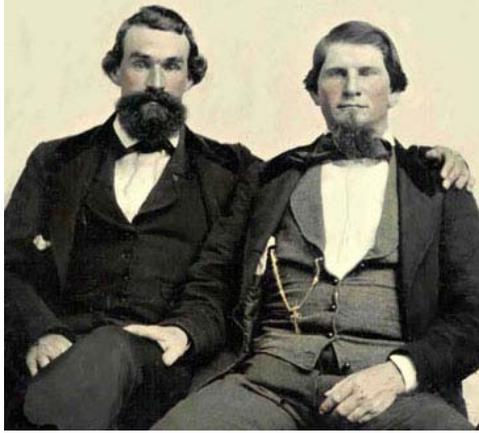


Olustee Observer - October 2001
P.O. Box 382
Glen St. Mary, Florida 32040



Battle of Olustee Reenactment
February 15-16-17, 2002
Olustee Historical Exposition
September 21, 2002

<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

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President's Report

I don't have a exact number of reenactors who participated at the Expo [September 22-23], but we fed over 150 at the Saturday night meal. I can't report on everything that went on, as I was showing relics, talking about the diorama we displayed and helping visitors fill out a questionnaire [survey]. Participants included infantry, cavalry, and two pieces of artillery, and a significant number of ladies. Also several sutlers, exhibitors of relics and a number of period artisans. On Saturday we had approximately 200 visitors, but only about 70 on Sunday. While a good turn out, it could have been better, but there is so much to compete with [Sunday football games, etc.]. At the board meeting on Sunday morning, we voted to make the Expo just a one day event in the future. We had so many reenactors leaving early on Sunday that it wasn't fair to spectators to have to pay the park entry fee. However, at next year's event, Sunday will be an unofficial training day for units that want to stay and hold early season training. [Editor's Note: Unlike more northern states which are nearing the end of their reenacting season, Florida's reenacting season usually starts with the Olustee Expo.] - John Thrush

Expo Details

For the estimated 300 visitors who attended the Civil War Expo at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park in September, a full day's worth of action was presented by historical reenactors. Several of the day's events were filmed by a video production crew working for the Florida News Channel. A short segment on the Olustee Expo aired on Tallahassee television stations the following week. A longer segment developed as part of a travelogue for destinations along the Upper Suwannee River will be aired at a later time. Military reenactors at this year's Expo

included members of the 2nd Florida Cavalry, the 8th Florida Infantry, the 15th US Infantry, the 13th Indiana Infantry, Clay Artillery, and an artillery unit from Ft. Clinch State Park. Exhibits included a diorama of the battle, period musical instruments, and relic collections owned by John Thrush and Larry Skinner. Artisans included Wheeler's Ironworks, M&T Mercantile, and Terry Rigenetter. Members of the 13th Indiana hosted a beautiful Ladies Tea. Southern Family Impressions and Ortega Trading set up sutleries. Lectures on aspects of the Battle of Olustee and the Civil War soldier were presented by Gene Ingram and Tom Fasulo. This year's event also featured Civil War stories told by Cracker cowboy poet Hank Mattson. - Martha Nelson

Museum News

The Olustee Battlefield CSO Museum Project Planning Committee held its 2nd workshop on August 25, 2001 at the Family Service Center, Macclenny, Florida. Curt Bowman and Eleanor Hughes (Hughes/Bowman Design Group Inc.) lead a discussion on elements of importance which will finalize the design concepts for the proposed museum. A cluster-of-buildings approach is being considered which lends itself to a construction phasing process and reduces the amount of funding required to get started. Still paramount is the approved location of the museum buildings and the approved charter to staff the complex. No progress was reported on these two issues because of the absence of both Federal and State people working on this portion of the project. A survey was conducted at the Olustee Battlefield Expo on September 22-23 and at other locations in the area to define the reason visitors visit the Park and what their interests would be in a battlefield museum.

