



THE ALCATRAZ SENTINEL
The Newsletter of Historic Civil War Alcatraz Island
Published by the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

Volume 5 Number 1
Spring/Summer/ 2013

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Living History Days

Each and every living history day on Alcatraz gets better and better. The first 2013 living history day that was held on March 2, 2013 was no exception. Visitors to Alcatraz are always surprised to see Union soldiers manning their posts and guarding Confederate prisoners on Alcatraz. As you know the effort it takes to put on such an event is tremendous. If you want to help, contact Co-chairpersons Fred or Brad. Besides having a great time, the photo opportunities are endless. We hope to see you the next 2013 living history day this fall. To view photos of past LHD'S visit the FOCWA web site.

Board of Directors & Officers Meetings

Visit The Friends of Civil War Alcatraz web site to read the published minutes of all Board of Directors and Officer Meetings.

Repair of Water Tower Completed

Early last month, the National Park Service did something unusual: It painted graffiti onto one of its buildings. However, this is no ordinary graffiti.

"Peace and Freedom. Welcome. Home of the Free Indian Land," the hand-painted slogan on the Alcatraz water tower reads. The scrawl dates back to the nearly two-year occupation of the famous island prison by Native American activists at the tail end of the 1960s.

"The Indian occupation was a pinnacle moment for the Native American population and one of the most significant moments in the history of Alcatraz," said Golden Gate National Recreation Area spokesperson Alexandra Picavet. "The graffiti on the water tower is one of the most visible remnants of that time."

Before the graffiti was painted over earlier this year as part of a restoration of the island's water tower, park officials meticulously documented it so they could recreate it perfectly on top of a fresh coat of paint.

"The painting on the water tower is one of the few remaining remnants of the occupation that are in areas open to the general public," said Picavet, explaining why it was a priority for officials to preserve the graffiti.

"It was before the days of spray cans being used; it was done with paint and brush," Fairfax resident John Martini, a historian who was a [ranger on Alcatraz](#) from 1974 to 1976, told the Marin Independent Journal. "A lot of graffiti is political and the Park Service felt then and now it was important to keep."

The occupation, which lasted from November 1969 until June 1971, captivated international media attention to the issue of Native American rights.

In the early 1960s, the federal government shut down the famous prison on Alcatraz, which housed inmates like Al Capone and George "Machine Gun" Kelly. This was around the time that the government also started closing Native American reservations and sending their former residents to urban areas.

"[The [Alcatraz occupiers](#)] wanted to focus attention on broken treaties, broken promises and termination of tribal areas," Professor Troy Johnson, chairman of the American Indian studies program at California State University, Long Beach explained to CNN.

In response, a group of activists boated onto the island and took it over with the intention of converting the former prison buildings into a Native American cultural center and museum, replacing another cultural center in San Francisco that had recently burned down. The occupiers lived on Alcatraz for over a year, largely without power and running water, until the size of the group dwindled to just over a dozen. Government officials eventually swarmed the island, putting a swift end to the action.

Members of the family of Richard Oakes, one of the occupation's ringleaders, were invited to come to the island and assist with the repainting.

Bio of Jeffery L. Vaillant

Member of the “Friends of Civil War Alcatraz” Board of Directors and Currently holds the office of Secretary.

Jeffrey is working towards his professional genealogical certification which he targets for 2015. His educational background includes a B.A. in History with English minor from the University of Redlands; Graduate studies in American Studies (History, Literature, Art History) at the University of Delaware (3 Years); Graduate study in Business at the Colgate Darden Graduate School of business Administration at the University of Virginia; Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (Utah Genealogical Association) and the Institute of Historic and Genealogic Research at Stamford University (Birmingham, AL) as well as numerous national, regional and local conferences.

He is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society, President, California Genealogical Society, member of the Marin County Genealogical Society, Past Secretary of the Nevada State Genealogical Society, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Iowa Genealogical Society, Highlands (Scotland) Family History Society, Aberdeen & N E Scotland Family History Society, South Bend Area Genealogical Society, Sonoma County Genealogical Society and the Clan Mackintosh of North America. He serves as Commander of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War GEN. ALFRED PLEASANTON CAMP NO. 24 and as Secretary of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz (<http://www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org/>). And is a member of the Department of Iowa SUVCW Col. William Kinsman Camp #23 in Atlantic, Iowa.

Jeff has had a varied and interesting career. with many major business and government agencies. His first professional career was as a Certified Facility Manager. He worked with the federal government, state government, financial institutions, research organizations, consumer games and manufacturing entities. He was one of the founders of the International Facility Management Association. He is past President of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce and Chaired the Government Affairs Committee at the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce.

He is married and together he and his wife, Janice Fetzer, have six children and six grandchildren. Jeff and Janice live in Novato, CA. Jeff and Janice travel a great deal, and both play golf, tennis and are movie buff. Jeff volunteers with the Random Act of Genealogy kindness for Marin County.

Editors Corner

I for one want to thank Jeff for all that he does as a member of the “Board of Directors” and as an “officer” of the organization. many, many Kudos to you my friend.

As always I welcome any and all items from members to be included in the Newsletter, Please take the time to put something together of interest for future newsletters.



Painting to enhance and interpret Fortress Alcatraz

The Friends of Civil War Alcatraz have commissioned artist James Breeden to provide a painting of Fortress Alcatraz to hang in Building 64 to better interrupt the military experience of visitors to Alcatraz. The Friends will donate the painting to the NPS for their use. The NPS has approved sketches of the proposed painting. The painting is scheduled to be completed by August 29, 2013 for visitors to see the Island in pre-prison days and will enhance their understanding of the long Military History of the Island.

The above photo taken in the late 1800's or early 1900's will be used as a reference for the commissioned painting. All of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz and the Park Personnel are anxiously anticipating the completion of the painting. We the Friend of Civil War Alcatraz are very proud of this effort to be able to provide the painting.