

The Newsletter of the
Friends of the
Camden Archives and Museum
1314 Broad Street
Camden, SC 29020



Preserving the past for the future

Volume 14 - Number 2

December 2013

Camden in the Civil War: The Home Front

Local residents answered call in helping support troops

BY RICKIE GOOD and
KATHERINE H. RICHARDSON

During the American Civil War, Camden was well behind the front lines. But what the Camden citizens could do for their state and for the Confederacy, they did.

The women gathered and sent food, clothing, and other goods to the soldiers fighting in the field.

Ladies Aid Association

With the vast majority of Camden's men off fighting the war, the ladies of Camden took up their arms in the form of the Kershaw Ladies Aid Association, founded in June 1861. This society began their work by gathering the needs of the troops, knitting socks and gloves, making shirts and undergarments, gathering blankets and carpets, and food and supplies of all description.

Much of this work was accomplished with great deprivation to the families at home who also went without proper shoes, and clothing, fire wood, and at times food stuffs.

The sacrifice for the brave fighting men was its own reward

for the women. They struggled to overcome their challenges – perhaps the largest of which was lack of cash as the war proceeded. Camden merchants had goods and food to sell, but on a cash only basis.

As the war progressed and terrible battle after battle sent wounded and gravely ill southern soldiers back from the front to be tended, the ladies took up a second stage of their wartime work.

Camden was a major stop on the S.C. Railroad and the site of the 1st South Carolina Hospital, an army hospital located in a large hotel building across King Street on the same side of Broad as the Mills Court House

Many other soldiers disembarked the train here to travel home for furlough or to recuperate from less serious injuries received on the battlefield. The Ladies Aid Association met their needs by establishing “The Soldiers’ Rest.”

Sometimes called the “Wayside Hospital,” the Soldiers’ Rest was located in the 1850 town hall which stood where the building housing TenEleven Galleria is today.

The ladies fed a daily meal



Camden in the Civil War: The Home Front exhibit continues through Jan. 11

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Camden Archives Calendar of Events

December 13 (10 a.m.- 5 p.m.) and December 14 (10 a.m.- 4 p.m.) — The H.L. Hunley Traveling Exhibit and the H.L. Hunley Camp #43, Sons of the Confederate Veterans, at the Archives and Museum. Scale replica of the H.L. Hunley on exhibit in the front driveway. Living history encampment on the grounds. Free and open to the public.

Now through January 11, 2014 — Exhibit: “Camden in the Civil War: The Home Front” in the Whiteley Room. Free and open to the public.

January 11, 2014 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) — The Carolina Ladies Aid Society living history group will demonstrate life on the home front of the Civil War and what the ladies at home did to aid

the Confederate cause during 1861 through 1865. They will also demonstrate home arts - what you had to know to live in that era. Free and open to the public.

January 25, 2014 through June 20, 2014 — Exhibit: “Robert Mills’ South Carolina” in the Whiteley Room. Free and open to the public.

March 12 through 14, 2014 — South Carolina Federation of Museums annual meeting in Camden. Home base is the Archives and Museum!

July 7, 2014 through January 9, 2015 — Exhibit: “In the Heart of the Pines: Camden during the Hotel Era, 1884 — 1941” in the Whiteley Room. Free and open to the public.

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Drawing of Camden Archives and Museum by Camden Architect Henry D. Boykin

Photographs courtesy of Camden Archives and Museum
Katherine H. Richardson

Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum is a membership organization concerned with supporting programs, protecting a continually growing collection, and expanding the facility. The purpose of the Archives and Museum is to collect, organize, preserve, and make items of historical interest related to Camden and the surrounding areas available to the public.

The Camden Archives and Museum newsletter is published twice a year.

Editor

Ed Garrison

Writers this issue

Katherine H. Richardson
Rickie A. Good

Story ideas, suggestions, and comments are welcomed and encouraged.

