



*The Dispatch*  
Newspaper of the

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

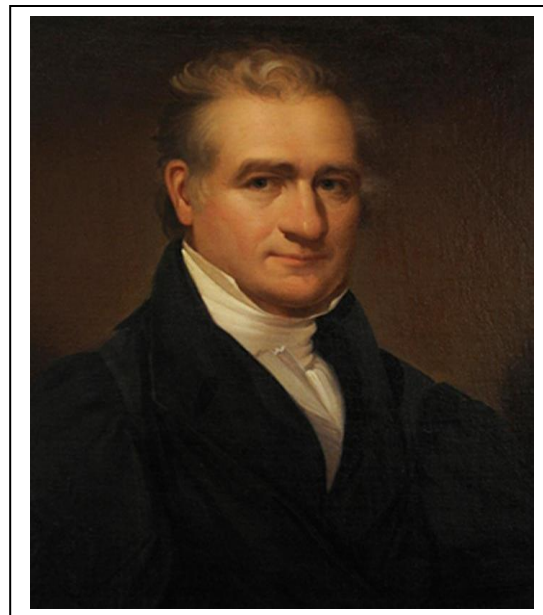
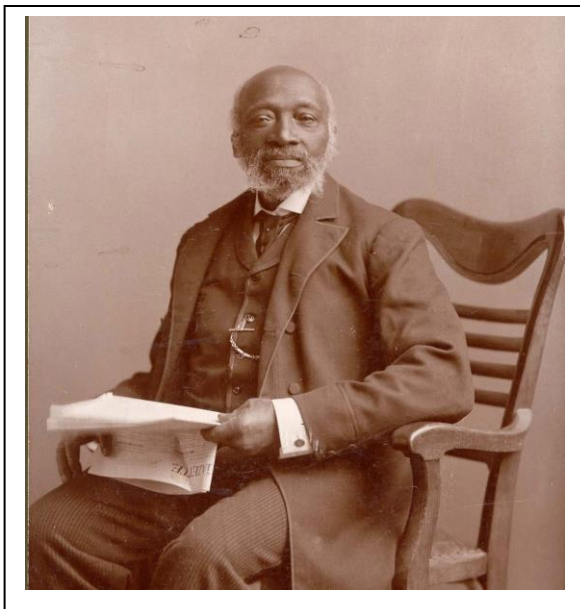
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## A President and a Man Who Woke Up a President



Pictured above (right) is Eliphalet Nott, who was president of Union College in Schenectady for over 60 years. Nott befriended an escaped slave, Moses Viney (left). Nott secured Moses' freedom, and Viney cared and worked for Nott until his death in 1866. Moses continued to serve Nott's widow until she died in 1886. The two men had formed a life-long bond of friendship that was unique.

One of his jobs while he was working for Nott was to wake up the students to make sure they went to church. He woke up Chester A. Arthur and the son of William Seward so they would get to the chapel. He was known as the grand old man of Union College. Arthur went on to become U.S. President.

# FEBRUARY MEETING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2018

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

**A Bonded Friendship:**

**Moses and Eliphalet**

**Gretchell Hathaway Ph.D.**

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, February 9, 2018. Our very special speaker is Dr. Gretchell Hathaway, who will talk about the real characters from her book, A Bonded Friendship: Moses and Eliphalet.”*

*This book tells the story of how two people, an escaped slave, Moses Viney, and Union College president, Eliphalet Nott, become close friends in the small city of Schenectady in the 1850s. Told mainly in first person, the story covers Moses' escape from slavery and the difficulty encountered by Eliphalet to assist Moses in attaining his freedom.*

*Gretchel Hathaway, Ph.D. currently serves as the Dean of Diversity & Inclusion / Chief Diversity Officer at Union College, NY. Reporting to the College President, Dr. Hathaway is responsible for leading the college's strategic plan diversity initiatives with the board of trustees, faculty and administrators. In addition, she supervises the newly established Office of Multicultural Affairs that focuses on designing programming and workshops for students. Her responsibility under Affirmative Action includes the implementation of college policy, the development of procedures for grievance and mediation settlements, and she serves on the review board of all tenure and promotion cases of faculty.*

*Dr. Hathaway received her Bachelors in psychology from Manhattanville College, NY, her Masters degree in psychology from Yeshiva University, NY, and her Doctorate in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh, PA. Dr. Hathaway teaches in the Sociology Department at Union College.*

## DUES! DUES ARE DUE!

This is a reminder that the annual dues of \$30 was due in January 2018. Checks may be mailed to Treasurer, at the CDCWRT address in the newsletter letterhead. Cash or check may be given to Steve Muller directly at the February meeting. Payment in gold, greenbacks or Confederate money is also acceptable.

