



*The Dispatch*  
Newspaper of the

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212  
[www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org](http://www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org)



Volume 36, Number 1

January 2019

# OUR ROUND TABLE DONATIONS NOW \$1,558,448 IN ACTUAL AND MATCHED FUNDS

### 2018 DONATIONS

1. CIVIL WAR TRUST – 2<sup>nd</sup> Manassas & New Market Heights  
\$515 for 33.42:1 match = \$17,211.30
2. CIVIL WAR TRUST – Slaughter Pen mortgage at Fredericksburg  
\$72.00
3. CIVIL WAR TRUST – Yorktown  
\$500 for a 76:1 match    \$38,000

**TOTAL CASH DONATIONS TO DATE \$272,276**

**TOTAL CASH & MATCHING DONATIONS TO DATE \$1,558,448**

# JANUARY MEETING

Friday, January 11, 2019

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

Potpourri Meeting

CDCWRT Members

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 first meeting of the new year of 2019 for the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, January 11, 2019. This is the annual Potpourri Meeting where round table members will talk briefly about a Civil War topic. These presentations may be a family history, or about a letter or diary, or about an artifact of the period.*

*The first presenters will be Frank Wicks, Marsha Mortimore and Laura Linder from Schenectady, who will talk about a wonderful project which hopefully will be realized early in 2019. This is The Tubman - Seward Statue Project - Leaders for Freedom and Justice". The hope is to create a work of art to embody the ideas of "diversity and friendship." This project is also supported and*

*endorsed by our close friends at the Under Ground Railroad History Project. The sculptor is Dexter Benedict. One of his most well-known works is a towering bronze statue of Albany law School educated Robert Jackson who was a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and prosecutor of war crimes at Nuremburg.*

*The second presentation will feature our own Gene Gore with a display of children's clothing from the 1860's. These articles of clothing were actually worn by members of Gene family. Gene published a book this past year about his Civil War relatives.*

## DUES, DUES, DUES

*The annual dues of \$35 are now due. Payments can be made to Treasurer, Steve Muller at the meeting. Cash, checks, silver, gold, greenbacks or real Confederate money will be accepted as payment. Members may also make an ADDITIONAL contribution to the Preservation Fund or to the Regular Fund.*

## THANK YOU MEMBERS

We wish to thank and recognize the following individuals who made donations to the Round Table's Operating Account &/or Preservation Account: Paul Vanwaganen, Gene Gore, Mike Phelan, Bart Cohen, Dean Long and Luanne Whitbeck, Mark Koziol, Mike Mahar, Wayne Aiken, Byron Moak, Stacy Kilts, Rosemary Nichols, Fran McCashion\*, Steve Muller, Bettina Stoller\*, and Danna Viscanti\*. (\* indicates donation in memory of Stan Bergman).

## **UP-COMING MEETINGS**

The February 8, 2019 meeting of the CDCWRT will feature historian and author, Will Greene. He is the former director of the Pamplin Historical Park and National Museum of the Civil War Soldier. His topic will be an aspect of the Petersburg Campaign.

The March 8, 2019 meeting of the CDCWRT will feature Paul and Liz Stewart who will speak on the Underground Railroad as the first Civil Rights Movement.

The April 12, 2019 meeting of the CDCWRT will feature a speaker to be announced.

The May 10, 2019 meeting of the CDCWRT will again feature Pat Falci who will talk about the movie Gettysburg --- 25 years later.

The June 7, 2019 meeting of the CSCWRT will feature Sue McLane who will speak on Victorian Secrets— Fashion in the Civil War Era.

## **BOARD MEETING REPORT**

The board met on October 29, 2018. The Treasurer reported \$522.56 in the regular account and \$3003.58 in the preservation account. Dues will be \$35 annually starting in 2019. A Brandy Station field trip with Bud Hall is being planned for May 17-19, 2019.

