



*The Dispatch*  
Newspaper of the  
**CAPITAL DISTRICT  
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

PO Box 11493 Loudonville NY 12211  
[www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org](http://www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org)



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## UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN



Pictured above is Mort Kunstler's painting of Jackson's headquarters in Winchester, VA in the winter of 1862. Jackson's second wife, Mary Anna, joined him for the winter. Even "Old Blue Light" could surprise his staff with his warmth and tenderness with the woman he loved. His letters to her were as passionate as Chamberlain's letters to his wife. In the background immediately behind Mary are Hunter Maguire (physician) and Sandie Pendleton (artillery). Immediately behind Jackson are Robert Dabney (Reverend) and Joseph Morrison (Mary's brother).

This month's speaker will talk about love and courtship during the war, the moral support of the home front, and the true feelings expressed to loved ones by the soldier at war.

# OCTOBER MEETING

Friday, October 12, 2018

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

## A Civil War Captain and His Lady: Love, Courtship, And Combat

Gene Barr

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 12, 2018. Our guest speaker will be Gene Barr, and the title of his unique presentation is, "A Civil War Captain and His Lady: Love, Courtship, and Combat from Fort Donelson through the Vicksburg Campaign."*

*"Walt Whitman famously wrote 'the real war will never get into the books,' but we can get close to the 'real war' by reading and learning from those who lived it. Gene Barr's engaging and revealing collection of letters directly links the battlefield with the home front." A 27-year-old Irish immigrant, Josiah Moore, met 19-year-old Jennie Lindsay of a*

*prominent Peoria, Illinois family. The war had just begun, Josiah was the captain of the 17<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, and his war would be a long and bloody one. Their courtship and romance, which came to light in a rare and unpublished series of letters, forms the basis of Barr's memorable book.*

*Josiah's and Jennie's letters shed significant light on the important role played by a soldier's sweetheart on the home front, and a warrior's observations from the war front. Josiah's letters offer a deeply personal glimpse into army life, how he dealt with the loss of many close to him, and the effects of war on a man's physical, spiritual, and moral well-being. Jennie's letters show a young woman mature beyond her age, dealing with the difficulties on the home front while her brother and her new love struggle through the travails of war. Her encouragement to keep his faith in God strong and remain morally upright gave Josiah the strength to lead his men through the horrors of the Civil War.*

*Gene Barr is the president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business Industry, the largest broad based advocacy group in the state. He joined the Chamber in 2003 and became president in 2011. He has more than 40 years of experience in politics, government affairs, and business operations. He is a member of the US Chamber Board of Directors, United Way of the Capital Region and a number of other groups. He is a board member and past chair of the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg. He is a graduate of St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.*

## **UP-COMING MEETINGS**

**The November 9, 2018 meeting of the CDCWRT** will feature Melinda Lawson, whose presentation is titled, "Patriot Fires: Forging a New American Nationalism in the Civil War North."

## **BUFORD'S VIEW- OCTOBER 2018**

On September 12 I did my living history presentation for the Green County Civil War Round Table at the Greenville Library. It was an enjoyable night with a responsive audience who turned out on a cool rainy night. I thank Mary Heisinger for inviting me.

On September 14 Wanda Burch gave an interesting talk discussing The Common Soldier, Dreams and Letters from Home. However, it was obvious that our Round Table needs to invest in a sound system (like a microphone) to guarantee that all might hear what is being said.

October will be an extremely active month for me. On October 4 I'll be leaving for the Mosby Heritage Art of Command Conference in Middleburg, Virginia. The topic will be the Battle of Antietam. Speakers include Jeffery Wert, Tom Clemens, Kevin Pawlek (who will speak to us next year), John Hoptak, and Dennis Frye. The Conference concludes with a tour of the battlefield on Sunday. The next weekend I'll be on a plane with Round Table Board Member at Large J.J. Jennings, headed to the C.W.T. Conference in Franklin, Tennessee. J.J.'s "Uncle Izzy" was mortally wounded in this battle.

On October 19, I'll be driving to the Old Baldy Civil War Round Table Civil War Navy Symposium in Camden, New Jersey. What is truly unique about this conference is that it's being held on the Battleship New Jersey moored in the Delaware River. One of the speakers will be Chuck Veit whose topic is African Americans in the Union Navy. Chuck, who is from Massachusetts, has spoken to our group many times in the past including his last talk on Sea Miner: Major E.B. Hunt's Civil War Rocket Torpedo. This was the Navy's first torpedo development program.

