

## *The Calling Card*



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

<http://www.swcw.org>

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Fellow members of the Society,

Something different about our organizational logo may have struck you recently: we have been gradually introducing a new look. In July of this year, your board of directors voted unanimously to revise it, with the full concurrence of all of our regents.

The revision brings our organizational symbol into compliance with US flag etiquette by placing the US flag-derived element of the framing banner on the (stage) right side of the image. For the same reason, the woman's silhouette has also been reversed, so that it faces that element of the frame. Additionally, when worn on a garment, this turns the silhouette to face the wearer's heart, which is the custom with most organizations. Finally, the hairstyle of the silhouette has been modified to more closely conform with mid-nineteenth century fashion.

The logo has been changed in all of its usages within SWCW, and our partner organizations are being notified of the revision. At no cost to SWCW, new indoor and outdoor banners will be ordered for our use, made possible by a donation to the society. New logo merchandise will be ordered for sale to the membership.

SWCW logo items, such as polo shirts, T-shirts, hats, bumper stickers and coffee cups with the original logo, remain authorized – and encouraged - for use.

Our thanks are due to our long-time vendor, Custom Advertising Products, for working with us to make this change, and for donating all of the considerable costs of the artwork.

**J. White**

**President, SWCW**

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# The Conference on Women and the Civil War

The Society for Women and the Civil War presents:

***Women of the Valley***

**July 22-24, 2022 in Harrisonburg, VA**

*For the past twenty-four years, SWCW has proudly hosted its annual conference focused on the lives of women during the period of 1861-1865, both in the United States and the Confederate States. Each year, SWCW invites professional and amateur historians, scholars, members of the Society, and members of the public to join us in celebrating women's contributions to our country's history during the Civil War.*

*Our conference is especially noted for showcasing original and innovative research.*



Image courtesy of The Valentine.

## **Call for Presentation Proposals**

The Society invites proposals for presentations examining the lives, service and contributions of Civil War-era women in the Shenandoah regional cultural area during intervals of peace, military campaigning, and occupation.

**Potential speakers should submit by electronic means:**

- A synopsis of the presentation, not more than three (3) pages. The synopsis must indicate why the presentation is related to the conference theme. It must also include a description of visual and physical aids used to illustrate and highlight the presentation, and identify the technology required to use the aids.
- A bibliography of the sources used, with an emphasis on the primary sources.
- A personal biography of not more than two (2) pages, including a listing of credentials, prior presentations (if any), publications (if any), and contact information. Links to on-line presentations made previously are considered quite useful.

**Please send submissions, and any questions or inquiries,  
to [swcw1865@gmail.com](mailto:swcw1865@gmail.com),  
ATTN: 2022 Conference Speaker Proposals**

**All submissions must be RECEIVED by  
November 1, 2021**

For additional information about the Call for Presentations, visit our website: [Call For Papers 2022 - Society for Women and the Civil War \(swcw.org\)](https://www.swcw.org)

*Those chosen to make presentations will receive an all-inclusive complimentary conference registration, including on-site luxury hotel lodging for the Friday and Saturday night of the conference. Speakers will also be provided with a one-*

*year courtesy membership in SWCW. Speakers are responsible for providing their own transportation to and from the conference.*

SWCW welcomes recommendations of potential speakers for conferences. In addition to the 2022 Conference in Harrisonburg, we are planning conferences in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (2023), Atlanta, Georgia (2024) and San Antonio, Texas (2025).

Recommendations of speakers with expertise regarding Civil War era women and civilian life in the Shenandoah Valley area, Pennsylvania, the Atlanta Campaign, and the American West are solicited. Recommendations may be sent to our email address, [swcw1865@gmail.com](mailto:swcw1865@gmail.com), ATTN: SWCW Conference Speakers.

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## News of Note

### **First Bilingual Civil War Trails Sign.**

Civil War Trails, Inc. has teamed up with Fairfax County Parks and Recreation, Old Baldy Civil War Round Table and several local stakeholders to launch a new bilingual sign at Ox Hill Battlefield Park. This new sign offers a new amenity for the many Korean and Spanish speaking residents and travelers while complimenting the existing signage which interprets the battle to English speaking visitors. This is the first bilingual Civil War Trails sign in the nation.