## UP-COMING MEETINGS

**The March 9, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT** will feature Chuck Veit. His presentation is titled "Sea Miner – E.B. Hunt and the Navy's 1<sup>st</sup> Torpedo Development."

**The April 13, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT** will feature Chris Mackowski, who will talk about Spotsylvania and the fighting at the Mule Shoe.

## BUFORD'S VIEW – FEBRUARY 2018

On January 17 I drove to the Niskayuna Public Library to hear a talk entitled "Secret Agents In Hoop Skirts: Woman Spies of the Civil War" by one of our January speakers Dave Hubbard. Unfortunately it was cancelled because of snow. Hopefully, I'll have another opportunity in the future. I was hoping to ask Dave, who is the site manager at Grant Cottage, to give this presentation for us sometime in the future.

This coming year could see me travel to Gettysburg 5 times or more. On Tuesday April 17 Mark Dunkelman will be speaking in Gettysburg about the 154<sup>th</sup> N. Y. mural on Coster Ave. Mark (who created the mural) spoke to us a couple of years ago. This is of particular interest to me because fighting next to the 154<sup>th</sup> at the "brickyard fight" was one of our local regiments 134<sup>th</sup> N. Y. (from Schenectady & Schoharie Counties). Eleven days later on the 26<sup>th</sup> I leave for the "Allen Hotel". The next day Round Table member, Mark Allen, and I will travel into nearby Frederick, Maryland to meet a group from the Mosby Heritage Association group in Middleburg, Virginia

for a dinner and talk. The next day we board a bus for an all day tour on "Lee's Retreat" after the battle of Gettysburg. The tour guide is Eric Wittenburg, one of the foremost experts on Union Cavalry.

August 8-12 I could be traveling to Gettysburg for a Conference on Custer called "Come on You Wolverines." I was given a special invitation by our good friend from the Civil War Round Table of New York City, Pat Falci (a.k.a A.P. Hill). Speakers include historian Jim Hesler and of course Pat as A. P. Hill. It is possible that I might be allowed to set up a table as a vendor to raise money for our Round Table. We have a number of blank Custer envelopes that might be of interest to this group (Little Big Horn Associates). Of course I'll probably be in Gettysburg in July for the re-enactment and once again in November for Remembrance Day. So that could be 5 trips there.....Gettysburg has become almost a second home.

In 9 days I'll be traveling to Farmville, Virginia for Pat Schroeder's FREE Appomattox Conference. Speakers include Ed Bearss, Gary Gallagher, and Ralph Peters. The Conference is held on the campus of Longwood University. I'll be arriving on Friday February 2 and leaving the morning of Monday, February 5. I have a double room reserved at the Days Inn in Farmville.

One of our recent speakers, Paula Vittorio, will be speaking at the Schenectady County Historical Society on the Erie Canal on Saturday, February 10 at 2:00 PM. Also, as a reminder the Underground Railroad History Conference is March 9-11. The Round Table will have an exhibit table set up. This will include some information and photos

kindly provided by our Newsletter editor, Matt Farina, on the U.S. Colored Troops who were wounded and treated by Troy's doctor and surgeon R.B. Bontecou.

Our February speaker is Gretchel Hathaway, Chief Diversity Officer, Dean of Diversity & Inclusion at Union College. Dr. Hathaway will be talking about her book "A Bonded Friendship: Moses Vinet and Eliphalet". Finally, I'm considering driving to Peekskill, N.Y. for the annual Lincoln Society fundraising dinner on Saturday, March 24. The speaker is Lou DelBianco whose grandfather was the chief carver of the Mount Rushmore National Monument. Of course one of 4 likenesses portrayed on the mountain is Lincoln.

## **FROM THE SOUTH**

Occasionally I have an article in the newsletter about my southern CWRT. At least for the past 10 years, Ed Bearss had made a January pass through North Carolina, speaking to six round tables in five days. Ed's transportation costs are shared by the round tables, and each is responsible for feeding him and putting him up at night the evening of his visit to that particular round table. On average, it has cost my CWRT less than \$200, thanks to a generous member who pays for food and lodgings.

Each year, Ed starts by flying into Brunswick County, home of the Brunswick CWRT. This is the largest round table in the country with 1,400 members who pay a yearly dues of \$30. That gives them a regular budget of over \$30,000. We of course can understand how round tables in Richmond, NYC, Chicago and Philadelphia can have large memberships.

