

THE DISPATCH

General Meade Society of Philadelphia, Inc. Newsletter – Winter 2016 - 2017

“Forget Not His Deeds”

General Meade Society Foundation – The Board of Directors of the General Meade Society of Philadelphia is pleased to announce the establishment of the General Meade Society Foundation. The Foundation's mission is stated below and is taken from the Meade Society By-Laws, Article 1, Purpose and Status. Section 2. The Foundation's primary focus will be the General George G. Meade School, 1600 North 18th Street, Philadelphia, PA. From time to time, specific solicitations will go out to the Meade Society community asking for additional donations to the Foundation for specific purposes.

The mission of the General Meade Society of Philadelphia Foundation is to engage in the lawful charitable, educational, historical and informational activity to promote the legacy of Major General George Gordon Meade (1815-1872) and the American Civil War.

FUTURE EVENTS

Annual General Meade Birthday Celebration, Saturday, December 31st, 2016 at Laurel Hill Cemetery - The General Meade Society of Philadelphia will mark the 201st anniversary of the birth of General George Gordon Meade, heroic commander of the victorious Union army at the Battle of Gettysburg and honored Philadelphian. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Meade birthday celebration by the General Meade Society at Historic Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Ave., Philadelphia, where the noble hero is interred.

Visitors and participants are asked to gather at the Gatehouse of Laurel Hill at 11:30 a. m. The ceremony and military parade will commence at 12 noon. Military and Civil War Living Historians are encouraged to participate! The parade of Civil War re-enactment units, civilians in period attire, heritage groups, and participants will proceed to the final resting place of the Victor of Gettysburg and memorialize his services to the nation. A champagne toast will cap off the program at graveside and will be followed by a reception in the Cemetery Gatehouse. A tour of the cemetery will be offered (weather permitting). Free parking is located in the lot across the street from the Gatehouse. The event is free and open to the public. However, donations to help offset the cost of providing quality food & drink by our excellent Kearney Kommissary and the support of Laurel Hill's preservation work will be greatly appreciated. THANK YOU!

The General Meade Society of Philadelphia is an educational non-profit 501c3 organization chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The mission of the Society is to promote and preserve the life and service of Major General George Gordon Meade (USA), Commander of the Army of the Potomac. The Society's Board of Directors meets at the Cannstatter Volksfest-Verein, 9130 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA 19114, on the 2nd Thursday of designated months starting at 7:00 P.M. All Society members are welcome.

Board of Directors

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Andy Waskie, PhD, President
Mike Peter, Vice-president
Jerry McCormick, Treasurer
Michael Wunsch, Corresponding Secretary
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www.generalmeadesociety.org

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215-204-5452

Champagne Toast Brunch & Awards Ceremony, Sunday, January 22, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Join the General Meade Society for its annual Champagne Toast Brunch and Awards Ceremony at the Cannstatter Volksfest-Verein, 9130 Academy Road, Philadelphia, PA. We will be presenting the Society's "Award of Merit", "President's Award" and Certificates of Achievement. Come and celebrate the New Year and toast the victor of Gettysburg. The event features our popular silent auction that benefits The General Meade Society Foundation. Make reservations at least one week before the event with Jerry McCormick at 215-8848-7753 or gedwinmc@msn.com. The cost is \$45 per person.

Octavius Catto (1839-1871), Saturday, February 25, at 10 a.m. – The ceremony honoring Octavius Catto will take place at 6th and Lombard Streets, Philadelphia. It is co-sponsored by the Catto Society and the General Meade Society. All military units, period civilians, veterans and heritage groups are encouraged to participate. Colors, wreath and music are encouraged. Pennsylvania National Guard "Major Catto Award" Ceremony to follow at 12:30 p.m. at the Union League. For information contact Andy Waskie at 215-204-5452 or awaskie01@temple.edu.

On October 10, 1871, Pennsylvania Militia Major Catto was murdered during a day of riots organized to stop African American from voting. More than 5,000 citizens attended Catto's funeral procession, the second largest in the city since Lincoln's. He was an esteemed teacher, principal and civil rights activist. He will soon not only have a prominent place in the city's history, but also outside City Hall.

