

The Gretna Chronicles

PUBLISHED BY THE MOUNT GRETTNA AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY • SPRING 2023



SPECIAL EDITION

Spanish-American War Anniversary Highlights Connections to Family and Mount Gretna by Josh Groh

Given the chance, relatively few people would be able to explain the Spanish-American War of 1898. Now, 125 years after the men of the National Guard of Pennsylvania (NGP) mobilized for the war, a group of dedicated historians wants to change that.

On May 6, they will stage an anniversary event in Mount Gretna that will tell the story of the war, honor the men who fought in it and offer a glimpse into life at Camp Hastings, the 1898 encampment where NGP units mustered into federal service.

Open to the public, the event is being sponsored by the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society, which will host historians at the Hall of Philosophy and

outdoor activities at Soldiers Field, and the Sons and Daughters of the Spanish-American War.

“The Daughters were originally daughters of the veterans, but now we’re mostly granddaughters, of course,” said Paulette Werni, Lebanon Fort President of the Daughters. They and the Sons, which were founded in 1927, are small but dedicated national organizations composed of both veteran descendants and historians with no familial connection to the conflict. James McAteer, former National President of the Sons, will be present for a genealogy consult for anyone interested in searching his collected records of men enlisted with the NGP at the time of the war.

Mount Gretna is linked to the war through the NGP and Camp Hastings.

By the time the NGP was summoned to mobilize in late April of 1898, it had enjoyed a working relationship with Mount Gretna for years. In 1885, a large field was cleared for the first NGP encampment – an area that came to be known as Soldiers Field. With the convenience of the nearby railroad, freshwater springs, and existing camp facilities, Soldiers Field in 1898 was an obvious choice for hosting a preparatory wartime encampment.

For Jim Abels, president of the NGP History Project, Soldiers Field in 2023 presents a chance to demonstrate a day in the lives of the men who briefly stayed there. The NGP History Project, a nonprofit with no official connection to the modern Guard, is a group of historians

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A photograph of the 10th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, taken in 1898 at Camp Hastings. Courtesy of MGAHS.

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The Mt. Gretna Area Historical Society is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization and is registered as a charitable organization with the State of Pennsylvania. The MGAHS is charged with preserving the heritage of the Mount Gretna area, including Mount Gretna Borough, Campmeeting, The Pennsylvania Chautauqua, the Heights, Timber Hills, Conewago Hill, Stoberdale, areas of Colebrook once occupied by the PA National Guard, and areas of Cornwall involved with the Coleman family.

THE MGAHS MUSEUM is open from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day weekend, 1-4pm, or by appointment. We offer school and group tours, summer walking tours, and research assistance by appointment throughout the year.

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ALL EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Saturday, May 6, 2023

125th Anniversary of the Spanish–American War

SOLDIERS FIELD

Dawn to Dusk: A Day in the Life of men in Company G of the 8th Regiment.

Living historians with the NGP History Project will engage in typical activities including Reveille (5:30 a.m.); Mess Call (5:45 a.m., Noon); Guard Mount (1:30 p.m.); Battalion Drill (3 p.m.).

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Scavenger Hunt for all ages. Search for information related to the mustering of troops for the Spanish–American War.

10 a.m.: Opening Ceremony, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation, Remarks, Wreath laying.

HALL OF PHILOSOPHY

12:30 – 4 p.m.: Spanish-American War Genealogy Consult with Jim McAteer, past president of the Sons of the Spanish-American War Veterans. He will have military records of those who served in the Spanish-American War.

2 p.m.: Espionage during the Spanish-American War presented by Bill Burkheimer, National First Vice President of the Sons of the Spanish-American War Veterans.

4 p.m.: War in the Philippines presented by Mark Donahue, National Second Vice President of Sons of Spanish-American War Veterans.

MOUNT GRETNA AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

11a.m. – 1 p.m.: Exhibits on the Spanish-American War, Camp Mount Gretna, and other regional history will be open to the public.

