



# The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212  
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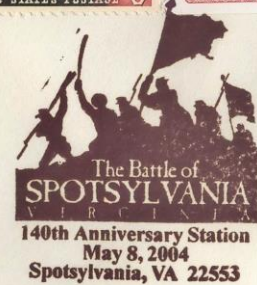
### CDCWRT CACHET FROM 140<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

#### BATTLE OF SPOTTSYLVANIA



Artist: Thure de Thulstrup

From a lithograph by Louis Prang



The Capital District Civil War Round Table designed a silk-screened #10 envelope for the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. The scene chosen was illustrated by Thure de Thulstrup, a Swedish artist. He served as a Swedish artillery officer, then joined the French Foreign Legion and the served in the First Zouave Regiment. Thulstrup moved to Canada and then America in 1873. His works include a series of American Civil War paintings. Louis Prang considered him the foremost military artist of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century. Sue Knost designed the black ink postmark. Stamps include the 1964 centennial Wilderness stamp, with additional postage on the coil "ATM" stamp. This stamp was available in only two post offices on a trial basis. A credit card was inserted into the stamp machine. The purchaser chose a denomination from \$0.01 to \$99.99 to be printed on each stamp, and the number of stamps requested. The machine dispensed the appropriate number of stamps as a coil, using a red military design.

# MARCH MEETING

FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2018

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

**The Muleshoe at Spotsylvania**

**Chris Mackowski 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, April 13, 2018. Our very special speaker is Chris Mackowski, and the topic of his presentation is, “The Muleshoe at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House.”*

*The following is taken from the dust jacket of Chris Mackowski and Kristopher White’s book. At Spotsylvania Court House, the two armies shifted from stalemate in the Wilderness to slugfest in the mud. Most commonly known for the horrific twenty-two-hour hand-to-hand combat in the pouring rain at the Bloody Angle, the battle actually stretched from May 8-21, 1864, fourteen long days of battle and maneuver.*

*Grant, the irresistible force, hammering with his overwhelming numbers and unprecedented power, versus Lee, the immovable object, hunkered down behind the most formidable defensive works yet seen on the continent—Spotsylvania Court House represents a chess match of immeasurable stakes between two master opponents. This clash is detailed in, A Season of Slaughter: The Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, May 8-21, 1864.*

*Chris Mackowski, Ph.D., is the editor-in-chief and co-founder of Emerging Civil War. He is the series editor of the award-winning Emerging Civil War Series, published by Savas Beatie, and the forthcoming “Engaging the Civil War” Series, published in partnership with Southern Illinois University Press. Chris is a professor of journalism and mass communication at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, NY, and historian-in-residence at Stevenson Ridge, a historic property on the Spotsylvania battlefield in central Virginia. He has also worked as a historian for the National Park Service at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, where he gives tours at 4 major Civil War battlefields (Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania), as well as at the building where Stonewall Jackson died in Guinea Station. Chris has authored or co-authored a dozen books on the Civil War, and his articles have appeared in all the major Civil War magazines. Chris serves on the national advisory board for the Civil War Chaplains Museum in Lynchburg, Virginia.*

## **UP-COMING MEETINGS**

### **April 26, 2018 meeting of the Ulster County Civil War Round Table**

7 pm, Legislative Chambers, Ulster County Office Building, 244 Fair St., Kingston NY. Rosemary Nichols will present "Discovering My Civil War Ancestors."

**The May 11, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT** will feature Gene Barr, who will talk about a Civil War Captain and his Lady.

**The June 8, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT** will feature Bob O'Connor. The title of his presentation is yet to be announced.

**The September 14, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT** will feature Wanda Burch, who will talk about dreams and imagination in Civil War letters and journals.

## **BUFORD'S VIEW – APRIL 2018**

On March 24 I traveled to Peekskill to attend The Lincoln Society's annual fund raising effort. The guest speaker was Luigi Del Bianca who wrote an interesting book (Out of Rushmore's Shadow) about his grandfather Luigi who was the chief carver of the iconic faces at Mount Rushmore. "Grandpa" Luigi who came to America in 1908 was a stone cutter back in Italy. When he became the head carver at Rushmore in 1933 his skills and abilities were immediately recognized as irreplaceable. Yet he was never recognized as anything more than just another laborer on the project. His grandson's book is the culmination of a long attempt to get him the recognition he deserved from the National Park Service. "Grandpa's" personal favorite President of the four images he worked on, was Abraham Lincoln. It was an enjoyable

evening. Our Round Table donated several Lincoln cachets to their silent auction.

