

MAY

# FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

2008

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The Fort Delaware Society celebrated its 58th year at our Annual Luncheon on February 3rd at the Christiana Hilton. As he promised 14 years ago when first elected to be President, Bill Robelen reminded the 75 guests that it didn't snow the day of the meeting. After a delicious roast turkey lunch and drawings for some excellent door prizes, the assembled were treated to an outstanding talk by Edward Bonekemper comparing the two Civil War Generals Lee and Grant. The afternoon concluded with the election of the slate of Officers and Directors for 2008 as follows: Chairman: William E. Craven; President: William G. Robelen; Vice-President: Edith Mahoney; Secretary: Thomas M. Smith; Treasurer: Donald A. Sholl. Directors: Daniel J. Cashin, Keli Copeland, Catherine C. Keenan, Jayne McCormick, David P. Price, Carolyn Raniszewski, Roger G. Reynolds, John C. Samis, R. Hugh Simmons, and Robert M. Stark.

## ROOMS DEDICATED

Four rooms in our headquarters have been dedicated to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Society over the past half-century. The research library

continues to be dedicated to our Founder, W. Emerson Wilson. The Research Room has been dedicated to Jocelyn P. Jamison, now deceased, who spent over 15 years compiling the records of prisoners and garrison members that are the foundation of our extensive data base. The Conference Room is named for Carl Hauger, who served as President from 1984 to 1994 and who was responsible for introducing the Society into the computer age. He passed away in 2005. The Board Room is dedicated to William E. Craven, a member of the Society since 1959. He likes to say with a chuckle, that he is the only one alive who has a room dedicated to him. Appropriated plaques are placed at the entrance to each room.

## STORM WINDOWS INSTALLED

With the installation of custom made wood storm windows this past November, the final phase of the restoration of our headquarters at 33 Staff Lane is complete. With the ever increasing fuel costs, it is hoped that we will be able to conserve heat in an effort to keep our fuel oil expenses as low as possible. The added insulation should also serve to keep the electric costs associated with our air conditioning use at a minimum.

## LONG TIME MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

It is very humbling to realize that there are members of the Society who have been so for fifty or almost fifty years. That's a long time to be dedicated to an organization, and we are privileged that they have continued their belief in the work of the Society for so many years. It is only appropriate that these faithful members be recognized. Here they are with the year they joined. Maurice (Moe) Murray 1957, David and Mary Cleeve Rittenhouse 1959, Louis Rubin (Charter Member) 1951, Mrs. A. J. Stoner 1959, William E. Craven (current Chairman) 1959, Donn Devine 1954, Dr. Davis Durham 1954. The Officers and Directors of the Fort Delaware Society extend their grateful appreciation to these individuals for their many years of support. Thank you.

## HANDY DIARY

The famous and fascinating diary of the Rev. Isaac W. Handy, a political prisoner at the Fort for 15 months has been reprinted and is available for sale. Contact Martha in the Society office 302-834-1630 to place your order. Send her your check made out to the Society in the amount of \$40 + \$4 s/h. She will telephone your order to the publisher, who will ship the book to you the same day.

## CANNON CAPER CONTINUES

If you have been following the saga of the cannon tubes as described in detail in the December 2007 *Newsletter*, this will serve to bring you up to speed on the latest development. You will recall that when we last left the matter, the two tubes that had been airlifted off the island were residing in the Army National Guard warehouse on Route 9 in New Castle. The intention at the time was to place them on loan from the Society to the Delaware Military Academy where they would be restored, interpreted and displayed. However, some of the National Guard officer staff did some detailed research and determined that the DMA is not qualified to have possession of the tubes. The Society is, however, and at some time in the future, we will request their return for disposition of some kind. In the meantime, they are safely stored in the Guard warehouse and covered securely. The two photos on the facing page were generously provided by the Army Guard photographer.

### STOCK GIFTS

A procedure is now in place to allow gifts of appreciated stock to the Society through an account with Charles Schwab, which has been established by our Treasurer. There is a definite tax advantage to contributing to the Society in this manner, and the Society also benefits by the infusion of funds. Contact the office at 302-834-1630 for additional details

## BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

D. Preston Lee was the last Commandant of Fort DuPont at the end of WW II. His son, D. Preston Lee, Jr. has been a member of the Society for many years. We were somewhat surprised and equally amused when his dues payment for 2004 was returned to us by the Post Office in March 2008 with a note stating that it had been found in a piece of unused equipment. Now, we like to criticize the Post Office for being slow at times, but four years is a bit much. We sent the envelope with his outdated check and a personal letter back to Press explaining the situation and detailing all that had happened during the past four years. He was probably wondering why he had not heard from us in such a long time, but true to form, he responded promptly with his 2008 dues, and all is in order once more. Thanks Press.

