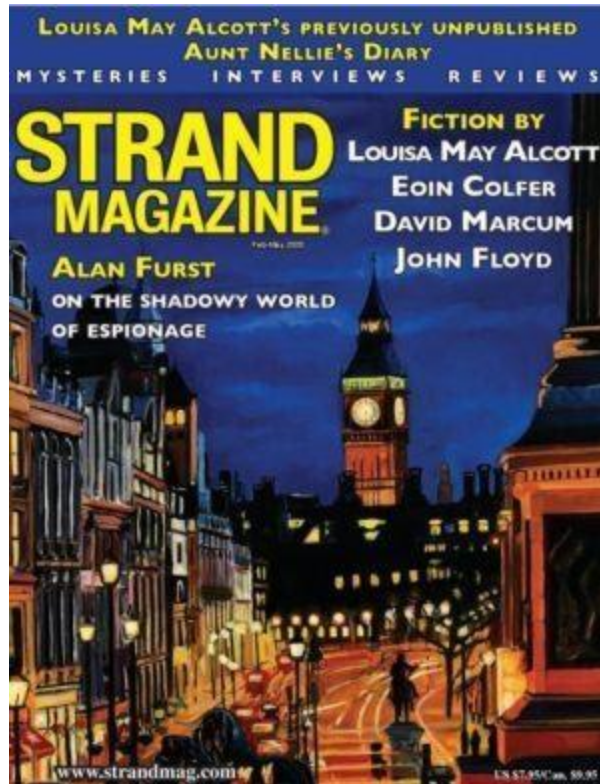
registrants, and is anticipated to fill up quickly. For more information, and to register, visit the Friends of Gettysburg website: <https://cart.gettysburgfoundation.org/12568/12575>

Civil War Roundtable Congress Best Practices Archive

The Civil War Roundtable Congress (CWRT-C), with which SWCW has a cooperative relationship, conducts frequent surveys of member Civil War roundtables and other organizations. The carefully-crafted analyses are posted on line at <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/proven.html>. CWRT-C, the motto for which is "Improvement Through Education and Networking," offers these insights to the Civil War community at large, in hopes they will assist in the process of development and maturation. These analyses are particularly useful for SWCW Regents, Deputy Regents, and those working with them.

Rediscovered Louisa May Alcott Work

The legendary *Strand Magazine* has published an unfinished novella by Louisa May Alcott. According to the Strand's publisher, Andrew Gulli, he found a reference to the manuscript during an online search of Alcott's archives, stored at Harvard University's Houghton Library. In an interview with AP, he observed that Alcott's "Aunt Nellie's Diary" has rarely been seen since she drafted what may have been planned as a novel or novella, and set it aside, as a teenager in the late 1840s. The 9,000-word fragment is narrated by the 40-year-old title character, and follows her observations as a romantic triangle appears to unfold among her orphaned, fair-haired niece Annie Ellerton, Annie's dark-haired friend Isabel Loving, and the visiting Edward Clifford, "a tall, noble-looking" young man with a complicated past. The work can be read in the magazine's current issue, which, for non-subscribers, can be purchased at www.strandmag.com or <https://strandmag.com/product/the-strand-magazine-unpublished-louisa-may-alcott/>. The magazine is offering prospective authors an opportunity to participate in a contest to complete Alcott's work. The publishers will send contest rules and guidelines to subscribers and those who purchase the Alcott issue of the magazine.



Virtual Tours of Shenandoah Valley Civil War Sites

In response to COVID-19 restrictions on public activity, the McCormick Civil War Institute has conducted a series of “virtual tour stops,” addressing various aspects of Shenandoah Valley Civil War-era history. All presentations are now posted on MCWI’s Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/McCormickCivilWarInstitute/>

Online Commemoration of the 156th Anniversary of the Battle of Cool Spring, Virginia

In another innovative response to pandemic restrictions, MCWI will host this year’s annual battle commemoration as an online activity. It is presenting a series of videos which began on July 12 and run throughout the week leading up to the July 18 anniversary. Videos, led by MCWI’s director, Jonathan Noyalas, address elements of the Battle of Cool Spring and its aftermath, with a

particular emphasis on stories of individuals. These videos air on MCWI's Facebook page, at <https://www.facebook.com/McCormickCivilWarInstitute/>. To conclude the event, Dr. Noyalas will host a Facebook Live event at 9:00 a.m. on July 18.

Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier Launches a New Digital Archives

The new digital archives can be accessed through the Pamplin Historical Park's homepage at www.pamplinpark.org, and consists of three archival categories: Antebellum, Civil War, and Postbellum. *Antebellum* includes documents dating to before the Civil War, including the Seminole Wars and the Mexican War. The Civil War category consists of personal letters of soldiers and civilians, general orders, staff endorsements, and the like. *Postbellum* documents include memoirs of soldiers and survivors, letters from their descendants, and recollections of Reconstruction. This will be a long-term project with new documents added on a regular basis. Visitors are encouraged to check in frequently to see what new documents have been added to the digital archives.

