



The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

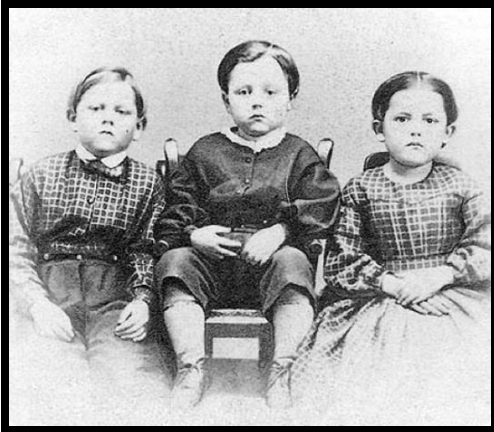
CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 11493 Loudonville
www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org



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Many are familiar with the story of the dead Union soldier at Gettysburg, who was found with an ambrotype in his hands. The picture showed three children who were now orphans. Eventually the soldier was identified as Sgt. Amos Humiston of the 154th NYVI. His wife had a picture of him as a civilian, but Dr. Francis Bourns had the picture “photo shopped” placing a beard and military coat on the image. Bourns sold images of the children and their deceased father to raise money for an orphanage in Gettysburg.

Years later, a box of letters from Humiston were discovered. It included a poem he wrote.

I am very sad tonight dear wife
My thoughts are dwelling on home and thee
As I keep the lone night watch
Beneath the holley tree

The winds are sighing through the trees
And as they onward roam
They whisper hopes of happiness
Within our cottage home

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Friday, September 14, 2018

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

THE HOME VOICES: Dreams & the Imagination in Civil War Letters & Memoirs

Wanda Easter Burch

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, September 14, 2018. Our guest speaker will be Wanda Burch, and the title of her unique presentation is, "The Home Voices: Dreams and the Imagination in Civil War Letters and Memoirs."

"Soldier mortals would not survive if they were not blessed with the gift of imagination and the pictures of hope," wrote Confederate Private Henry Graves in the trenches outside Petersburg, Virginia. "The second angel of mercy is the night dream." Providing fresh perspective on the

human side of the Civil War, historian, Wanda Burch, explores the dreams and imaginings of those who fought it, as recorded in their letters, journals and memoirs. Sometimes published as poems or songs or printed in newspapers, these rarely acknowledged writings reflect the personalities and experiences of their authors. Some expressions of fear, pain, loss, homesickness and disappointment are related with grim fatalism, some with glimpses of humor. The focus on dreams and the meaning of "home" to the soldier and his loved ones speaks to the universality of this experience to soldiers in all wars.

Wanda recently published a book titled, The Home Voices Speak Louder than the Drums: Dreams and the Imagination in Civil War Letters and Memoirs. She will have copies for sale to members.

She has a M.A. from SUNY Oneonta. Wanda is a retired site manager of an 18th century house museum, Johnson Hall, and a writer whose articles on 18th century history have appeared in history journals and articles on dreams and imagery in various women's and self-help magazines. She lives in Fultonville, New York.

Wanda Burch and singer/songwriter John Kenosian received a 2017 Saratoga Arts Individual Artist Grant for Montgomery County for six performances of readings and original songs: The Home Voices: The American Civil War Experience through Words and Music.

UP-COMING MEETINGS

The October 12, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT will feature Gene Barr, who presentation is titled, "A Civil War Captain and His Lady Love."

BOARD MEETING

The Board of the CDCWRT met on July 16th. The treasurer reported \$751.47 in the regular account and \$3636.33 in the preservation account.

Up-coming events where the CDCWRT will have a presence include: Heritage Day in Clarksville (Aug. 4th); the Round Table picnic at Schuyler Flatts (Aug. 17th) and the Schuyler Flatts Heritage Days (Aug. 18th and 19th); Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway Gala (Oct. 18th).

NEW ITEM FOR MEMBERS!

Please check our newly designed website and brand new podcast at capitaldistrictcivilwar.org. In the latest episode of the Capital District Civil War Round Table Podcast, Nick Thony traveled to the Civil War Institute's Summer Conference at Gettysburg College to interview Villanova Professor Judith Giesberg about her book *Sex and the Civil War: Soldiers, Pornography, and the Making of American Morality*, and Southern Mississippi professor Susannah Ural about her book *Hood's Texas Brigade: The Soldiers and Families of the Confederacy's Most Celebrated Unit*.

