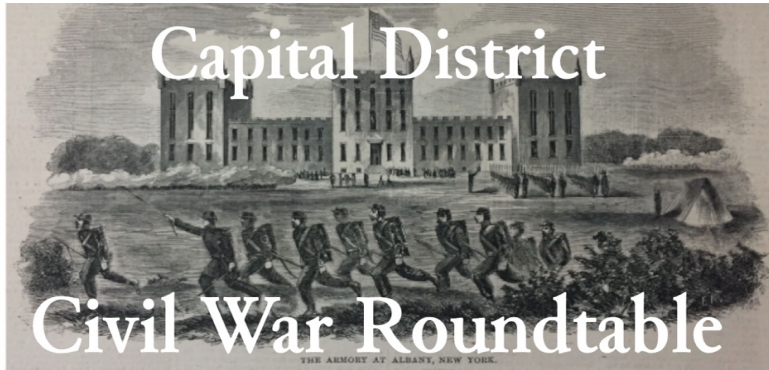


The Dispatch

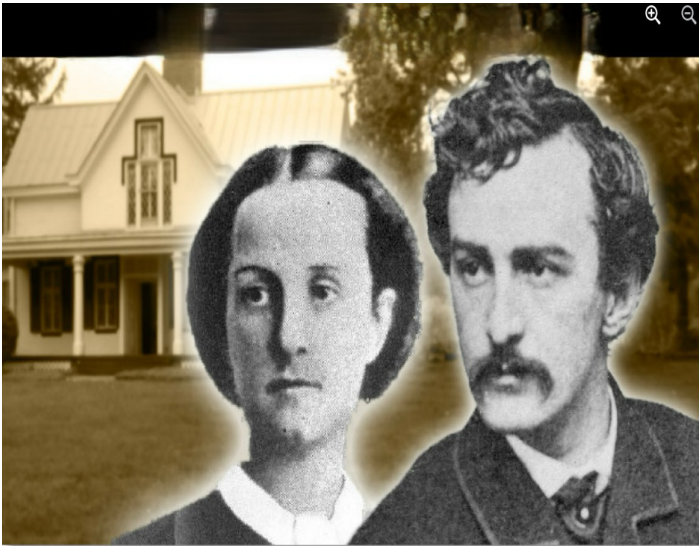
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P.O. Box 11493 Loudonville, New York 12211

www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.com



John Wilkes Booth and His Sister Asia

A Special Relationship

presented by Lisa Samia

Saturday, May 9th @ 4pm

Watervliet Senior Center

1501 Broadway Watervliet, N.Y.

Join us as author and poet Lisa Samia will present her program about “John Wilkes Booth and his sister Asia Booth Clarke, A Special Relationship” to the roundtable at the Watervliet Senior Center on Saturday, May 9, at 4 pm.

Lisa will explore the similarities in the personalities of both John and Asia, who shared a romantic, restless nature as well as a stubborn, unrelenting side. They remained close even as their lives moved towards and into early adulthood, as John pursued the family vocation of acting and Asia became a wife, mother, and later an author as Asia Booth Clarke.



Lisa G. Samia is an Award-Winning Poet and author specializing in American Civil War History. For the last six years, she has been selected as the National Park Service Artist-in-Residence (for poetry) at three Civil War sites: Murfreesboro, Manassas, and Gettysburg. Her third Civil War poetry and essay book in the series, *The Nameless and the Faceless of the Civil War: Gettysburg, Manassas & More*, earned her a book nomination from the International Edgar Allan Poe Festival & Awards in October 2024, in Baltimore, MD. She has presented her poetry at the Civil War Round Table Congress, the American Civil War Museum in Richmond and Appomattox, the Seminary Ridge Museum in Gettysburg, the Gettysburg Civil War Round Table, and many other venues.