For 5 weeks in a row on Tuesdays I'll be taking two courses in Union College's UCALL Program. One course is called "Food for Thought: Historical People and Places and Things. The second is entitled, "Beyond Computers 101: Security, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data". A few years ago you might remember, the Round Table sponsored 5 classes on the Civil War where the speakers were Round Table members (including Matt Farina and myself). On October 25 I'll be attending the Archives Partnership Trust presentation of its Empire State Award to actor and history enthusiast Stephen Lang. There is also a slight chance I'll be able to go the Round Table of New York's meeting on October 10. The speaker will be Pete Carmichael author of the "Struggle of the Common Man in the Civil War".

Finally, the last weekend in October I'm lending a hand to the Underground RR History Project Conference planning committee preparing for their Conference in the spring. So, as you can see I plan to be busy. Next month...information on Remembrance Day and a great

conference being planned for August, 2019.

## **GEN. GRANT'S SET OF LOST REVOLVERS**

Throughout the 19th century, the cotton trade was one of the world's largest industries, and the majority of raw cotton was harvested by slave labor in the deep South. Prior to the war, most of this cotton was exported to Britain, where its dominant textile industry consumed millions of pounds annually. A month after the Civil War erupted at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, Britain declared its neutrality and the Union Navy quickly blockaded the Atlantic seaports and, shortly thereafter, the Gulf of Mexico. Confederate commerce with England was drastically reduced, creating a major loss in revenue for the desperately needed war chest. Despite large pre-war reserves, England ran out of cotton in late 1862, as did the North. As a result, the price of cotton, which had been approximately 10 cents a pound in 1860, skyrocketed to \$1.89 a pound in the North during 1863—if it could be successfully shipped to the East Coast for the multitude of Union Civil War uses.

This high-priced “white gold” quickly resulted in a large variety of drastically war-altered entrepreneurial activities in the cotton-producing southern states, but especially in Louisiana. When New Orleans fell under Union occupancy, it was still possible to buy cotton for as little as 20 cents a pound in the war-torn state, even though the Confederacy had ordered the destruction of all cotton that might fall into Union hands. Confederates destroyed 15 times more cotton than the Union confiscated during the Civil War.

Multiple obstacles occurred for cotton speculators. With the Confederacy controlling the states surrounding Louisiana, the only remaining solution was to try and ship this bulky cargo by boat up the Confederate-controlled Mississippi River. It wasn't until Vicksburg fell to the Union in July 1863 that shipping cotton became easier and more predictable.

To begin with, purchasing raw cotton was not easy, as it had to be paid for in federal cash (typically “greenbacks,” not backed by gold or silver), and the unreliable sources included rogue elements of the Confederate government, rebels needing federal cash and loyalist citizens wanting their income back. Once purchased, the cotton needed to be packed, loaded and transported to the Mississippi River to be shipped 400 miles upstream to Union-controlled Memphis. While the potential monetary rewards were unequalled at the time, the risks were also exceedingly high, with graft and corruption becoming central elements in most negotiations. Yet, if everything went according to plan, it was possible to make up to \$175,000 in one shipment. One observer noted that the “mania for sudden fortunes in cotton” meant that “Every [Union] colonel, captain or quartermaster is in secret partnership with some operator in cotton.” The most reliable cotton shipment to Memphis was with the cooperation and assistance from Union forces. This meant forming an alliance and writing contracts with high-ranking Union officers stationed in Louisiana.

General James B. McPherson was such a person—a first-in-his-class West Point graduate who was commander of the Union-occupied New Orleans district.

One of his most important cotton sources was William C. Wagley, who served as a second lieutenant in the 3rd Dragoons during the Mexican-American War. Wagley was a plantation owner in the area, but also plundered the nearby abandoned plantations for their unpicked cotton crops. He was responsible for establishing contracts approved by McPherson to deliver unpicked and abandoned cotton, and was also mentioned in Abraham Lincoln's letters. This cotton was processed, when delivered on government transports, at the contractor's expense. The sizeable profits were divided equally between the Union and contractual parties.

Otis Nelson Cutler was also a veteran of the Mexican-American War and like Wagley, did not serve during the Civil War. When the war broke out, Cutler was appointed as special treasury agent by Treasury Secretary William P. Fessenden and stationed in New Orleans. After the war, he became a banker in New York and, later, a member of the New York Stock Exchange. In his position, and with considerable financial backing available, Cutler typically took over Wagley's interest in these cotton contracts.

After Confederate control of the Mississippi ended during mid-1863, cotton shipments to the East Coast became both more frequent and reliable thanks to the Union's "delivery protection service," but only if the right people were involved. A 50/50 profit-sharing arrangement between the Union and cotton suppliers was the norm for these contracts. This lucrative arrangement generated massive amounts of revenue for both the Union and Cutler/Wagley,

and no doubt, Generals McPherson and Grant.

