

Olustee Observer - October 1998

P.O. Box 382

Glen St. Mary, Florida 32040



Battle of Olustee Reenactment -

February 12-13-14, 1999

Olustee Historical Exposition -

September 25-26, 1999

<http://battleofolustee.org/>

Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization Membership Application

I wish to become a member of the Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization,
and to support its efforts in maintaining a part of Florida's, and our nation's, history.

Check one: new member renewing member

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: work _____ home _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

Please select your membership category:

Individual \$10 Family \$15 Patron \$30 Organizational \$50
 Individual Life \$100 Corporate Friend \$500 Corporate Sponsor \$1000

Make checks payable to: "Olustee Battlefield CSO," and mail to:
Olustee Battlefield CSO, P.O. Box 382, Glen St. Mary, Florida 32040

Hot and Cold

Regular visitors to the **Interpretative Center** at the Historical Site will be delighted to hear that the **Florida Park Service** has replaced the heating/air conditioning unit in the Center. The funds budgeted also allowed for vents in the video and restrooms. In the past, some have wondered if the old A/C unit was the original one used during the battle.

Cash On Hand

John Thrush, CSO treasurer, reports that with all the bills now paid from the last reenactment, we have \$20,512 in cash and \$25,184 in Certificates of Deposit. Sales of the Olustee video are doing well, but our membership is down. **Please encourage others to join**, especially corporate sponsors.

Take a Seat

The bleachers used in past reenactments are showing their age, and some are no longer considered safe. To rent additional bleachers will cost \$4 per seat with a total cost in the \$20,000 range. Your Board of Directors is agonizing over raising the price of admission or using fewer bleachers.

History Class

Elaine McGrath, of the Florida Park Service, reports that the work on the **Olustee Teachers Handbook** grant is continuing. A 4th grade teacher has been contacted to write it in cooperation with the CSO and several teachers will be paid from the grant to attend a workshop on it. Once approved, the Florida Department of State will then pay to print 1,000 copies to give to Florida schools. Another product of the grant will be **Olustee Guide and Activity Booklets** that will be printed by the CSO. These will be available

at the park for **free** distribution (donations requested if the booklet is taken home).

Museum Site Update

At a recent meeting, **Gene Ingram** outlined the progress made on the Museum Project. Board members were asked to review a concept plan which included: goals and objectives, scope of the plan, museum and visitor center purposes and themes, and the planned layout and rendering of the building. Five committees were established and are in the process of being staffed. The conceptual size of the building will be approximately 13,000 square feet and to cost over three million dollars. The schedule calls for completion of the project in 2003.

The Reenactors Are Coming

Please use every means available to spread the word of the **135th Anniversary Reenactment** in February. Many local newspapers, as well as radio stations, will accept short notices on the event. A poster on the event is available on the Battle of Olustee WWI site and can be printed and reproduced for distribution.

Tougher Rules

As the CSO strives to attain greater authenticity for the event, it finds it necessary to enact stricter rules and at the same time stay within federal and state guidelines. The guidelines for sutlers is one area that has seen significant revision again. For example, where the rules previously stated that merchandise for sale had to be from the 1860s and before, it was not intended to permit merchandise from the **Medieval Period**. Only 19th Century goods up to the 1860s are now allowed. Sutlers should examine other rules that were revised when they receive their packets.

Thank You, Johnny Reb!

The last newsletter extended a thank you to the unknown Confederate unit that attended the Union Memorial Service during the last reenactment. We have since been informed that this unit was **Company B, 6th Florida Battalion**. As commanding officer Stephen Knight states, "We have attended all these services, and it is our honor to do so."

We're Not That Hardcore

You probably heard of the reenactor who was actually shot during the Gettysburg reenactment this year. **Clinton Wakefield Epps**, of Charlottesville, VA was **hit in the neck by a .44 cal. pistol ball**, that entered on the left side and lodged near his right tonsil. Epps, who fortunately suffered no permanent injury, fell down and had difficulty convincing fellow reenactors he was actually hit. The bullet was fired by a non-English speaking, French reenactor who had borrowed the pistol from someone who had borrowed it from someone else who didn't attend. Police are satisfied that no harm was intended by anyone involved. The Frenchman borrowed the pistol to participate in the Friday afternoon battle as his own weapon had not yet passed through customs. Now that Epps is the most authentic Civil War reenactor who ever lived, what are his plans? Epps says he will quit reenacting and concentrate on graduate school. I guess when you have achieved perfection in one field, it is time to move on to other challenges.