New York artist Branly Cadet has unveiled his design for a memorial. The sculpture, which will be placed along the southwestern apron of City Hall, will be the first among the city's collection dedicated solely to an African American. It will explore aspects of Catto's life that include his efforts to desegregate Philadelphia's streetcars and to have the state ratify the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave all men — regardless of race — the right to vote. More than \$1.6 million was raised for the tribute, with funding from the city and other partners.

Born in 1839 in South Carolina, Catto's parents moved the family to Philadelphia, where he obtained a good education. He worked tirelessly for the all men to get the right to vote. He successfully led efforts to integrate streetcars in Philadelphia in 1867. Catto was 32 years old when he was gunned down on Oct. 10, 1871, while on his way to a polling site in South Philadelphia to serve in his official capacity as a National Guardsman assigned to protect newly registered African-American voters during a political riot.

"I wanted to get a sense of the space, physical location, and what his life was like," the sculptor added. "He was an historical figure who had an impact on my life. Because of him, I can walk around freely and I can vote, so I thought it was important to highlight these two particular aspects of his life for the memorial. From there, I came up with the final design for the sculpture, which not only reflects Catto's accomplishments, but his life."

The memorial consists of a ground level collection of sculptural elements including a bronze statue of Catto, a granite abstraction of a 1860s horse-car and a representation of a mid-19th century ballot box. The granite forms of the horse-car and the ballot box will each be engraved and adorned with text and images of Catto's various accomplishments in education, the military, sports, activism and leadership. The project is expected to be completed in spring 2017.

18th Annual Meade Society Symposium: Saturday, April 8, 2017 - "America Enters the Great War - 1917 at the 100th anniversary". Featuring noted historians and speakers, and authors on the U.S. in World War I, as well as books, prints and raffles. 12 Noon - 5PM. Co-Sponsored by the PA National Guard. Held at the Conservatory at West Laurel Hill Cemetery, Bala Cynwyd, PA. <http://www.forever-care.com/contact.php>
Cost: \$40 per person including registration, luncheon & refreshments. Contact: Jerry McCormick 215-848-7753, gedwinmc@msn.com

PAST EVENTS

Meade Society Picnic to Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Society -

On a sunny September 17th Members and friends of the Society gathered at the foot of the Meade equestrian statue on the grounds of the Please Touch Museum in Fairmount Park, to picnic in the shadow of this imposing monument. It was sculpted by Alexander Milne Calder and depicts the General in reflective pose looking over the Park that he helped create and preserve. Flags were placed and toasts were made - a fun time was had by all.

VMI: Past, Present and Future, Meade Society Fall Trip, October 8-10, 2016

Day One - Stopping at Woodstock Garden Café, in Virginia, for lunch, we were nestled inside the Fort Valley Nursery. General Meade, Fairmount Park Commissioner, would have been pleased with the Café's "Go Green" philosophy by establishing programs like composting and recycling. We were very pleased with the lunch.

At our next stop we joined Major Troy Marshall, Site Director of the New Market Battlefield Historical Park, Virginia's only state-owned Civil War Museum, for a tour.

The Battle of New Market was fought on May 15, 1864 during Shenandoah Valley Campaign. A makeshift Confederate army of 4,100 men, which included cadets from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), forced Union Major General Franz Sigel and his army out of the Valley.

The Museum includes the Virginia Room with original artifacts from VMI, Battle of New Market, and the Bushong family; the Kaminsky Gallery of Civil War Firearms, The Robert Raeburn Civil War Art Collection, The Stained Slab Glass mural wall created by Artist Ami Shamir, Field of Lost Shoes in the museum's theater.

We took a walk in the 300-acre battlefield park went into Bushong Farmstead with two original structures standing during the battle.

After arrival at the Holiday Inn in Staunton, Virginia, we a short break before enjoying our pizza party in the Jefferson/Jackson room. History tours sometimes acquaint us with strange bedfellows. - Joe Perry

Day 2 - Stoked by a hearty, hot buffet breakfast, we were on the bus at 9 a.m., ready for a full day of activities. During the approximately 45-minute trip from Staunton to Lexington, VA, we were shown an 18-minute film that provided an overview of the history of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and its uniquely rigorous program to help prepare us for our visit there.