Society Notices

News from the Board of Directors: Board Member J. White has been elected as Vice-President of the Society. DeAnne Blanton has been elected to fill a vacancy on the Board. DeAnne also serves as editor of *The Calling Card*. For information about all of the Board of Directors members, visit our website: <http://www.swcw.org/board.html>

News from the Board of Regents: the Society is geographically expanding! Board member Tabitha Miller has accepted appointment as the Regent for Europe, and Kim Osieczonek will serve as Regent for Asia. To learn more about the Regent Program, visit our website: <http://www.swcw.org/regents.html>

Coming This Month!

At Home and In The Field

The Quarterly Journal of the Society for Women and the Civil War

An exclusive benefit of membership in the SWCW is receipt of our regular journal, ***At Home and in the Field***. This publication is full of scholarly articles submitted by our members about women in the Civil War, their lifestyles, the music they enjoyed, and the meals they cooked. Our new editorial team has been hard at work researching and creating the upcoming issue, which will be released **to members only** at the end of July 2020.

If you are not yet an SWCW member, now is a great time to ensure you receive this and future issues of our journal. Membership dues are only \$25 for individuals and you can sign up now via our website -- <http://www.swcw.org/join-the-society.html>

One of the features of the July issue will be an introduction to 19th century cooking, addressing the equipment, techniques, and recipes used

by Civil War era women. Learning about cooking increases our understanding of 19th century women, as it was such a fundamental facet of their lives.

Individuals who want to learn more about hearth cooking and open fire cooking are encouraged to seek out workshops and demonstrations held by their local historical societies and historic sites. Such demonstrations were fairly prevalent prior to the current pandemic, and it is expected that they will resume when it is safe to do so.

Additionally, three of the most prominent dedicated providers of formal training in hearth cooking -- the Louisa Hearth Cooking Guild (of the Louisa Co. VA Historical Society); *The 17th Century Virginia Cook*; and *Heart to Hearth Cookery* -- offer full day and hands-on workshops using historic techniques and equipment on historic hearths. To find out when these programs will resume, and to learn more about the varied offerings, check out the following websites:

The Louisa Hearth Cooking Guild: <https://louisahistory.org>

The 17th Century Virginia Cook: <https://17thcvirginiacook.wixsite.com>

Heart to Hearth Cookery: <http://www.hearttohearthcookery.com>

National Register of Women's Service in the Civil War

(NRWSCW):

Woman of the Month

**Emma Sansom Johnson
Cavalry Guide, CSA**



Portrait of Emma Sansom as a teenager, painted in 1902, and presented to the State of Alabama

Emma Sansom was born on June 2, 1847, near Social Circle, Georgia, a descendant of a prominent Cherokee Nation family. When a small child, she moved with her large family to a farm outside the Alabama town of Gadsden. Her father died when she was eleven, leaving her mother to raise Emma and her eleven siblings on her own.

Emma is revered in Alabama as the fifteen year-old heroine who guided the cavalry of then-Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest to find, defeat, and capture raiding

Federal cavalry forces led by Col. Abel D. Streight in May 1863.

While conducting search and destroy raiding through the Gadsden area, Streight's cavalry was pursued by Forrest's troops. The Union cavalry destroyed the only area bridge which Confederate troops could use to catch up to them. The bridge was burned with simmering coals demanded from the nearest home – that of the Sansom's. The house and farm were also pillaged and Emma's older brother, a wounded Confederate soldier recovering at home, was taken prisoner by Streight's forces.

With Black Creek rain-swollen and unfordable at the site of the destroyed bridge, General Forrest soon rode to that same home in order to find a guide. Over her mother's objections to her being in the company of strange men, Emma volunteered to lead Forrest to a nearby cow ford. Forrest lifted her to mount his horse behind him. Nearing the ford, and under fire from Federal sharpshooters, Emma dismounted and led the way on foot, with Forrest personally shielding her.

Forrest's outnumbered forces were able to cross the ford which Emma located for them, and then they caught up to the Federal raiders and saved Rome, Georgia from destruction. Emma's brother was found amongst Colonel Streight's prisoners, and, at the recollection of General Forrest, "dispatched on the fleetest horse in the command" back to his home.

In aiding Forrest, Emma not only faced death from Federal fire, but risked capture and prosecution of herself, potential execution of her brother, and Federal retribution against her family and farm. Her actions in support of the Confederate Army, undertaken at such potential sacrifice, made her a cherished war heroine.

At its meeting in November 1863, the Alabama Legislature awarded a parcel of public land and a gold medal to Emma in consideration of her public service. During the course of the war, the lands and medal were lost, but the 1899 state legislature awarded her 640 acres of land as a replacement.

She died on August 9, 1900, as a pioneering farmer in Upshur County, Texas, who

raised her seven children alone after having been widowed at forty. The subject of a poem, *The Ballad of Emma Sansom*, by John Trotwood Moore, she is also honored by a portrait displayed in the Alabama state capitol; by monuments in Gadsden, Alabama, in Social Circle, Georgia, and in Gilmer, Texas; by a Gadsden-area middle school named in her honor; and by the Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp 253, of Gadsden, originally chartered in 1899, also named in her honor.

Solicitations

The Calling Card accepts submissions. We are keen to share the achievements of our members, and to advertise the activities of the Civil War and Women's History communities. Please send your submissions to swcw1865@gmail.com. *The Calling Card* is distributed on the 15th of each month.



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