



The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

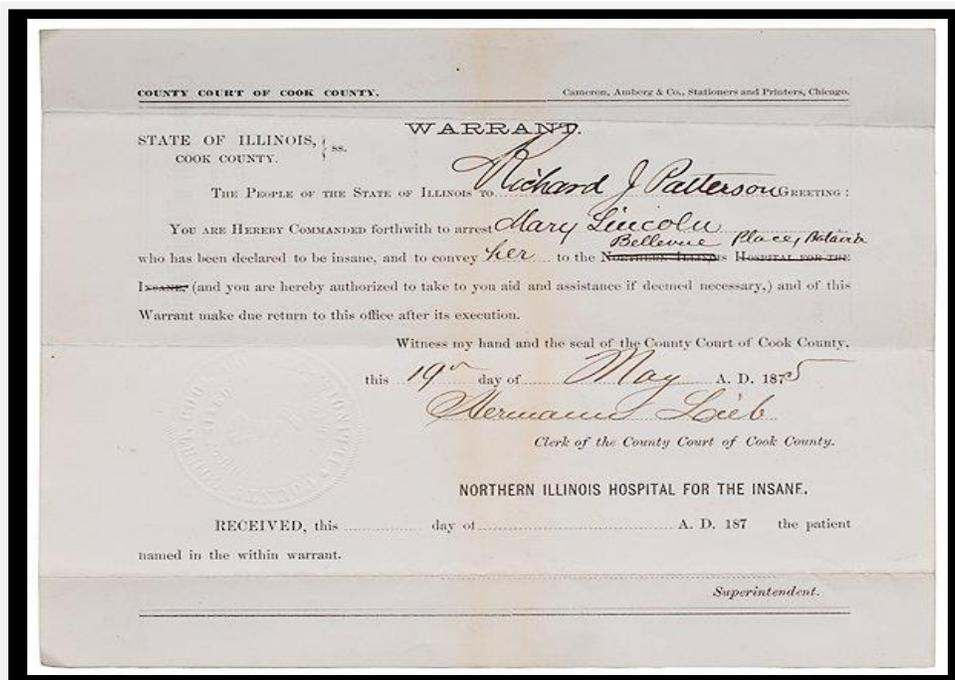
PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org



Volume 34, Number 8

October 2017

MARY TODD LINCOLN TO BE ARRESTED



Mary Todd Lincoln, aged 56, was taken to the Cook County Courthouse on May 19, 1875 for a public trial where 17 witnesses testified as to her unstable condition. No witnesses were called in her defense. Robert Todd Lincoln, her son, testified, "I have no doubt my mother is insane. She has long been a source of great anxiety to me."

This afternoon the court agreed, and a warrant for her arrest was issued, ordering Dr. Richard Patterson to convey her to Bellevue Place for the Insane. The Institution is approximately 30 miles from Chicago. It is not known how long Mrs. Lincoln will remain at Bellevue Place.

OCTBER MEETING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2017

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

Mary Todd Lincoln

By Judee Synakowski

Social Hour	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Presentation	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Questions & Answers	8:00 – 8:30 p.m.

The regular meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, October 13, 2017. Our special guest speaker will be Judee Synakowski, and the topic of her presentation is “Mary Todd Lincoln.”

Judee is a retired Information Technology Specialist at the NYS Teachers’ Retirement System. She has a passion for Civil War history and for a number of years she has portrayed Mary Lincoln. Judee has appeared in period dress at reenactments and the Peterboro Civil War Weekends. She often appears with John Baylis, who portrays Abraham Lincoln.

Judee is similar in stature to Mrs. Lincoln. She will talk about her life

with Lincoln in Springfield and in Washington.

PETERBORO CIVIL WAR WEEKEND

This was received this past week. The CDCWRT sponsored commemorative postal cancelations at Peterboro for a number of years. Members who still have those cachets, now have a unique piece of the past.

When circumstances in life change, one must let go of previously valued situations and move on toward new horizons. Such is the case with Peterboro Civil War Weekend, and it is with mixed emotions that the Civil War Weekend Committee of the Smithfield Community Association has decided to terminate the event.

We can look far enough ahead to predict the eventual outcome of this event, but we would rather look back on the events we have joyously hosted and remember them for their success and fond purpose they served. It is our pleasure to announce that we will continue to provide and expand the Civil War Living History Education Day for 5th grade students from area schools.

