

# THE UNION VOLUNTEER

NEWSLETTER OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY, CO. B, INC.

Volume XXXVI No. 1 January 2017

## Club Leadership

### New Member Chairs:

Daniel Malick (military)  
dmalick12@gmail.com  
Julie Everett (civilian)  
djkeverett@comcast.net

President: Dave Downing  
Vice President: Steve Church  
Secretary: Doug McComas  
Treasurer: Don Everett  
Military: Doug McComas, Captain  
Civilian Coordinator: Sue Colegrove  
Board Members-at-Large:  
Dan Conklin, Joy Henderson,  
Bill Jarrett  
Quartermaster: Don Everett  
Club Historian: Doug McComas  
Webmaster: Dennis Zank

Website: [www.7thmichigan.us](http://www.7thmichigan.us)

### Annual Membership Dues:

\$16.00 – single

\$19.20 – family

\$6.00 – to receive newsletter as  
non-participating/non-voting member

Mail payments or inquiries to:

7th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Co. B, Inc.  
P.O. Box 16206, Lansing, MI 48901-6206

### Newsletter Submission Guidelines:

Thanks to all who submitted  
information for this month's issue.

Deadline date for submissions is the 25<sup>th</sup>  
of each month. Please have all reports,  
articles, notices, etc. in print-ready form.

I am able to accept documents in most of the  
usual word processing programs or formats.

If accompanying maps or images are  
needed, **please** include them (in jpg  
format), if possible. Be sure to ascertain  
that any items coming from another source  
are properly credited, or have obtained  
reprint permission.

Personal news items are welcomed and  
encouraged, or photos of special  
events. Original articles (800-1000 word  
limit) pertaining to the Civil War or  
reenacting are also desired.

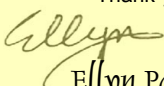
Email submissions to me at:

[7thminewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:7thminewsletter@gmail.com)

Or mail to:

736 Gettysburg Ave.  
Jackson, MI 49203


Thank-you.

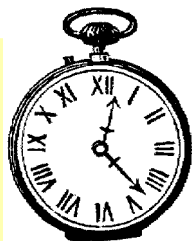
  
Ellyn Painter, Editor



Sven and Ollie at the club Christmas Party on Dec. 3. Photo shared by Gloria Kirschensteiner on Facebook.

**Happy**  
**NEW**  
**YEAR**

**NOTE CORRECTION:**   
**The Next Club Meeting is:**  
**Sunday, January 15, 2017, 1:00PM**  
**at Robbins United Methodist Church.**  
 (See map on last page)

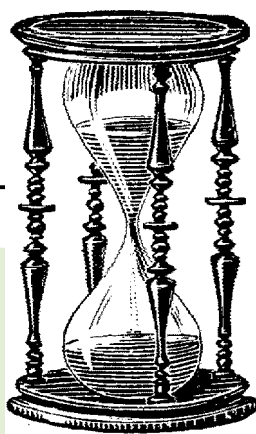


## *A Look Back...*

Ladies: Remember when we used to make a quilt each year and raffle it off at the Jackson (Cascades) Civil War Muster? Here is an oldie, but goodie from the photo albums of Vonda Warren --Bev Nichols Baerren working on the raffle quilt approx 1986-1989—and looking none too happy at being photographed!



My apologies  
 for the error in date in the  
 December newsletter. I must have  
 been having a senior moment.  
 Please don't come on the 17<sup>th</sup>--  
 it is a Tuesday, and the church will not  
 be open for us!  
 Please see the Civilian Report for the  
 correct sewing party date, as I also  
 screwed that up!  
 Hope you all did something exciting on  
 New Year's Eve / Day!



**Time's Running  
 Out! Don't Forget  
 to Pay Your  
 Club Dues!**

Information about annual dues amounts,  
 and the address to which to mail checks is  
 in the sidebar on page 1 of this issue.  
 (It is always in the sidebar, but not  
 always on page 1!)

