
MEMORIAL VOLUME
OF THE
WHITPAIN
LADIES' AID SOCIETY
FOR THE RELIEF OF THE
SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS,
DURING THE
GREAT SOUTHERN REBELLION.

1862-64

PHILADELPHIA
J. A. WAGENSELLER, 23 N. SIXTH STREET
1869

The Information in this Booklet was compiled,
from the **MEMORIAL VOLUME**, and published by,
The Ladies' Aid Society, in 1869.

The information was written to,
Honor
the Members
of the
Ladies' Aid Society
of
Whitpain Township
for their endeavors,
in supporting the soldiers, during the Civil War,
and to provide some history of what they did,
during that War.

Whitpain Ladies' Aid Society, during the Civil War

November 3, 1862 - March 31, 1866

In nearly every community of Montgomery County, organized efforts were made to win popular support in non-military ways, for the Union cause in the Civil War. Men formed Union Leagues, and women had relief societies. These projects counted for much in enlisting the interest of the people.

Of many of these endeavors no complete record was preserved. Fortunately, however, the minutes of the Whitpain Ladies' Aid Society throughout the entire period of its activity are still in existence, and they show how these efforts to help the government were conducted.

A group of women living in Whitpain Township met November 3, 1862, at the home of Jesse B. Fisher, Centre Square, and organized the Aid Society, the purpose being to provide for the "aid and comfort of sick and wounded soldiers on the battlefield, in the hospitals and in the refreshment saloons at Philadelphia." Forty-three women signed the roll that day and elected Mrs. Jacob Conrad, President; Mrs. Jesse B. Fisher, Secretary, and Mrs. William Hood, Treasurer. At the second meeting, on November 15, 1862, Mrs. Fisher resigned as Secretary and Miss Sallie A. Conrad became her successor.

The new society appointed committees to collect supplies and forward them to hospitals. It was arranged to meet every Wednesday at the Centre Square Store for sewing and other work.

A fine of 5 cents was to be imposed upon members not answering the weekly roll call, except when they were sick. Soon they were also excused in case of inclement weather. Then in December it was decided to abolish the fine but to require all members to pay dues of 5 cents a month.

The first-contribution of the society was a barrel of food, sent early in December to the Pennsylvania Relief Society, similar barrels and boxes of food, clothing and hospital supplies were thereafter packed at frequent intervals, many sent to the military hospitals at Chestnut Hill.

Funds had to be raised to buy goods needed by the workers. For this purpose a lecture course was arranged. The first lecture was on January 1, 1863, in Franklinville Hall. It may puzzle latter-day residents of Whitpain Township to identify Franklinville Hall. Franklinville was the hamlet at the intersection of Morris Road and State Road, now Dekalb Street. There was a hotel here at that time, and over the hotel stable was a room called Franklinville Hall.

The lecturer was Rev. P.M. Rightmyer, pastor of the Lutheran charge comprising St. John's Church, Centre Square, and St. Peter's, North Wales. The women of the society had a refreshment table at this and subsequent lectures. From the sale of tickets and refreshments, a net profit of \$19.49 was realized. The lecturer charged no fee, and in appreciation of his aid, the society gave him and his family tickets to the ensuing lecture.

George W. Rogers, a Norristown lawyer, was the lecturer on February 9, 1863 the scene being Gerhard's Hall, which was the hall at the Centre Square Hotel. The March 3rd lecture was in Whitcomb's Hall, at the Blue Bell Hotel.

It was now decided to try a new kind of entertainment. Signor Blitz, a popular magician of that day was engaged to perform in Gerhard's Hall. While the gross receipts were larger than at lectures, still the lecturers usually made no charges for their services, while it was necessary to pay the magician \$29.50, so the net profit was only \$19.53. However, Signor Blitz was so well received that it was at once agreed to have him again on June 22nd, for an afternoon and evening show in Gerhard's Hall. This time the net profit was \$92.42, of which \$33.20 came from the sale of refreshments.

Lectures and other entertainment continued monthly, and attracted such large audiences, that it proved desirable to have larger quarters than were afforded by the hotel halls. For January 21, 1864 Rev. Edwin A. Hutter, an eloquent Lutheran clergyman of Philadelphia, was engaged to lecture, and application was made of Boehm's Reformed Church, Blue Bell, to have the lecture in that church.

