

NOVEMBER 15, 2020



The Calling Card

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

<http://www.swcw.org>

*The Board of Directors wishes all of you
a safe and joyous Thanksgiving.*

**The Conference on Women
and the Civil War**

Register Now!

**Our 21st Conference, *The Women of the Shenandoah Valley*,
will be held July 23 - 25, 2021,
in Harrisonburg, Virginia.**

For conference details, click here:

<http://www.swcw.org/2021-conference-details.html>

To register for the conference, click here:

<http://www.swcw.org/2021-conference-details.html>



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OFF FOR THE WAR.

News of Note

Online Art Auction.

The **Pasadena, CA Civil War Round Table** announces an exciting opportunity for those who love Civil War-inspired art. A generous donor bequeathed the CWRT three signed, numbered, framed and matted art pieces, including a **Don Troiani** original, and they will be auctioned online to benefit Civil War battlefield preservation. The auction will be open from **Sunday, November 15 through Sunday, December 13**. The timing is perfect for holiday gift giving (or receiving). Anyone can sign up as a bidder, and you might come away with beautiful art at a great price. Payment can be made via PayPal, with shipment arranged at the winner's expense. Go to <https://www.biddingowl.com/PasadenaCWRT> to get in on the bidding action.

Online Lecture Series.

The **Civil War Roundtable Congress** continues to post its Speaker Series events on YouTube. One of its recent postings is **Theresa Kaminski's** *Dr. Mary Walker's Civil War*, which addresses the life and US Army medical service of the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swMhIzbqlJM&feature=youtu.be>



Dr. Mary Edwards Walker

On **November 18**, SWCW member **Lisa Samia** will join the CWRTC Speaker Series with *So Runs the World Away*, a fascinating lecture about the lives of John Wilkes Booth and his beloved sister Asia Booth Clark. For more information about registering for the event, click here: <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/PDF/Speaker/SO%20RUNS%20THE%20WORLD%20AWAY.pdf>

Abraham Lincoln and the 1863 Thanksgiving Proclamation.

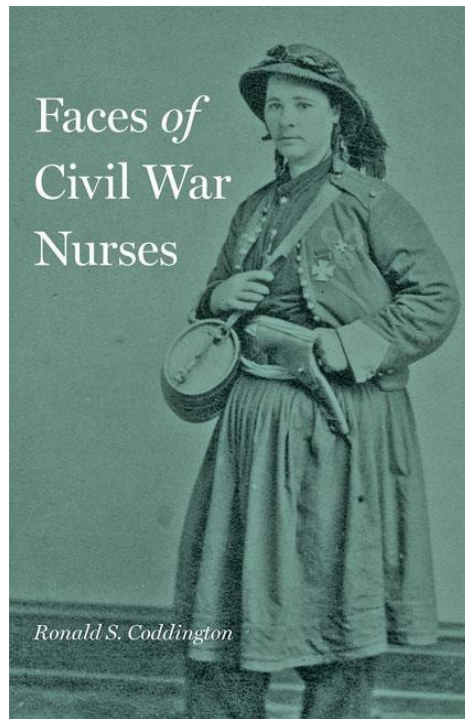
Join the **National Archives** Young Learners Program, featuring **Bob Gleason** of the American Historical Theatre, on **November 17** at 11:00 a.m. EST to meet President Lincoln and learn how he made Thanksgiving a national holiday. Follow this link: <https://youtu.be/amxiioaR9qY>

Faces of Civil War Nurses.

The **Old Baldy CWRT** of Philadelphia recently hosted **Ronald S. Coddington** for a Zoom presentation covering his new book *Faces of Civil War: Nurses*. The book is a collection of images, mostly held in the collections of the US Army Heritage and Education Center and the Library of Congress. Each of the 77 images is teamed with an anecdote of that woman's service during the Civil War.

The video presentation is available on YouTube, and may be reached via Old Baldy's website at <http://www.oldbaldycwrt.org/meeting-of-october-22-2020/>. The book is the most recent in a series of images of individuals serving in the war, all of which may be ordered at https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/book-search?search_api_views_fulltext=coddington&Search=

Mr. Coddington has kindly offered his knowledge and assistance in support of work on SWCW's National Registry of Women's Service in the Civil War (NRWSCW). SWCW thanks Ron Coddington and the members of Old Baldy for their graciousness.



Research Resource

The National Tribune

The National Tribune was founded in October 1877 by attorney and veteran George E. Lemon as a newspaper for Union Civil War veterans and their families.

