

Olustee Observer - October 2002
P.O. Box 382
Glen St. Mary, Florida 32040



Battle of Olustee Reenactment
February 14-15-16, 2003
Olustee Historical Exposition
September 20, 2003

<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 Message

We survived another summer and are now waiting for hurricane season to be over. The Expo was on September 21st. We had a good visitor attendance. I do not know how many reenactors were there, but it seemed like a good number. The sutlers had a couple of tents set up and our period demonstrators did a good job. There was a new item of interest for the visitors - sharing a lunch with the soldiers. **Ranger Frank** took care of that and it seemed to go well. We had three people showing artifacts, that did a lot to educate curious people. I don't want to miss anyone with my thanks for your hard work to make this a success. The reenactment committee met to get everything ready for the February reenactment. We are trying to make some small changes to make this a better and growing event. We also held a board of directors meeting to get some other changes done. Board and reenactment meetings will be held on 11 January, 2003. All are invited to attend. I would like to thank every one again for supporting me in running this organization. - **John Thrush**

Civil War Expo

The highlight of the Civil War Expo at Olustee Battlefield on September 21 was an authentic camp meal complete with hard tack. Long-time friends of the Battlefield, **Pat Haygood** and **Danny O'Neal** were persuaded to cook the meal for visitors. The pair cooked a delicious pot of chicken with rice, carrots and onions, served with a side dish of fresh boiled cabbage. Steaming plates were served from large cast iron pots with a healthy helping of good humor.

Ranger Frank Loughran took culinary honors from everyone with his homemade recipe for hard tack. CSO members **Dean**

and **Anita Lauramore** donated a fine government-issue wooden box to store and serve the hard tack, and visitors were able to take home a piece of the legendary war ration as a souvenir of the Expo.



Pat Haygood serves a plate of chicken and rice to an Expo visitor at the living history Civil War camp meal.

The Civil War tunes played by the **3rd Florida Regimental Band** throughout the day were especially popular with both reenactors and audience members. The ladies tea, artillery firing, cavalry drills, and sutlery by the **Lauramores** were familiar and favorite landmarks, as were the relic exhibits by CSO President **John Thrush** and his sidekick, **Larry Skinner**.

Union reenactor **Gene Ingram** drew a large audience for his lecture on the history of the Battle of Olustee. We were relieved to see Cavalry Captain **Bob McLendon**, still recovering from his wrestling match with an Alabama rattlesnake, but strong enough to join us for the day. Also new this year was a civilian ladies' picnic presented by **Chris Giddens** and friends, depicting leisure activities of women during the 1860s. Artisans once again treated visitors to the bellows of a portable blacksmith's forge, and

the tasty treat of kettle corn. We were glad that the **Wheelers** and the **Poindexters** shared their living history talents with everyone. Thanks also to the **Children of the Confederacy** for the food concession.

Although we trimmed the Expo to a one-day event rather than the full weekend, our attendance remained steady at about 300 people. We would like to develop the camp meal into a more structured living history presentation and need reenactors who will coordinate their activities with **Ranger Loughran** to offer visitors a unique first-person experience with Civil War history at the 2003 Expo. - **Martha Nelson**



Volunteer Chris Giddens at a civilian picnic that presented women's leisure activities during the 1860s at Olustee.

27th Annual Battle of Olustee February 14-16, 2003

The reenactment of the 27th Annual Battle of Olustee will be held February 15-16, 2003 at the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park. A parade, civilian activities, storytelling about the role of African American women, period music, ladies' tea, living history demonstrations and period church services are planned. Military drills with 2,500 reenactors and more than 50 horsemen representing infantry, cavalry and artillery units. The Olustee Battle Reenactment will be at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday. Open to all authentic 1864 impressions as found in the actual battle. No registration fee for reenactors. Sutlers must pre-register and pre-pay a Sutler Fee. Full scale artillery only. Registration packets available after October 1, 2002 on the Web site. Handicapped porta-johns for women reenactors. Saturday evening ball for reenactors only. Spectator fee is \$4 for adults, \$2 for children, and free for pre-schoolers. No pets allowed. All proceeds benefit the Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization and the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park Located in Osceola National Forest, the park is situated 20 miles east of I-75 and Lake City, FL, and 50 miles west of I-95 and Jacksonville, FL. Contact: Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, P.O. Drawer G, White Springs, FL 32096. (386) 397-2733 • FAX (386) 397-4262 • e-mail: Martha.J.Nelson@dep.state.fl.us Web site at <http://battleofolustee.org/>.

Reenactment

Following is a press release for the Reenactment from **Martha Nelson**. If you wish to use it in local papers or other media, please feel free to do so. You can contact Martha at Martha.J.Nelson@dep.state.fl.us for electronic copies.