Financial News

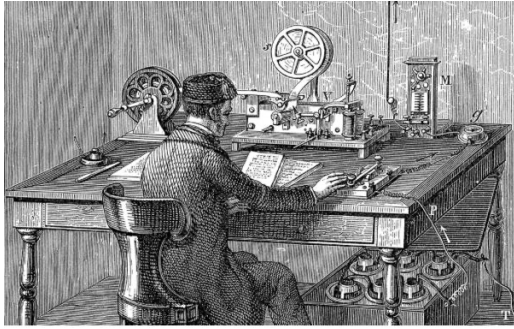
The RT finances remain in the black with a bank balance of \$8,163.46. This allows the RT to pay the expenses of out-of-town speakers booked for upcoming meetings. Also, we have added a few new members to our ranks this spring, and we welcome them aboard. This makes 34 dues-paying members.



Thank You To Our Generous Members

The Round Table wishes to thank these members for their donations to the Preservation Account and/or the Operating Account so far this year: John Assini, Jeffrey Falace, Dean Long, Robert Mungari, Steve Muller, Bruce Reed, Larry Rogers, Ric Scarce, William Schreiner, Luanne Whitbeck, Brian Castler, Mark Koziol, Norman Kuchar, Leo McGuire, Byron Moak, Rosemary Nichols, James Yuchniewicz, Mary Bonczar, Mary Ellen Johnson, Stuart Lehman, and

Terry Fraser. We also wish to thank Dean Long for providing refreshments for our meetings.



Media News

The roundtable is working hard to keep the website fresh with news about 2026 New York State reenactments and history days. Please contact us at cdcwrt@hotmail.com if you know of a relevant event that we have not posted. We will be glad to spread the word.

Our Facebook page is active in sharing interesting Civil War history and posting stories and upcoming events. In the last 30 days, we gained 19 new followers, bringing our total to 2,778.

Programming Information

We are always looking to book interesting speakers to present to the Roundtable. The 2026 calendar is full, and we are booking programs into next year. A few spring 2027 dates are available. For further

information, contact a board member or email us at cdcwrt@hotmail.com

Upcoming Events

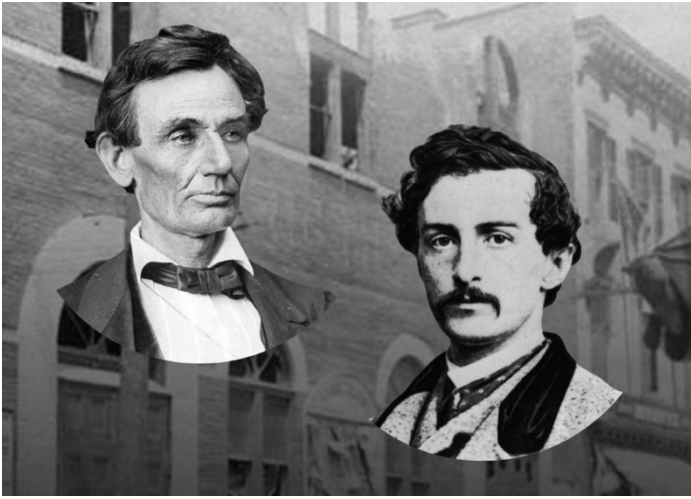
The RT will be participating in the *June 13 Grant Cottage Community Days*. Proceeds from the sale of books, clothing, and other items shall go towards preserving endangered Civil War battlefield lands.

Join us for the bi-yearly *Book and Clothing Sale at the June 13 meeting*. Browse through the collection of reasonably priced Civil War biographies, regimental histories, and DVDs, plus t-shirts, polos, sweatshirts, and neckties.



In Memoriam

The Round Table has learned that long-time CDCWRT member Ed Kokoski recently passed away. We offer our condolences to his family. His obituary can be found [here](#).