---The Editor

Members that have not paid 2017 dues as of Dec 24, 2016:

Carol Bachand

Al Baerren

Armin Berg

George Conklin

Kevin Doyle

Thomas Edwards

Diane Geck

Mark Heath

Joy Henderson

Marilyn/Ned Hughes

Dale/Debra Marvin/VanElst

Dean Mielke

Douglas/Jerri Munn

Gregory/Carmen Nolin/Salin

Craig Searles

Ian Searles

Marie/Audrey/Elliot Searles

Robert/ Dawn Smit

Dennis Zank

If you have paid your dues and you are on this list contact Don Everett at [djkeverett@comcast.net](mailto:djkeverett@comcast.net) or 517-393-3475.

**Remember: if your dues are not paid by Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2017 you will not be on the March 1 roster that is sent to Greenfield Village for the Remembrance weekend May 27,28,29 2017 Memorial Day weekend.**





# President's Report

With Christmas upon us and the start of a new year, it's interesting to think back on how many things we enjoy today that had their influence dating back to the time period we portray. One that many don't normally think about is that of Santa Claus. The origins of what Santa is today can be traced to political cartoonist Thomas Nast. He is credited as creating the symbol of the elephant for the Republican Party as well as the donkey for the Democrats. His drawings of Santa that first appeared during the Civil War influenced how we imagine him even today.

Nast first drew Santa during the 1862 Christmas season. The drawings, however, actually appeared in the post-dated January 3, 1863 edition of *Harper's Weekly*. Nast's Santa appears on the cover of the paper in an illustration titled "Santa Claus in Camp." Nast drew a patriotic Santa dressed in striped pants and a coat covered with stars sitting on his sleigh beneath a

waving American flag. Two drummer boys in the foreground of the sketch appear fascinated with a jack-in-the-box toy. One soldier is shown opening his box to find a stocking stuffed with presents, while another soldier holds up the pipe he received as a present. In the background, other soldiers play football, chase a greased boar, and cook Christmas dinner.

More surprisingly, Santa is shown amusing the soldiers by hanging a wooden effigy of Confederate president Jefferson Davis. So no one is mistaken as to its meaning, a text accompanying the drawing notes: *"Santa Claus is entertaining the soldiers by showing them Jeff Davis's future. He is tying a cord pretty tightly round his neck, and Jeff Davis seems to be kicking very much at such a fate."*

Each year Santa appeared in "Harper's" with a slightly different tale to tell, right up through the 1880s. As we all realize by studying this time period, there are many things that we take for granted today which have their origins back during the time of the Civil War. This being the holiday season I thought it might be fun to remember this chapter of history.

Here's hoping you have a nice break during the month and hoping to see you at the meeting in January where we will begin to put together ideas and schedules for the upcoming season, and beyond.

Dave



## Historic Fort Wayne Receives Kresge Revitalization Grant

The National Park Foundation is teaming up with the Historic Fort Wayne coalition and the City of Detroit to help revitalize this landmark. The effort is supported by a \$265,000 planning grant from the Kresge Foundation.

The 83-acre site, with buildings dating back to the 1840s, is in pretty dire shape. The site, located along West Jefferson Avenue, hosts tours, civil war reenactments, vintage baseball games, weddings, and other events. But the site needs work and a plan.

The project aims to improve recreational and cultural opportunities for Southwest Detroit residents and visitors. The grant will fund a consultant to work with city officials to develop a comprehensive strategic plan, including a timeline for implementation, by December 31, 2017.

"For nearly 175 years, Historic Fort Wayne has stood as a cultural and historical landmark, today attracting some 150,000 visitors a year... Fort Wayne was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. The City of Detroit has owned the site since 1974, and it's operated by the Parks and Recreation Department with assistance from the non-profit Historic Fort Wayne Coalition.



Photo by Ellyn Painter

<http://detroit.curbed.com/2016/12/21/14039270/historic-fort-wayne-revitalization-park-kresge>

## MACKINAC ISLAND GUARD DUTY JANUARY 1864



By Roger Carpenter

RJC  
02/02





## Civilian Report

Hi Everyone:

I hope that all of you had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The holiday event that was planned for Dec 11 at Meridian Village was cancelled due to the weather.