A number of years ago, Richmond decided they were TOO large, or more correctly, that a large number of members joined for the prestige value, but did not attend meetings. The Board decided to limit "true" membership to those who lived within a geographic range around Richmond. Other could belong (to obtain their newsletter etc.) but were now called "associate members."

I don't know whatever happened to the Richmond CWRT, but nationally over the past 15 years, a number of round tables have disappeared as interest in the Civil War has waned after the peak years during the 1990s. That's what makes round tables like Brunswick, Puget Sound, and Scottsdale outliers. Or so it seems.

All the round tables in North Carolina have had an annual business meeting the past 2 years to address the issue of shrinking CWRTs. I was asked to speak on ways to grow a round table at last summer's meeting. We had already seen the closure of the Durham CWRT from the preceding year. Durham city has a population of 255,000 and Durham County is 295,000. And they met at the visitor center of the state-owned Bennett farm where Joe Johnston surrendered 92,000 Confederates to Billy Sherman! Why had the CWRT folded with less than 20 members?

Nearby Raleigh CWRT is doing quite well with 225 members in a city of 404,000 and a county of 901,000. My group, the Rufus Barringer CWRT now has 80 members in a tri-village community of 31,500 and a county of 88,000. And then there is the Brunswick CWRT with a county population of 107,500.

The CDCWRT has a membership of about 77. Albany city was at its peak in 1950 with a population of 135,000, but with a steady decline, the city dropped out of the category of major cities and is presently at 98,000. Albany County has surely grown from 239,000 in 1950 to over 305,500 in 2016. I'll come back to all this data shortly.

Back to Ed. Last year Ed had to cancel some of his North Carolina talks because of a snowstorm. This year we had another snowstorm the day before Ed's visit. Although Ed could fly out of Washington, the community center where the Brunswick CWRT meets, decided to close because of black ice road conditions. Their meeting was canceled. Ed changed his flight to Raleigh and we picked him up at the airport and drove on cleared, dry highways to Southern Pines. Four of us had a delightful dinner with Ed at a local sports bar (all the restaurants were closed). Ed's son had served in the same Ranger Battalion as one of the diners, so we got to know more about Ed's family. Total bill with tip for 5 diners-\$100.

Only 25 showed for our meeting since the NCDOT advised against driving. We had chosen the topic of the Trent affair back in October. Ed admitted that we had chosen a topic about which he said he knew little. In fact, while returning by auto from speaking to a Toledo round table, Ed decided to stop in Auburn, NY, and visit the Seward House, which he thoroughly enjoyed. He called it one of the best period preserved homes he has seen, and praised the staff. Seward was very much involved in the Trent Affair, so Ed bought a 3-inch thick biography at the

Seward House Gift Shop. He said we had forced him to read that in 10 days! And he shared a bit of personal information with the intimate group ---- namely that he does much of his reading on the "throne."

He started out with the War of 1812 and the reasons why it was fought. He covered the international agreements of maritime rule between belligerent and neutral nations, and then moved to the British Mail Ship, Trent. Of course, he covered all the side-stories that he knew between Lincoln, Seward, Cameron, Chase, Wells, the ship captain, Slidell and Mason (the two Confederates), the political situation in England and France, etc., etc., that only Ed can do. The affair was much more serious than the few articles published about it suggest.

Some 7000 British soldiers were shipped to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Americans remembered that four score and seven years earlier, the British fleet brought troops from Halifax to Long Island to embarrass George Washington. When I told Matt George about this, he remembered recently seeing the artwork on the cover of a bill introduced to the NYS legislature to enlarge the locks on the Erie and Champlain canals to accommodate monitors in case the British did decide to invade again from Canada as a consequence of the Trent Affair.

Well, Ed, did cancel all his other talks other than one in Raleigh. A couple of weeks later, Ed suggested moving his visit to July when the risk of snow would be unlikely. He suggested July because his schedule is also light in July. If other Carolina round tables agree, we are in favor of adding an extra meeting on our

schedule, and that gets me back to the CDCWRT and the population data.

Why is the Brunswick CWRT 12-14 time larger than the CDCWRT, even though the county population is only 1/3 of Albany County? And the surrounding counties to Brunswick are all rural, unlike Schenectady, Rensselaer and Saratoga counties. Brunswick is a retirement area, but it is not the retirement community of the National History and Social Teachers Association. And that takes me to the main reason why I think some round tables are growing in size, while others are wilting.

