

History of the Bucks County Civil War Round Table

During the Civil War, the 104th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment from Bucks County was encamped on Morris Island, South Carolina for eighteen months. At the time, the bread provided by the Union army was of very poor quality and considered inedible. The unit's commander, W.W.H. Davis, managed to obtain some small bake ovens. The troops baked their own fresh bread and sold it to the soldiers for a nickel a loaf. Normally such funds were distributed among the soldiers of the unit, but the men decided it should be saved for a memorial to their fallen comrades. The amount saved was \$1,600. After the war, private citizens added additional donations to total a little over \$3,000.

The thirty-four feet high white marble obelisk was placed in the center of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. It was dedicated on Memorial Day 1868. Following the dedication, the crowd walked half a mile to the training camp for the regiment. That occasion is considered to be the first continuous Memorial Day parade in the country. The monument is one of the first three local monuments in the U.S.

Since 1868, there have been other rededications in 1913, 1993, 2003, and 2018. After the 1993 rededication, a group of dedicated community leaders decided to form a Civil War Round Table to further build on the enthusiasm generated by the celebration and encourage the study of the Civil War. Speakers were invited to monthly meetings which met in the county court house. In 2003, one of the members of the Round Table passed away and gifted the organization enough money to purchase a building in which to house a museum and library. There was enough money left over for an endowment to support the building and collection. In addition to outright gifts to the collection, there are many artifact loans from members and the community. Volunteers act as docents and care for the library and museum. The library is open to the public to borrow books and use the genealogical materials. Due to limited availability of docents, the museum is only open Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. We have had visitors from most of the United States and many foreign countries. We continue to have monthly speakers on various Civil War subjects and book review meetings. The museum and library are located in the center of historic Bucks County which is 25 miles north of Philadelphia. Information: www.civilwarmuseumdoylestown.org and civilwarmuseumdoylestown@gmail.com