Thank you to the many reenactors, community members, sponsors, and volunteers for your important contributions to the success of the Peterboro Civil War Weekend over these past 25 years. Your dedication and passion have kept the event alive. Our focus now will be to continue to provide programs that promote Peterboro’s historical legacy of passionate concern for the recognition of every human being’s innate, natural right to be treated equitably.

UP-COMING MEETING/EVENTS.

On Friday, November 10, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Dave Dixon who will talk about the Lost Gettysburg Address.

On Friday, December 8, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will be held in the usual location. The speaker is TBA.

BUFORD'S VIEW – OCTOBER 2017

I just returned from the highly successful Civil War Round Table Conference in Centreville, Virginia. It proved to be both interesting and useful in respect to Round Table organization, fund raising, publicity, and membership. In addition, we were given two excellent tours of Second Bull Run and the Battle of Ball's Bluff. Thirty Four Round Tables from across the country sent representatives. Also present were representatives from the Civil War Trust, Kernstown Battlefield Assoc., Lincoln Bookshop, and Manassas Battlefield Trust.

Three of the largest Round Tables were the Brunswick CWRT with 1200 members and the Scottsdale CWRT and the Puget Sound CWRT (both with several hundred members). Our good friends from the Connecticut CWRT (Blair Pavlik and his wife Mary) attended. Our RT and the Round Table of New York (City) represented New York. Just a few of the items leading to a successful Round Table include:

1) Having varied programs gearing to many different aspects of the Civil War in addition to battle studies

2) Appointing a publicity chairman or even just an advisor whose only responsibility (and expertise) is publicity and advertising

3) A strong social media program (Facebook, etc.)

4) Varying degrees of membership fees (such as student, seniors, etc.). The Brunswick has a "couple" membership option of \$25.00 a couple which is very popular with their over 1000 members.

Most Round Tables have a variety of ways of raising money, many of which our Round Table also use. However, they were impressed with our over twenty year effort of raising money via commemorative postal cancelations. Few of them ever considered this. Our Civil War baseball shirt was also popular (we actually sold two of them while we were there).

I really enjoyed the tour of the Balls Bluff battlefield. This early in the war, the Union disaster was characterized by both sides demonstrating total and complete inexperience and mistakes. Ultimately the incompetence on the Northern Side led to a complete rout and near total destruction. Two of the many interesting trivial facts about the battlefield were:

1) In the well-known Civil War era song the "Vacant Chair" there is a reference to "how our noble Willy fell". Willy was a real person. He was John William Grout of the 15th Massachusetts.

2) One of the more famous men to have fought there and wounded twice was Oliver Wendell Holmes also of the 15th Massachusetts (the "Harvard Regiment").

Perhaps the best book on this engagement is "A Little Short of Boats – The Battles of Balls Bluff and Edwards Ferry" by James A Morgan, who also was our tour guide.

I made a major error in my last column when I misidentified the youth group sponsored by the Underground Railroad History Project. The group's correct name is the Young Abolitionist Teen Scholars Institute. They are an excellent group of young people whose interest in history is matched by their positive community involvement. Several of their members portray soldiers in the 26th USCT.

I will be traveling to Virginia again the first weekend in October for the Mosby Heritage Conference. One of the speakers will be our Round Table's old friend Tom Clemens from the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF). I (JJ Jennings and Rosemary Nichols) will be returning to Virginia for the third time to attend the CWT Conference in Fredericksburg.

I am sad to report that Sam Bower a long time loyal purchaser of our commemorative postal cancelations at Gettysburg has passed away. Many of the envelopes he purchased were to be given to his grandson as a legacy. His grandson was born on July 3. His wife Ellen has graciously offered to return some of these to us to be sold again to raise money for battlefield preservation. Round Table member Mark Allen (who lives in Thurmont, Maryland.) has volunteered to pick these up.

Finally, because of the length of this Conference report I will conclude my discussion of Eric Foner's article "Our Monumental Mistakes" in his 2017 book Battles for Freedom in the November column.

CAMP LETTERMAN

Glen Hayes wrote to our President, Erin Baillargeon. His group, the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association, is trying to save the site of Camp Letterman General Hospital in Gettysburg from development. Over 4,000 badly wounded Union and Confederate soldiers from the battle were treated at that hospital and 365 soldiers died of their wounds in the 4 months Letterman was in operation. We are trying to get S&A Homes to save 17 acres out of 191 acres they own that contained tents with the wounded at Letterman.