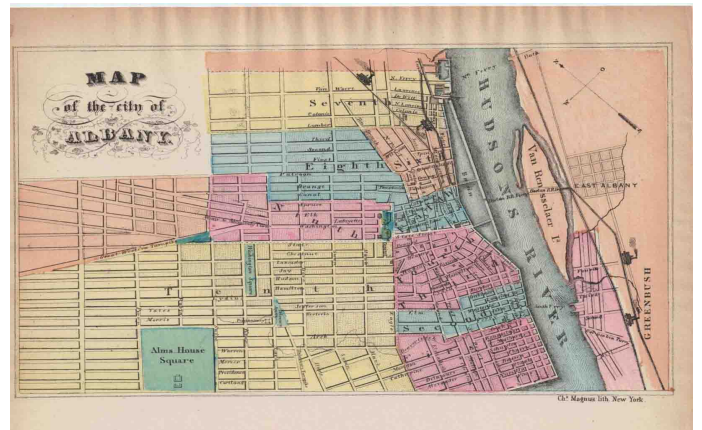
Abraham Lincoln & John Wilkes Booth in Albany

In hindsight February 18, 1861 was an important day in American history. On that day Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as president of the Confederate States of America for a term of six years. Alexander Hamilton Stephens was confirmed as vice-president and the capital city of the Confederate States was established in Montgomery, Alabama. The celebrated tune "Dixie" was played for the first time as a Confederate anthem during Davis's Inauguration.

Further north on the same day, John Wilkes Booth was in Albany, performing as an actor at the same time President-elect Abraham Lincoln was visiting the city on his

pre-inauguration train journey to Washington, DC. Lincoln made speeches at Albany and New York City, still attempting to reconcile differences between the Union and the seceded States.

Following his election as President in 1860, Lincoln took a train ride to Washington that took him through Albany. He arrived in the city on February 18, 1861 with his wife and three sons.



Map of Albany, NY, 1860

As their train passed the West Albany railroad shops, an electrical switch was turned off nearby at the Dudley Observatory, causing an electromagnet mounted on the roof of the Capitol in downtown Albany to release a metal ball that slid down a pole, signaling to military officials to start a 21-gun salute in Capitol Park. Albany's Congressman Erastus Corning, the founder and first

president of the New York Central Railroad, had been instrumental in donating a high-quality telescope and time-keeping system at the new Dudley Observatory. Each morning a worker started up a dynamo (generator) at the observatory and at exactly 12 noon the worker turned on an electrical switch that ran a wire to an electromagnet on top of a pole mounted on the roof of the Capitol. The energized electromagnet pulled up the metal ball. Every night at exactly midnight, the worker turned off the switch which caused the ball to drop.



Dudley Observatory, ca 1880

One of these “Time Balls” controlled by the Dudley Observatory had also been mounted on the train station in New York City. It was important to the railroads that New York City and Albany were on exactly the same time so that trains between the two cities could run accurately.

Since few people at that time had watches and the pocket watches that existed usually showed a variety of times, it became traditional in both New York and Albany for partiers to go downtown on New Years Eve “to watch the ball drop.” On that day in 1861, the ball was being used to signal the President’s arrival.

Albany’s Democratic Mayor George Thacher met Lincoln at the train station, and they rode in a carriage to the Capitol. Thacher, Thurlow Weed, State Republican Chairman and editor of the *Albany Evening Journal*, Republican Governor Edwin D. Morgan, U.S. Senator Ira Harris and probably Democratic Congressman Erastus Corning hosted Lincoln.

As the carriage proceeded down Broadway and turned up State Street, it passed Stanwix Hall, then the residence of John Wilkes Booth. Undoubtedly, Booth watched with almost all of Albany as the new President went by. Another spectator was Clara Harris, daughter of Senator Harris. Clara and her fiance Henry Rathbone would be reunited with President and Mrs. Lincoln at a later tragic encounter with Booth.

GAYETY THEATRE.

J. R. SPACKMAN Manager.

Re-appearance of the Great tragedian,
Mr. J. WILKES BOOTH.

This evening will be performed
THE APOSTATE.

Pescara Mr. Booth.
DANCE Miss KINCADE.

To conclude with
BOOTS AT THE SWAN.