For more information about visiting Ox Hill Battlefield Park, click here: [Ox Hill Battlefield Park | Park Authority \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ox-hill-battlefield-park)



## Upcoming Events

*1860s Civilian Celebration*, sponsored by *The Homefront Herald*, October 1-3, 2021 at Capon Springs, WV. [Welcome \(1860sciviliancelebration.com\)](https://www.homefrontherald.com/1860sciviliancelebration)

*Back to our Roots: Celebrating 25 Years of Preserving Battlefields*, sponsored by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, October 8-10, 2021 at Fredericksburg, VA. [CVBT | 2021 Annual Conference](https://www.cvbtt.org/2021-annual-conference)

## Research Resource:

## Records of the Freedmen's Bureau

The **Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands**, usually referred to as simply the **Freedmen's Bureau**, was an important agency of early Reconstruction, assisting formerly enslaved persons in the South, as well as assisting destitute whites. It was established on March 3, 1865 and operated as a War Department agency from 1865 to 1872, to direct "provisions, clothing, and fuel...for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children."

Freedmen's Bureau records are a rich source of information for African American genealogy and for social and local history of the Reconstruction era.

The extant records of the Freedmen's Bureau are located at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC. The records were microfilmed for preservation reasons. For detailed information about these holdings, click here: [African American Records: Freedmen's Bureau | National Archives](#)

Most of the Freedmen's Bureau records have been digitized from the microfilm and are available online at FamilySearch.org. To use these records online, start here: [African American Freedmen's Bureau Records • FamilySearch](#)

## **Update.**

The CWRT Congress has postponed their Sustainability Conference, originally scheduled for this month. Put the date on your calendars now for the rescheduled conference on September 16-18, 2022 at the Civil War Museum in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Another new development is the launch of their Online Classroom program, which will bring proven practices and innovative ideas to CWRTs (and are also applicable to other organizations). The online classes are offered without charge (but donations are graciously accepted). Check out their website for the list of class offerings: <http://cwrtingress.org/classroom.html>. Seating is limited for these classes, so sign up early!

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**The Society for Women and the Civil War is dedicated to recognizing the efforts of women who lived through or participated in the American Civil War, and those who research, reenact or otherwise honor these women of the past.**

**Join our efforts and become a member.**

[Join the Society - Society for Women and the Civil War](http://swcw.org)

[\(swcw.org\)](http://swcw.org)

Membership year runs from January - December.

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## Society Notices

### **A New Alliance.**

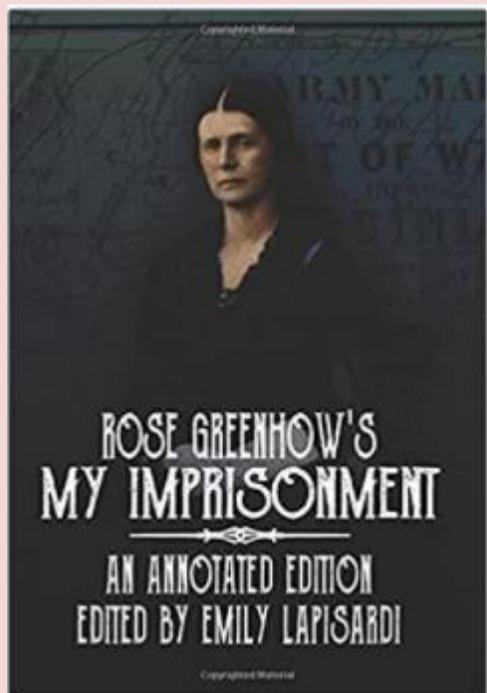
The Society is proud to announce that we have formed a new organizational partnership with *The Homefront Herald*, a suite of publications “revisiting the life and times of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century civilian society.” This arrangement marks the addition of our 12<sup>th</sup> Organizational Partner. You can check out the listing of all of our partners at our website - <https://www.swcw.org/organizational-partnerships.html>.

### **We're on Facebook.**

SWCW has a Facebook page: [Society for Women and the Civil War | Groups | Facebook](#) This is a space for discussion of all aspects of 19th century women's history and material culture, as well as a forum for announcing books and events. Please come join us on social media.

### **Member News**

SWCW member **Emily Lapisardi**'s new book, *Rose Greenhow's My Imprisonment: An Annotated Edition*, was recently published. This scholarly edition of Greenhow's 1863 memoirs is enhanced for the first time with copious footnotes, a complete index, and an introduction placing it within the context of her years in the nation's capital, her espionage, and her diplomatic mission to Europe. Look for it wherever you purchase your books.