The Washington & Lee University campus is immediately adjacent to VMI, and the architectural contrast was striking as we drove through: at Washington & Lee, its Colonnade, a magnificent row of deep red, Neo-Classical buildings with snowy white columns presides over the its park-like walks; VMI is characterized by its massive, unadorned Gothic Revival facades of yellow stone, strikingly vertical in their lines, that overlook the vast, flat expanse of the central parade ground. Likewise, the general appearances of the students were quite different: the Washington & Lee students ambling in casual wear; the VMI cadets striding with ramrod-straight backs in their uniforms.

We were met in front of the VMI chapel by Colonel Keith Gibson, who oversees VMI's museums and their collections. We were also joined by VMI First Classman Austin Bajc, son of longtime Meade Society members Clara and Jerry Bajc, who had all worked for a year to plan and coordinate this 2016 fall trip.

Col. Gibson led us to the nearby school of engineering, in front of which lie the simple flat stones marking the graves of eight of the ten VMI cadets who died during or as a result of wounds incurred at the Battle of New Market, and cenotaphs for the other two. A moving sculpture, "Virginia Mourns her Dead," rendered by VMI's first Jewish cadet, Moses Ezekiel, who was himself a veteran of the battle, holds vigil over their graves.

A comfortable auditorium inside provided a venue for Col. Gibson to give a PowerPoint presentation that reinforced and expanded upon the information presented by the video we had viewed en route. Col. Gibson talked about John Thomas Lewis Preston, who founded VMI in 1839, Claudius Crozet, the brilliant mathematician who served as the first president of its board, Francis Henney Smith, VMI's first superintendent, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, who taught mathematics from 1851 until the Civil War erupted in 1861, and its renowned alumnus, WW II five-star general George C. Marshall, author of the 1947 Marshall Plan that undertook the reconstruction of war-ravaged Europe.

We were informed that Preston had proposed that this Virginia state school be established in Lexington because the town was at that time the site of an arsenal. The school was proposed to be a state school characterized by its emphasis on military deportment and training, and it would be deliberately called an "institute" to distinguish it from other colleges and universities. We learned that VMI continues to uphold rigorous standards of deportment, academic and physical achievement, and always strict adherence to its honor code.

Some other facts about VMI:

- Its cadets have been called to active duty 20 times by the Commonwealth of Virginia, and 20 have died during those mobilizations, including 10 as a result of wounds incurred at the Battle of New Market in May 1864.
- The following month Union General David Hunter ordered VMI to be destroyed by his troops.
- Its first football game was in 1891.
- ROTC was inaugurated at VMI in 1919. Currently all cadets are enrolled in ROTC during their four years of schooling at VMI, but it is about a 50/50 split between students electing to be commissioned and those going into the private sector after graduation.
- Within six months of graduation, 98% of VMI's alumni are employed or attending graduate school.
- VMI was opened up to African-Americans in 1968 and to women in 1997.
- Seven of its graduates have been awarded the Medal of Honor, which is way out of proportion to the size of its student population over the years. (Currently, there are about 1,700 enrolled.)

Col. Gibson then escorted us to the VMI Museum, which is in the basement of the Chapel. The museum holds some 15,000 artifacts related to VMI history, including seven Medals of Honor awarded to alumni. One case featured artifacts related to Stonewall Jackson, including one of his hats, two uniforms, items from his VMI teaching days, and the stuffed hide of his favorite horse, Little Sorrel. (This unabashedly biased observer could not help but compare the rather tatty remains of Little Sorrel to the magnificent head of Old Baldy, Meade's favorite war horse, is displayed at Philadelphia's G.A.R. Museum.)