## **THE TRUST 300**

*The Winter 2018 edition of Hallowed Ground recognizes and outstanding group of preservationists. The magazine is the official publication of the American Battlefield Trust, an expanded version of the Civil War*

*Trust. The list honors the top lifetime donors to the Trust and its predecessor organizations.*

*In the category “\$75,000 and up” is the Capital District CWRT. We are the highest listed CWRT. Our actual donations are probably over \$100,000 because monies were donated to the APCWS (Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites) which predated the CWT.*

*Only two other CWRTs are in the Trust 300: the Austin CWRT and the CWRT of Eastern Pennsylvania. Both are in the category of “\$52,000 and up.”*

*But we should not slack-off in our donation efforts, because we should be humbled by a group in the “\$100,000 and up” category: Our Lady of Sorrows Middle School!!! Yes, a middle school is ahead of us. So, how about buying a few cachets or t-shirts or books at the next meetings.*

## **SANTA CLAUS AND THE CIVIL WAR**

*In early December my wife and I were invited to a friend's house to see their Christmas decorations. He proudly showed us his Santa Claus collection of perhaps over 100 Santas, some ceramic, some wood, some stone and some plastic. Almost all were the jovial, rotund Santa from our childhoods. I casually mentioned that our image of Santa had its beginning in the Civil War. He looked surprised and was somewhat skeptical.*

*All Nan's friends know that I find the Civil War in “everything,” often quoting Bernard DeVoto's statement. “The Civil War is the crux of our history.....”*

But I remembered that Sue Knost brought Kevin Rawlings from Antietam twice for the Victorian Stroll in Troy. One of those times, Kevin spoke to our CWRT on Christmas in the Civil War. And I bought his book on this topic. I decided this was the perfect topic for a holiday article in the newsletters of my Northern and Southern CWRTs.



This is Nast's original image of Santa Claus in 1861 (above). Below is his image of Santa distributing gifts to the Union soldiers. His hat and jacket are blue with white trim and white stars. His pants are red and white stripes.



CDCWRT

Dutch immigrants would bring to the New World the story of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children. Nicholas was a 4th century bishop of Myra in Asia Minor. He was orphaned as a child and was raised by an uncle who was a priest. Nicholas became a priest and legend has it he arrived at Myra through divine intervention. He died on December 6, 342. Over the centuries he became the patron saint of scholars, thieves, pawnbrokers and eventually, New York City.

In some countries he rides a white horse, or has a white beard, or wears episcopal red vestments. In Holland, Nicholas would deliver gifts to the wooden shoes of good children. His helper, Black Peter, would leave lumps of coal for bad or lazy children. Different countries had their own versions of Nicholas. In New Amsterdam, the Dutch modified the story from shoes to stockings hung by the fireside. German immigrants brought a sterner St. Nicolas and his more frightening helper, Pelsnickel.

Both personages eventually merged into one. St. Nicholas eventually died out as Santa Claus became more popular with the acceptance of December 24th as the official Christmas Eve.

In 1822, Clement Moore of New York City, wrote a poem for his children titled "A Visit from Saint Nicholas." Moore's description of St. Nick was modelled after a jolly, portly, old, Dutch workman who did odd jobs at Moore's estate. The following year, a friend, Harriet Butler of Troy, NY, anonymously sent a copy that was published in the *Troy Sentinel*. Many falsely claimed to have penned the poem, but in 1838, an embarrassed Moore finally acknowledged his

authorship.

In 1848, publisher Henry Onderdonk, hired a wood-engraver, T.C. Boyd to illustrate a book of Moore's poems. Boyd's artwork removed St. Nicholas from the religious-based legend, to a clearly secular bringer of gifts, the "Americanized" Santa Claus. Cartoonist, Thomas Nast became the second person to transform Santa Claus and Christmas. The Nast family emigrated to the U.S. from Germany in 1841. He established his reputation in *Harper's Weekly* in 1862.

It was in 1862-3 that Nast first drew Santa Claus for publication and then yearly until his last appearance in *Harper's* in 1886. It is his 19th Century image, inspired by childhood memories of reading Clement Moore's poem about Santa Claus that would become the fixture of our 20th Century holiday image.

For Christmas in 1866, Nast would make the North Pole the home of Santa Claus so that no nation might lay claim to him as their own. Nast also showed the lore of Santa's workshop for the production of toys, his account book for keeping record of children's behavior, keeping watch through a telescope for good children, and forever intertwining Santa Claus to the Christmas tree. In later drawings, Santa would be pictured answering mail sent to him by children. In 1931, advertising artist, Haddon Sundblom, would make minor changes to the image and put a bottle of Coca-Cola in Santa's hand to become a purveyor of the drink.