I will be meeting with the Village committee in March regarding their 2017 slate of events.

The January sewing circle will be on Saturday, the 14<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the home of Sue Colegrove. I know that our sewing circles are usually the 3rd Saturday of the month. However, January has 5 Sundays, thus, we are doing it on the 2nd Saturday in order to keep to the same weekend as the January club members' meeting (which is on the next day, the 15<sup>th</sup>).

We will be meeting at Flap Jack restaurant on Waverly Rd. at 9:00am for breakfast, for those who wish to come early. If you need directions please call.

The sewing will commence at 10:00am at Sue's house. As usual, please bring a passing dish for the potluck lunch, and whatever projects you wish to work on.

I would like all the civilians to think about our upcoming events so that we can start to plan our activities for the ladies and the male civilians. I know it's early but would like to get started with ideas.

Sue Colegrove

Civilian Coordinator

Sue's Address:

3415 S. Catherine

Lansing, MI 48911

517-626-0144

[scolegrove@rocketmail.com](mailto:scolegrove@rocketmail.com)

Flap Jack Restaurant  
1601 S. Waverly Rd.

Lansing, MI 48917  
Phone: 517-334-9999

from *The Civil War Trust:*

*I have some great news to share with you!* Last week, Congress voted to expand the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in Virginia by more than 7,000 acres. While no land will be immediately transferred to the park, this bill could make Petersburg the largest national battlefield park in the country! This exciting development is the culmination of years of effort by the Civil War Trust, its allies in the conservation community and—most importantly—members like you.

Throughout this campaign, we asked you to speak out and contact your federal representatives in support of this project. The response was overwhelming: thousands of you reached out, and your voices were heard in Washington, D.C. With this expansion, Petersburg National Battlefield's authorized boundary will include battlefields of the 1864-65 Petersburg Campaign that were not previously part of the park, including places you helped save at the Petersburg Breakthrough, White Oak Road and Ream's Station.

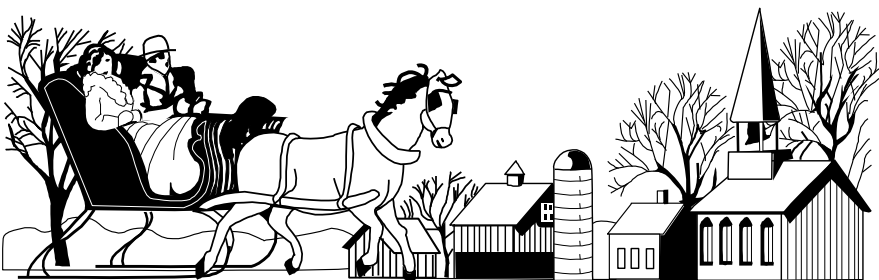
We still have a great deal of work ahead. Our goal is to work with the National Park Service to incorporate lands saved by the Trust into the park, seamlessly integrating these sites into Petersburg National Battlefield.

Thank you for your support over the years to preserve land at Petersburg, and for lending your voice to ensure these hallowed grounds are preserved for future generations. Together, we will continue to do great work to preserve battlefield land fundamental to our nation's history.

'Til the Battle is Won,  
Jim

*Jim Lighthizer*

December 14, on Facebook; posted by  
JimKirschensteiner



"A copy of the minutes of previous club meetings is available upon request to all members in good standing."

Doug McComas, Club Secretary

[dougmccomas@comcast.net](mailto:dougmccomas@comcast.net)

# Christmas in the Confederate

How the Davis family spent  
the Christmas of 1864  
By Varina Davis

## White House



The wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis wrote this article describing how the Davis family spent the Christmas of 1864 in the Confederate White House. It was published in *The New York World*, December 13, 1896 and has since been reprinted often. This excerpt was obtained via the website "The American Civil War, 1861-1865."  
---The Editor