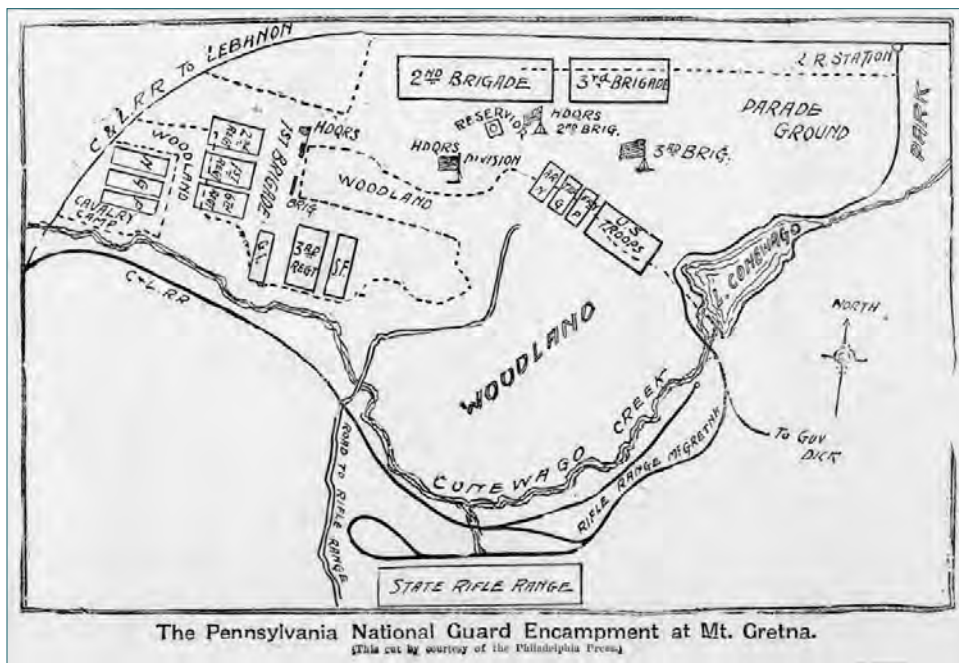
125th Anniversary events are sponsored by the Mount Gretna Area Historical Society; the Sons & Daughters of Spanish-American War Veterans; the NGP History Project; and the Lebanon Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



At left, a photograph of some of the planners of the anniversary. From left to right: Robin May of MGAHS, Pat McAteer of the Daughters of the SAW, Sue Hostetter of MGAHS, Jim McAteer of the Sons of the SAW, Paulette Werni, Daughters President, and Mark Donahue, Sons President.

Photo by Josh Groh.

Spanish-American War Anniversary *continued from page 1*



An illustration of the 10th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, taken in 1898 at Camp Hastings. Courtesy of MGAHS.

and educators who perform the “living history” of the NGP – the traditional routines, rituals, and activities of its troops.

In addition to sponsoring the anniversary, the organization will be staging a real Camp Hastings daily routine for attendees who want to better understand camp life.

“It’s a learning experience for everybody,” Abels stated in an interview. “You come out to see what these men looked like,

what they were wearing, and you get a better sense of what they were doing.”

About a dozen volunteers in the guise of NGP troops will begin the day at 5:30 a.m. with reveille, conduct mess calls for each meal, and hold demonstrations of routine activities. These include basic drill lessons like “School of the Soldier” as well as more esoteric items such as “Tattoo” (an end-of-day tune played prior to bedtime at 9:30 p.m.).



A photograph of the 2019 NGP History Project’s event at Soldiers Field, which was also focused on Camp Hastings and the 1898 SAW encampment. Courtesy of NGP History Project.

The specific unit that the group will be portraying is Company G of the 8th Regiment, known informally as the “Gobin Guard” in honor of John Gobin, a Civil War officer who lived in Lebanon and later became major general in the NGP.

Though the routine will be historically accurate, Abels wants people to know that the volunteers won’t be “in character” – that is, acting exactly as men from 1898 would.


“You can come and see how things are done and then ask any questions about it,” he said.