The Lincoln Society is continuing their renovation of the historic Peekskill railroad station where Lincoln stopped on his way to his inauguration. On April 21 and 22 there will be another rededication and grand opening. The theme will be Civil War era photography. Sunday's guest will be Ron Coddington, a recognized expert on Civil War photos. I hope to attend so as to be able to personally thank Ron for giving us permission to use pictures in his collection for the envelopes we made for the commemorative postal cancellation we did last July in Gettysburg.

In the last month we made a combined total of \$62.00 at two events: The Rotterdam United Methodist Church's flea market and the Underground Railroad History Project's Conference held at the new Albany's Visitors' Center. It was an excellent Conference. During Friday's activities before the main Conference, I was fortunate to attend a student's only workshop in the education room at the N.Y.S. Museum. It was inspiring to see the number of students from Albany and Schenectady High Schools discussing some of the major controversial issues of the day including Confederate monuments and gun violence.

Although the long running Peterboro Civil War weekend is sadly no longer being held, they are again planning a student living history event on June 7 & 8. I was invited to attend in my role as a soldier of the 134<sup>th</sup> New York. Busloads of students will attend and I will be giving a number of 15-20 minute presentations.

On April 27 & 28 CDCWRT member Mark Allen (of Thurmont, Maryland) and I will be attending the Mosby Heritage reception/talk and bus tour on Lee's Retreat from Gettysburg. The reception on Friday will be at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. Our tour guide will be none other than Eric Wittenburg the author of "One Continuous Fight: The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of Lee's Army."

March 5 was the first day of high school baseball practice in New York (in the gym of course). While watching a combined group of Varsity and J.V. players having a catch, I made an interesting observation. One boy, sophomore Jack Holmes, and another, freshman Caleb O'Hanlon, were exchanging throws. While my mind was on baseball I still was sensitive to an interesting historical juxtaposition. Jack Holmes' great-great-grandfather was not only a Civil War soldier from Massachusetts (20<sup>th</sup> Mass.) who was wounded three times during the war (including Ball's Bluff and Fredericksburg), he later became a U.S. Supreme Court Judge (Oliver Wendell Holmes). Caleb O'Hanlon's great-great-grandfather was William Liddle, a soldier in the 76<sup>th</sup> New York. Liddle was in the one company from Schoharie County (the Middleburgh/Summit area). He rose through the ranks to become 3<sup>rd</sup> Sergeant, survived Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, then re-enlisted and was killed (probably by a sniper) around June 26 outside of Petersburg. A few of you might remember meeting Caleb a couple of years ago at the Schuyler Flatts Living history weekend. The 76<sup>th</sup> New York is

the Regiment featured on Civil War baseball tee shirts and sweatshirts.

## **FEDERAL GARRISONS IN FAYETTEVILLE, NC**

Fort Bragg, North Carolina has become known as the home of The United States Army's Airborne and Special Operations Forces. The headquarters of the U.S. Army Forces Command and Reserve Command are also tenants. A major base since the 1940's, the Federal Government actually first took an interest in the Fayetteville, NC area over one hundred years earlier.

The year of 1836 saw the United States in a conflict that would come to be known as the Second Seminole War. It would last almost seven years. On the western border, the Mexican province of Tejas (Texas) was in rebellion against the autocratic rule of Santa Anna. The U.S. Congress also passed its largest budget for the War Department in twenty years. It included funds to build four more Federal Arsenals. Fayetteville, North Carolina was chosen to be the site of one of them.

Fayetteville was chosen for being midway between existing Arsenals in Augusta, GA and Washington, DC. Another consideration was its access to the port of Wilmington via the Cape Fear River. The U.S. Army Ordnance Department assigned Captain James Andrew Jackson Bradford to find a site and direct the construction of the Arsenal. He picked a site on a hill overlooking downtown Fayetteville. The cornerstone for the Arsenal was laid in 1838. Captain Bradford served five separate tours of duty as Commander of the Arsenal, directing its construction and operations by a civilian workforce.

