

The Calling Card



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

<http://www.swcw.org>

**The 2023 Conference on
Women and the Civil War**



SWCW 2023 Conference a Great Success!

On behalf of our SWCW Board of Directors and Regents, I'd like to extend our thanks to all who participated in the 2023 annual conference in Carlisle, Pennsylvania!

Great thanks are due for the hard work by board members, regents and our member-volunteers -- which led to one of the largest sets of attendees who have graced our conferences.

We are particularly appreciative to the Old Baldy CWRT for its intensely active co-sponsorship participation. Also critical to our success was the publicity support of organizational partners and friends -- the CWRT Congress, *Homefront Herald*, and the GAR Museum and Archives.

Much appreciation is due to our speakers – Stephen Romaine, Karin Bohleke, Betsy Estilow, Barbara Franco, Allison Millward, Scott Mingus, Jill Newmark and Kim Schwatka; to our display providers - Old Baldy, Carol Randell, and the Reynolds Battery L Ladies Aid Society; and to our reenactors from Pallas

Athena Ladies Aid Society, including its surgeon, and to living historians from the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Union. We also thank those member-authors who provided opportunities to discuss and sign their works for buyers.

Expanded versions of speaker presentations will be included in our Summer 2023 issue of *At Home and in the Field*.

This was a true team effort, and we are so very pleased by the positive response from attendees. Please be certain that the frank and useful responses to our attendee survey have been carefully analyzed and will be applied to our planning for future events.

Thanks again to all, and we look forward to renewing our bonds in person at next year's conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 26 - 28, 2024!

J. White
President



Special thanks to our 2023 Conference volunteers:

Toyin Agenifuga
Frank Barletta
Ellen Bowen
Barbara Buchanan
Susie Davidson
Jim Hayden
Greg Henesey
Housted
Rich Jankowski
Ann Killian
Miki Krakauer
Randy Krakauer
Laurel Lipschutz
Mariel Norat
Lin Russell
Mike Smith
Clara Stevens
Ginger Stevens
Rebekah Thomas
Susan Wall
Janet Whaley
TJ Youhn
Ty Zimmerman

News of Note

Call for Applications: *All Roads Lead to Gettysburg.*

The Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy at Temple University is planning a conference, *All Roads Lead to Gettysburg*, for April 5-6, 2024 in Philadelphia, and is soliciting presentations from SWCW. They are seeking proposals for papers addressing any topics relating to any aspect of the Battle of

Gettysburg and its aftermath, and are specifically seeking presentations from underrepresented groups.

To submit a paper, please send by **October 15, 2023**, two Word or PDF attachments to Joseph Johnson at joseph.johnson0008@temple.edu.

1) A maximum 300-word description of your paper, with a title, followed by your full contact information. If your institution can cover your travel or lodging costs, please include this information in this document after your description.

2) A 2-page CV that includes your affiliation and your most prominent publications, if any.

For more information about the Center, visit their website: [Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy | Temple University College of Liberal Arts](#)

All About Cockades.

Cockades are pleated or knotted ribbons, usually hand-made, and worn on the chest or a hat to silently make a public statement. The earliest documented use of the cockade is 1709. To learn more about cockades, including their use in the Civil War and how to make them today, visit Heather Sheen's YouTube channel: [Heather Sheen - YouTube](#)



Secession Cockade

Living History Display.

Living historians with Officers for the Union and Ladies for the Union will present a Civil War living history display on August 24 - 25 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on the covered pavilion of the historic Gettysburg Lincoln Railroad Station in downtown Gettysburg. Officers for the Union will present first-person impressions of officers who commanded and fought in the battle. Ladies for the Union will demonstrate various home craft skills of the era. This presentation is free and open to the public.

Research Resource

Documenting the American South

[Documenting the American South homepage \(unc.edu\)](http://www.unc.edu/documentingthesouth/)



The University Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill sponsors *Documenting the American South*, a digital publishing initiative that provides Internet access to texts, images, and audio files. The materials come primarily from its southern holdings.

Some of the digital collections of interest to the study of women's history include:

First Person Narratives of the American South.

This collection offers many Southerners' perspectives on their lives by presenting letters, memoirs, autobiographies and other writings by enslaved persons, laborers, women, aristocrats, soldiers, and officers.

North American Slave Narratives.

This collection documents the individual and collective story of African Americans' struggle for freedom and human rights in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Southern Homefront, 1861-1865.