Indebted to both generals, what better way of expressing gratitude to both McPherson and Grant than to present each of them with a set of highly embellished cased revolvers? A well-documented, exquisite pair of ornately engraved Colt Model 1861 Navy revolvers (Serial Nos. 11756 and 11757) was presented to Gen. McPherson first, with the inscription on both backstraps "From his Friends, O.N. Cutler and W.C. Wagley." These famous Colts were formerly part of Dr. Joseph Murphy's collection. Interestingly, until the sale of the Murphy collection in 2009, no one had ever established the historical Civil War connection between O.N. Cutler and W.C. Wagley. When both men decided to reward Gen. Grant for similar Civil War services, it was only fitting they chose the latest and most up-to-date revolver—Remington's New Model Army that went into production in June 1863, chambered for .44 cal. More than 100,000 revolvers were contracted to the Union. Manufacture was completed by war's end.

During this period of American arms manufacture, perhaps the best and most expeditious way of getting a cased presentation set of Remington revolvers custom made was to place a special order with the New York City-based firm of Schuyler, Hartley and Graham, America's largest gun retailer and wholesaler in 1860. The firm was responsible for maintaining a robust inventory of currently manufactured firearms, which was very unusual at the time. After Cutler and Wagley placed their order, the well-known merchant would have started by purchasing the

commercial revolvers from Remington, which offered special-order arms removed from the normal production line. Serial numbers were within their own separate series, and research indicates that fewer than 100 of these revolvers were made during the Civil War.

The next step would have been to have the arms properly embellished “in the white,” and the pattern and execution of the engraving style indicate this most important creative process was done by the firm of L.D. Nimschke, also from New York City. Once finished, the guns would have been polished, blued and, finally, fitted to a deluxe presentation case with proper accessories by an established case maker. Easily, this set’s most stunning features are the elaborately carved ivory stocks featuring high relief portrait busts of Grant and American eagle motifs, also attributed to Nimschke. The overall cost of the extravagant gift was no more than \$400, with the revolvers’ original value at about \$12 each.

Unfortunately, it is not known exactly when or where this set of Remington revolvers was presented to Gen. Grant, but considering the economic windfall both parties were enjoying, it was most likely a low-key event wherever Grant was stationed. Neither Grant nor his wife Julia lead lavish lifestyles, so the set was probably stored out of sight with little fanfare at their post-war house located at 3 East 66th St. in New York City.

Grant’s children were Frederick (oldest), Ulysses, Jr., Jesse and Nellie. Jesse Grant (the general’s youngest son) and his family moved to San Diego in the late 1880s, and Ulysses, Jr., followed with his

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family in 1893. Along with the family’s other possessions, the Remington set apparently headed west with one of them. The Remingtons must have remained in a secure place with the family in virtual obscurity until Jesse passed away in 1934.

Grant V, the grandson of Jesse, became custodian of the many items and artifacts, including the late president’s letters and will, and most likely, the Remington set. The legacy of the magnificent Remington presentation revolvers belonging to various Grant descendants, remained intact.

When the Jesse Grant home needed repair work, a handyman for the family received this set of Remingtons as payment for his services. The current owner’s father, who was a gun fancier and friend of the handyman, found out about the presentation set during the 1950s. While the handyman stubbornly refused to sell the guns for 10 years, a sale was finally transacted in the amount of \$1,500, as documented in a copy of the sales receipt. Incredibly, just like the Grant family, the purchaser never showed anyone the set, and it remained unknown to historians and collectors. The Remingtons were passed down to the collector’s son in 2013.

The current owner recently called Greg Martin, antique arms dealer. Picking up the phone, the veteran dealer heard “I have in my possession a cased pair of Remington revolvers that were presented to a general and was wondering if you might be interested in them.” Taken by surprise, Martin didn’t ask who the general was at first. The two arranged to meet, view the set together

and discuss a possible sales arrangement. Upon opening the rosewood presentation case, the experienced dealer instantly realized who the general was, as he described a carved bust of Grant was “staring him in the face.” After more than six months of further negotiations, the owner agreed to place the Grant revolvers on consignment because his son was going to college, and he felt the time had come to part with his heirloom.



One more very important obstacle quickly became a major consideration for the set could make its first debut in more than 125 years. All parties had to assure the California Fish & Wildlife Dept. that the ivory stocks were antiques and at least 100 years old. To overcome this potential legal hurdle, an experienced and qualified ivory expert was hired to examine the stocks, and provide a certificate from the state certifying the type of ivory, its origin and age. After all necessary licenses were in place, Gen. Grant's Remingtons were displayed at the Las Vegas Antique Arms Show in January 2018. Without a doubt, these cased Remingtons constitute the most elaborate and historically significant set of currently known revolvers manufactured during the Civil War.



***(This article was excerpted from American Rifleman, August 29, 2018. The author is S. P. Fjestad. He is also the author and publisher of The Blue Book of Gun Values.)***



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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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