

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

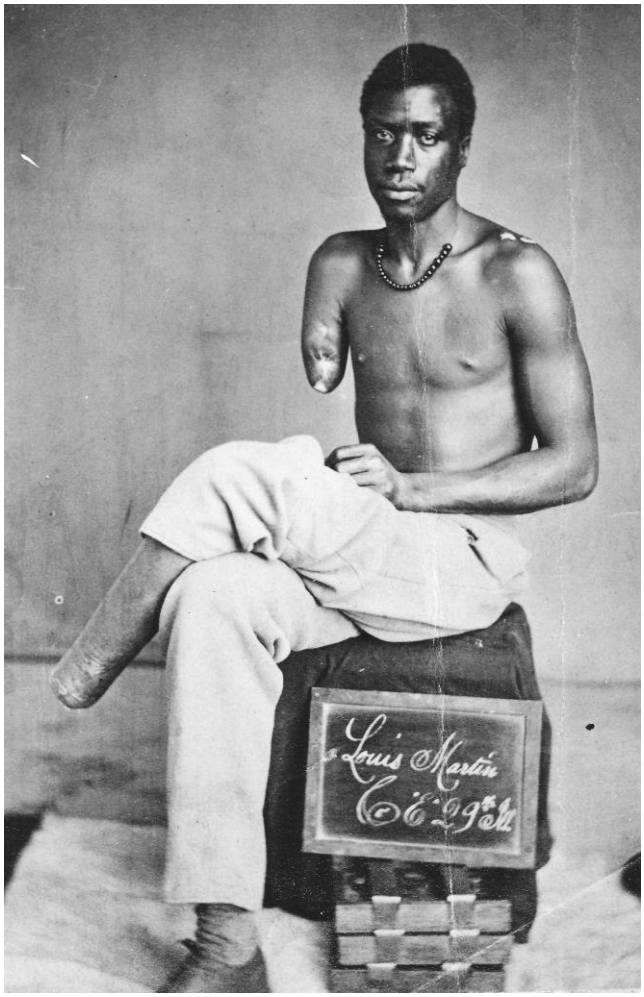
CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.cdcwrt.net



Volume 33, Number 2 February 2016


# THE U.S.C.T. AND FREEDOM'S JOURNEY




Private Louis (Lewis) Martin of Company E, 29th USCT, was enlisted at Alton Illinois, February 9, 1864. Five months later he fought in the Battle of the Crater. Shell fragments and bullets so mangled his left leg and right arm that they were amputated. Buckshot wounds in the head and left shoulder resulted in painful scars. After field hospital treatment, he convalesced at Harewood Hospital in Washington, D.C. This photograph was taken by Dr. Reed Brockway Bontecou of Troy, NY. In spite of his wounds, his medical records indicate he was present with his regiment at the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox Court House in April of 1865.

On December 6, 1865, he was discharged as totally disabled and was given a pension of $20 per month, which was increased to $24 in 1872. He later claimed an increase because of shoulder pain, but in spite of the scar clearly visible in the photograph, the existence of such a wound was denied. In 1869 he was wed to Mary Jones. In 1895 he was dropped from the pension rolls for failure to claim his checks since 1892. No widow's claim was ever filed.

# FEBRUARY MEETING
## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016

## WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
## 1541 BROADWAY
## WATERVLIET, NY

## Freedom Journey:
## Black Civil War Soldiers
## In Westchester County

## Edythe Ann Quinn
## Professor of History
## Hartwick College, Oneonta, NY

| | |
|---|---|
| **Social Hour** | **6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** |
| **Business Meeting** | **7:00 – 7:15 p.m.** |
| **Presentation** | **7:15 – 7:45 p.m.** |
| **Discussion** | **7:45 - 8:15 p.m.** |

## CDCWRT MEETING

***The February meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, February 12, 2016. The topic for presentation is very appropriate for Lincoln's Birthday. Our special guest speaker is historian and author, Edythe Quinn, who will talk about "*Freedom Journey: Black Civil War Soldiers in Westchester County."***

***Her new book, FREEDOM JOURNEY: Black Civil War Soldiers and The Hills Community, Westchester County, New York (SUNY Press, May 2015), is distinctive as both the history of a northern black community and the Civil War service of 36 black men from that community in three USCT regiments and the Navy. She discusses their experiences in the 29th Connecticut Infantry, 14th Rhode Island/11th USCT, the 20th USCT and the Navy, and follows their return home as veterans.***

***In the National Archives, she discovered five incredible letters written by Sergeant Simon Anderson Tierce (14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery/11th USCT) to his wife Sarah Jane, at home in The Hills, the largest Black community in Westchester County. Supported by other important primaries, these letters are the heart of the book.***