Camden Archives and Museum

1314 Broad Street
Camden, SC 29020
(803) 425-6050
www.camdenarchives.org

Museum Hours

Monday-Friday 8 am - 5 pm
Saturdays 10 am - 4 pm

Free admission

From the Chairman

Dear Friends:

You will note from the various articles in this newsletter that your financial help continues to fuel a very vibrant facility.

I can specifically mention the near completion of the repackaging and organizing of our collections. Our helping the S.C. Federation of Museums stage its annual convention in Camden and the building of new cabinetry for the Ross Beard collection is an indication membership dues, both large and small, make all of these things possible.

A strong organization like the Friends sends a strong signal to the community and our patrons. Our visitations are up significantly and it's become necessary to hire a research assistant. These are positive developments that you helped create.

Thank you for renewing your membership for 2014 as we look forward to another great year.

Best regards,
Steve Van Horn

Windy Corbett welcomed to staff



Windy Corbett has joined the Archives and Museum staff as a research assistant.

Corbett began work on May 30 and comes to us with excellent organizational skills and genealogical research experience. She served from 1996 until 2001 as Clarendon County's archivist and helped set up the first Manning Archives.

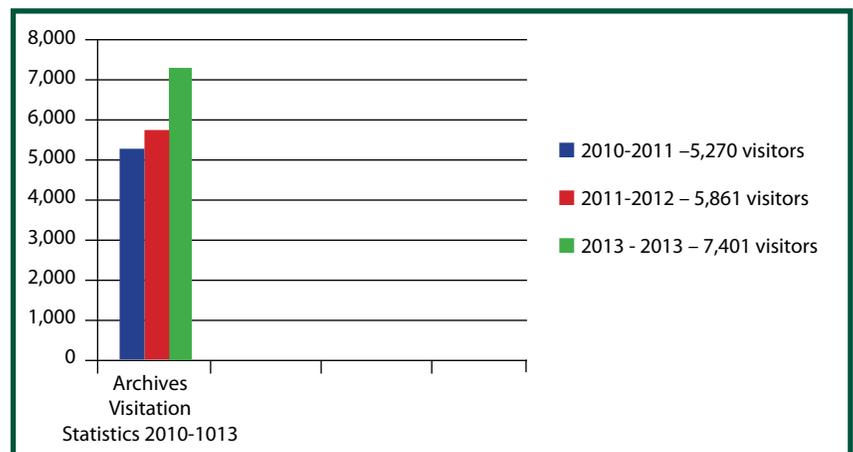
She was essentially a one-person whirlwind there – organizing their collections for the first time, setting up their first programming and research procedures while coping with renovations to the building and outfitting the archives with proper equipment.

While there, she assisted all manner of researchers, from government agencies to journalists, genealogists to amateur historians. So, she strolled into the Archives and Museum and we put her right to work.

Corbett

No learning curve here! She is so personable and helpful to our researchers. You will find her at the front desk on Thursdays and Saturdays. Stop by and meet Windy!

Archives visitation up



As depicted in this chart, the number of visitors to the Archives has shown a steady increase during the past three years.

Archives to host 2014 SC Federation of Museums

Conference attendees of the S.C. Federation of Museums (SCFM) annual meeting will enjoy the historic town of Camden next March 12-14.

The conference will bring between 85 and 125 museum professionals from around the state to Camden to attend professional development sessions, visit local sites important to the history of Camden and generally enjoy our good food and hospitality.

The SCFM local arrangements committee consists of your Archives and Museum staffers Katherine Richardson, Rickie Good, Windy Corbett and assistant to the city manager, Caitlin Corbett.

Camden has already begun to open its doors to conference attendees. They will enjoy the Old McCaskill Farm and the National Steeplechase Museum for receptions, tours of Holly Hedge and Bloomsbury, Bethesda Presbyterian Church and Historic Camden.

Lunches will be held at Salud, the historic Robert Mills Courthouse and in TenEleven Galleria's wonderful reception hall. Conference attendees will have dinner on their own one evening and will visit other local restaurants of their choice.

Many already have their eyes on the antique shops and Books on Broad! The City of Camden has opened its doors to welcome them as city hall and the Price House will be venues for educational sessions.

