

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

Registration is open for the 23rd Conference on Women and the Civil
War,

Women in Government Service,

July 28 - 30, 2023, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Space is limited!

**SWCW promises an exciting and informative event,
featuring speakers who are experts in their field;
an immersive experience at the *U.S. Army Heritage &
Education Center*;
plenty of time for networking and socializing; plus fine dining.**

Get all the details here: [Details for the 2023 Conference - Society for Women and the Civil War \(swcw.org\)](#)

Register here: [2023 Conference Registration - Society for Women and the Civil War \(swcw.org\)](#)

Conference Spotlight:

Comfort Suites Downtown Carlisle



This year's conference hotel is centrally located in historic downtown Carlisle, and will be the site of our nightly entertainments, hospitality suite, and Sunday presentations.

Comfort Suites Downtown Carlisle is an amenity-filled hotel, and all rooms are suites with single or double occupancy.

A block of rooms at the special rate of \$139.00 per night + tax has been reserved for conference attendees. Reserve your room by phone -- (717) 960-1000
or online at:

[Rates & Available Rooms - Comfort Suites Downtown Carlisle](#)
[\(choicehotels.com\)](#)

The rate may be extended to 3 days prior and 3 days after the conference.
Reserve your room with the hotel by **June 16th** for our special rate.

A Story of a Civil War Valentine

Even in the midst of the Civil War, soldiers' thoughts still turned to romance on Valentine's Day. By the mid 1800s, Valentine's Day was widely observed in the United States. Commercially produced Valentine's cards and other greeting cards were widely available for purchase. Newspapers displayed ads for Soldiers' Valentine Packages, targeting women with loved ones away at war. Other ads were geared specifically for the soldier stating that valentines with fancy envelopes could be bought and mailed to loved ones. For soldiers in the field, however, they often had to make do with composing poetry or love letters to send back home or they made their own valentines out of materials that were available to them.

One particularly special valentine came from Confederate soldier Robert H. King, of Montgomery County, Virginia who created a paper heart with a pen knife for his wife, Louisa. Robert had married Louisa Williams on November 15, 1860; they

were both 25 years old. Ten months later he enlisted as a private in the 54th Virginia Infantry, CSA. Robert missed his wife greatly having been separated from her after less than a year of marriage. He wanted to create something unique for her for Valentine's Day. He created a heart out of newspaper and a used envelope and intertwined the two in a basket weave pattern. When opened, the seemingly random holes in the paper revealed two people separated from one another, crying. On November 8, 1861, Robert wrote to his wife, "it panes my hart to think of leaven you all" and signed his letter "yours til death." Sadly, this turned out to be true, as Robert died of typhoid fever near Petersburg, Virginia in April, 1863 and all Louisa would have left was this paper heart. Louisa found herself a widow at age 28 with a young son, Robert William. She applied for a pension in 1911, many years after her husband's death because she was completely dependent upon her son Robert. Louisa kept this valentine until her death at the age of 94 in Starkey, Roanoke County, Virginia on June 22, 1930. This valentine is now in the collection of the Robert H. King Papers, 1861-1910 in the Library of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia.



Contributed by SWCW member Karen Connair.

Research Resource

The Library Company of Philadelphia

The Library Company is America's first successful lending library and oldest cultural institution. It was founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin as a subscription library supported by its shareholders, as it is to this day. The Library Company is an independent research library concentrating on American society and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Free and open to the public, the Library Company houses an extensive non-circulating collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera, prints, photographs, and works of art. Their mission is to foster scholarship in and increase public understanding of American history before 1900.



2023 Membership Campaign

Now is the time to join us for the first time,
or to renew your annual membership.

Just go to our website:

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

Our membership year runs from January - December*

Exclusive benefits of membership include a discounted rate on our annual conference, a members-only page on our website, and access to our quarterly journal, At Home and In the Field.

The Society for Women and the Civil War is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. **Membership dues are tax-deductible, and they enable us to fulfill our mission.** We are 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.

*New members who joined from October - December 2022 do not need to renew for 2023.

Society Notices

Call for Volunteers: Conference Notebook Scanning

SWCW is engaged in a long-term project to digitize our archives. An important component to this project is scanning our conference notebooks. We need the help of our members and prior conference attendees to complete the online notebook collection. If you have any of the following conference notebooks, if you have a personal scanner, and if you want to help, please contact the Chair for the project, Janet Whaley, at janet1860@charter.net.

Conference notebooks not yet scanned:

1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014,
2015, 2017, 2018, 2019

Woman of the Month

Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin

activist and publisher



Born August 31, 1842 in Boston, Massachusetts

Died March 13, 1924 in Boston, Massachusetts

Buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts

Josephine St. Pierre was the daughter of a successful clothier from Martinique, John St. Pierre, and his English wife, Elizabeth. She grew up in the African-American community on Beacon Hill in Boston, and was educated in both Boston and New York City. Her family was active in abolitionist and political circles.

At the age of 16, she married George Ruffin, the first African-American graduate of Harvard Law School. George would go on to be the first elected African-American Boston city council member, as well as the first African-American municipal judge in the city. Josephine and George welcomed five children during their marriage, and were activist partners in a wide range of social causes.

During the Civil War, the Ruffins recruited soldiers for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantry regiments and also volunteered with the Sanitary Commission. After the war, Josephine was active in the Kansas Freedmen Relief Association, an organization founded to assist formerly enslaved families who left the South for Kansas.

A staunch suffragist, Josephine joined Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone in establishing the American Woman Suffrage Association in Boston in 1868, and was active in promoting women's suffrage for the rest of her life.

After the death of George in 1886, Josephine turned her attention to publishing, and founded *The Women's Era*, the first American newspaper published by and for African-American women. Josephine was editor until 1897. In 1894, Ruffin organized The Women's Era Club, an advocacy organization for African-American women. The following year, she organized the National Federation of Afro-

American Women, and convened the First National Conference of the Colored Women of America in Boston. In 1896, Josephine integrated the New England Women's Club, becoming its first African-American member.

In 1910, Josephine helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and was a charter member.

Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin died at the age of 81. She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1995. Her bust is in the Massachusetts State House. Her home on Charles Street is part of the Boston Women's Heritage Trail.

Solicitations

The Calling Card accepts 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.