Federal Camp

The CSO is considering moving the Federal military camp to the west side of the road. But this may not take place at the next reenactment. However, a site for campaign-style camping has been chosen along one of

the trails leading to the battlefield. That area will be widened to allow soldiers to throw their bedding down. This will allow spectators to see how the soldiers actually lived in the field.

The **17th Connecticut**, under Jeff Grzelak, is organizing the placement of "hutments" at the **Federal Garrison at Fort Marion** this December 11-13. They hope to replicate a photograph taken of the fort in the 1860s (see below). Reenactors will be sleeping inside Fort Marion for the first time since the war. Afterwards, the hutments will be disassembled and used later in the area of the Federal military camp at Olustee during February to simulate the Barber's Plantation area.



Fort Marion, St. Augustine, 1860s

Civilian Blood

At the next Battle of Olustee, the medical reenactors plan to ask for volunteers from the spectators to be their victims... er, patients. Successful, and still living, volunteers will be awarded "**Honorary Wounded**" certificates.

Weary Travelers

Last year's effort by the **Sanitary Commission** to feed the reenactors who came in during the late night hours will be expanded at the next Battle of Olustee. Sanitary Commission members from many states will provide **hot food** for the reenactors who arrive throughout the day and night after having spent many hours traveling to the event. Please don't forget to thank them!

Father and Son

Thomas Flynn was 15 years old in 1861 when he ran away to join the 62nd New York Volunteer Infantry. **James Flynn**, his father, then joined the Union Army to look for him. James (his photograph appears on the address page) initially served with the 1st New York Volunteer Cavalry, then with a medical unit and finally with the **7th New Hampshire Infantry**. James was wounded at Olustee, and the last letter his family received from him was written while he was a prisoner in Tallahassee. The letters (1861 through 1864) of Thomas and James to their family are now available on the Olustee WWW site, and are an example of how many families were torn apart by the war. The letters and photographs of both men were graciously provided by **Gerry Flynn**, James' great-grandson.

Olustee WWW site

The Battle of Olustee and Reenactment WWW site recorded 45,649 "hits" as of October 31, 1998, and averages 50 hits a day. Our award winning site is located at: <http://battleofolustee.org/>

Tom Fasulo, the site's Webmaster, purchased a copy of **The Civil War CD-ROM** which is a compilation of **The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies**. Tom has

accessed most of the records that deal with the battle and will be adding them to the WWW site over the next few months. Some of the more interesting reports include the chief Union medical officer's report on the wounded; the reports of the individual regimental commanders, Union and Confederate; detailed reports from artillery and engineer officers; reports on the actions of both forces skirmishing after the battle; and the fascinating correspondence relating to Col. Caraway Smith's report on his Confederate Cavalry Brigade, and Generals Colquitt's and Finegan's refusal to endorse the report, resulting in Smith's request for a court of inquiry.

Olustee Video and Booklets

If you are interested in becoming a **distributor** for the CSO historical materials: the video, booklets, maps, post cards, etc., contact **Alice Williams** (904-259-3965) for details on wholesale prices and quantity. An order form for the video, booklets and other materials is available on the WWW site. The video is also an excellent gift for your neighborhood school.

Time and Waste :-)

Sometimes it seems the CSO spends more time discussing the number and locations of the **porta-potties** than the commanders did on the disposition of troops during the battle. Hopefully, the new locations will eliminate some of the problems reenactors had last year.

News That Fits

News items concerning the CSO and the battle can be sent to Tom Fasulo, the newsletter editor, at fasulo@ufl.edu. As editor, Tom reserves the right to tear, mutilate and spindle all submissions. Thank you!