Nick also recently sat down with town of Malta historian Paul Perreault to discuss the life and death of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth. Ellsworth was born in Malta and later became a close

friend of Abraham Lincoln. On May 24, 1861, he was killed after capturing the Confederate flag that flew above the Marshall House in Alexandria, Virginia. That podcast will be available after August 1st.

BUFORD'S VIEW – SEPTEMBER 2018

This has been an informative and interesting summer. From June 30 through July 8, I was at Gettysburg raising money for battlefield preservation. Once again we sold the commemorative postal cancellation in the Artist's and Authors tent at the re-enactment. The Round table made over \$500.00 selling a variety of cachets. Matt Farina is selling a few more as well. The featured envelopes were pictures of structures that were on the battlefield at the time of the battle. These included Lee's Headquarters, Meade's Headquarters, the Trostle house and the Klingel house. While the money we made does not come close to the totals from the "glorious" 1990's, it was a little more than what we made last year. Earlier in the week I did sell a few shirts at the Historian Bookstore on York Street. Again, I would like to thank Larry Weindorf for allowing us to set up a table on the sidewalk in front of his store. Larry has enthusiastically supported our efforts for several years. It should be noted that a longtime friend of Sue Knost, Bernadette Atkins has retired and has closed her bookstore, Battlefields and Beyond. I would also like to thank Round Table members Mark and Janet Allen for their support and assistance this year.

On August 2 I had a fund raising table set up at the Elwood Museum's "Dairy Day" in Amsterdam. I made \$49.00 at this

event. Two days later I had our tent & table at the Clarksville Heritage Day event in Clarksville. Because of the rain the crowd was limited in the morning but picked up when the sun came out in the afternoon. We made \$95.00 at this event.

I accepted an offer from Pat Falci (A. P. Hill) to attend the annual Little Big Horn Associates Conference (August 8-11). Often this is held in the west but this year they held the Conference in Gettysburg. The topic was "Custer at Gettysburg". The L.B.H.A. is a large group with hundreds of members. The speakers included Ed Longacre, Jim Hessler and of course, Pat Falci. Pat's entertaining and amusing talk was entitled "Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Gettysburg Movie." Pat has agreed to give this talk to us in May, 2019. Pat played A. P. Hill in the movie. One of the vendors there that I talked to was a sculptor named Terry Jones who was a friend of our own Ron Tunison (who passed away a few years ago). On Saturday 10, we took an excellent bus tour of the cavalry battles at Hunterstown and Hanover. Although the general history books claim the hero was Farnsworth, the real hero of the battle of Hanover was the 5th N. Y. Cavalry led by John Hammond. Hammond was from Crown Point, New York. There is no known biography of Hammond.

That weekend while I was in Gettysburg, the Round Table was raising money at the Grant Cottage's Civil War History weekend. A number of Round Table members were there to help. According to Treasurer Steve Muller, we did quite well. I do want to thank our new Member at Large Nick Thony not only for his efforts in making this event successful but, his enthusiastic work in making pod casts of our recent speakers. If our

Round Table is going to grow in size and reputation as we move deeper into the 21st century, we need the kind of expertise that Nick is providing us.

From August 17-19 Rosemary Nichols and I attended the 2nd Annual Civil War Round Table Conference hosted this year by Wayne Motts and the Harrisburg Civil War Museum in Pennsylvania. Although it was unfortunately the same weekend as the Round Table picnic, it was in my opinion larger and more successful than the first conference in Manassas, Virginia. We heard an excellent talk by Chris Mackowski on Chancellorsville (Chris spoke to us a few months ago on Spotsylvania). Other historians attending were Jim Hessler, and Gene Barr (who will be speaking to us in October). In my opinion, the highlight was the "behind the scenes" tour of the museum led by Wayne Motts. Some of the artifacts we were allowed to hold (with white gloves) were absolutely amazing. They included documents signed by Lincoln, a coat worn by George Sears Greene and swords used by several officers at Gettysburg. There was one letter written on Irish Brigade stationary (some of you might recall our Irish Brigade sweatshirts) by Thomas Francis Meagher addressed to the Quartermaster of New York State requesting more supplies. The Quartermaster at the time was Chester A. Arthur graduate of Union College, future President of the United States and buried in Albany's Rural Cemetery. Speakers on Saturday 18 included Matthew Borowick of the Civil War News, Jay Jorgensen of the R.E. Lee CWRT, John Bamberi of the Scottsdale CWRT (who mentioned our Round Table's Website as a an example of a good website), Mike Movius of the Puget