Though hostilities lasted less than four months from late April to early August, the war had a lasting impact.

“The Spanish-American War is central to American history as it was the first conflict wherein the U.S. fought outside the continental United States in a declared war vs a superpower – Spain,” explained Mark Donahue, Lebanon camp president of the Sons.

Despite the war’s low profile in public memory today, it was a huge victory for the United States, which emerged as a major force in world affairs with a formidable naval presence. Additionally, the U.S. gained control of the former Spanish territories of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam and, temporarily, Cuba.

For the Sons, Daughters, the NGP History Project, and the Society, the 125th anniversary event will be a time to remember family and local connections to an often-overlooked conflict – and pass on some knowledge in the process. “Hopefully folks will be motivated to study the war more closely and to appreciate the sacrifices of those who gave their lives,”

Donahue said. 

Mobilizing in Mount Gretna for the Spanish-American War

by Margaret Hopkins

When President William McKinley declared war with Spain on April 21, 1898, the Army numbered about 26,000 soldiers serving mostly on the frontier or coastal United States. Fearing a Spanish invasion, McKinley immediately called upon governors to bring the Army up to at 125,000 men. Heeding the call, Pennsylvania Governor Daniel Hastings ordered all regiments with the National Guard of Pennsylvania to mobilize in Mount Gretna by April 28.

At that time, the Guard included about 8,000 volunteers who typically signed up in their home counties for 3 to 5 years and who engaged in training both in their local drill areas and at Mount Gretna for one to two weeks throughout July and August.

Initially about 8,700 men from across Pennsylvania made their way to Mount Gretna where they were inspected for federal service, the first instance of any national guard unit federalized as part of the Army, said Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Heft, formerly of the Pennsylvania National Guard, who now works at National Guard headquarters in Washington and is a 28th Infantry Division historian.

Inspection included medical exams—the Army had different physical standards than those of the National Guard of Pennsylvania—and also different age limitations. Being a citizen, however, was not a requirement, and many of the volunteers were foreign born, Heft said.

Showing up at Camp Hastings in Mount Gretna didn't automatically result in induction. At that time, men serving in National Guard units were only authorized for mobilization within the U.S., so had to 'volunteer' for the Spanish-American War.

While records show that some men declined to volunteer, most of those who came to the encampment at Mount Gretna served.

"When they came, they knew they were coming for service in the war, and they thought they were going to see combat," Heft said. "They knew they would be mobilized for a while."

But only 3 of Pennsylvania's 18 regiments—the 4th, 10th, and 16th—along with three calvary troops and three artillery batteries ever left the U.S., according to *The First Century: A History of the 28th Infantry Division*.

Instead, the majority of the regiments went to camps in Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee and Florida for extensive training as many of the volunteer units had men who hadn't been in the service previously and had to learn everything from how to march to how to use weapons, Heft said.

A couple of Pennsylvania's regiments were deployed to guard coastal fortifications and munition plants like DuPont's in Delaware, he added.

The 10th regiment was the first to leave Mount Gretna, leaving on May 18—and was also the only one to serve in the Philippines, the result of the commanding officer's "pulling strings," according to *The First Century: A History of the 28th Infantry Division*.



This obelisk on Coneswago Hill Drive was dedicated to the Governor's Troop Pennsylvania Volunteer Calvary who came to Mount Gretna on April 28, 1898, and were mustered into service for the Spanish-American War on May 13, 1898. A plaque lists all of the members of the Governor's Troop. The obelisk also includes a tablet cast from metal recovered from the Maine which sank in the Havana harbor. Photo by K. Donahue.


As orders from the Army came, more units shipped out although some had to wait several weeks with the last of the volunteers leaving Mount Gretna on July 22. The total of Pennsylvania troops was more than 12,000 as some were recruited after volunteers had left Camp Hastings, Heft said. Most of the troops were demobilized in October 1898 and returned home although those overseas in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines didn't return until 1899.



