

Around Town

Gage holds Civil War 122nd flag commemoration

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation last week held a ceremony on its front lawn to commemorate the presentation of a Civil War flag to the 122nd Regiment of New York State Volunteers.

The event took place April 12 on the sesquicentennial anniversary of the start of the Civil War. The actual flag presentation by Gage occurred on Aug. 25, 1862, when she presented it to local soldiers who were marching off to war.

More than 12,000 men of Onondaga fought in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865.

"When the war began, Matilda Joslyn Gage hung a flag from this house to commemorate that this work was being done to end slavery," said Gage House Executive Director Sally Roesch Wagner. "She saw this as a terrible event, but an absolutely necessary one, because everything to that point had been tried, and war was finally necessary. If this is what it took to bring freedom to African Americans, this is what needed to happen."



TAMI S. ZIMMERMAN

Standing with the reproduction of the 122nd flag are, clockwise from front left: County Clerk Ann Ciarpelli, flagmakers Jane Tracy and Dolly Monteleone, Legislator Bill Meyer (District 3) and "Matilda Joslyn Gage."

Gage had offered her home and continued to offer it as a station on the Underground Railroad, and risked imprisonment – six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine (equivalent to \$23,000 in today's money) for each freedom taker she invited into her home.

"She said it was one of the proudest moments of her life when the Rev. Jermain Lougen came to [her] door and asked her if she would [offer her home] and she said 'absolutely.'"

The Gage home is now a state and federally designated Underground Railroad site.

Among local officials at the event were Onondaga County legislators Bill Meyer (District 3), Kevin Holmquist (District 10) and Judy Tassone (District 4); Manlius Supervisor Ed Theobald and County Clerk Ann Ciarpelli. Members of the Civil War Roundtable arrived in period dress.

Meyer, whose district includes the town of Cicero where Gage grew up, presented declarations to Jane Tracy and Dolly Monteleone, two local women who created the reproduction of the original 122nd flag; Jim Keib, an active member of the Civil War Flag Committee; and Darothy DeAngelo and the Onondaga County Civil War Roundtable.

Meyer also thanked Onondaga Historical Association Executive Director Greg Tripoli, recognizing that the OHA has played a critical role in the county's flag restoration project over the last 10 years.

"The flag that a lot of the soldiers took off to battle was the flag that their mother, their wife, their sister made," Meyer said. "A lot of the troops