Sound CWRT and Wally Rueckel of the Brunswick CWRT in North Carolina. Our Round Table is becoming well known throughout the country.

Finally Rosemary Nichols, Fran McCashion and J.J. Jennings and I attended a celebration of life on August 14 for Lee Schechter who passed away a number of months ago. Those long time members of the Round Table, might remember Lee as the husband of Cindy and father of Brandon, both of whom were re-enactors and very active members of our Round Table.

Because the length of this column is already quite long, I will not be able to go in detail about upcoming events. However, while September is relatively less busy except for our monthly meeting (Wanda Burch) and a local living history presentation in Greenville, October will be a month filled with events and Conferences. There will not be a weekend where I will not be at a Conference. And, on Oct. 25 the N.Y.S. Archives Partnership Trust will be presenting its annual history award to Stephen Lang the actor.

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH

The following is a portion of an editorial in the May 24, 2018 edition of **The Fayetteville Observer** titled "Civil War Center Takes the Right Approach." Last month I included information on the ground-breaking for the new museum or more correctly, history center.

The center on Tuesday announced it is sponsoring a presentation by Hari Jones, "one of the foremost authorities on the role of African-Americans in the Civil War." Jones' appearance is scheduled for 7 p.m. on

June 19 at the Rudolph Jones Student Center on the campus of Fayetteville State University, and he will talk on the subject of "How the Civil War Made America Great." The date of his talk was specifically chosen: June 19 marks Juneteenth, which is celebrated by some African-Americans in honor of the date in 1865 where the abolition of slavery was announced in Texas. One sees right away the date is different from the Jan. 1, 1863, date of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. This discrepancy gets to the point of the holiday: That freedom did not come all at once to all enslaved African-Americans.

Jones' theme will generate discussion, too. He will make the case that the "war effectively formed a more perfect union and secured the blessing of liberty for millions of Americans who had not known such freedom before."

The location of his talk is no accident. FSU Chancellor James Anderson has been a strong advocate for the Civil War center, which broke ground in a ceremony last month. Back in 2016, when support for the center started to gain steam, he addressed concerns that the center would have a tough time attracting a diverse audience.

"I really had to be assured before coming on board," he said at the time. "I am convinced that every group, every viewpoint will be properly represented. The fact that it's a learning center, not a museum, will assure that it can continue to attract people. This is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." (It is of note that Fayetteville State University is a

predominately black university as is its Chancellor.)

GRANT VISITS UTICA, NY

It was a memorable event in Utica's celebrated history and it all began on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1875.

Never before – and never since – was there such a gathering of distinguished men and women in Utica, except, perhaps, on the day of the funeral of James Schoolcraft Sherman, the Utican who was vice president of the United States when he died on Oct. 30, 1912.

The city's guests during the three-day event in 1875 were greeted by hundreds of exploding fireworks in every section of the city and street handsomely decorated with thousands of flags, bunting and Chinese lanterns. Many of the guests had made arrangements to stay at the Bagg's Hotel on Bagg's Square, the Butterfield House hotel on Genesee and Devereux streets and at U.S. Sen. Roscoe Conkling's magnificent mansion at 3 Rutger Park. Large crowds gathered at the three places to get a glimpse of the well-known visitors.