Web Site News

Speaking of the reenactment... **Elaine McGrath** provided the applications, forms and regulations necessary for reenactors, sutlers and educational exhibitors interested in attending. These were posted on the Web site in late September- early October. All the applications are in PDF format. Other items added since the last issue: photographs of William Denham, 2nd Florida Cavalry; a link to "A Gallant Rush for Glory - A Story of the 54th Massachusetts"; and Reminiscences by Mary Fears.

The site still receives an average of 100 visitors per day, if you just consider the counter on the main menu. Hundreds of Web sites link directly to files under the main menu.

90 Years as a State Park

Olustee Battlefield celebrated its 90th year as Florida's first state park on October 23. **Ranger Frank Loughran** posted a celebratory note on the marquis at the entrance on U.S. 90 and set out punch and cookies for any travelers who stopped to visit the site.

The **United Daughters of the Confederacy** initiated the effort to mark the battlefield as a historic site before the end of the 19th century. Through their efforts, the governor of Florida accepted the deed to Olustee Battlefield on October 23, 1912, establishing the battlefield as the first state park in Florida. - **Martha Nelson**

Olustee Battlefield Library

The newly created library at Olustee Battlefield recently received assistance from two of its supporters. **Anita Lauramore**,

the official librarian, designated the proceeds from the sale of books in her sutlery to the library fund. Lauramore began sales on behalf of the library at the Olustee Civil War Expo on September 21. We are very appreciative of her efforts to secure both funds and books for the new library.

Margaret St. John donated a beautiful, leather-bound collection of Time-Life books on the Civil War to the library. The donation was made in memory of her late husband, **A.G. St. John**, who originally purchased the 30-volume set for his personal library. We extend our appreciation to Mrs. St. John for her thoughtful gift. - **Martha Nelson**

Civil War Books

Speaking of books... Also out this summer is a new book by **James M. McPherson**, the dean of Civil War historians, which is also about Antietam. "Crossroads of Freedom - Antietam: The Battle That Changed the Course of the War" A very favorable review is available on the The Civil War News Web site. On November 10th I searched Half.com for this book and found it for \$12.50 in "Like New" condition, half the list price of \$25. This was much lower than the average resale price of \$18-19. You may not find the copy listed for \$12.50 as I am going to tell my girlfriend that it would make a great Christmas gift. - **Tom Fasulo**

Olustee Supporters?

On November 7th I finally received the mailing labels for the October issue. As is my habit, I counted the number of members and arrived at 122. It is interesting that none of the members includes a single reenacting unit, or even a Sons of Confederacy or Union post. However, the Florida **Brevard County Civil War Round Table** is a member, as is the **Fall Creek Sutlery**. You might express

your appreciation to the latter by visiting them first anytime you are in the market for period goods.

Olustee is the largest annual and most authentic reenactment in Florida. It commemorates Florida's largest Civil War battle, a battle that would have had significant disadvantages for the South if the Union had won. Unlike most other reenactments, reenactors do not have to pay a fee to attend, and they are provided with free hay, firewood and even rations. The CSO operates on a lean budget while putting on this event and would suffer heavily if the weather turned really bad, as has happened most than once. Profits from the event are funneled back into the Historic Site and into the Florida Civil War Museum now in planning. The CSO has already spent more than \$25,000 just in planning the museum.

So I have to ask why it is that so many in the Civil War community - especially all those Sons of the Confederacy posts that like to boast about this significant Confederate victory - show up and take advantage of our event, but apparently aren't interested in supporting it financially. It's often been said that people only value what they pay for. If the Civil War community is not interested in supporting Olustee with even a paltry \$10 per year membership, maybe it is time to charge a reenactor's fee. I'm not one of those who feel that the larger an event is, the better it is. As a living historian, it would not bother me to see a small fee charged that might reduce the number of yahoos that show up only to party and not to contribute to the event's authenticity.

I have also wondered why we have not attracted corporate sponsors. I do have some ideas about that but don't wish to discuss

them here. **All the above represents my opinion only, and not that of the CSO.** I make them here and now as I have always wanted to state them publicly and the next issue of this newsletter - in January - will be my last as editor. - **Tom Fasulo**

All The News That Fits

Please send your Olustee and other Civil War news and activities by CSO members to me at fasulo@ufl.edu. The next issue is scheduled for late January. After that issue there will be a new editor. I want to thank **Martha Nelson, Elaine McGrath and John Thrush** for contributing to this issue. Thanks also to 5-year-old **Jodi** and almost-9-year-old **Andres** who applied the stamps and labels. A thank you is also extended to their mother who helped me supervise them so the labels and stamps were in the correct spots and right side up.

The photograph on the cover of this issue is of reenactor Ken Giddens talking with visitors about the importance of hard tack as a war ration during the Civil War. Olustee Battlefield Park Ranger Frank Loughran is paying close attention.

Please remember to send me your newsletter information by e-mail or on diskette so I don't have to retype it. If you do send an article on printed paper, then I reserve the right to ignore it for my last issue. Please understand that I am at a computer all day at work and the last thing I want to do when I get home is retype your article. - **Tom Fasulo**