## ANNUAL MEETING INVITATIONS

Some of our loyal friends and members across the country may wonder why someone as far away as California would receive an invitation to attend our Annual Luncheon in February. It is not very likely that a member residing several hundreds of miles would be able to attend. However, since it is an official Society meeting where we elect Officers and Directors for the coming year, our By-laws require that we notify every member, regardless of their location.

## POSTAL MAIL VS. E-MAIL

It's hard to believe that our annual postage expense exceeds \$1000, until you consider that we have seven mailings a year. Even with our bulk mailing permit, and the corresponding reduction in postage, it's a lot of money. Yet we firmly believe that, in response to our member loyalty and their support we need to keep in touch with all of them throughout the year. We must find ways to reduce our expenses without negatively affecting our communication. Consequently, we are considering using our e-mail capability to send newsletters, dues notices and reminders, and General Membership Meeting flyers to as many members as we can. This would not have been considered a few years ago, but as more and more people are using e-mail on an ever increasing basis, it is now feasible to start making plans to incorporate this medium into our ever-increasing business.

To that end, we are asking all of you to drop a brief e-mail message to us at the following address

[Society@fortdelaware.org](mailto:Society@fortdelaware.org)

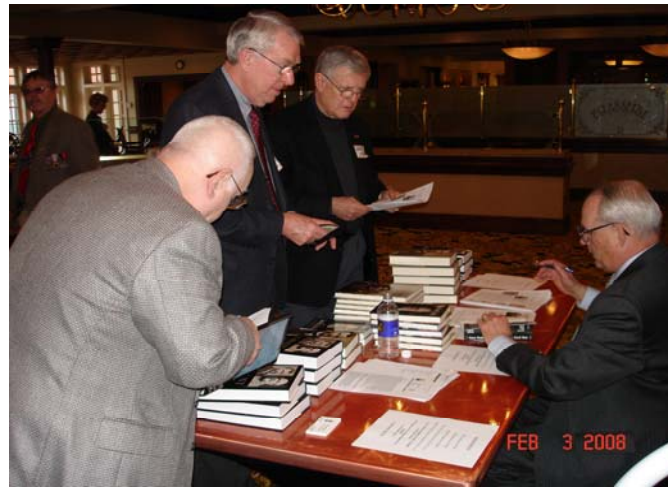
We can then create an e-mail address directory using your e-mail message. That way we won't have to depend on interpreting someone's handwriting, with the corresponding risk of getting one letter wrong. We recognize that it will take a long time to develop this system, but the sooner we get started, the sooner we can begin to realize significant savings on postage and greatly speed up our communication process.

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*Annual Meeting at the Christiana Hilton*



*President Bill Robelen*



*Guest Speaker Ed Bonekemper*



*The Reception Area Before Lunch*



*Members Entering the Dining Rooms*

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*Society Cannon in Delaware Army National Guard Storage*



*In Transit from Pea Patch Island*



*Palletted for Storage*

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Delaware City, DE 19706

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
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DELAWARE CITY, DE

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## PHOTO GALLERY

For many years, the Society has had a collection of photographs of Civil War soldiers, and the most popular ones are shown in our Photo Catalog. Fortunately for us, descendants of Union and Confederate soldiers alike continue to send us photos of their ancestors to add to our collection. We have accumulated enough of them to make a Photo Gallery project worthwhile. The first step is to research the history of each person using our resources. Then they are digitally copied to a uniform size and laminated along with a brief description of the individual and mounted on a display panel. At the present they can be seen on

the wall of the center hall in our headquarters, but we also plan to display them in the Sutler Shop. We believe that this will provide some added interest for visitors to the Shop by bringing the past more alive when they see the faces of those who were imprisoned or stationed at Fort Delaware. We also hope that there may be some visitors who have historical photographs of their own ancestors that they would be willing to contribute to this project. As a member of the Society reading this newsletter, you can perform a valuable service to the Society by donating any photographs of soldiers or members of the Garrison. Contact the office, stop by at #33 Staff Lane or see us in the Sutler Shop.

## SUTLER SHOP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The Fort Delaware Society has been managing, staffing and operating the Sutler Shop in the Fort for 50 years. The income from sales provides a substantial portion of our annual budget, and so is a critical part of our operation. It is successful only because it is staffed by volunteer members of the Society. It is imperative that more members take an active role in supporting the Society by helping out in the Shop. It is not hard, and it is a worthwhile experience meeting and talking with the great variety of visitors. We'll even train you to make you more comfortable. Please call Martha at 834-1630 to offer your services.

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