Since the VMI barracks are off-limits to visitors, the Museum offers a special exhibit: a reconstruction of a typical cadet's dorm room, which would always be shared with others. We could see the "hays," the flat mats on which they sleep at night and then must carefully roll up and stash each morning. Textbooks are arranged by descending size, left to right, on designated shelves. Possessions are kept to a minimum and maintained in precise order. The dorm rooms undergo regular inspections conducted with a page-long, single-spaced checklist: any aberrations results in the cadet getting "boned," i.e. receiving demerits.

After a brief walk across the campus, we went to the mess hall, which is a cafeteria offering a wide selection of entrees, two salad bars, desserts and beverages. Austin Bajc circulated among us as we enjoyed our lunch.

After presenting him with an armload of mementoes, we bade farewell to Col. Gibson and headed off by bus to the Lee Chapel and Museum on the Washington & Lee campus. There, because of the size of our party, we had to divide into two groups. The first group was given a talk about the history of the chapel, its function (it serves as an unconsecrated meeting hall), and its artwork, including the first portrait of George Washington (executed by Philadelphia's own Charles Wilson Peale), and in the rear apse, the striking white marble sculpture of Robert E. Lee, depicted as sleeping forever on an unnamed Civil War battlefield, all under dramatic lighting. The second group started downstairs, where Lee, his wife, and various family members are entombed. Just across from the sepulchre is Lee's study, looking much as it did when he left it late in the afternoon on the day he died of a stroke, October 12, 1870. There was also a small exhibit room and, of course, a gift shop. The groups then switched.

Just outside the door of the downstairs chapel, less than 20 feet from his master, lie the remains of Lee's beloved war horse Traveller, with an identifying sign that included an image of its reassembled skeleton, which was displayed for decades like a saintly relic at various locations before finally being interred.

Our day at Lexington, VA, was far from done! We moved on to yet another split of attendees, some going first to the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery, and the other half starting with tour of the Jackson House, then we switched sites. At this point a significant number of Meade Society attendees frankly went AWOL! It was a gorgeous, early autumn day under pristine blue skies, and we found ourselves in a picturesque and charming town with deep 19th-century roots. Some of us eschewed the short bus shuttle to switch locations, and very much enjoyed the walk. But it made for an anxious 20 minutes or so for Clara Bajc until she knew that all tour members had been accounted for!

Everyone dutifully was back on the bus at 5:15 pm for our return trip to Staunton. Thick traffic en route mercifully cleared so that we had sufficient time to relax or freshen up before our 7:00 p.m. departure for our dinner at the Mill Street Grill in downtown Staunton. We spent the evening there enjoying drinks, dinner, and presentations in a private room. Rounds of bread fresh from the oven helped take the edge off our hunger, followed by salad, and our pre-selected entrees. The portions were generous, and the food very well prepared.

During the evening Colonel Brad Coleman, a VMI faculty member who has been working closely with Austin Bajc on some special projects, spoke to us about the life and accomplishments of General Marshall, whose museum we would visit the next day. Austin also shared with us more insights and stories about what it is like to be a VMI cadet. Colonel Jeffrey Boobar who had also helped plan the trip was a guest with his wife for the dinner, but he did not speak to the group.

We arrived back at our hotel at about 10:30 pm, tired but happy campers! – Kerry Bryan

Day 3 - On October 10th, the third and final day of the Meade Society's fall trip, members breakfasted at our hotel and, once again, boarded the bus to the Virginia Military Institute.

This day was to be devoted to a visit to the George Catlett Marshall Museum and Library, a vital component of the George C. Marshall Foundation. [<http://marshallfoundation.org>] The mission of the foundation is to celebrate the achievements and encourage research into the legacy of the five star general, both in peace and war. The museum, customarily closed on Mondays, was opened especially for the Meade Society, with several members of the staff, the director, the archivist, librarian and the president (!) on hand to impress us with the collection's artifacts, their expertise and knowledge about the man who organized the logistical effort and eventual peace after the Second World War. Marshall was the rare general who won a Nobel Peace Prize.