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At left: Members of the 16th Pennsylvania Infantry of the Pennsylvania National Guard erected this monument in honor of the men who were mobilized for the Spanish-American War (April 1898), Mexican Border Campaign (June 1916), and who entered World War I in June 1917 as the 112th United States Infantry. Photo by K. Donahue.

Spanish-American War Timeline

On Feb. 15, 1898, the U.S. battleship *Maine* exploded and sank in Havana harbor, Cuba. Historians have noted how a media war between Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst stoked public passions to declare war with Spain, widely thought to have set off the explosion which killed 266 of 354 crew.

Support for a war declaration was also strong among American businessmen. Those who had sunk significant capital into Cuban sugar plantations and mining operations wanted American intervention to protect their investments. Businessmen in the banking, iron and transportation industries, sensing potential economic gain, also endorsed war with Spain.

- February 15, 1898:** U.S. battleship *Maine* explodes in Havana harbor, Cuba.
- March 28, 1898:** Report of U.S. Naval Court of Inquiry finds *Maine* explosion caused by a mine (a 1976 investigation by the U.S. Navy indicated explosion was the result of a coal bunker fire and not an external blast).
- March 29, 1898:** U.S. government issues ultimatum to Spain to give up Cuba; Spain refuses.
- April 21, 1898:** U.S. institutes a blockade of Cuba.
- April 22, 1898:** Mobilization Act of April 22 passed by Congress to increase the size of the Army.
- April 23, 1898:** President McKinley calls for a volunteer army of 125,000. Grand total mustered: 223,325 men.
- April 24, 1898:** Spain declares war on the U.S.
- April 25, 1898:** U.S. declares war on Spain, making the declaration retroactive to April 21.
- April 26, 1898:** Pennsylvania Governor Daniel Hastings orders all regiments with the National Guard of Pennsylvania to mobilize at Camp Hastings (named in his honor) in Mount Gretna by April 28.
- April 28, 1898:** About 9,000 members of the National Guard of Pennsylvania report to Camp Hastings.
- May 18, 1898:** Under the command of Colonel Alexander Hawkins, the Tenth Regiment leaves Camp Hastings for California and ultimately for the Philippines.
- July 22, 1898:** Last of Pennsylvania troops leave Camp Hastings.
- August 12, 1898:** Peace protocols (armistice) signed by Spain and U.S., ending active conflict but war continued until signing of the Treaty of Paris.
- December 10, 1898:** Treaty of Paris is signed. Puerto Rico and Guam are placed under U.S. control; Spain relinquishes claim to Cuba; U.S. pays \$20 million to Spain for control of the Philippines.

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Proclamation 412: Calling Forth Volunteers to Serve in the War with Spain (April 23, 1898)

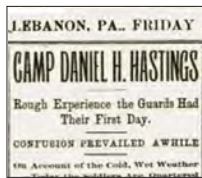
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Patriot Fervor Dampened by Heavy Rains

by Margaret Hopkins



The mobilization of the National Guard at Camp Hastings for the Spanish-American War got bogged down—literally—in what the Daily News of Lebanon reported to be “one mass of mud.”


Heavy rains and cold temperatures interfered with expectations that upon their arrival, the Guards would unload their tents and pitch them. Instead, so many men opted to remain on the trains on which they arrived, that other trains were delayed, according to the story that ran on Friday, April 29, 1898, with the headline “Rough Experience the Guards Had Their First Day.”

“All was confusion,” wrote the unnamed reporter who visited the camp on Thursday evening.

Officers were unsuccessful in corralling the men to leave the trains and pitch their tents in what was described as “two inches of mud.”

While the men who had arrived at Camp Hastings early Thursday were able to establish their quarters, about half of the men went on today’s equivalent of AWOL, seeking shelter wherever they could find it.

This included cottages—typically uninhabited at this time of year—in both the Pennsylvania Chautauqua and the United Brethren Campmeeting Association. Exactly how many cottages were occupied and in what location of Mount Gretna is undetermined.

But 29 cottage owners filed claims for damages sustained on April 28, 1898. Daniel Runkle of Lancaster claimed damages of \$10 and received that payment. H.A. Orth of Harrisburg claimed \$3,033.30 in damages and received that amount, according to the Annual Report of the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania for the Year 1898. 