The National Tribune was the leading advocate for the rights of Union veterans and their dependents, and specifically lobbied for generous and expanded pension legislation, as well as printing legal advice for veterans and widows seeking pensions. Additionally, the publication included

articles on the experiences of both commanding officers as well as rank and file soldiers, ranging from detailed battle descriptions to personal narratives. Indeed, the paper became a forum for discussion, debate, and reminiscence for veterans around the country, eventually becoming the official paper of the Grand Army of the Republic. *The National Tribune* also covered lighter topics and included anecdotes, poems, and jokes. Large illustrations, many drawn by Thomas Nast, appeared on its front page.

Where to Find It:

- The **Library of Congress** has digitized its *National Tribune* Collection for the years 1877 - 1911, and they are available online at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82016187/issues/>
- For microfilm copies, visit the **Library of Congress** or the **United States Army Heritage and Education Center**, both of whom have collections dating from 1877 - 1940.

Access Tool: ***The National Tribune Civil War Index: A Guide to the Weekly Newspaper Dedicated to Civil War Veterans, 3 vols.,*** by **Richard A. Sauers.**

Volumes 1 and 2 comprise a chronological presentation of the Civil War content of each issue of the paper. Volume 3 consists of author, subject, and unit indices.

The National Tribune Civil War Index is available from Savas Beatie in both hardcover and Kindle format at <https://www.savasbeatie.com/the-national-tribune-civil-war-index-a-guide-to-the-weekly-newspaper-dedicated-to-civil-war-veterans-1877-1943-vols-1-3/>

Society Notices

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM DEBUTS

Earlier this year, the SWCW embarked on a new program to extend our outreach with organizations which have complimentary missions to our own. In addition to providing a reciprocal arrangement of posting links to each other's websites, the Partnership Program will help publicize the news and activities of each other's organizations throughout the year. We begin that effort by initiating a new *Calling Card* feature: Partner Organizations Spotlight.

We are proud to announce our inaugural group of Organizational Partners:

American Battlefields Trust
Blue & Gray Educational Society
Civil War Dance Foundation
Civil War Roundtable Congress
Company of Military Historians
Cuyahoga County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument
McCormick Civil War Institute
Pallas Athena Ladies Aid Society
Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation
Shenandoah Valley Civil War Era Dance Foundation

Nominations for potential organizational partnerships are vetted by the Organizational Partnerships Committee, and should be submitted to Committee Chair **Janet Whaley** at swcw1865@gmail.com

SWCW SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation**, one of our Organizational Partners, is developing an audio tour for the **New Market Battlefield** area in Virginia to be debuted at the end of this year.

One of the 25 tour stops will elaborate on the “Civilians of New Market,” detailing their experiences and involvement as this 1864 battle swept through their town.

Each of the tour stops is available for sponsorship by individuals or organizations for a fee of \$1,000. The sponsor’s name will be mentioned at the beginning of the audio tour stop. The SWCW Board believes that sponsorship of the “Civilian” tour stop is an innovative way to put our organization’s name out in the community, and one which fully aligns with our mission of “recognizing the efforts of women who lived through or participated in the American Civil War.”

We are asking our members and readers to join the effort to make this a reality, and are seeking your donations, in any amount, toward the fulfillment of this sponsorship opportunity.

We are happy to announce that anonymous donors have offered to match \$1 for every dollar donated to this effort. So your donation will be doubled with this challenge grant!

To contribute to this sponsorship, visit our “Donations” page at <http://www.swcw.org/donations.html>. Go to “General Donations” and use the “Comments” section of the PayPal link to let us know you want to help with the “Audio Tour Sponsorship.” Or you can send a check to our mailing address: SWCW – Audio Tour Sponsorship – P. O. Box 3117 – Gettysburg, PA 17325.

Please make your contribution by November 30, 2020. Many thanks!



Regents Program

The **SWCW Regents Program** is comprised of SWCW Members who assist the Board of Directors in mission fulfillment, membership support, and outreach. As critical members of the SWCW leadership team, Regents support membership within their geographic regions and keep the Board apprised of issues which should be addressed. Regents also serve as advisors to the Board for general matters as well as for those matters which pertain specifically to their regions. Regents support members by assisting them to coordinate with others pursuing similar research, reenactment, memorialization, preservation, or publishing goals.

