

## Soldiers occupy York, Civil War-style

### Re-enactors portray Confederate occupation during Civil War

By TERESA MCMINN

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Patti Brown wore a burnt-orange colored, worn cotton gown as she packed her wagon with only the most crucial supplies, including dishes and a blanket. The civilian had gotten word that Confederate soldiers were on their way to York, so she decided to flee the city in search of safety.

Brown of Manchester Township was one of about 25 Civil War re-enactors who were downtown Saturday for York Patriot Day, Prelude to Gettysburg. The event, which drew hundreds of folks, commemorated York's takeover by Confederates and featured lectures, dramas, displays, a scavenger hunt and guided walking tours.



Jason Plotkin - YDR

Brad Smith of York, dressed as a Confederate corporal, took part in Saturday's dramatization of York's surrender to rebel forces in June 1863.

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A Union encampment was set up behind Bonham House, where costumed actors played period instruments and portrayed civilians and soldiers.

York resident Aaron Keperling, 14, sat at a spinning wheel in the encampment. "I was making bandages for wounded soldiers," he said.

Windsor Township resident Scott Butcher organized the event. He also wrote a script entitled, "The Confederate Occupation of York: A Drama," for the re-enactors to use on a temporary stage at Market and Duke streets.

Butcher, who acted as Confederate General John B. Gordon, said the play is a living history portrayal of York during the days preceding the Battle of Gettysburg.

Four-year-old Alex McClellan was fascinated by the

primitive weapon Butcher carried on his uniform.

"Can I see your sword?" the West York boy asked.

Hopewell Township resident Richard Banz, also chief curator for the York County Heritage Trust, portrayed Union Maj. Granville O. Haller. "He only had 350 men and he was going to face 6,000," he said.

Paul Geltmacher, 13, experienced the discomfort soldiers must have faced while wearing heavy wool uniforms in late June 1863. The re-enactor, who portrayed a flag bearer, collapsed briefly during a performance at noon.

The Lower Windsor Township teen said he felt better after sitting in some cool air and drinking water.

"History is his favorite subject," his dad, Douglas Geltmacher, said. "And he likes dressing up in period costumes."

Eight-year-old Nick Smith sat on house steps along Queen Street wearing a black leather cap and drinking a slushy. The York resident came with his dad and sister, Angelique, 7, to understand what their neighborhood was like when Confederate soldiers invaded it.

"I've always been interested in the Civil War," their father, Mike Brown said.

"That's why I brought them down, to try to teach them a little bit today."

### Today's events

- Bonham House Tours on the hour from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Historical Society Museum exhibits open, noon-4 p.m.
- Civil War burial re-enactment, Prospect Hill Cemetery, 4 p.m.

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