***The men's ties to family, land, church, school, and occupational experiences at home buffered the brutal indifference of boredom and battle, the ravages of illness, the deprivations of unequal pay, and the hostility of some commissioned officers and white troops. At the same time, their service among kith and kin bolstered their determination and pride.***

***Dr. Quinn is a Professor of History at Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY. She received a Gilder-Lehrman Institute Fellowship for African-American Research and is an experienced teacher, lecturer, and researcher. She used materials from the White Plains Collections and other local libraries, historical societies, and archives in her research. At the 2015 Commencement, she received the Margaret Brigham Bunn Award presented annually to a member of the faculty who judged by students "best exemplifies the centrality of the interaction between teacher and student."***

***Professor Quinn will have copies of her new book available for purchase at the meeting.***

## UP-COMING MEETING/ EVENTS

**On Friday, February 12, 2016**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Edythe Quinn, who will present "Freedom Journey – Black Civil War Soldiers in Westchester County.

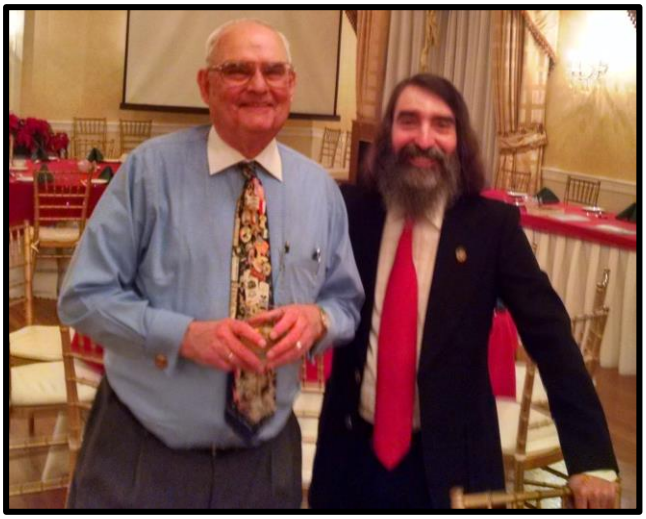
**On Friday, March 11, 2016**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Michelle Hamilton, who will present "Lincoln and Spiritualism."

**On Friday, April 8, 2016**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Jamie Malinowski, who will talk about Commander Will Cushing.

**On Friday, May 13, 2016**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Mike Reetz, who will talk about Brigadier General Horace Porter.

**On Friday, June 10, 2016**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor David Hochfelder, who will talk about the Freedman's Savings Bank.

## FROM THE CONFERENCE



New York City CWRT past-president, Patrick Falci (right), spoke about the death of A.P. Hill at Petersburg. Ed Bonekemper (left) wanted his picture taken with Gen. Hill.

## LINCOLN AND THE PRICE OF CRUDE OIL

My wife is continually reminded that the Civil War is interwoven in our lives on a daily basis. I know this as a fact, and I am never surprised by that fact. However, even to me, this reference comes out of left field as a surprise.

In the January 9, 2016 issue of the ***Wall Street Journal*** there was a review article entitled, "Just Say No to Stolen Oil" by Leif Wenar. He discussed the possibility of an oil-fueled regional conflict in the Middle East that could clobber the world economy, and raised the real question: ***Why do we give our money to the world's most unsavory regimes –often our declared enemies—in exchange for the oil they control?*** The simple answer, of course, is that these regimes control oil, and we need it. We too often look past the troubling moral reality of the global oil trade, and settle for every country's default law for foreign oil: "Whoever controls it by force can sell it to us."

Rewarding the control of oil with big money encourages armed conflict over oil – and it enables strongmen to use money to buy the muscle and loyalty they need to stay in power.

One of America's most profound ideas, proclaimed by **Lincoln** in his First Inaugural, is that a country belongs to its people. The people have the ultimate right to control the land and its resources. Today the whole world speaks **Lincoln's language**. The vast majority of countries – including the U.S., China, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria and Russia – have ratified one of two major global human-rights treaties, both of which declare, "All peoples may, for their own needs, freely dispose their natural wealth and resources."

But not even the U.S. has turned Lincoln's principle into law. When a country's natural resources are sold off by autocrats or extremists, without any accountability to its citizens, those assets are stolen from the people. More than half of the world's traded oil is stolen goods. If Lincoln's principle were law, Americans would have no right to buy that oil.

The U.S. has decided to privatize its petroleum assets, under laws passed by publically accountable legislators. Privatize, nationalize, leave it in the ground – we would respect any rules that foreigners choose for oil, so long as they are not selling off the people's assets without the people's consent.

If we reformed our own laws, the U.S. could lead the world to follow suit, as it has started to do with other politically fraught commercial practices. The U.S. led a world-wide import ban on "blood diamonds" sold by African militias. Why not expand this ban to include "blood oil."