At its next meeting the society was surprised to learn that the consistory refused to permit the church to be used for the lecture. Thereupon St. John's Lutheran Church, Centre Square, was offered for the purpose, and there the lecture was given, netting \$26.00.

Another feature from which the society received the proceeds was a concert in the Union Meeting House, a mile Southeast of Centre Square. (This church remained vacant for many years. The church was desecrated and vandalized, and the cemetery deteriorated and was densely overgrown. In 1947, extensive work was done to restore the building to useable condition, and the cemetery to its former appearance. In the year 2013, the "Reformation Church, of Blue Bell," meet and hold services in this building, on Union Meeting Road.)

On May 19, 1864, the society gave a concert in the Agricultural Hall. This was the most ambitious effort up to that time. The hall was a large building on the Fair Grounds, at Springtown, near DeKalb Street and Germantown Pike. For this occasion, Isaac B. Evans, Caleb R. Hallowell and Augustus W. Dettra were appointed door tenders. The proceeds were \$34.55.

Another entertainment was given in the same hall, December 8, 1864, when the program was provided by a Glee Club from Norristown, and the Kulpville Brass Band. Adults tickets cost 25 cents and those of children 15 cents. This proved the most profitable of all the entertainments, \$118.90 being left after paying expenses.

Two nights later Capt. Calhoun, of Kentucky, who was lecturing in Montgomery County, spoke in the same hall, for the benefit of the society, telling about life in Libby Prison, and \$20.00 was added to the society's treasury.

With the end of the war in April, 1865, the society's activities ceased, and the money in the treasury was given to the Soldiers' Home Fund.

(The information in this article, was taken from the book, **MEMORIAL VOLUME**, and written by NORRIS, for the Norristown Herald, for the column "Up and Down Montgomery County," year unknown.)

Information from **MEMORIAL VOLUME**, of the Whitpain Ladies' Aid Society, 1862 - 66.

List of Whitpain Ladies' Aid Members

Mrs. Jacob Conard	Mrs. Jesse B. Fisher	Mrs. William Hood	Mrs. John McCoombs
Miss Lizzie Jarrett	Miss Lucretia Jarrett	Miss Mary A. Roberts	Miss Sallie A. Conard
Miss Mary M. Conard	Miss Priscilla Jarrett	Miss Bell Fisher	Miss Maggie McIntyre
Miss Maria Taney	Miss Laura Supple	Mrs. R.A. Lackey	Mrs. A.W. Dettra
Miss Euphemia Conard	Miss Rebecca A. Jones	Miss Annie E. Wood	Miss Beck G. Davis
Mrs. Luke Davis	Miss Sophie Frantz	Miss Sarah Conard	Mrs. Milton Godshalk
Mrs. Theo. Kinkiner	Mrs. Han'h Kibblehouse	Miss Amanda Jarrett	Miss Rebecca Conard
Mrs. Richard Jarrett	Mrs. Caleb R. Hollowell	Mrs. Charles Schlater	Miss Cecelia Zimmerman
Miss Mary Streeper	Mrs. George Lewis	Mrs. Chalkley Styer	Miss Annie Durborrow
Miss Sallie J. Evans	Miss Susan J. Sheppard	Miss Jarrett Wood	Mrs. William Ellis
Mrs. Jonathan Wood	Mrs. H. Cadwallader	Mrs. Isaac B. Evans	- Additional women joined later

Additional lectures were held at Franklinville Hall, August 22, 1863, Broad Axe Hall, Broad Axe, February 9, 1865, and various other lectures at Gerhard's Hall, Centre Square.

From when the Whitpain Ladies' Aid Society was organized on November 3, 1862, until their final meeting on March 31, 1866, they packed and forwarded, food, hand made clothes, such as flannel shirts, stockings, pants, slippers, quilted comforters, towels, bandaging, pillows, reading matters, castile soap, etc. to the following hospitals: Fifth & Master Streets Hospital, Philadelphia - Chestnut Hill Hospital - Sanitary Commission, via North Penna. R.R. - Falmouth Hospital - Nashville, Tenn., via Christian Commission - the Soldier's Home, Philadelphia - to Dr. Holstein, Winchester, Va. - to Petersburg, Va, for the soldiers that credited themselves to Whitpain Township - to Richmond Va., by request of G.W. Holstein.