SWCW Board member **DeAnne Blanton** will present a Zoom lecture, *Albert Cashier: A Life Apart*, to the Irish American Heritage Museum on September 21 at 7 pm Eastern Time. For more information, click here: [Irish American Heritage Museum \(irish-us.org\)](http://irish-us.org)

SWCW member **Lisa Samia** will present a Zoom lecture, *The Never-Before-Seen Letters of Asia Booth Clark*, to the CWRT Congress on October 6 at 7 pm Eastern Time. To register for the free lecture, click here: [Speaker Series | CWRT Congress](#)

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**National Register of Women's Service in the Civil War  
(NRWSCW):**

**Woman of the Month**

**Lucy "Aunt Lucy" Higgs Nichols**

Nurse, Herbalist, Laundress, Cook, Seamstress,  
"Daughter of the Regiment" USA



(Image from Stuart B. Wrege History Room, New Albany Floyd - County Public Library)

Born April 10, 1838, in Halifax County, North Carolina

Died January 29, 1915, in New Albany, Indiana

Buried at West Haven Cemetery in New Albany, Indiana

Lucy Higgs Nichols was born enslaved, held along with her family by a farmer, Reuben Higgs, in Halifax County, North Carolina. During her youth, she and her

family were moved to Yalobusha County, Mississippi, and, by 1850, to Hardeman County, Tennessee.

In 1862, the twenty-four-year-old wife and mother learned that she and her fellow enslaved persons were to be moved further south, and therefore more distant from the possibility of being freed by the Federal army. Along with other enslaved persons, she escaped with her daughter, Mona, to a US Army camp at the fairgrounds of Bolivar, Tennessee. She was possibly accompanied by her husband. Pursued by the family from whom she escaped, she sought protection from the 23d Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment, an element of the Army of the Tennessee, then encamped at Bolivar. Under the conditions of the Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862, she was declared contraband of war and free from re-enslavement.

In gratitude for protection by the regiment, Lucy remained with it for the rest of the war, serving as an unpaid regimental hospital nurse, cook, laundress and seamstress. With the affectionate nickname of "Aunt Lucy," she shared with the unit the hardships of field life: long foot marches, battles and encampments. She served in the unit through 28 battles, including the Vicksburg and Atlanta Campaigns as well as Sherman's March to the Sea.

The regiment's adjutant described Lucy as a person of integrity, honesty and intelligence who was always smiling, cheerful and kind, and a willing washerwoman, seamstress, nurse, cook, and singer. She was known for finding medicinal herbs for the regimental hospital as well as being a "rattling good forager." The regiment's surgeon commended her as a faithful nurse.

Lucy's daughter was with her during her service, and was beloved by the troops of the regiment. Tragically, at five years of age, Mona died at the conclusion of the Vicksburg siege, and was buried there by the soldiers of the regiment.

Tragedy struck again for Lucy when, at some point, her husband was reported

to have been killed in action while serving elsewhere in an unidentified capacity with the US Army.

At the end of the war, Lucy marched as part of the unit during the May 1865 Grand Review in Washington DC. This was remarkable, as few regimental nurses or daughters of the regiment took part in the review, and the US Colored Troops were banned from the review. (USCT regiments later marched in their own segregated review in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.)

Lucy was honorably released from service on approximately July 23, 1865, in Indianapolis, Indiana. A number of her regiment's soldiers persuaded her to join them in the unit's home area of New Albany, Indiana. In New Albany, she worked as a housekeeper for several former officers, including Bvt. Maj. Gen. Walter Q. Gresham, later US Secretary of State. General Gresham's family considered her a member of their family and treated her with great affection. She also provided nursing care for former soldiers of the regiment. In return, her soldier comrades and their families cared for her when she had measles, and when she later suffered a stroke.

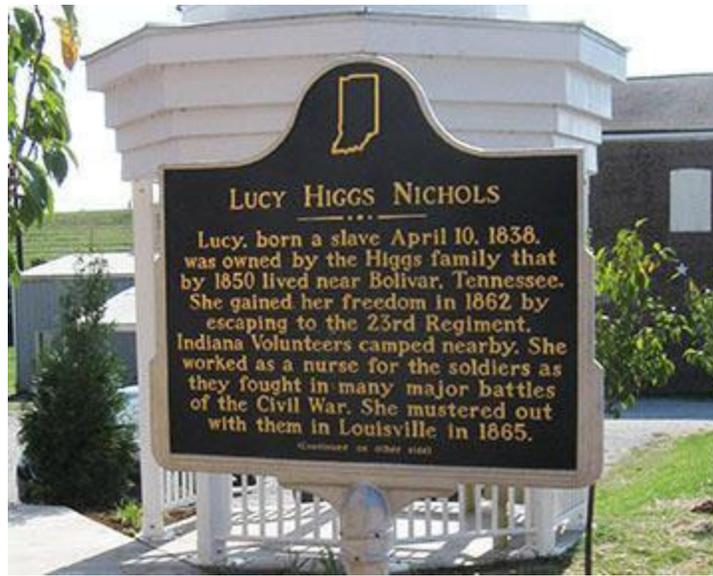
Lucy married her second husband, laborer and fireman John Nichols, on April 13, 1870. John Nichols had been born a free African American, and was a fellow Civil War veteran. In 1871, he purchased property in New Albany, and the couple lived together in the township for more than forty years, until his death in 1910. Widowed at the age of 62, she worked as a laundress, living as a boarder.