Nast was the father of the political cartoon, having given us the images

Uncle Sam, John Bull (Great Britain), Boss Tweed and the Tammany Hall Tiger. Some remain with us today such as the Republican Elephant and the Democratic Donkey. He was always short of money and in heavy debt. Teddy Roosevelt appointed him Consul General to Ecuador to help him out financially. While serving as such, Thomas Nast contracted a fever and died on December 7, 1902, the day after Saint Nicholas Day.

*(This article was excerpted from We Were Marching on Christmas Day: A History and Chronicle of Christmas During the Civil War by Kevin Rawlings.)*

## **BUFORD'S VIEW-JANUARY**

Unfortunately I was not able to compose my column for last month's Newsletter as I was in the hospital receiving a new right knee and then spending 6 more days in the Sunny View Rehabilitation facility. I now have a matching set of titanium knees and will soon be moving from a walker to a cane. It was something that had to be done if I intended to walk Civil War battlefields again. However, knee replacements and the subsequent therapy that follows is a long painful process.

I received permission to drive short distances and was thus able to be at the last meeting. In some ways it could have of been a meeting in a Civil War field hospital. I had a wounded knee, J.J. Jennings was recovering from surgery on his arm and our speaker Pat Schroeder had ruptured his back just a few days before speaking to us. In spite of being in obvious discomfort Pat gave an excellent presentation on "Zouaves: America's Forgotten Soldiers."

On Saturday, January 12 the Round Table will have a display table at the annual New State Museum's Great Places and Spaces. I will be there with a display table to interact with visitors many of whom are school children. It is a great opportunity to bring our Civil War heritage to students in a different setting than a classroom. The hours are noon to 4:00 PM. I expect to be somewhat recovered in two weeks but not yet 100%. I would appreciate some additional help especially around 11:30 and at 4:00 in bringing in and then packing up taking out our several boxes of materials. If you can lend a hand meet me at front of the museum between 11:30 and noon.

The coming year will bring many Conferences and other Civil War events. As we get closer to these dates I will try to keep any of you who might be interested informed of the details in case you might like to attend. Finally, I would like to wish all a very joyous and happy New Year

## FROM YOUR EDITOR

It was in the November 1999 that the editor of the round table newsletter suddenly announced he was quitting. I volunteered to do the December newsletter, and last month's was the 20<sup>th</sup> year. Just by sheer coincidence (or perhaps it was kismet) I have written about Santa and Kevin Rawlings for this newsletter. A few minutes before writing this, I looked back to see what I wrote for the December 1999 issue. Dab-nab-bit! It was about Kevin coming to speak to our round table at Century House where we could serve liquor and did not have to be out of the building by 9 p.m. But it was also the time of Y2K and many thought

civilization would end on 1/1/2000!

It has been quite a ride for me, but now I will turn over the edit pen to Erin and Rosemary who have indicated they want to do the newsletter. I had explained to the Board several months ago that I wanted a smooth transition to a new editor while I was still in good health.

When I became editor I decided that I wanted our newsletter to be different. I used a modern headline approach on page 1 that tied in with the speaker topic on page 2. Since this approach would be like on-the-spot reporting, sometime the news was inaccurate like "*unnamed sources reported that General Joshua Chamberlain was reported killed at Petersburg yesterday, June 17, 1864.*"

For the filler articles inside, I tried to find unusual, atypical, or little-known Civil War stories from many non-war sites such as stamp news or the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In this way I tried to increase everyone's knowledge about the period.

I will turn over 19 years' worth of newsletters to Erin and Rosemary. They can recycle old items if they wish. I will continue to send reports from the south especially about the new Civil War Center in North Carolina, and the fate of Confederate monuments.

Finally, the CDCWRT is what you make it to be. It needs your attendance and volunteerism. It needs your financial support, so purchase its products be they t-shirts, books or cachets. Thank-you for letting me be your editor and for not complaining if sometime I went off the rails with my ideas and editorials. Signing off ----Matt Farina.



2019 MEMBERSHIP FORM  
 (Membership Year Runs January – December)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Preference: View on website \_\_\_\_\_ Copy Mailed to Home \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues\* \$35

Donation to Preservation Account\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Operating Account\*\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

- \* All dues money goes into Operating Account
- \*\* Pays for battlefield preservation donations, rental of storage shed, insurance
- \*\*\* Pays for newsletters, program expenses, donation for use of Watervliet Senior Center

Please send your payment to:

CDCWRT  
 P.O. Box 11493  
 Loudonville, NY 12211-0493

Note 1: Payments by credit/debit card can be made at the January meeting