More information about the program may be found at <http://www.swcw.org/regents.html>. To participate in the program, please contact its chair, **J. White**, at SWCW1865@gmail.com. Regents may also be contacted directly via swcw1865@gmail.com – please identify in the subject line the Regent

whom you wish to contact.

Northeast US (CT, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)

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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.

<http://www.swcw.org/join-the-society.html>

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

Woman of the Month

Maria Salmon Mitchell

Astronomer, Naturalist, Educator and Librarian, United States of America

“We especially need imagination in science. It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but it is somewhat beauty and poetry” – Maria Mitchell



Born August 1, 1818 in Nantucket, Massachusetts. Died June 28, 1889 in Lynn, Massachusetts. Buried with family members at Prospect Hill Cemetery in Nantucket.

Maria Mitchell was born and raised the third of ten children of Quaker parents William and Lydia Coleman Mitchell. Her father was a teacher and her mother was a librarian. Her forward-thinking parents encouraged her education and the development of her precocious abilities in mathematics and science. She attended the school owned by her father, and soon became his teaching assistant. Her father, an amateur astronomer, recognized her own interest in the sky, and early on taught her the use of a variety of types of telescopes and surveying equipment. She also learned to use a sextant and a chronometer to assist her father in his celestial observations and reporting. Her scientific education was further aided by studying the works of great astronomers in the original French and Latin texts.

At twelve, young Maria assisted her father in calculating the exact position of their home by observing a solar eclipse. Within months, she calculated the exact timing of a lunar eclipse. At fourteen, her navigational computations were trusted by Nantucket sailors to guide them on long whaling voyages. As a teenager, she could use observations of the positions of planets and stars to calculate latitude and longitude, and predict the timing of a solar eclipse.

In 1835, at seventeen, having already taught at another school, Mitchell opened her own pioneering racially-integrated private school. She closed it after a year in order to become the first librarian for the new Nantucket Atheneum, serving until 1856. While working during the usually quiet day, she read and continued her personal studies in Latin, German, celestial mechanics (physics), navigation, and advanced mathematics. She also attended the Atheneum's lectures, presented by the most noted of American scientists and philosophers.

At the same time, her father became the head cashier at a Nantucket bank which also provided residential accommodations for his family. He built a roof-top observatory which housed a four-inch telescope. In the evenings, Maria assisted her father in working for the Revenue Cutter Service (now the US Coast Guard) by performing celestial observations to support navigational timekeeping and by surveying the coast of Nantucket. She also used her telescope to study the planets, star systems, and solar eclipses.

On the evening of October 1, 1847, she discovered a new comet with her 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch Dolland refractor telescope. She continued to track and document her observations of the comet over the next few days. Over the next two weeks, additional astronomers around the world observed the same comet, but these other observations occurred later than those of Mitchell and were not as well-documented. On November 12, 1847, Britain's Royal Astronomical Society published her observations in its journal, awarding Maria Mitchell credit as the discoverer. The comet, formally titled C/1847 T1, received the nickname "Miss Mitchell's Comet."

This discovery led to Mitchell's renown as North America's first female professional astronomer. She was quickly elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of the Association for the Advancement of Science, and of the American Philosophical Society – the first woman member of each of these organizations. (It was not until 1943 that another woman was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.) Maria Mitchell, the "scientific American woman," became the subject of worldwide newspaper reporting and received visits from leading international scholars and philosophers.

In 1849, Mitchell was hired by the US Nautical Almanac Office to calculate positions of the planet Venus, which was used as a navigational "star" by sailors. She continued to serve the office, later a branch of the US Naval Observatory, during later years of her career. In

the same year, the US Coast Survey – now the National Geodetic Survey – employed her to perform the calculations of the positions of planets and stars at specific times in varied locations. With both of these appointments, she became one of the first women employees of the US federal government. Her work facilitated the assembly and publishing of official navigational tables, which aided safe shipping travel. During the Civil War, this work supported naval operations on both sides.

Resigning from the Atheneum in 1856, and funded by a wealthy benefactor, Mitchell undertook national and world professional travel for two years. In 1858, she was the first woman permitted into the Vatican's Observatory.

In 1862, she settled in Lynn, Massachusetts with her recently-widowed father. Presented with a new five-inch Alvan Clark telescope, a gift from "The Women of America," funded by collections taken up across the US, she subsequently discovered that sunspots were not, as then thought, clouds, but actually whirling vertical cavities. She also continued her work for the Nautical Almanac and Coast Survey.