After all, it wasn't often that one could get a close-up look at U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia; U.S. Vice President Henry Wilson; New York Gov. Samuel Tilden; Civil War generals William Tecumseh Sherman, "Fighting Joe" Hooker and Henry Slocum; and Harrison Willard, famed singer and composer of one of the war's most popular songs, "The Flag of the Free." Gen. George Armstrong Custer (who was killed one year later at the Battle of the Little Bighorn) was invited, but was unable to attend. (*Remember, Gen. George Thomas died in 1870. Ed.*)

The occasion was the ninth annual reunion of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland. The ninth annual reunion of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland was held in 1875 in Utica. Hundreds of its veterans and their families were in Utica, exchanging memories and swapping stories about the fierce battles they had fought during the Civil War against Confederate troops in Tennessee in such places as Chattanooga, Chickamauga and Lookout Mountain.

It remains a mystery why Utica was chosen for the reunion. It was the first time the reunion had taken place in a city in the Northeast. After all, few, if any, men from the Utica area had fought with the Cumberland. Perhaps Conkling's close friendship with Grant has something to do with the decision.

Whatever, Utica was selected and was proud of it. The Utica Observer wrote on September 15: "They are here! Utica today welcomes the most distinguished men in the nation. The society's ninth reunion is within our borders and to its sessions come those who proved our ablest and bravest in war. They have since become our heroes in peace."

The Grants stayed at No. 3 Rutger Park as guests of the Conklings. The mansion was gaily decorated as were homes on Rutger Street from Howard Avenue to Park Avenue. Elegant carriages carrying the city's notables could be seen rolling over the cobblestone street to the mansion to pay their respects to the couple from Washington.

Reporters for the Utica Observer were busy day and night gathering stories about the many events. One was at the

Bagg's Hotel when guests began to arrive on Wednesday morning. Hooker arrived at 10:50 and was escorted to a reception room where Sherman was. The two generals shook hands.

Sherman spoke first. "Hello, Hooker. How are you? You're looking well."

"I'm first-rate," Hooker replied. "You're looking well for you, Sherman."

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Senator Roscoe Conkling's Home

The formal sessions of the reunion were held in the Utica Opera House, on the northeast corner of Lafayette and Washington streets. At the opening session, the veterans and Uticans in the audience were welcomed by Grant and Sherman. Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan, the society's president, was unable to attend, but Grant read a wire from him wishing all a successful reunion.

Among the Uticans asked to speak were Mayor Charles Hutchinson; Ward Hunt, who was an associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court; Thomas R. Proctor; Sen.

Conkling; and Horatio Seymour, the Democrat who had unsuccessfully opposed Republican Grant in the 1868 presidential election.

Seymour, former mayor of Utica and governor of New York during the Civil War, walked onto the stage and embraced Grant. Then Seymour turned to the audience and said, "I trust my friend President Grant will admit that when I had a little combat with him, he ran a great deal faster – and farther – than I did." Grant roared with laughter as the two shook hands.

The three days were filled with parades, concerts, dances and speeches. One morning, a special train took many of the visitors to Trenton Falls. Another morning, many went to Ilion to inspect the armory there. Most of the music for the events was provided by the visiting Governor's Island Band, the Marine Band and the Utica Band. Among those in Utica for the festivities were 23 mayors of communities in New York and neighboring states.

When the reunion ended, one visitor wrote to the Observer: "I understand that nothing of the kind ever before attempted in Utica equaled the event; it reflected the greatest credit upon the city and its good people who tendered it with the most perfect cordiality to their honored guests and to the brave men of the Army of the Cumberland. It will be a long time ere the bright dream will be forgotten."

(Thanks to historian, Frank Tomaino, and the Observer-Dispatch for letting me use this article.)

**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	Steve Muller	274-0846	smuller1@nycap.rr.com
Secretary	Rosemary Nichols	273-8746	rosemarygailnichols@gmail.com
At-Large	J.J. Jennings		jjj226@aol.com
At-Large	Nick Thony		nickthony@gmail.com
At-Large	Art Henningson		Art2sArt@aol.com

THE NONCOMS

Program	Matt George	355-2131	Jbuford63@alo.com
Membership	Mike Affinito	281-5583	maffinit@hotmail.com
Newsletter	Matt Farina	910-246-0452	mafarina@aol.com
Education	Matt George	355-2131	Jbuford63@aol.com
Refreshments	Dean Long/Luanne Whitbeck	475-1008	
Webmaster	Mike Affinito	281-5583	maffinit@hotmail.com
Historian	Gene Gore	729-5212	gfgore@gmail.com