The first Baby Boomers were going to be retiring around 2011, but the recession of 2008 put a real damper on that. Retirement nest eggs lost value; boomers postponed retirement if at all possible; plans to sell their northern homes and retire more temperate areas were put on hold; buying a retirement home was replaced by some remodeling of the old homestead.

But studies also show that Baby Boomers are healthier retirees who want to be more active in retirement. The growth of adult lifelong learning institutes also indicates they want to learn and/or be more entertained than the earlier depression/WWII generation. So I have actually predicted that round tables can actually grow substantially in the near future. But to use a garden analogy, we have the seeds and the soil is right, but we still need to water and weed the garden before we harvest the crop. Brunswick CWRT and Scottsdale CWRT aggressively promote and advertise their groups by using all social media and free communication sources such as newsletters, rack cards, retirement

community bulletins, local newspapers, public bulletins boards, etc., etc.

I sense that the right Board is in place for the CDCWRT to expand into these areas, BUT the memberships MUST also commit. Here's one way: by the time of the June meeting, every member should try to bring one guest to one of the up-coming meetings with the goal of convincing that guest to join. Every member should tell (verbal, face to face, via social media) at least two friends about each up-coming meeting, with the goal of trying to interest them to tag along. No cost. No special equipment. Just your commitment to support your round table.

Here's an idea. Invite Ed Bearss to come this summer to give a talk. Venues to consider: the Military Museum; the State Museum; the Maybee Farm. Approach as partners to share costs: the historical societies, the SUV, the 125<sup>th</sup> NYVI, the Underground Railroad, the Greene Co. CWRT, Siena College History Department and club; State University history department.

Why Ed? He is Mister Civil War. He is 94 year old, is a member of the greatest generation, is an icon in the NPS, is the Chief Historian Emeritus for the NPS, and he is responsible for at least 8 of the National Parks coming into existence. His style is unique, and even though he sometimes makes a name reversal error, every Civil War enthusiast needs to hear him one more time.

*Submitted by Matt Farina, editor, CDCWRT*

## DR. SAMUEL MUDD

A collector of Lincoln ephemera gave the community college three scrapbooks, and after a decade, the college gave them to me. As I read through them, I decided to pull different stories together.

We all know the story of Dr. Mudd of Bryantown, MD who treated John Wilkes Booth's broken fibula of April 15, 1865 at 4:30 am. Booth and his companion, Davie Herold, stayed at Mudd's house until 5:00 pm and then left. Although Mudd knew Booth, and had met Booth several time before, he initially lied and said he did not know Booth. It is uncertain that he knew that Booth had assassinated Lincoln at the time of the treatment of the leg. Later the next day, Sunday, he reported that 2 men had stopped at his house.

Booth was killed on April 26, and Mudd was subsequently arrested, and at a hastily convened military trial, he was found guilty of participating in the crime. In the trial, Union cavalry officer, Alexander Lovett, testified that on April 21<sup>st</sup> he went to Mudd's house to arrest him and search the house. Mudd told his wife to bring down the boot that he had removed from the injured man and had hidden upstairs. Initials in the boot identified it as Booth's. Mudd was sentenced to life imprisonment at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas (70 miles south of Key West).

He treated other prisoners during a yellow fever outbreak, and contracted the disease himself. Mudd was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson in 1869 and returned to Bryantown where he died in 1883 at the age of 49. Yellow fever had contributed to his death.

Dr. Richard Mudd, the grandson of Samuel Mudd grew up with the families painful past. He refused to accept the verdict and began fighting to have the conviction overturned. He collected and read over 800 books on the assassination and had tens of thousands of documents in filing cabinets in his basement in Saginaw, MI.

Both Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan had been contacted by the family and agreed that the conviction charge should be dropped. However they stated they had no authority to set aside the conviction.

In 1992 after 127 years, the 90 year old Richard Mudd and three lawyers persuaded the Army to rehear the evidence. Two of the lawyers were relatives (Richard J. Mudd and Laura Vargas Chapelle), and the third was Candida Ewing Steel, great-great granddaughter of Thomas Ewing, Jr., the Union general who defended Samuel Mudd in the original trial.

The five-member panel of the Army Board for Correction of Military Records, unanimously recommended that the conviction be set aside because the military commission that found Mudd guilty, had no jurisdiction over civilians. However Acting Assistant Army Secretary William Clark ignored the recommendation. In 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case because the deadline for filing had been missed.

So, to this day, Samuel Mudd's role in the assassination has given birth to the peculiar epithet, "Your name is Mudd."

**CDCWRT  
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*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.*

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