In 1865, she accepted the position of Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College, thus becoming both the first Professor of Astronomy in the US and the first American woman college professor. Mitchell kept this position for 23 years. Vassar boasted the third largest telescope in the country, and was second only to Harvard in having the best equipped observatory in the US. Under her leadership, the Vassar Observatory became renowned for its early application of photography to the study of sunspots, asteroids and stars. Mitchell's personal work continued to focus upon her observations of sunspots, comets, stars, nebulae, solar eclipses and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn.

In 1878, the US government issued grants for scientists to travel to study that year's total solar eclipse. Denied one of these grants due to her gender, Mitchell self-funded an expedition to study the event in the clear skies of Denver, accompanied by her five best students. The Vassar group traveled almost 2,000 miles on the new Transcontinental Railroad, then camped and set up their telescopes on the open plains. In 1882, she led Vassar students in recording the traversing of the sun by Venus -- an action which has occurred only eight times between 1608 and 2012.

Throughout her career, Mitchell used her position as America's most prominent woman scientist to advance the causes of universal rights, women's suffrage, and equal pay. With

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she co-founded the Association for the Advancement of Women in 1873, and served as its first president. Simultaneously, she was elected Vice President of the American Social Science Association. As a professor at Vassar, she led her women colleagues in a successful legal action to be paid salaries equal with their junior male counterparts. Her biographer, Sandy Levins, observed that “Maria Mitchell was a star of 19th century American science who used astronomy to expand the boundaries of what women could expect and achieve. Her life and work are a root of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) movement that today draws ever larger numbers of young women to scientific careers.”

Maria Mitchell retired from teaching at the age of seventy, and died one year later, in 1889, of heart disease and “brain disease.” In its July 20, 1889 eulogy, *Scientific American Magazine* praised her as standing out “clear and conspicuous, like an evening star in the heavens she loved so well to study.” During her lifetime, Mitchell was honored by the naming of a lunar crater as “Mitchell’s Crater” in 1865. Columbia University (then College) bestowed upon her an honorary doctorate in 1887. Following her death, the Maria Mitchell Association, founded by her former students in 1902, named its 1908 Nantucket observatory in her honor. (<https://www.mariamitchell.org>) Additional posthumous honors included the 1937 naming of Asteroid #1455 “Mitchella”; and the 1943 christening of a World War II Liberty Ship as the *SS Maria Mitchell*. In 1994, she was inducted into the National Woman’s Hall of Fame. Beginning in 2018, the 200th anniversary of her birth, the Maria Mitchell Association has hosted the annual Maria Mitchell Women of Science Symposium. (<https://www.mmwiss.org/>)

Her Henry Fitz telescope from Vassar resides at the Smithsonian.

https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1185541

Vassar hosts her archives.

https://specialcollections.vassar.edu/collections/manuscripts/findingaids/mitchell_maria.html



Maria Mitchell and the Vassar Expedition to study the 1878 Solar Eclipse.

An expanded version of this article will be posted on the SWCW website. Sources available upon request.

Partner Organizations Spotlight

SHENANDOAH VALLEY BATTLEFIELDS FOUNDATION



To launch our monthly spotlight on each of our Organizational Partners, we begin with the group that will serve as the co-sponsor for the Society's 2021 Conference in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) manages the eight-county **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District**, which preserves and interprets the region's significant Civil War battlefields and related historic sites. The SVBF's mission is to preserve the hallowed ground of the Valley's Civil War battlefields, to tell its Civil War story – including the history of the people (soldiers and civilians), places, and events before, during, and after the war – and to encourage tourism and travel to the Valley's Civil War sites. In 2021, the SVBF will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the National Historic District.

The SVBF's major upcoming events include three Civil War Conferences in 2021 –

- National Conference: "*Our Hour Had Come*": *New Market, Piedmont, and the Fall of Staunton*, April 22-24, 2021, in Staunton, Virginia

- Valley Conference: *“Born of Fire”: West Virginia and the Civil War*, July 31, 2021, in Martinsburg, West Virginia
- Traveling Conference: *“Tar Heels in the Valley”: North Carolina Soldiers in the Shenandoah Valley*, October 23, 2021, at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh, North Carolina

For more information about these events or membership in the SVBF, check out their website at www.shenandoahatwar.org.

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. We also welcome individual research requests, and notifications about educational and archival resources.

Please send your submissions to swcw1865@gmail.com, and please write 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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