

## A Civil War homage

'Who knew learning like this could be so much fun?' York celebrates Patriot Days.

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Jun 24, 2006 — Carol Beaverson has lived in York all of her 52 years. And, like most people who have lived here that long, she is familiar with historical names such as Small and Farquhar.

But, until Friday night, she never understood why those names turn up so prominently around town.

Her questions were answered Friday evening during the York County Heritage Trust Civil War Celebrity Tea. The fundraiser was the opening event of the city's Patriot Days Weekend Celebration.

The graduate of York High spent many years at the school's Small Athletic Field. During the tea, she learned that David Small, for whom the field is named, served nine terms as Chief Burgess of York beginning in 1862.

She also learned that he was the owner of the York Gazette, one of two newspapers published during the Civil War, which Patriot Days pays homage to.

The three-day event recalls the city's 72-hour occupation by the Confederates during the days just prior to the Battle of Gettysburg.

At the tea where other local celebrities of the period including the successful

black businessman William Goodridge, played by Wm. Lee Smallwood, and A.B. (Arthur Briggs) Farquhar, played by Scott Royer, the trust's coordinator of education.

For almost 20 minutes, Beaverson danced on the same floor while the band, The Susquehanna Travelers, played music from the Civil War period.

"This is wonderful," said Beaverson during a break. "I knew, but didn't really know, how many interesting things there were to learn about local history."

Royer represented Farquhar with two good feet during the square dance.

"After the first few rotations, the dance gets a little easier," Royer said. "All you have to do is count to eight."

Helping lead the dancers in her one of her finest period dresses was Cathy Markardt of Vienna, Va., of the Victorian Dance Ensemble.

With each new song, the trust's foyer became fuller and fuller with dancers. "This is what the tea is really about," said Richard Banz, the trust's chief curator, who was playing Major Granville O. Haller. "Giving people a real feel for how people celebrated life back then."

Haller, who was born in York, was put in charge of defending York and Adams counties. But he was given few troops, which made the Confederates' capture of the city easier.

Local author Scott Butcher, who played Confederate General John B. Gordon, was there with his wife, Debbie, who portrayed Cassandra Small.

Small, of York, is noted for the letters she wrote to her cousin Lissie about York's occupation.

Using some of Small's letter to guide him, Scott Butcher wrote a play about the day the city surrendered. For three years, including this year, the play has been reenacted on the old East Market Street courthouse's steps.

During the tea, Scott Butcher, as Gordon, joked with Banz, as Haller, that it was finally nice to see his face after chasing his retreat for so long.

It was that sort of historical banter that made the evening so entertaining for Susan Dietterick of Dover. Like her friend Beaverson, this was her first visit to the tea social.

"This is delightful," Dietterick said. "Who knew learning like this could be so much fun?"