Mrs. Varina Davis, First Lady of the Confederacy

Christmas Eve a number of young people were invited to come and string apples and popcorn for the trees; a neighbor very deft in domestic arts had tiny candle moulds made and furnished all the candles for the tree. However the puzzle and triumph of all was the construction of a large number of cornucopias. At last someone suggested a conical block of wood, about which the drawing paper could be wound and pasted. In a little book shop a number of small, highly colored pictures cut out and ready to apply were unearthed, and our old confectioner friend, Mr. Piazza, consented, with a broad smile, to give "all the love verses the young people wanted to roll with the candy." .....About twenty young men and girls gathered around small tables in one of the drawing rooms of the mansion and the cornucopias were begun. The men wrapped the squares of candy, first reading the "sentiments" printed upon them, such as "Roses are red, violets blue, sugar's sweet and so are you," "If you love me as I love you no knife can cut our love in two." The fresh young faces, wreathed in smiles, nodded attention to the reading, while with their small deft hands they gined [?] the cornucopias and pasted on the pictures. Where were the silk tops to come from? Trunks of old things were turned out and snippings of silk and even woolen of bright colors were found to close the tops, and some of the young people twisted sewing silk into cords with which to draw the bags up. The beauty of those home-made things astonished us all, for they looked quite "custom-made...."

### Makeshift Toys for the Orphans

Some small feathered chickens and parrots which nodded their heads in obedience to a weight beneath them were furnished with new tail feathers, lambs minus much of their wool were supplied with a cotton wool substitute, rag dolls were plumped out and recovered with clean cloth, and the young ladies painted their fat faces in bright colors and furnished them with beads for eyes.

On Christmas morning the children awoke early and came in to see their toys. They were followed by the negro women, who one after another "caught" us by wishing us a merry Christmas before we could say it to them, which gave them a right to a gift. Of course, there was a present for every one, small though it might be, and one who had been born and brought up at our plantation was vocal in her admiration of a gay handkerchief. As she left the room she ejaculated: "Lord knows mistress knows our insides; she jest got the very thing I wanted."

### Mrs. Davis's Strange Presents {these gifts appear to have been offerings from an admiring public ???}

For me there were six cakes of delicious soap, made from the grease of ham boiled for a family at Farmville, a skein of exquisitely fine gray linen thread spun at home, a pincushion of some plain brown cotton material made by some poor woman and stuffed with wool from her pet sheep, and a little baby hat plaited by the orphans and presented by the industrious little pair who sewed the straw together. ... Another present was a fine, delicate little baby frock without an inch of lace or embroidery upon it, but the delicate fabric was set with fairy stitches by the dear invalid neighbor who made it, and it was very precious in my eyes. There were also a few of Swinburne's best songs bound in wall-paper and a chamois needlebook left for me by young Mr. P., now succeeded to his title in England. In it was a Brobdingnagian thimble "for my own finger, you know," said the handsome, cheerful young fellow. After breakfast, at which all the family, great and small, were present, came the walk to St. Paul's Church. We did not use our carriage on Christmas or, if possible to avoid it, on Sunday.

{During or after the service, the First Family distributed to orphans the gifts prepared the evening before.}

The orphans sat mute with astonishment until the opening hymn and prayer and the last amen had been said, and then they at a signal warily and slowly gathered around the tree to receive from a lovely young girl their allotted present. The different gradations from joy to ecstasy which illuminated their faces was "worth two years of peaceful life" to see. The


continued on next page....

## *Christmas in the Confederate White House, concluded....*

President became so enthusiastic that he undertook to help in the distribution, but worked such wild confusion giving everything asked for into their outstretched hands, that we called a halt, so he contented himself with unwinding one or two tots from a network of strung popcorn in which they had become entangled and taking off all the apples he could when unobserved, and presenting them to the smaller children....