Meade-ites enjoyed—for once!—a leisurely museum experience at the Marshall Museum. Those who wanted shopped at the museum store, then watched a short video about Marshall, then visited the exhibits devoted to the general and his experiences in the Philippines, World War One, World War Two and the re-establishing of peace in Europe. In addition, there were several interesting ancillary exhibits relating to winning the Second World War, in particular, Coca-Cola, Hershey, and other food providers. (We arrived too late to see three local chefs compete in a Spam-centered cook-off but were able to view an exhibit about the Hormel product and its contribution to victory over German sauerkraut.)

After those informative and visually interesting exhibits devoted to Marshall's early years, his childhood, his VMI experience, WWI, his tenure as the organizer of victory in WWII, and as a "soldier of peace", his role as the Secretary of Defense, his Marshall Plan, and eventual award of the Nobel Peace Prize, we adjourned to the library. There, we were given access to items given to Marshall for his efforts, papers, maps, and regalia. An Enigma Machine, a large artistically engraved and embossed broadsword given to Mussolini to mark the tenth anniversary of Italian fascism—'liberated' by Lucian Truscott and given to Marshall—and an actual operations map of the D-Day landing in Normandy were just a few highlights.

The Society wishes to thank all of the attending staff—Jeffrey Kozak, Cara Sonnier, Leigh McFaddin, and Cathy DeSilvey—for all their efforts. For this writer, this visit was one of—if not the best—the Society has experienced. There was ample time to sample exhibits, whose visual and informative quality was nonpareil; the attention of the staff and their wonderful choice of memorabilia made it close to perfect.

After the museum tour the Society members were free to wander the campus and VMI's PX/bookstore and observe a typical day at the Institute. Afterwards we saddled up for the Meade Society's favorite pastime, second to historical scholarship: putting on the feedbag. We headed for the Devil's Backbone Brewery for a barbeque lunch and beer. Most of us chose to sit outside on the veranda to enjoy a most beautiful day. Tours of the brewing process were optional, taken by several Society members.

After our luncheon, we boarded Hagey Bus number 76 for a long return to Philadelphia. The trip was one more in a line of memorable excursions given by the Meade Society. This trip, Jerry McCormick and Betty McCormick were aided by the Bajcs, Jerry and Clara. I must say the collaboration worked extremely well. We thank them for all their efforts! – Ken Garson

General Meade Society 20th Anniversary Dinner – In General Meade's farewell address to the Army of the Potomac, dated June 28, 1865, he asked them to "discharge our duties as citizens, as we have endeavored to discharge them as soldiers." To those who created the Meade Society we now know that they have discharged their duties as citizens over the past 20 years by engaging in the lawful charitable, educational, historical and informational activities that have benefitted and honored so many.

On October 29, 2016, the Meade Society gathered at the Cannstatter Volksfest Verein in Philadelphia to celebrate the founding of the Society. The following charter members were honored: Donald Gallagher, Paula Gidjunis, Stacy and Isabella Hampton, Mary Ann Hartner, Tony Heisler, Richard Kienast, John Mower, Carol Neumann, Jane Peters, John Riley, Harry Sproehnle, Tom Stewart, Frank Viola, Jack Walton and Andy Waskie. Sadly, a few are no longer with us, but the Society carries on their legacy. Our view of the many photographs displayed produced a few tears and laughs.

Master of Ceremonies, Joe Hauptmann, started the festivities with ride on a time machine back through the years. President Andy Waskie spoke of these years of research and his meetings with Meade relatives. Board Member Bill Linhart gave us news of the plan to do something with the 50 lbs. of wood left to us after the Meade Witness Tree was taken down. Corresponding Secretary Michael Wunsch gave us a description past Board meetings and the locations. Vice-President Michael Peter outlined the logistical aspects of the Society during its many on location events. He also paid tribute to the memory of William (Billy) Boehmer, the namesake of our Preservation Fund. Treasurer Jerry McCormick's speech, entitled "Paying the Bills and Planning the Trips", highlighted the Society's spring and fall history excursions and the many donations and preservation efforts of the Society over the years that included the following:

The Union League of Philadelphia- sponsorship of the Octavious V. Catto luncheon.
West Laurel Hill Cemetery
The Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery
Mother Bethel A.M. E. church
The Philadelphia Brigade (Beck's) band
Grand Army of the Republic Library & Museum
Mr. Rasheed Robinson, recipient of the 2016 General Meade Society scholarship at the Gen. George G. Meade elementary school, Philadelphia, PA
Old Baldy Civil War Round Table