Three articles about our efforts to save the site have come out in "Maine at War" Gettysburg College and Hillsdale Collegian. The easiest way to see these is go to GOOGLE, type in, "Help Save 17 Acres of Camp Letterman," and look under the subtitles, "maineatwar" "gettysburgcompiler" "hillsdalecollegian" .Also, Civil War Times magazine has come out with an article about our efforts. Go to GOOGLE, type in,"civilartimes-historynet" and click on that title. When the page comes up go to the SEARCH box at the top of the page and type in "camp letterman" and click. The article will come up. Glen is requesting that our Round Table please send a brief note to S&A Homes asking them to work with our group to save those 17 acres. Their address is S&A Homes, Bob Poole, CEO, Suite 200, 2121 Old Gatesburg Road, State College, Pa. 16803.

(Editor's note: This piece of property had previously been slated for a shopping center. Only a small plot alongside the road designates the site of Letterman Hospital with a small monument and sign. This would be an opportunity to preserve at least a portion of the site where hospital ward tents were pitched. The dead house, embalming tent and graveyard will become homes. Presumably all the dead were removed to other cemeteries.)

BY-LAWS CHANGES

The Executive Committee proposes the following amendments to the CDCWRT Bylaws:

1. Article II Section 2. President shall be amended by the removal of the following **highlighted** phrase:

President: The President shall be elected for a term of one year or until a successor has been elected; **however, the President shall not serve more than two successive terms.**

2. Article II Section 3. Vice-president shall be amended by the removal of the following highlighted phrase:

Vice-president: **The Vice-president shall not serve more than two successive terms.**

3. Article IX on Amendments shall be amended by adding the following sentence to the end of the existing paragraph:

“The written notice required in this article may be provided by email and/or in other appropriate digital

form, so long as the notice is sufficient to inform the membership.”

These proposed amendments are presented to the membership through the newsletter (whether in print or on-line and email), allowing a period of not less than two weeks in advance of the meeting at which the changes are to be acted upon. The Executive Committee proposes that these amendments shall be voted upon at the November 2017 meeting, on Friday, November 10, 2017.

MYRA COLBY BRADWELL

Myra Colby Bradwell came from a family of Revolutionary War patriots. Her parents were prominent in the antislavery movement in Illinois. Myra became a close friend of Mary Lincoln after the President's death. She was intellectually gifted and started to read for the law following her marriage to a young attorney James Bradwell.

She was thirty-eight when she took the Illinois bar exam and passed with the highest honors. With her husband's help she founded and operated the Chicago Legal News, the most widely circulated legal newspaper in the United States. Her formal application for a law license was denied twice by the Illinois Supreme Court, first “by reason of the disability imposed by your married condition” and then when that logic was questioned on appeal, simply because she was a woman.

When Myra appealed to the United States Supreme Court, the country treated her lawsuit as a comedy. The press stated the only way she could win, was if all nine justices went crazy. The state of Illinois considered the case such

a foregone conclusion that when oral arguments were heard before the Supreme Court in 1873, it did not even send an attorney to make a presentation.

The vote was 8 to 1 against Myra with the majority declaring in derogatory language that the idea of a married woman taking on a career independent of her marital duties was "repugnant" and must be resisted.

"The Paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the Law of the Creator" read the decision. Only Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase dissented.

WERE LEE & JACKSON TRAITORS?

A number of interviews of protestors (some students, some not students, some leaders, some educators) indicated that Lee and Jackson were traitors because they made war against the United States and therefore should not have any monuments to them in any location. By extension all Confederates were therefore traitors.

I don't want to get into the issue of whether secession was possible or not under the Constitution. Post-war, the issue was never referred to the Supreme Court. I know "mock trials" have been presented to Supreme Court lawyers in recent years, but that's as useless as "what if" scenarios. Today we cannot mimic the political and emotional attitude of the country of that time after the war when a Supreme Court decision would have been made.

Remember in the 1880s, in an 8:1 decision the Supreme Court ruled that

the role of woman was primarily the raising of the family. "This is the law of the Devine Creator." Try to run that by a mock Supreme Court today!

Historians have spoken of the Civil War as unique in that unlike most civil wars, both sides felt they were fighting for freedom. The country was still in a transition in self-identity as a country or a collection of states. Antebellum writings often defined the country as these united states, while after the war we became THE United States. Going from the plural to the singular, and capitalizing the "U" and the "S" reflected a profound change in identity.