Thanks to the boom in U.S. production, the West would have enough energy at reasonable prices without tainted oil and gas. Experts say that the U.S. could quickly and costlessly switch to other suppliers. The transition in Europe would be slower, requiring billions in new infrastructure investments. The cost of upgrading the global oil trade would be substantial – but so is the alternative of endless, oil-fueled conflict across the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

The slave trade, colonialism, apartheid – all were once legal, widely accepted practices. History's great movements for freedom have broken the legal links between might and right that everyone once took for granted. The progress that humanity has made in the last 300 years has come from turning "respectable" practices of violence into widely reviled crimes.

The U.S. can now lead the world in taking the next giant step toward the rule of law by abolishing the right to buy stolen oil – and getting us out of business with rulers and thugs whose riches come from bloody hands.

*(Mr. Wenar is author of "Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence, and the Rules That Run the World," Oxford University Press.)*

## DINNER WITH ED BEARSS

On January 7, 2016, Ed Bearss was the speaker for the Rufus Barringer CWRT in Southern Pines, NC. Every year, Ed goes on a one week lecture tour through North Carolina, speaking to round tables in Raleigh, New Bern, Burlington, Southern Pines, Fort Fisher and other sites. I was asked to join our Program Chair, Teej Smith and Ed for dinner prior to the meeting.

Ed asked me how things were at the CDCWRT, and if we were still doing postal cancels. I explained that after the sesquicentennial, the round table decided to shelf cancels for a while. However for 2016, Matt George is organizing the 153rd anniversary for Gettysburg, Matt is producing some new envelopes with pictures of monuments as the subject. This led into a discussion of monuments, and I learned that Ed's all-time favorite Civil War monument collection is the Grant Memorial in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington. Teej and I agreed that this would make a nice article for our newsletters that would also honor Ed.

Situated in Union Square at the edge of the reflecting pool and backed by the United States Capitol, the bronze and marble General Ulysses S. Grant Memorial honors the Civil War Commander of the Union Armies who was also a two-term President. It marks the eastern terminus of the National Mall and faces the Lincoln Memorial almost two miles to the west, symbolically linking the President and the General who fought to save the Union.

Celebrated as the largest equestrian monument in the United States, it is 252 feet

long by 71 feet wide by 44 feet high and is a tour de force of monumental sculpture. It is a remarkable achievement by a sculptor who, with little formal training, toiled twenty years to translate his grand vision into cast bronze. At two and one-half times life size, the figure of Grant mounted on his horse forms the monument's apex atop a pedestal that is over twenty-two feet high. Four lions lying with heads erect, guarding the flags of the Army and the United States, mark the corners of an imaginary pyramid's base and visually align with the life-size Cavalry Group on the north and Artillery Group on the south.

The monument is an essay in opposites, contrasting Grant's customary stillness while observing battles with the turbulence of the charging Cavalry and Artillery. The symmetry and simplicity of the classically styled platform, suggesting a reviewing stand, provide an effective stage for the heightened realism of the bronze components.

Thirty years after General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox ended the Civil War, veterans who had served under Grant in the Army of the Tennessee launched a campaign to erect a monument to General Grant in Washington, D.C. In 1901, Congress passed the Hepburn Act, authorizing funds for a memorial at a cost not to exceed $250,000; this was the largest Federal sculptural commission to date. Congress appointed the Grant Memorial Commission to identify a site and oversee a competition.

In March 1902, the Commission solicited proposals, including the stipulations that artists had to be American citizens and that all sculpting and casting had to take place on American soil. Twenty-three artists submitted twenty-seven designs. The selection panel, including prominent sculptors Daniel Chester French and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, reviewed the plaster models and chose the team of Shrady and Casey, a decision contested by older, more established artists, particularly the runner up, Charles H. Niehaus.

As Shrady worked on the monument's various sculptural elements, he forged a close relationship with Roman Bronze Works, a Brooklyn-based foundry noted for its exceptional craftsmanship. The sculptor began with the monument's simplest bronze elements, the lions. One pair was completed in 1906, and by the spring of 1908 the architectural superstructure was in place and all four lions were placed on their pedestals. Next came the Artillery Group, at the time the largest bronze group ever to be cast in the United States. Weighing fifteen tons, the ensemble required expert engineering and was assembled on site in 1912 from four large sections.

In 1915 Shrady completed the modeling of the Cavalry, and it was installed the following year. Finally, in 1918, Shrady received approval for the full-scale clay model of the mounted Grant, which was cast and installed in 1919. Only the low-relief infantry panels for the sides of Grant's pedestal remained to be completed. Shrady tragically died two weeks before the memorial's dedication on the centennial of Grant's birthday, April 27, 1922. Shrady's assistants Edmond Amateis and Sherry Fry finished the panels based on his sketches, and they were installed in 1924.