This collection presents materials related to Southern life during the Civil War and the challenge of creating a nation state while waging war. This collection includes government documents, personal diaries, religious pamphlets, and many other materials.

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 \(swcw.org\)](https://www.swcw.org)

Membership year runs from January - December.

Society Notices

2024 Conference on Women and the Civil War **Call for Presentation Proposals**

The Society for Women and the Civil War proudly hosts its annual conferences focused upon the lives of women living and serving in both in the United States and the Confederate States. For each year's conference, it invites professional and amateur historians, scholars of all genres, members of the Society, and members of the public to join it in celebrating women's contributions to our country's history during the Civil War and its aftermath, showcasing original and innovative research.

**SWCW's 2024 conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia,
July 26 - 28, 2024**

The Society invites proposals for presentations examining the lives and contributions of Civil War-era women at local, regional and national levels. Proposals for presentations regarding all relevant topics which further our

knowledge and understanding of these women, to include the life-styles, milieu, material culture, arts and skills of the mid-nineteenth century, will be welcomed for consideration. Topics which address the lives of women – Confederate, Unionist and/or neutral - in the Atlanta area and the South are particularly welcome for this conference.

Potential speakers should submit by electronic means:

- A synopsis of the presentation, of at least one (1) page, but not more than three (3) pages. The synopsis must indicate why the presentation is relevant to the conference. It must also include a description of visual and physical aids used to illustrate and highlight the presentation, and specify 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 online presentations made previously are considered quite useful. *This should not be construed to discourage amateur historians or first-time presenters.*

All submissions should be provided in MS Word format.

Note that presentations are expected to be of a duration of approximately one hour, and will be followed by Question-and-Answer sessions of approximately fifteen minutes.

If a presentation is selected for this conference, the information provided by the speaker will be included in the conference binder. The speaker will be asked to contribute to a follow-on issue of the Society's scholarly journal, *At Home and in the Field*, an article in MS Word format which is based upon the presentation. The speaker may also be invited to have the presentation videoed for later television broadcast.

Submissions will be evaluated principally upon the following criteria:

- Originality of the topic.
- Relevancy of the topic to the lives and efforts of women during the Civil War era and its aftermath.
- Quality of research, highlighting the use of primary sources.
- Quality of the presentation, including the use of visual aids.
- Presentation ability of the speaker.
- Anticipated attendee interest level for the topic.

Submissions from graduate students are encouraged. Subjects examined from a macro-history perspective or a micro-history perspective are welcomed. Displays accompanying the presentations are also welcome.

**Please send submissions, and any questions or inquiries,
to: swcw1865@gmail.com ATTN: 2024 Conference Speaker Proposals.**

Those chosen to make presentations will receive complimentary conference participation, including access to conference presentations, field trip(s), displays, social events and meals. Complimentary lodging for the Friday and Saturday night of the conference will be provided for speakers. Speakers will also benefit from conference and general publicity provided by SWCW and its partner organizations. Those selected who have published books on Civil War-era and women's history subjects are invited to set up tables for book sales and signings – without fee. Speakers will also be provided with a one-year courtesy membership in SWCW for the following year. Speakers are responsible for providing their own transportation to and from the conference.

Deadline: All submissions must be RECEIVED by November 1, 2023. Presentation submission indicates willingness to speak if selected by the SWCW conference committee. In December 2023, the Society will contact all those who have provided proposals.



Ruins of the Atlanta Depot. Library of Congress.

DONOR LIST

Betsy Estilow
Inland Empire Civil War Roundtable
Stephen Romaine

Individuals wishing to donate to our General Fund or Scholarship Fund should visit our website at [Donations - Society for Women and the Civil War \(swcw.org\)](http://Donations - Society for Women and the Civil War (swcw.org)). SWCW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

Woman of the Month

Maria Salmon Mitchell

Astronomer, Naturalist, Educator and Librarian, USA



Born August 1, 1818 in Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Died June 28, 1889 in Lynn, Massachusetts.

Buried 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.



Maria Mitchell, second from left

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.mmmwiss.org/>)



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

Solicitations

The Calling Card accepts submissions.

We request notices of the achievements of our members; activities of the Civil War & Women's History communities; educational and archival resources; and essays for our Woman of the Month column.

Send your submissions to 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.

Editor: DeAnne Blanton, SWCW Board Member and President Emerita