Thanks to the Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum for generously sponsoring the opening reception on March 12.

So, if you see a visitor on the street in March, give them a big Camden welcome. They may be from the S.C. Federation of Museums!



On the move

There have been some changes going on inside the Archives to make it more visitor friendly. The free-standing exhibit cases have been moved into the Whiteley Room for changing exhibits. The Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum has also approved the construction of new double-sided cases for the middle portion of the Museum Gallery in the Friends wing. Shown are Camden Public Works employees carefully moving the heavy cases across the gallery. Not a scratch to be found!

Towell donates Thiel hunting outfit to Archives collection

BY RICKIE GOOD
Curator of Collections

One of the fallacies about museum collections is that we are only interested in "old stuff." Just because something is old does not mean that it belongs in a museum collection.

Many museums collect modern items that will one day be interesting "old stuff" so it will be preserved for future generations. What a museum collects depends on its collection policy and its mission statement.

For the Archives and Museum, we collect items related to the history of Kershaw County. And one of our newest acquisitions fits right in with this policy.

A donation from Lisa Towell of Judy Firestone Thiel's hunting outfit and a donation from Laura Thiel Shull of Thiel's dress hunting boots and whip are wonderful additions to the Archives and Museum's collection.

Thiel (Mrs. Dale K.), who passed away in August, was an integral part of Camden's past and present. The daughter of Raymond C. and Laura Lisk Firestone, Thiel came to Camden in the 1950s where she and her family were regulars with the Camden Hunt.

Along with her decades-long association with the Hunt, serving

as Master in the 1980s and as its lifetime honorary Master, Thiel showed at major horses shows and was a benefactor for our county's Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) chapter and animal shelter.

In 2002, Thiel and her husband received the Palmetto Trust BMW Conservation Award for their work toward the creation of the 12,500 acres of wetlands, woodlands and sand hills known as "Camden Hunt Country."

As many people know, the Camden Hunt, recognized in 1926 by the Master of Foxhound Association, is the second oldest hunt club in South Carolina.

Organized by Martha Partridge (Master of Foxhounds from 1926-1941), the Camden Hunt leased 2,300 acres of property, built courses, purchased hounds, issued invitations to Camden's large horse community and started its first season from Dec. 1, 1926 to April 1, 1927.

Except for a hiatus during World War II, the Camden Hunt has continued to provide good hunts and a hospitable atmosphere for its members and guests.

Today, the Camden Hunt maintains a professional huntsman, kennel, and between 20 to 25 couple of hounds. Its formal hunt season begins on Thanksgiving Day and runs through mid-March.



Boots and whip

The home front –

Continued from page 1

to the soldiers, many of whom left after midday dinner and went on their way. Some required a longer stay and some medical attention. Some they transported home when they were too disabled to walk. For some they found coffins and buried them.

All received the gentle and loving attention and care from the Camden ladies who belonged to the Soldiers' Rest Committee of the Ladies Aid Society

The "country ladies" from surrounding areas donated to the Camden Soldiers' Rest. Supplies for the Rest came in from Flat Rock, Lancaster, Kershaw and other adjacent locales.

This work at Camden touched thousands of lives during the war. In the last days of the war, when the arrival of Union troops under Sherman and Potter was eminent, town council made a wise decision to protect the town hall where the Rest was located by making it a "hospital." This prevented the hall from being torched as were numerous other Camden buildings during the Union invasion.

The Kirkland-Truesdel Letters

These letters were written by members of the Kirkland and Truesdel families of Kershaw County. The Kirklands, six brothers and a sister, and the Truesdels, five brothers and three sisters, were both neighbors and relatives - two Kirkland siblings having married two Truesdel siblings.

During the Civil War, five of the Kirkland brothers and at least three of the Truesdel brothers fought for the Confederacy.