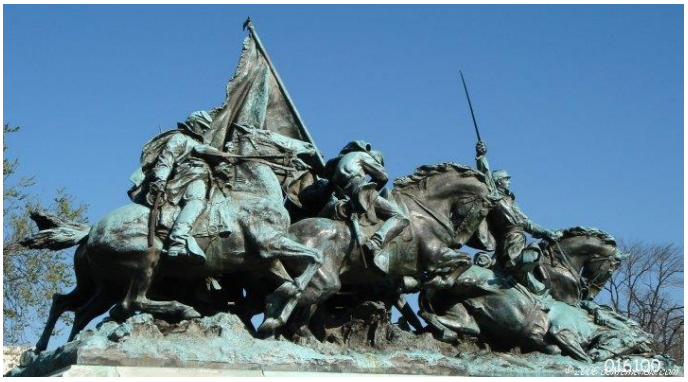
The Grant Memorial continues to captivate viewers with its immediacy and dramatic power. The low height of the flanking groups of Cavalry and Artillery, situated across from marble exedras built into the monument, allows viewers to imagine themselves amid the action as if in the heat of battle. Realistic details at eye level, including military trappings and uniforms, rocky terrain, battle debris, horse musculature, and the pained expressions of individual soldiers, endow the scene with authenticity. Shrady researched and studied all aspects of the monument intently, even observing specially staged cavalry and artillery drills at

the United States Military Academy at West Point to ensure accuracy in the movement of the two groups. In the Cavalry group, seven horsemen of the color squad of a cavalry regiment stampede onto the battlefield, about to crush a fallen soldier, one of their own. Weapons, figures, animals, and terrain merge into a riveting, visual narrative. In the Artillery Group, soldiers struggle to steer a cannon into position, but the team of three horses lunges and twists as the lead horse, reacting to a broken bridle, rears uncontrollably.

In sculpting the Cavalry and the Artillery groups, Shrady used painstaking detail to convincingly convey the idea of individual soldiers' sacrifices in the context of a national purpose. Similarly, in his likeness of Grant astride his Kentucky thoroughbred, he sought to capture an authentic portrait of the great military leader. Shrady synthesized all available sources, including the death mask of Grant in the Smithsonian and the recollections of his own father, who was Grant's personal physician during his last illness. As described in the memorial's 1924 commemorative book, "truth and simplicity were the pervading traits which tinged Grant's other qualities." Shrady portrayed Grant as he often appeared on the battlefield, without a sword, shoulders slightly drooping, and crowned with a tilted, wide-brimmed Army hat.













**Dear Officers, Board Members, and distinguished members/friends of the esteemed, "Capital District Civil War Round Table:"**

It is noted that your informative and interesting January newsletter, "The Dispatch," details the contributions your peerless Round Table have made to the preservation effort at Brandy Station since 1996.

As an early board member of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, Inc., and a founder of the Brandy Station Foundation, I was both astonished and humbled to learn you generous folks have donated almost $40,000 in actual contributions, and nearly $210,000 in matching funds toward Civil War Trust efforts to save the Brandy Station Battlefield.

I can't begin to tell you how much your long-time commitment to Brandy Station is appreciated by those who labor in the trenches to protect America's greatest cavalry battlefield, but I should not be surprised when it is considered more New York regiments fought at Brandy than any other state, except Virginia. And of course Virginia regiments were fighting on their home turf--*not* in the Hudson Valley of upper New York State!

Yes, we at Brandy Station well recall the dark days back in the early-mid 90's when powerful development forces were arrayed against us and we needed all the help possible to counter-attack those who planned the wholesale destruction of our battlefield.

*But*, in rode the Capital District Round Table--*the very first CWRT to come to our side*--and soon our combined voices and dollars were heard. The battlefield is now free of this heavy development threat.

I would add, profoundly, that no one proved more eloquent in Brandy's defense than did the immortal Sue Knost, an inspiring hero to all who knew and loved her. I know you folks miss her every day. And please know that I do, as well.

On your behalf, Sue and the CDCWRT board bought specific acreage at Brandy that we "auctioned off" (for donations), and to this day I never go past "New York territory" without thinking of Sue's delight when the plot was pointed out to her as the "Capital District's proprietorship on the Brandy Station Battlefield."

And the next time you folks are down here--soon, I hope--it will be pointed out to you, as well. After all, you own it.

Please extend my sincere gratitude for all that each of you, collectively and individually, have accomplished at Brandy Station. And it goes without saying--but I'll say it, anyway: I am at your service, and I do hope you'll soon arrange a Round Table tour to a pristinely magnificent battlefield you substantively helped to save.

With warm respect,
-Bud

Clark B. Hall
Wicomico Church, VA