Another meeting was held October 13, 2001, at the Olustee Ranger station. Hughes/Bowman discussed the results of the survey taken at the Olustee Expo. Forty-four visitors were interviewed, most traveling 30 to 60 miles; two exceptions were from Texas and Georgia. Most were on a family outing and learned of the Expo by word of mouth and less than 10% from the media. Seeing artifacts, exhibits and reenactments topped their list of reasons for visiting Civil War battlefields. An important meeting of the State Park Service, the U.S. Forestry Service and the CSO was held on November 9, at the Olustee Ranger Station to discuss location and operational responsibilities for the proposed museum. At the next workshop scheduled for February 2, 2002, Hughes/Bowman will present a draft of the interpretive plan. - Gene Ingram, Planning Chair



CSO Presidents Meeting

The Stephen Foster and Olustee Battlefield CSOs co-sponsored the Florida Park Service District 2 6th CSO Presidents Meeting on September 15th at the Stephen Foster Cultural Center Park. This meeting provided CSO members an opportunity to share knowledge, information, resources, technical assistance and networks to better serve their parks and the Florida Park Services's mission. Valinda Subic is the Park Manager for both Stephen Foster and Olustee and, as such, works

closely with both CSOs. - Valinda Subic and Thomas Fasulo

New Park Director

With the departure of long time Florida Park Director Fran P. Mainella to serve as Director of the National Park Service, the leadership post for the Florida Park Service was empty. So David B. Struhs, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) appointed Wendy Mays Spencer as the new Director of the DEP's Division of State Parks. Ms. Spencer assumed her new position on September 4th. The Olustee CSO welcomes her aboard and wishes her success.

Wendy has a tough job as the number of parks in the Florida system now number more than 150. Plus attendance at the state parks reached an all time high last year. During the state fiscal period of July 1 2000 through June 30, 2001 over 18.1 million visitors visited the our parks, or 8.2 percent more than the 16.7 million visitors in the previous years.

With recent cutbacks in state funding for park ranger positions, and more expected in the future due to the slowing of the economy and the decline of tourism, the need for strong CSOs is greater than ever. While many potential visitors from out-of-state may now choose stay at home, so will many Floridians. What better way for Floridians to relax than to visit a state park. Hopefully, attendance will stay high to prove to our legislature how important our parks are. But even if attendance declines during this period of national restructuring we must not let our parks suffer. We need to maintain them for the future when our citizens can once again enjoy our parks without worrying about that future. - Valinda Subic and Thomas Fasulo

Annual State CSO Meeting

The 10th Annual State CSO Meeting of all CSOs and Park staff took place on November 1–3, 2001 at the Radisson Inn in Fort Myers, Florida. There were a great many training sessions for persons interested in becoming a leader in the CSO or just learning how to help the CSO. A number of our CSO leaders and Historic Site park personnel attended. At the end of each annual meeting there are many free tours of parks in the areas. Many of these tours include boat or kayak trips. I spoke at the annual meeting last year and I still fondly remember the kayak trip through the islands near Little Talbot Island State Park. - Thomas Fasulo

Olustee Photographs.

Many people share their photographs [old and new] with me to post on the Battle of Olustee Web site. Often these photographs are buried deep in the site, linked from a unit or individual's page. So I thought I would make some of these more accessible and highlight those the Photo Committee (me, myself and I) thought were the most interesting. So the main menu now carries a listing for the "Olustee Photograph of the Month." To start off in October, I picked one by David Coffield. Since this is a new feature I'll keep it up until the end of November, then select a new one each month. This photo, while not completely focused, is interesting as it shows the split second Federal artillerymen fired their cannon. The flame emerging from the barrel should remind all infantrymen to quickly move out of the artillery's cone of fire when ordered to do so. At a recent Florida event, a deputy sheriff walked in front of a cannon just as it fired. Fortunately, he was not seriously injured. - Thomas Fasulo

The photograph on the cover of this issue is of two of the Cone brothers who served in the 2nd Florida Cavalry - see details below.

Web Site Additions

There were several important additions to the Web site since the last issue. John Moore of Concord, MA, provided me with a copy of a letter Captain Robert Newell, of the 54th Massachusetts, wrote his brother after the battle. Captain Newell had an interesting perspective about the training provided his men, his duties while in Florida and the people he met and fought against. All this, combined with his sense of humor, makes this eight page letter a joy to read.

Also Ken Cone, Lt. Col. USAF retired, provided me with the photograph of the two Cone brothers on this issue's cover, plus more information on the four Cone brothers who fought at Olustee with the 2nd Florida Cavalry. Three of the brothers, especially William Haddock, had significant military experience in the 3rd Seminole War, and that information is also included on their page. William's family was also involved in politics as his father was a Georgia state legislator, a Florida territorial legislator and later a Florida state senator, and William's son was governor of Florida in the late 1930s.