Summer 1898 in Mount Gretna

In the 1890s, Mount Gretna was a destination point for those seeking cultural and educational programs with the Pennsylvania Chautauqua; religious inspiration and instruction with the Mount Gretna Campmeeting; and entertainment and amusement at the Mt. Gretna Park’s picnic grounds, lake and carousel.

Declaration of war with Spain had little effect on those annual summer activities in 1898. Both Pennsylvania Chautauqua and Mount Gretna Campmeeting held their summer programs. The Park also operated.

Most impacted were members of the National Guard of Pennsylvania who typically came to Mount Gretna for 2-3 weeks a year for training. Awaiting orders, some regiments stayed for 2-3 months in 1898.

Pennsylvania Chautauqua


- JULY 1 – Seventh Pennsylvania Chautauqua season begins.
- JULY 4 – Festivities include fireworks show, “the largest that has ever been fired within a radius of 50 miles of Mt. Gretna”; patriotic speeches in favor of the war; and an unveiling of a large portrait of Admiral George Dewey, famous for his victory at the Battle of Manila Bay.

- JULY 6 – Lecture, “Warships, Old and New,” with special focus on modern United States Navy vessels actively engaged in the war, pictures of which are met with “shouts of applause.”
- JULY 22 – “A Visit to Other Worlds” imagines a future where the Moon is claimed as an American colonial possession.
- JULY 26 – An early film projector, the vitagraph, is displayed “with a special series of Cuban and war pictures” alongside Thomas Edison’s phonograph; vitagraph motion pictures of Spanish-American War scenes and events are considered some of the first filmed propaganda.
- AUGUST 5 – Chautauqua season concludes.

Mount Gretna Campmeeting

- AUGUST 2-12 Campmeeting with special speaker Rev. Dr. Needham, evangelist from South Carolina.

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The Enemy Within Training Camps

by Margaret Hopkins



The biggest threat to the National Guard volunteers in the Spanish-American War was an enemy within their training camps—a microorganism found in intestinal waste.

That bacterium, *Salmonella enterica serovar Typhi* (*S. Typhi*), causes typhoid fever. Only humans can contract typhoid fever, and survival from an infection guarantees immunity from a second bout of the high fevers, nausea, abdominal pain, skin lesions and sepsis characteristic of typhoid.

Records indicate that as many as 20,000 of the Army recruits contracted typhoid fever, 1,600 of whom died from the disease. (1) In contrast, only about 400 soldiers died in combat.

The high infection and death rates from the bacterium were largely caused by conditions in the training camps in southeastern United States where many troops spent the war. Although scientists and physicians had concluded in the early 1890s that contaminated drinking water and food could spread the *S. Typhi* bacterium, the

general public's understanding of bacteria and disease was limited. (3)

As a result, latrines were often dug too close to drinking water supplies and in swampland; food was not protected from bacterium-carrying flies; and infected men were not isolated, thereby sharing the bacterium throughout eating and sleeping quarters. (2)

Some in the Army were aware of the dangers posed by the camps' poor sanitation and hygiene practices. An officer with Pennsylvania's Twelfth Infantry ordered any volunteer using a latrine to cover his waste and then wash his hands—and had sentinels posted to ensure those orders were obeyed (1).

But few shared that officer's awareness, and calls to improve camp sanitation and hygiene were largely unheeded.

In the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, the toll of typhoid fever on volunteers was considered a national scandal, and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point began requiring all officers to pass a course in military hygiene. (1)

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- (3) Stump T. (2020). "The Not So Good Old Days": Disease and the Struggle for Public Health in Pennsylvania. *Pennsylvania Heritage*. Spring 2020. <http://paheritage.wpengine.com/article/not-so-good-old-days/> MGAHS

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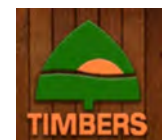
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- print our membership form (at right), complete it and mail it to us at P.O. Box 362, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064;
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