A twenty man detachment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Artillery, led by Lieutenant Sewall I. Fremont reported for duty on August 6, 1844. Fremont and most of his men were veterans of the Second Seminole War in Florida, and all had Infantry training and experience. They provided security for the Arsenal and helped in its construction. They would be transferred and not replaced prior to the outbreak of the War with Mexico in 1846.

The Arsenal had stored 278 pistols, 180 rifles, 3,300 smoothbore muskets, and 11 cannon by 1848. An ongoing project was to convert flintlock firearms to the percussion system. The small arms would keep coming in for this upgrade throughout the 1850's. The central building eventually housed about 37,000 various types of rifles and muskets. John Brown's raid on the U.S. Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, VA in 1859 caused the citizens of Fayetteville to request the return of a U.S. Army garrison to protect the facility.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Artillery detachdc fifty of its members from Ft. Hamilton, NY for this duty. They were under the command of Brevet Major Samuel S. Anderson. His second in command, Lieutenant Julius Delagnel had a connection to the Arsenal. His father was its architect. The welcome they received would be short lived.

North Carolina elected to stay with the Union as seven other southern states seceded after the election in 1860. Following the bombardment of Ft Sumter on 12 April, 1861, President Lincoln called on all states of the Union for troops to suppress the rebellion. North Carolina Governor John W. Ellis informed him

“that he can get no troops from North Carolina”. He called out the State Militia in Fayetteville, and ordered them to seize the Arsenal. About 1,000 of them gathered downtown and marched up hill and seized the facility on 22 April, 1861.

Brevet Major Anderson, Capt. Bradford, and Lieutenant Delagnel, after inspecting the Militia, agreed to surrender the Arsenal. The U.S. Artillerymen were allowed to march out under arms, boarded a ship to Wilmington and thence sailed back to Ft Hamilton, NY. All three of these Federal Officers resigned their commissions and joined the armed forces of the Confederacy. Col. Delagnel, C.S.A. served a tour as commander of the Arsenal from September of 1862 to April 17, 1863. Col. Bradford, C.S.A., commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> NC Artillery, was captured at Roanoke Island, and later was exchanged. Taking ill, he returned to his beloved Fayetteville and passed away on 7 September, 1863.

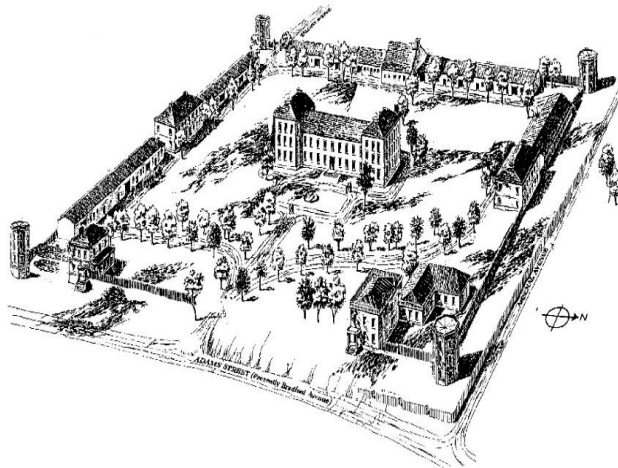
Federal forces returned to Fayetteville in March of 1865. General William Sherman ordered the destruction of the Arsenal. Much of the machinery in the arsenal had formerly belonged to the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry. Early on the morning of March 11, however, the Confederates shipped out of Fayetteville by rail some of the machinery and stores from the arsenal. The machinery was hidden at the Egypt Coal Mines in Chatham County.

It took the 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Engineers three days to do this between 12 and 14 March. Also destroyed were all railroad property, all shops, factories, tanneries, and all grist mills except one water mill of sufficient capacity to grind meal for the people of Fayetteville. The U.S.

Government sold the grounds in 1873. The current Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex now occupies a part of the land at the intersection of Arsenal and Bradford Avenues.

America's entry into World War I caused the U.S. Army to look for new bases throughout the nation. Lands near Fayetteville were chosen to become the site of Artillery training ranges. This base was named "Camp Bragg" in honor of Brevet Major Braxton Bragg for his distinguished service in the Mexican War as U.S. Army Artillery commander, not as a Confederate General during the Civil War. An adjacent airfield was built for observation planes and balloons. The Army decided to keep Camp Bragg open after World War I ended. Later it was re-designated Fort Bragg on September 30, 1922. Presently, it is the largest Army base in the United States.