Lucy maintained close cordial relations with her former regimental comrades, attending every unit reunion and marching with them in each Decoration Day parade. She was named as the GAR's only honorary African American woman member, and was regularly active in the local GAR chapter.

Despite the respect and affection of the former members of her regiment, Lucy was stymied for several years in her attempts to obtain recognition and a pension as a US Army nurse. When pensions for "invalid" and indigent US Army nurses first became available in 1892, Lucy applied on September 5 (Nurse's Claim 1130541). After lengthy examination by the US Pension Bureau, her application was rejected twice in 1894, on the basis that she had not been paid for her service: "claimant was not employed as a nurse by proper authority of the War Dept." During her 1895 re-application, 55 members of the regiment petitioned the government in support of her. The application was reopened in 1898, with more support coming from the GAR and national newspapers. The public support finally resulted in passage of a Special Act of Congress on December 20, 1898 and signed by the president a week later. On January 6, 1899, the US Pension Commissioner approved Lucy's application and ordered that her pension be issued to her, with inclusion of back pay.

On January 5, 1915, Lucy was admitted for medical care to the Floyd County Asylum (also known as the Floyd County Poor House). She died there on January 29, 1915. Her cause of death was listed as "paralysis and senility." Lucy was buried with full military honors in an unmarked grave located in New Albany's West Haven Cemetery for African Americans.

Lucy was honored in 2011 by placement of an Indiana state historical marker outside New Albany's Second Baptist Church (formerly known as the Town Clock Church), which had been her place of worship. She is also honored by exhibits and programs at New Albany's Carnegie Center for Art and History, and at Louisville, Kentucky's Frazier History Museum. *Honorable – Purpose in Repose*, a historical novel based upon Lucy's life, as well as a young reader's book about Lucy, both by Indiana writer Kathryn Grant, were published in 2013. In 2019, she and her daughter Mona were honored by a limestone bas relief sculpture placed in a setting next to her historical marker.



Indiana State Historical Marker honoring Lucy Higgs Nichols



Sculpture by David Ruckman.

(Photograph by Tyler Stewart for the *News and Tribune*, Jeffersonville, Indiana.)

Notes: Some sources incorrectly list Lucy Higgs Nichols' year of birth as 1837; others variously list her date of death as January 25, 1915. Some sources erroneously report that she was mustered out of service with the 23d Indiana at Washington DC – this is incorrectly inferred due to the unit's participation in the 1865 Grand Review at that location. The 23d Indiana Volunteer Infantry's regimental history, written by its adjutant, 1LT Shadrach K. Hooper, in 1910, may be found at <http://nafclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/23rdIndianaVolunteer.pdf>

Sources available upon request.

**SWCW seeks to share the stories of all women  
who served during the Civil War.**

**We are encountering considerable challenges in identifying individual African American, Native American, and Hispanic American women, as well as foreign women, who served during the war. We seek input helping us to identify these women,**

**along with verified information regarding their lives and roles during the war. Sourcing information is appreciated.**

**Information may be sent to**  
[swcw1865@gmail.com](mailto:swcw1865@gmail.com), ATTN: NRWSCW.

## **Partner Organizations Spotlight**



Dedicated July 4, 1894, Cuyahoga County's architecturally unique Civil War monument memorializes its 9,000 veterans by inscribing their names in marble and depicts their heroics with larger-than-life battle scenes. It also preserves in bronze the

remembrance of those women who established and ran the Northern Ohio Relief Society and Ohio's generals, politicians, statesmen and other national leaders who ran the war. For information on the Monument, you can access their Visitor's Guide at [www.soldiersandsailors.com/about-us/visitors-guide](http://www.soldiersandsailors.com/about-us/visitors-guide)

In 1938 the Works Progress Administration of Ohio completed work on the *Alphabetical Index to Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion*. Since that time the cumbersome volume was only available physically or on microfilm in libraries across the state. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument staff, led by now retired Executive Director and SWCW member Tim Daley, has digitized this valuable resource. Through a partnership with the Cleveland Public Library and Internet Archives researchers can now view the index online. Visit the "Honored Veterans" tab at [www.soldiersandsailors.com](http://www.soldiersandsailors.com).

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## ***The Calling Card* accepts submissions.**

We are pleased to share the achievements of our members, and to advertise the activities of the Civil War and Women's History communities. We also welcome individual research requests, and notifications about educational and archival resources.

Please send your submissions to [swcw1865@gmail.com](mailto:swcw1865@gmail.com), with *Calling Card* in the subject field. (Submissions may be edited for brevity or clarity.)

*The Calling Card* is distributed on the 15th of each month, and our deadline for same-month submissions is the 10th.

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