Daniel, Samuel, and William Kirkland served in the Kirkwood Rangers of Holcombe's Legion. Richard Kirkland, the "Angel of Marye's Heights", Jessie, William, and Burrell Truesdel all served in the famed 2nd South Carolina Infantry. Both the Kirkwood Rangers and the 2nd SC saw action from the beginning of the war until their units surrendered in 1865.

The letters are written from the front and directed to "Brother" Jessie Kirkland and his wife Rosa Truesdel Kirkland.

They contain news of battles fought, soldiers wounded and killed, and of the boredom of everyday camp life. They also illustrate how much the support from home meant to the soldiers. Lacking much of the infrastructure and organization of the Union Army, Southern civilian support of the soldiers - in the field, in the hospitals, and through contributions of horses, food, and clothing - cannot be over emphasized.

The Villipigue Letters

Martha Bracey Villipigue and her family resided in Camden. The Villipigue letters give us an insight into life at home in Camden, in Charleston and in Mississippi.

Perhaps the most fervent plea in all the letters was the cry, "Please write soon." Far flung relatives relied on the written word for news of their loved ones, news on the war, and sometimes, news on the simplest things – like the progress of flower boxes.

These letters were written to Martha and her children. The letters from Mississippi are from Martha's nieces, Emma and Martha Bracey, and contain news about the Bracey and Yates families of Noxubee County, Mississippi. The letters from Charleston are from Martha's cousins by marriage, Emma Carr and her son Henry W. Carr.

The Villipigue letters also include several letters and documents relating to Brigadier Gen. John B. Villepigue (1830-1862). The son of Paul V. and Agnes M. Villepigue of Camden, he graduated from West Point in 1854. For the next seven years he served on several western frontier posts.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Lt. Villepigue was stationed in Utah. He resigned his commission and joined the Confederate Army. Initially commissioned as a captain of artillery, he advanced quickly to the rank of brigadier general.

Carolina Ladies Aid Society Living History Demonstration

Life on the home front

January 11

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Villepigue commanded the defense of Fort McRee in Pensacola, of Fort Pillow in Tennessee (1861), and commanded a brigade at the Second Battle of Corinth in Mississippi (1862). After the retreat from Corinth, Villepigue became ill with fever and died. The general's body, accompanied by his staff, was brought home to Camden with great ceremony.

According to Col. W. M. Shannon, Villipigue wrote upon resigning his commission in the U. S. Army that "my chin sank upon my breast and that the tears coursed down my cheeks as I bade farewell to the flag I loved so well..."

Camden's African American Residents

In 1860, Camden's population was 1,667. Of that, 1,028 were white, 442 were enslaved African Americans, and 197 were free people of color. In Kershaw District, there were 5,026 white residents, 7,841 enslaved people, and 219 free people of color.

The majority of the free people of color lived in the town of Camden. What statistics cannot convey are the experiences of these residents during the War.

Surviving records are sparse. Contemporary newspapers record pleas from the Confederacy for enslaved workers to shore up coastal fortifications. One 1862 newspaper account thanks "the colored membership of" the Camden Baptist Church for their contribution of \$3.00 to the Soldier's Rest.

An 1863 letter from Mississippi records that an enslaved man went to war with his young owner – his name and fate are unknown. A January 1865 letter records how a woman named Lucy used the confusion of war to escape her bondage.

Kershaw County Pension records contained African-Americans who served during the war. Those from Kershaw County include Sam Clyburn, who was a manservant to a lieutenant in the 2nd S. C. Regiment.

Henry Boykin performed his service on the coast of South Carolina and William Boykin served a Confederate officer in the 10th Alabama. The same pension records place Washington Drakeford and Robert Murphy as cooks with Kershaw's Brigade – Drakeford with the 2nd S. C. and Murphy with the 15th Regiment.

When Sherman's forces reached Camden in 1865, the responses of the newly freed population were mixed. Undoubtedly, some former slaves guided Union soldiers to hidden treasures. At the same time, many diaries and reminiscences by former owners include stories about freedmen either protecting the white inhabitants or helping to hide their possessions from the invading army.