The Virginia Military Institute Museum
The Lee Chapel, Lexington, Virginia
The Stonewall Jackson House, Lexington, Virginia
The General George C. Marshall museum, on the campus of V.M. I. Institute.
The Virginia Military Institute Foundation

Jerry's partner in all these endeavors, his wife Betty McCormick, received a standing ovation. Jerry concluded his remarks with his entertaining imitation of Ed Bearss, a great historian and friend of the Society.

Personal remembrances were given by Bob Hanrahan, Jr., Mary Ann Hartner and Carol Neumann. The dinner ended with the presentation of a wooden gavel and box made from the Meade Witness tree to President Andy Waskie, a well deserved tribute to our tireless and esteemed leader. Andy was joined by our musical quest, Charlie Zahm, in singing the Irish Folk Song, "Will Ye Go Lassie Go".

Vince Lombardi once said, "The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual." Thanks to all those individuals who contributed to this harmonious and worthwhile organization to make it a success.

U.S. Marine Corps Birthday and Tree Planting - Thursday, November 10, 2016, Laurel Hill Cemetery: The day dawned bright and warm, a perfect day to spend in Historic Laurel Hill. At 10:00 a.m., the annual Salute to the U.S. Marine Corps on its 241st Birthday took place at the grave and memorial to the 7th Commandant of the Marine Corps Brigadier General Jacob Zeilin. A contingent of Marines from the 14th Marine Engineers from Folcroft, Delaware County and a number of citizens and veterans gathered to join in the observance, was co-sponsored by the General Meade Society, Legion Post 405 of the Union League and the Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery.

The keynote speaker was Marine veteran of Vietnam, Captain Terry Williamson, who is also the president of the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee. Terry spoke movingly about the Marines he served with in combat in Vietnam.

After the ceremony, the annual Veterans' Day tour 'Killed in Action' was conducted for a dozen stalwarts. The group visited a number of graves of veterans from the revolution to Vietnam interred at Laurel Hill who gave the supreme sacrifice for the nation.

At 1:00 p.m. a ceremony was held to accompany the planting of a new tree over the grave of General George G. Meade to replace the 'Witness Tree' that sheltered the noble hero's final resting place for close to 170 years and under which, four U.S. Presidents, dignitaries, Civil War veterans and generations of citizens stood to admire and honor the 'Victor of the Battle of Gettysburg'.

The new tree is a 20 foot White Oak that is being sponsored by the General Meade Society. A bronze plaque will be placed at the base of the new Meade Tree to mark the occasion. It is said that this tree may reach the age of 300 years, which is common with this variety. Future generations of admirers of the gallantry of General Meade will rest under its shade. – Andy Waskie



2017
GENERAL GEORGE MEADE SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Kindly remit your 2017 dues payment on or before January 31, 2017.

As a member of **General Meade Society of Philadelphia, Inc.** your annual membership dues and contributions support the nation's only organization devoted to "promoting and preserving" the memory of the life and service of Major General George Gordon Meade. Members receive *The Dispatch* via email or by the USPS (additional fee required) as they choose, and also an invitation to all Society events and monthly meetings, including the annual business meeting in April.

Mail to:

**The General Meade Society of Philadelphia, Inc.
P.O. Box 45556
Philadelphia, PA 19149**

Annual membership dues cover the calendar year – January 1st to December 31st, 2017.

- _____ **\$10.00 Student Membership (18 years & younger)**
- _____ **\$20.00 Individual Membership**
- _____ **\$30.00 Family Membership**
- _____ **\$10.00 Additional for USPS mailing of *The Meade Post - Dispatch***
- _____ **Additional Tax-deductible donation to the *General Meade Society of Philadelphia***
- _____ **Contribution to the *William H. Boehmer Preservation Fund***
- _____ **Contribution to the *General Meade Society Foundation (The General Meade School, Philadelphia)***

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT !!