

# FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2012

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION FUND



As the Nation commemorates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Civil War, the Fort Delaware Society is launching a fund raising campaign for preservation of its *Special Civil War Collections*. Through acquisitions and donations made since its inception in 1950, the Fort Delaware Society has accumulated more than 2,000 irreplaceable manuscripts, photographs and

artifacts pertaining to Fort Delaware and the American Civil War.

In June, 2011 the Fort Delaware Society was awarded a Conservation Assessment Program grant (CAP) from Heritage Preservation which supported a two-day site visit by a conservation professional who assessed the our museum and library at Fort DuPont State Park.

Based on the preliminary preservation needs assessment, protection of the collections from water and fire damage was established as a priority fundraising goal. Several foundations were solicited and the Marmot Foundation granted us an award of \$7500.00. Gutters and downspouts were mounted to improve drainage around the perimeter of the building and the Board is seeking bids for the centrally monitored fire detection system.

Another high priority recommendation was for us to develop a long-range conservation plan for the manuscript collections and art objects with historic value. This long-range conservation plan will establish priorities and a coherent strategy for collections care, conservation work, exhibit and storage procedures, environmental control and monitoring, security, and emergency preparedness. The conservation plan will identify and document remedial work and preventive conservation, and will facilitate strategic budgeting for collections care and artifact stabilization. Preserving and conserving collections is an investment in stewardship of the past, present and future. Please consider a contribution to our *Special Civil War Collections* fund to commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War. Donations of appreciated stock provide tax advantages to the donor. Call the office for more details on how to donate stock.

## 63ND ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The Fort Delaware Society's 63nd Annual Luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, February 10, 2013 at the Hilton Wilmington/Christiana. In response to concerns, the luncheon was moved to the week after the Super Bowl. Invitations will be in the mail shortly. This year the entertainment will be provided by the Libby Prison Minstrels-a group of musicians who perform authentic Civil War era music modeled after a real group of Union prisoners who performed in the infamous Libby Prison in Richmond, VA. The program will include period music in historical arrangements they have researched.

The Luncheon is the highlight of our year and is the time when we get together to talk with old friends, share an excellent meal, distribute terrific door prizes and elect Officers and Directors to serve in 2013. This year we will have items from the Sutler Shop available for purchase. The price of the luncheon continues to be \$25. It's not too early to mark your calendar and make plans to join your fellow Society members in an afternoon of fun, prizes and conviviality.

## SAVE THE DATES

*February 10, 2013- 63rd Annual Luncheon*

*February 23, 2013- 2nd Annual First State Mayors' Charity Ball*

*May 3, 2013- Fort Delaware State Park opens for the season*

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## ***NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!***

Chairman of the Board Bill Robelen asks that anyone interested in assuming a Society leadership position should contact him as soon as possible. The office of President will be vacant as well as Director positions. Bill will gladly discuss the particulars of the positions with any one interested via phone, email or mail. Contact information for the Society is on the back of this newsletter. The election of Officers and Directors for 2013 will be held at the annual luncheon.

*Visitors from 19 countries and 42 States signed the visitor log in the Sutler shop this year.*

## ***FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY MISSION***

***TO FOSTER AN  
AWARENESS OF THE  
SIGNIFICANCE OF  
HISTORIC FORT DEL-  
AWARE AND PRE-  
SERVE ITS LEGACY***

## ***HELP SAVE THE SUTLER SHOP***

The Society has operated a gift/Sutler shop at the fort since 1955. In recent years, Sutler Shop revenue has not kept pace with expenses. Paying for full-time contract services, purchases of shop inventory, and the annual \$1000 vendor fee charged by State Parks, the shop has been operating at a deficit for several years. The Board requests the membership's input on this matter. If the shop could be staffed full-time by volunteers instead of using contracted services, expenses could be substantially reduced.

The Officers and Director wish to send a heartfelt thank you to the 14 members who donated their time to work on the island. Vice-President Edie Mahoney

and Director Al Trecoast each staffed the shop one day a week in June and July. President Kay Keenan, Treasurer Tom Smith, and Secretary Bobbi Steele-Wilkins along with Directors Carolyn Raniszewski and Hugh Simmons donated their time. Members who volunteered at least one day were: Don Sholl, Ed Fielding, Bob Stark, Deb Haskell, Jean Bonner, Barbara Citron and Barbara Walters.

Please contact the Society by phone, mail or email with your ideas about continuing the Society's presence on the island through operation of the Sutler Shop.

## ***THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER***

Edith K. Mahoney and I have served on the Board together for 22 years. It is with great pleasure that I share this profile of Edie in her own words.

"I have been an educator for over 30 years. I worked with regular education and special education. Most of my teaching time was in elementary, but I have also in middle and high school. I enjoyed teaching elementary school the most at Baltz Elementary.

In 1981, a teacher friend asked me to go to Fort Delaware one Saturday in May. 'Fort Delaware where?'- I had no idea where I was going. That day I was introduced to what I feel is Delaware's best kept secret. We worked in the FDS Sutler shop. I fell in love with the Fort. That was the start of 20+ years of service to the Society and the Fort. I joined the FDS and worked in the shop

and I have never looked back. I became a member of the FDS Board and then an officer.

I do not have a great background in Civil War history, but I learn more and more each year. I would always ask Joslyn Jamison or Martha Bennett questions to broaden my knowledge.

It has been a delight to see the changes (for the better) brought to the fort through the cooperative efforts of Parks and the FDS.

Unfortunately, Fort Delaware is still DELAWARE'S BEST KEPT SECRET. I marvel at how many native Delawareans have never been on the island. I hope through a major publicity campaign we can change this."



## 2012 SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The 5th Annual KidsFest included both modern and Victorian games, face painting, and potpourri making. President Kay Keenan, Vice-President Edie Mahoney, Director Carolyn Raniszewski, Life member Brandon Keenan and member Barbara Walters volunteered their time along with members of Americorp and Bank of America.



The Bills cutting their "Tribute" cake at the Spring General Membership meeting that dedicated the Robelen building.



State Parks intern, Emily Irwin, helps us pack the Sutler shop at the end of the season. Emily who is pursuing a Master's in Historical Preservation has been helping the Society one day a week on various projects.

The Spring Sutler Shop and Museum Set up Day in April was attended by Officers, Directors, Sutler Shop Manager Martha Bennett and members shown here with Park Superintendent Becky Webb.



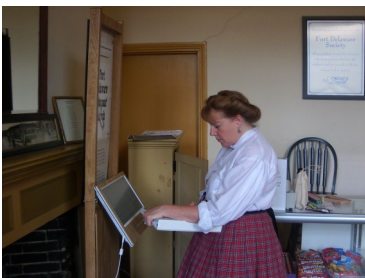
Vice President Edie Mahoney is shown here at the Society's table at Separation Day on the Battery in New Castle. Society Officers, Directors and members were very active this season getting the word out about Fort Delaware at events in Delaware (Newark, Middletown, Delaware City, and Wilmington), as well as , in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.



Director Dan Cashin and friends at Neshaminy Creek in Pennsylvania.

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### ***KIOSK A HIT!***



The touch screen kiosk, which contains over 41,000 records of the Confederate POWs, political prisoners and members of the garrison was placed in the Sutler Shop this season. Several visitors found the records of their ancestors, and many enjoyed “googling” their last name to see if they would get a hit. A 14 year-old young lady found a reference to an ancestor of her father. She said couldn’t wait to get home and do more research on him.

### ***ROBELEN BUILDING ROCKING WITH RESEARCHERS***



As the word gets out about our outstanding Civil War library and research archives more people are utilizing our facilities. Working with the Delaware Division of Libraries, our books will soon be added to the Delaware Library Catalog for non circulating use. Our office is open Tuesday through Thursday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., the first and third Saturdays of each month from noon until 4 p.m., or by appointment.