Casualties of War

Several weeks ago a TV news reporter said that the deaths at the World Trade Center and Pentagon totaled about 6,000 people. She stated that never in our country's history have more Americans died in one day, not even in the Civil War. As any Civil War historian knows, the bloodiest day in American History occurred on another September day near the small Maryland town of Sharpsburg. The battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, resulted in 4,710 dead, 18,440 wounded and 3,043 missing [Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War, 1991. 850 p]. Those counting the casualties at Antietam usually only total the number of dead and wounded [23,150], but who knows how many of the missing at Antietam were also killed? Was the reporter right or wrong about the deaths at the World Trade Center exceeding those at Antietam? But that is not why I am writing this.

The United States now has a population of about 270 million. During the 1860s there were about 11 million people in the northern states and 7 million in the southern states, or about 18 million total. This means our population is now about 15 times what it was during the Civil War. Mary Chestnut, a southern woman whose diary is now famous, wrote [about three years into the war] that before the Civil War she did not know a family that had someone in the army, but that now she did not know of any family that had not lost someone to the war. Our population is now far greater and yet our county is still tightly linked. I have two cousins who work in the World Trade Center complex - both survived, one by a lucky chance. At the University of Florida I work closely with a graduate student who has two friends among the missing. All of us, those who have lost friends and family and those who haven't, are deeply affected

by this tragedy. Yet consider what Americans who lived in the Civil War must have felt when the casualty lists from Antietam (23,150), Gettysburg (more than 50,000), Chickamauga (28,399) and other battles were published. Worse than the battles were the lists of those who died from disease - two of every three of the 622,000 who died in the Civil War. The despair in the cities, towns and hamlets during those four bloody years must have been overpowering at times.

Also consider that the men in most military units were from the same area, companies being formed of men from the same town or county. What happened in those communities when units like the 1st Texas and the 16th Connecticut took horrendous casualties in the cornfield at Antietam, or at Gettysburg when units like the 26th North Carolina had three men left when it reached the stone wall, or the 1st Minnesota, a small regiment of 280 men attacked an entire Confederate brigade, to buy five minutes for General Hancock with their lives? What this meant was that entire towns or counties lost all their young men. I'm reminded of the folk song from the 1960s that went, "Where have all the young men gone? Gone to graveyards every one." What must have it been like in America after the war, with a large part of an entire generation missing? Yet, despite the hardships, those Americans who survived still struggled to build a great nation.

Many of us who reenact say we do so in awe of and to honor the Americans of the 1860s who struggled under such great personal hardships, in battle and on the home front. But now is our time to really honor them. If they could continue to live in such terrible times, when they shuddered in anticipation of the next day's newspapers and its casualty lists, how can we shrink from our own fear of the loss of a loved one or economic

hardship? Do statistics really matter? Which is worse, 6,000 dead in one day, or 622,000 dead in four years? Perhaps John Dunne answered this when he wrote in his Devotions #17, "...any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Those of us who chose to live our lives in the past for one or two weekends a month, can best honor those whom we try to impersonate by facing the future with courage and resolve and not turning aside from our goal. They did it once, we must do it now. - Thomas Fasulo

Another Award for Our CSO

For many years, I have attended the Florida Recreation and Park Association (FRPA) Annual Conference, and sat through the Annual Award Ceremony without giving a whole lot of thought to the ones who receive the yearly awards. But when I received the nomination forms this year, I thought why not the Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization as the best Volunteer Group of the year. After all, we are the BEST of the BEST. (Just in case you don't remember or have forgotten, we received the Friends of Florida State Parks Award for the Best Citizens Support Organization for the year 2000.) So I filled out the form and mailed it in to FRPA. Mark Abdo, the Nomination Committee Chair later called and said that we had WON! Park Manager Valinda Subic, CSO President John Thrush and I then traveled to Saddlebrook Resort north of Tampa to receive the award. We were recognized because of all the things that we do to help improve the quality and quantity of leisure opportunities in Florida and our support of the Florida Park Service and the Olustee Battlefield Historic Site State Park.

- Mitzi Nelson, Secretary

All The News

The next issue of the Olustee Observer is scheduled for late January 2002. Please get your news to me [at fasulo@ufl.edu] early as the issue needs to arrive in mailboxes before the February reenactment. Unavoidable mailing label logistics [a transfer of the computer program from Mitzi Nelson to Jerry Herren] held this issue up for several weeks.

I want to thank Gene Ingram, Martha Nelson, Mitzi Nelson, John Thrush, and Valinda Subic for providing the news for this issue.

Also I'm happy to announce that John Thrush told me the CSO renewed its contract with last year's weather vendor. As a result, reenactors and visitors can once again plan for perfect weather during the February event. - Thomas Fasulo