At their last meeting on March 31, 1866, the treasurer reported since the commencement of the society she has received cash in contributions, monthly fees, and from the net profits arising from lectures, concerts, entertainments, and also from refreshment tables furnished by the society at said gatherings, a total of \$752.66; expenses by the society for groceries, canning & preserving fruit, purchasing flannel, calicoes, thread, needles, quilting cotton, etc., \$649.61; balance left in treasury, March 31, 1866, \$103.05. It was *Resolved* to forward said stores, and the balance of cash to the Soldier's Home.

A Publishing Committee was instructed to have the society minutes printed and bound.

The secretary regrets that no account has ever been kept of the different contributions of cakes, fruit and of the cream for making of ice cream, furnished by the society for the refreshment tables. The manufacturing of ice cream, confectioneries, etc. were purchased from funds of the society.

The society before adjourning would state, in closing our accounts, that we sincerely hope and trust that the efforts we have made to collect, manufacture, and forward contributions to our brave brethren who have gone forth to battle, and destroy this wicked rebellion, that came near destroying our once happy and prosperous country, have had their effect in assisting to relieve many of our weary soldiers during sickness and suffering, and their long and tiresome marches, whilst far away from home, their friends, and domestic firesides. We close, praying God, in His infinite mercy, may bring peace and happiness to our divided country. And we also hope and pray that the heroes who have fallen at the post of duty or pined away by sickness, those that died of hunger and thirst in the rebel prisons, or were foully murdered whilst in captivity, have been received at the kingdom of glory and holiness, where the weary spirit rests in peace and happiness for ever and ever.

It was now moved that we adjourn, *sine die*. It was unanimously carried.

Civil War information pertaining to St. John's Church, Centre Square, PA

Rev. John Hassler, D.D., became the minister of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, North Wales, & St. John's Lutheran Church, Centre Square in 1855. At the opening of the Civil War, Rev. Hassler received an appointment as Chaplain, of the Second Pennsylvania Artillery, in the G.A.R., accepted it, and resigned as Pastor of both churches in 1861.

Rev. P.M. Rightmyer, was Pastor of St. Peter's & St. John's Church, from 1862 - 1868. On January 1, 1863, he helped the newly formed "Whitpain Ladies Aid Society," by donating his time, to give a lecture at the Franklinville Hall, to earn money for the society. The money raised was used to buy and ship food, clothing, etc., to the troops at war, and the wounded in hospitals.

List of 43 Civil War Veterans, interred in Whitpain Township

"St. John's Lutheran Cemetery," Centre Square

Janson T. Butler	Henry Fullmer	John Harpoth	*David Knipe	Thomas C. Lownes
Andrew T. Roberts	William Vogel	Jacob R. Weber	Joseph H. Zearfoss	Jacob Zoll

"Union Meeting Methodist Cemetery," Blue Bell

John M. Holmes

"Boehm's Reformed Cemetery," Blue Bell

Henry C. Biddle	Isaac Brown	Penrose Wylie Clair	Charles H. Fitzgerald	Charles Ford
Algernon J. Hoover	Jesse Jarrett	Charles Land	*J. Le Bold	Justus W. Lutz
Jesse McCombs	John Montgomery	Charles E. Pugh	Jacob W. Rapp	Benjamin B. Schrack
*Gilbert Livingston Sellers	*Henry Smith	Jacob S. Steiner	John C. Still	
Morton C. Streeper	*William Von Derau	Alfred Walton	Ethan J. Weidner	James Wilkinson

"Mt. Pleasant Baptist Cemetery," Morris Rd. & Lewis Lane, Broad Axe

George Garner	Joshua McCool	Thomas Rapp	Morris Robbins
William Showack	Peter Sleath	Thomas Stillfield	Josiah Weidner

* Denotes, killed or died of sickness, in the Civil War.

This information was compiled by Bob Whittock, August 25, 2013.