The day after the firing on Fort Sumter, the United States Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, directed that all United States Military Academy cadets must take a "*new oath of allegiance*." Previously, each cadet had taken an "*oath of allegiance to his respective State*." Now, they were required to "swear fealty to the United States paramount to any other state, county or political entity." Lee's oath then was to his state, but he wrestled with his conscious before he reluctantly refused command of Federal forces and sided with Virginia.

Postwar, amnesty was first offered to those who supported the Confederacy but not soldiers. Later amnesty was offered to soldiers and junior officers. Amnesty was then extended to officers and political leaders. Another proclamation was issued on 4 July 1868 in which Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, John C. Breckinridge and a few others were restricted from pardon. A final proclamation was issued in December 1868 which granted amnesty to everybody who had participated in the rebellion. But first all had to swear

allegiance to the U.S. and the Constitution. Lee's amnesty oath was "misplaced" and was discovered in the National Archives in 1970. In 1975, Lee's full rights of citizenship were posthumously restored by a joint congressional resolution effective June 13, 1865.

But did the President, during the war, consider Lee and Jackson to be traitors. As is often the case, Lincoln shows us the way.

An editorial by John Forney in the *Daily Morning Chronicle* (Washington, DC) appeared 3 days after Jackson's death and expressed the views of many in the North.

"While we are only too glad to be rid, in any way, of so terrible a foe, our sense of relief is not unmingled with emotions of sorrow and sympathy at the death of so brave a man."

WHY SOME SOLDIERS GLOWED IN THE DARK

After the Battle of Shiloh, some of the wounded soldiers sat in the mud for two rainy days and nights. As dusk fell the first night, some of them noticed something very strange: their wounds were glowing, casting a faint light into the darkness. Even stranger, when the wounded were eventually moved to field hospitals, those whose wounds glowed, had a better survival rate and had their wounds heal more quickly than their unilluminated comrades. The protective effect of the mysterious light was called "Angel Glow."

In 2001, 17-year old Bill Martin heard the story on a battlefield tour and he asked his mother about it. She was a microbiologist. Then he and his friend,

Jon Curtis began research on bacteria and the battle. They learned that *Photobacterium luminescens*, a bacteria that his mom studied lived in the guts of parasitic worms called nematodes with a strange lifecycle.

Nematodes hunt down insect larvae in the soil, burrow into their bodies and take up residence in their blood vessels. The worms then excrete the bioluminescent bacteria which glow a soft blue. These bacteria produce several chemicals that kill the insect host and suppress and kill other bacteria in the host. The nematodes and *P. luminescens* grow and multiply without interruption. They burst from the larval corpse, and scientists believe the glowing bacteria attract other insects to the site, making transition to another new host much easier.

The students checked historical records and confirmed that weather and soil conditions were right for the nematodes and the bacteria. Their lab experiments however showed that the bacteria could not live at human body temperature. But they postulated that the cold rainy conditions could cause hypothermia in the wounded men. Based on the presence of the bacteria in Shiloh, the students concluded that nematodes and bacteria in the soil, got into the soldiers' wounds.

The chemicals produced by the bacteria probably helped kill pathogenic bacteria that also might have infected the wounds. Since neither *P. luminescens* nor the nematodes are very infectious to humans, they would have been destroyed by the human immune system. Bill and Jon won first place at the 2001 Intel International Science Fair.

**CDCWRT
P.O. BOX 14871
ALBANY, NY 12212-4871**

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 \$30. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.

THE OFFICERS

President	Erin Baillargeon	929-5852	embailargeon@ hotmail.com
Vice-President	Mark Koziol	516-640-2517	mjkoziol@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Fran McCashion	459-4209	
Secretary	Rosemary Nichols	273-8746	rosemarygailnichols@gmail.com
Program	Matt George	355-2131	Jbuford63@aol.com
Membership	Mike Affinito	281-5583	maffinit@hotmail.com
At-Large	J.J. Jennings		jjj226@aol.com
At-Large	Steven Muller	274-0846	smuller1@nycap.rr.com
At-Large	Art Henningson		Art2sArt@aol.com

THE NONCOMS

Newsletter	Matt Farina	910-246-0452	mafarina@aol.com
Education	Matt George	355-2131	
Refreshments	Dean Long/Luanne Whitbeck	475-1008	
Webmaster	Mike Affinito	281-5583	
Historian	Gene Gore	729-5212	gfgore@gmail.com