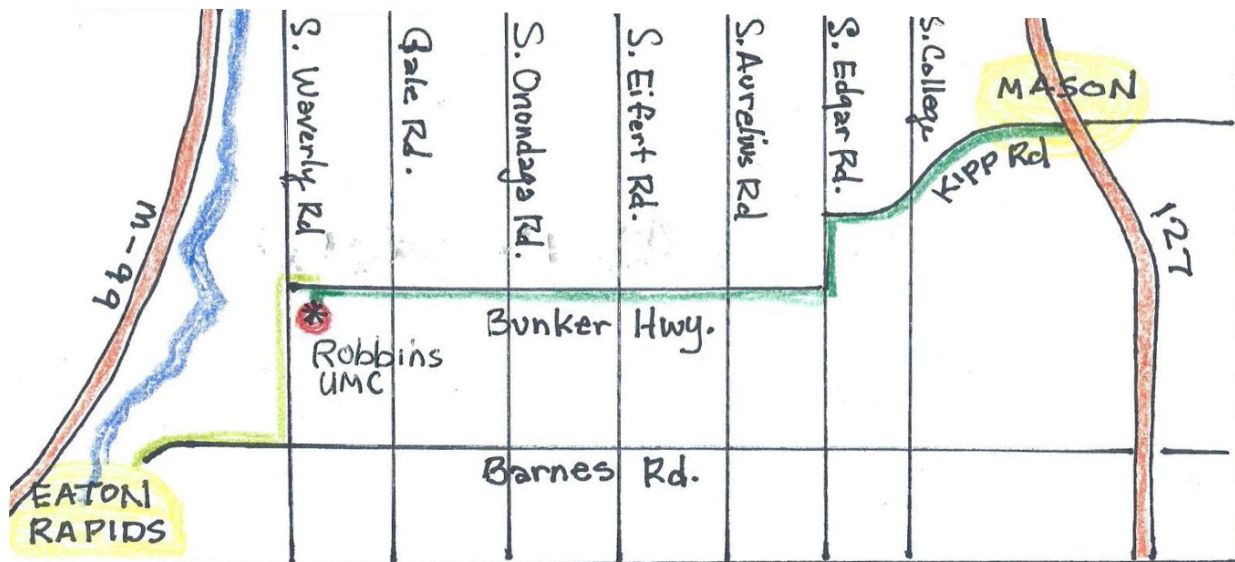
"When the lights were fled, the garlands dead, and all but we departed" we also went home to find that Gen. Lee had called in our absence, and many other people. Gen. Lee had left word that he had received a barrel of sweet potatoes for us, which had been sent to him by mistake. He did not discover the mistake until he had taken his share (a dishful) and given the rest to the soldiers! We wished it had been much more for them and him.

*{On Christmas night they attended a dance.}*

The night closed with a "starvation" party, where there were no refreshments, at a neighboring house. The rooms lighted as well as practicable, some one willing to play dance music on the piano and plenty of young men and girls comprised the entertainment. Sam Weller's soiree [sic, soiree], consisting of boiled mutton and capers, would have been a royal feast in the Confederacy. The officers, who rode into town with their long cavalry boots pulled well up over their knees, but splashed up their waists, put up their horses and rushed to the places where their dress uniform suits had been left for safekeeping. They very soon emerged, however, in full toggery and entered into the pleasures of their dance with the bright-eyed girls, who many of them were fragile as fairies, but worked like peasants for their home and country. These young people are gray-haired now, but the lessons of self-denial, industry and frugality in which they became past mistresses then, have made of them the most dignified, self-reliant and tender women I have ever known -- all honor to them. 



Cyndi Carlson wearing one of her many pretty day caps. This one looks very "Christmas-y!"



Robbins United Methodist Church - 6419 Bunker Rd. (Hwy),  
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827 517-663-5226

MAP Not To Scale  
Roads are 1 mile apart

EDITOR'S NOTE: For members new to the club, please make a record of the info on the above map (or another of your choice), as I will not be reprinting it every month. Our monthly club meetings are always on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday (unless otherwise specified), starting at 1:00PM, at Robbins UMC. To ALL members, please try to make an effort to attend, as the meetings are the beating heart of our club, at which we not only forge relationships and impart information, but discuss and make decisions on issues vital to YOUR interests and success as a reenactor. January is the month in which we decide much of our agenda and the key events we'll be supporting for the coming year. We desire and NEED your input! Thanks to you all we are a great club.