*(The editor thanks Paul Peeples, former Marine and present docent at the Museum of the Cape Fear for this presentation.)*



## **BROTHERS: WWII & THE CIVIL WAR**

The first **USS *Juneau* (CL-52)** was a United States Navy *Atlanta*-class light

cruiser sunk at the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal 13 November 1942. In total, 687 men, including the five Sullivan brothers, were killed in action as a result of its sinking. *Juneau* was struck on the port side by a torpedo. She, along with two other cruisers damaged in the battle headed toward Espiritu Santo for repairs. A few minutes after 1100, two torpedoes were launched from Japanese sub *I-26* intended for USS *San Francisco*, but both passed ahead of her. One struck *Juneau* in the same place that had been hit during the battle.

There was a great explosion, and *Juneau* broke in two and disappeared in just 20 seconds. Assuming from the massive explosion that there were no survivors, USS *Helena* and USS *San Francisco* departed without attempting to rescue more than 100 sailors who had survived the sinking. They were in the open ocean for eight days before belated rescue aircraft were dispatched. All but 10 died from the elements and shark attacks, including the 5 Sullivan brothers.

The Sullivans of Waterloo, Iowa, had enlisted in the US Navy on January 3, 1942, with the stipulation that they serve together. The Navy had a policy of separating siblings, but this was not strictly enforced. All five were assigned to the light cruiser USS *Juneau*. The Sullivans were not the only brother sailors on board the ship. There were at least thirty sets of brothers, including the four Rogers brothers from New Haven, Connecticut. Before the ill-fated Savo Island operation, two of the Rogers brothers were transferred to other commands. According to those who survived, had the ship returned to port

safely, at least two Sullivans would have also transferred.

The USS Juneau wreckage was discovered on March 17, 2018 about 2.6 miles beneath the surface near the coast of the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. When I saw the report on TV, I thought of the Civil War and the five Bixby brothers. Both the Sullivans and the Bixbys were mentioned in the movie *Saving Private Ryan*.

On November 21, 1864, a letter was written to a Mrs. Lydia Bixby of Massachusetts consoling her for the loss of five sons during their service in the Union army. The letter was written at the request of John A. Andrew, then governor of Massachusetts, after he was informed by the state's adjutant general, that documents had been submitted by Mrs. Bixby indicating her five sons had died while serving in the Union army. Governor Andrew then forwarded the information to Washington asking the president to write Mrs. Bixby in regard to her profound loss.

In reality, only two of her sons had been killed in the Civil War. One had deserted the Union army in 1862, while another was honorably discharged two years later in 1864. Her fifth son was captured in 1864 and either deserted or died in prison, records are unclear as to which. The "Widow Bixby" herself was later reported by relatives to be a Southern sympathizer and supposedly destroyed the original letter shortly after receiving it from Lincoln. Years later it was reported that she ran a house of ill-repute.

Although signed by Abraham Lincoln, some scholars have proposed that it was actually written by John Hay, Lincoln's personal secretary. No solid proof exists establishing Hay as the author, but supporters of the theory point to stylistic similarities with Hay's other writings and hearsay evidence that he privately declared his authorship to acquaintances. By contrast, Hay's children stated their father never made such claims to them and the president's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, wrote in a 1917 letter that John Hay CDCWRT

had no knowledge of the letter at the time it was written as "Hay himself told me so." Here is the letter:

***I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.***

***I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.***

***I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.***

Not all five sons died in battle, with records showing that two died while on duty:

**Pvt. Arthur Bixby**, Massachusetts 1st Heavy Artillery (June 1861 – May 1862) Mrs. Bixby claimed he had joined underage and without permission, which led to a discharge order. He was already AWOL by the time the order arrived; **Sgt. Charles Bixby**, 20th Massachusetts, killed at Fredericksburg, May 1863; **Cpl. Henry Bixby**, 32nd Massachusetts, captured in 1864, paroled, and discharged that December; **Pvt. Oliver Bixby, Jr.**, 58th Massachusetts, killed at Petersburg in July 1864; **Cpl. George Bixby**, 25th Massachusetts, captured at Petersburg in July 1864. Army pension records showed he was held prisoner and may have deserted, however, his final fate is not clear.

The text has been widely praised as one of Lincoln's finest works of writing alongside the Gettysburg Address and his second Inaugural Address.



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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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