PRICES OF ADMISSION:
First Tier and Parquette..... 50 cents.
Second Tier 25
Private Boxes \$5 00
Doors open at 7; to commence at 7½ precisely.

Advertisement For New Gayety Theater, Albany Eve
Journal, 2/18/1861

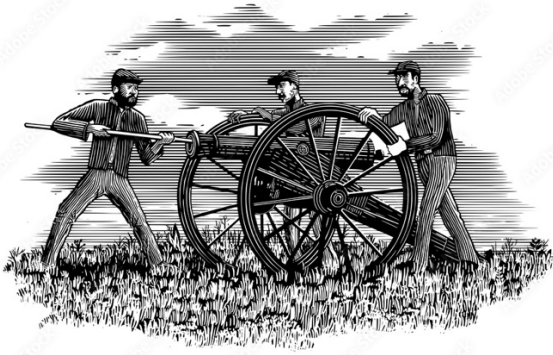
Booth was in Albany starring in the play "The Apostate" at the Gayety Theater. He had fallen on his dagger during a performance earlier in the week and had been sidelined for several performances. He was spending his time in the Stanwix bar and lobby, criticizing Lincoln and the Union to the point where Gayety's treasurer, Mr. Cuyler, told him to keep his comments to himself or he would discourage attendance. Thurlow Weed's *Albany Evening Journal* said of Wilkes' performance: "Undoubtedly one of the finest actors this country has ever produced."

Lincoln spoke to a joint session of the Legislature, attended a dinner with Governor Morgan and returned to a large reception at the Delavan House. The main topic of conversation was the seceding of southern states. Part

of the reason for Lincoln's visit was to judge the breadth and depth of his support in the North. At each stop in New York, Albany being no exception, Lincoln witnessed a strong demonstration of patriotism. Lincoln left Albany by train, departing for New York City and then Washington. Albany's Major John Titcomb Sprague accompanied Lincoln.

Booth stayed in Albany continuing his performances at the Gayety, where he was joined by married Albany actress Henrietta Irving. They resumed their romance. On April 26, at the Stanwix Hotel, Booth tried to break off his relationship with Irving. Irving thrust a knife at Booth's chest. He deflected the knife with his arm, resulting in a slash to his face. Irving then turned the knife on herself, but according to an Albany Police Report "did no real harm."

Lincoln and Booth visited Albany, and Clara Harris and her fiancé Henry Rathbone had the opportunity to see both men in their disparate public roles. No one was aware at the time, but in Albany the stage had been set for the tragedy of Good Friday, April 14, 1865.



Capital District
Civil War
Roundtable
2026 Presentations

Social Hour Starts At 10:30 am / Presentation at 11:00 am

May 9 (*Rescheduled to new time 4pm*)

John Wilkes Booth & Asia Booth Clarke

A Special Relationship

presented by Lisa Samia

June 13th

Gettysburg's Unknown Soldier

The Life, Death, & Celebrity of Amos Humiston

Presented by Mark Dunkleman

September 12th

The 11th N.Y. Light Artillery During the Civil War

Presented by Dennis Doyle

October 10th

The 117th N.Y. Volunteer Infantry

Presented by Jim Pula

November 14th

Civil War Stereo Cards

Presented by Stu Lehman

December 12th

American Revolutionary War Swords

Presented by Daniel Flynn

Watervliet Senior Center
1501 Broadway Watervliet, New York 12189

CDCWRT
P.O. BOX 11493
LOUDONVILLE, NY 12211

Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly in various locations in the Capital District. This newsletter is published eleven times per year. Annual dues are \$35. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.

Contact the Capital District Civil War Round Table through
our website: www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org
or email: cdcwrt@hotmail.com

THE OFFICERS

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Treasurer	Steve Muller	Secretary	Shawn Connery
At-Large	Rosemary Nichols	At-Large	Leo McGuire

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Refreshments	Dean Long and Luanne Whitbeck
Webmaster	Mark Koziol
Education	
Newsletter	Rosemary Nichols and Shawn Connery