At the End

Toward the end of the war a Camden girl asked her brother about morale in the army. He, a lieutenant in the 2nd South Carolina, wrote "And as for the soldiers being low-spirited, a good many of them are so, but from what I can hear they are not half as much so as the people at home." As for Kershaw's Division, they were still prepared to fight.

The South's nemesis, William T. Sherman, said that to win the war, he had to destroy the civilian's will to resist. His march through South

Continued on page 5



Return engagement

A replica of the H.L. Hunley makes a return visit to the Archives grounds on Dec. 13 and 14 as part of the “Camden in the Civil War” exhibit ongoing in the Whiteley Room through Jan. 11. The Hunley will be accompanied by the H.L. Hunley Camp #43, Sons of the Confederate Veterans living history encampment. Shown are visitors enjoying the submarine during its last visit to the Archives.

The home front –

Continued from page 4

Carolina left burnt out buildings, destroyed crops, and looted homes. In the end, although he achieved his objectives, he never truly subdued the civilian population.

At war’s end, Southern white women picked up the mantle of the Confederacy from the military. Their aid societies turned their attention to the memorialization of the Confederate Army and to the myth of the Lost Cause; monuments went up and legends were born.

2013 Friends of the Camden Archives & Museum

This newsletter and other activities in support of the Archives and Museum are made possible by the generous contributions of the following people and organizations:

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**In memory of
Richard Stogstill**

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*Names of donors, memorials
and honorariums are current
through Nov. 1*

Why you should join Friends of the Archives

With a mission of “Preserving the past for the future,” the Camden Archives and Museum is a treasure chest of Kershaw County history. In its beautiful expanded facility, it offers visitors an opportunity to explore a wealth of artifacts, displays, documents, records and various other historical research materials.

What happens at the Archives?

With funding from the City of Camden and support from the Friends of the Archives organization, the Archives staff collects, preserves and makes accessible items of importance to the history of the area. Artifacts in the museum represent a diverse collection of items relating to cultural heritage.

The Camden Archives and Museum is recognized throughout South Carolina and the Southeast as having one of the best research libraries for genealogical research. It houses a diverse collection of books, microfilm, maps, files, periodicals and general reference materials which will aid visitors in their research for ancestry.

What is found in the Archives?

The Archives also has a growing collection of photographs and is also the repository for a number of city-related records, including city minutes, early ordinance and many other miscellaneous records. Census records, publications, cemetery surveys, local newspapers, vertical files and SC Death Certificates from 1915-1952 are also available for research. The S.C. Daughters of the American Revolution Library and the S.C. Society Colonial Dames XVII Century Library are housed in the Archives building.

More information about the Archives and its collections can be found on its website at www.camdenarchives.org. Features there include a list of records available for further research, a Kershaw County time line, local history books and other documents available for review, and an explanation of research services offered by the Archives staff.

How can you help?

You can support the efforts of the Archives by joining the Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum. This organization began in 1998 to encourage and manage monetary donations for the betterment of the Archives and Museum.

Since 1999 the Friends group has raised in excess of \$750,000. Most of these funds were used to help finance construction and renovation projects. The Archives has many other needs which exceed available funding. Your donation to the organization will help provide for those needs.

“Friends of the Archives is a great group of folks who recognize the value and importance of maintaining, in most cases, the irreplaceable. Additionally, we all know that our membership is the only way to maintain the level of stewardship to which the core founders of the Friends aspired,” says Stephen Van Horn, presidents of the Friends of the Archives.

How do you join Friends of the Archives?

You can join “Friends” using the application on page 8 of this newsletter. You can also remember donations to the Archives through honorariums or memorials. Your support will make a difference and help promote the Archives’ mission of “preserving the past for the future.”

As a member of Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum, you will receive our twice a year newsletter as a benefit of your tax deductible donation. Please consider joining by submitting the form on page 8 with your donation. An updated list of donors will be published in the year-end newsletter. Thank you for your consideration and support!

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Mail checks along with this form to Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum, 1314 Broad Street, Camden, SC 29020. Your contribution is tax deductible. Thank you!