

NEWSLETTER

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

FEBRUARY, 2016

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Reunion of Indian Occupiers Years ago while visiting Arizona I pass through Oraibi, the oldest continuously inhabited village in North America, where the Hopi people have lived for over 700 years. Down the road was New Oraibi, and I soon learned why there were two Oraibis; the latter had split from the very traditional, older village because they had adopted the religion and customs of the white man. Now, over the years I have been on Alcatraz, I have learned the connection between old Oraibi and

Dates to Remember

Saturday, Feb. 13, 2016

Indians of All Tribes Day —
reunion of Indian occupiers

Sunday, Feb. 28, 2016

General Meeting on Alcatraz at
10 am

Saturday, April 9, 2016

Living History Day on Alcatraz



Alcatraz; in the 1880's the village was the center of opposition to the government's plan to divide their land into individual plots (they had always farmed communally) and to ship their children off to boarding schools miles away. After years of passive resistance by the Hopi elders, the government shipped 19 them to Alcatraz to force

them to comply. These men spent 8 months at hard labor on the island, living in not very pleasant conditions, until they agreed to the government's demands. They were returned back to their homes, but many Hopi did all they could to subvert the white man's policies that divided their families and communities. The next group of Indians arriving on the island came not as prisoners but as occupiers, in 1969, in the same spirit as those Hopi elders - to gain self-determination for their people. On February 13th some of those occupiers will be returning to commemorate their historic take-over of the island. If you are interested in that part of the island's history, you are invited to come and learn about it from the people who lived it. If you are a NPS volunteer, your help is needed that day. Call Ranger Lori Brosnan to find out in what ways you can help.

FORT POINT LIVING HISTORY DAY was held on Saturday, January 30th, on a clear but very chilly day. About 40 re-enactors from the American Civil War Association, and a few from the National Civil War Association, presented a living portrait of soldiers' lives at the fort. Cannon drills, a telegraph exhibit, military drills, and a stirring flag ceremony were among the highlights. FOCWA members helped in a number of ways: Frank Avila and Ken Felton manned a table with information about FOCWA and the Sons of Union



Veterans of the Civil War; Steve Johnson gave tours of the fort; and Robert Mayer helped with canon demonstrations.

Visitors taking the fort tour were treated to a brilliant view of the bay from the barbette tier, and were told about the role of Alcatraz in the defense of the bay, as well as its use as a prison for both military and civilian prisoners during the war. They were invited to come to the Living History Day on Alcatraz in April, when the weather would be warmer and where they could take a tour of the citadel, whose amazing brickwork was laid at about the same time as the work at Fort Point.

Attendance was approximately 2700 people, and after all the visitors left the re-enactors had a Civil War dinner of pizza and coke. Many of the troops stayed overnight, and they took turns doing sentry duty all through the cold, dark, windy night. Brave men, indeed.

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS TO VISIT THE ISLAND Under the auspices of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz, 200 students from Jordan Middle School in Palo Alto will be visiting Alcatraz over a two day period (February 25 and March 4) as part of their studies of the American Civil War.

FOCWA member Steve Johnson will be visiting their school twice, dressed as a Union infantryman, to tell the students about the uniform and equipment of a soldier, including all the things typically carried in his haversack and knapsack. When the students arrive on the island, they will be given a tour, participate in a cannon drill, and selected volunteers will get to “dress as a soldier”. The students will then become Park Ambassadors, taking what they learned back to school so they can make presentations to the school PTA (and possibly the school board) about what their visit to a National Park meant to them.

GENERAL MEETING ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28 All members are urged to attend the General Meeting on Alcatraz at 10 am. Elections of board members, the year's calendar, and finances will be discussed.