



# The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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



Volume 36, Number 2

February 2019

### Currier and Ives' *'The Progress of the Century'*



## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

**Friday, February 8, 2019**

**WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER**

**1541 BROADWAY**

**WATERVLIET, NY**

**David Hochfelder**  
**Civil War Technology,**  
**With an Emphasis on**  
**Railroads**

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 8, 2019. Our very special guest speaker will be author and historian, Dr. David Hochfelder.*

*Dr. Hochfelder is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University at Albany. He presented to our Round Table twice several years ago.*

*An electrical engineer turned historian, Hochfelder specializes in the history of U.S. business and technology. He also helps administer UAlbany public history program.*

*Before joining UAlbany, Hochfelder served as a research historian at the Thomas Edison Papers.*

*Hochfelder is the author of The Telegraph in America, 1832-1920 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012). His next project is a social history of savings and investment, including a topic on which he presented to us, the Freedman's Savings Bank.*

## **DUES ARE DUE!**

If you have not yet paid your dues for 2019, please mail a check or bring \$35 dollars to the next meeting. We are still accepting donations to the Operating account and/or Preservation Fund.

## **THANK YOU MEMBERS**

We wish to thank and recognize the following individuals who made donations to the Round Table's Operating Account and/or Preservation Fund.

In the past month we have received donations from: Mary Heisinger, Bill & Noreen Underhill, William Schreiner, Joyce Brooks, Paul Cooney, Jeff Falace, Mary Ellen Johnson, Frank Wicks, Larry Arnold, Erin Baillargeon, Norman Kuchar and Benjamin Mastaitis.

If you have not yet made a special donation, please consider doing so.

## **CORRECTION TO THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER**

For years our Editor Emeritus Matt Farina has made an annual update to our donations of cash, with the available matches we always seek. In reviewing those numbers the final time, Matt identified an error. He wanted a correction published in the February newsletter.

The actual amount should read \$215,908 instead of the published \$272,276. The leveraged amount is correct.

In actual fact, as Matt says, “the leveraged amount should be considerably more because in the early years of the CWPT we made donations but did not record leveraged amounts. So for those years I used the actual amount donated in lieu of the leveraged amount.”

Thanks to our former editor for the clarification.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

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

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

The May 10, 2019 meeting’s speaker will be actor and historian Patrick

Falci, who will talk about the movie *Gettysburg* -- 25 years later. As we all will recall, Pat played an amazing A.P. Hill in that movie as well as the follow up *Gods and Generals*.

The June 7, 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.

There will be no Round Table meetings in July and August 2019. We are still planning a picnic for August.

## **BOARD UPDATES**

The annual election of Executive Board officers took place at the January potpourri meeting. Erin Baillargeon was re-elected as President, Mark Koziol as Vice-President, Steve Muller as Treasurer, Rosemary Nichols as Secretary, and J.J. Jennings and Nick Thony as At-Large members.

There is an At-Large position currently vacant. Anyone interested in serving on the E-Board should talk to a current Board member. This position involves attending an additional meeting per month to discuss fundraising and publicity/outreach plans and decide upon Preservation donations.

At the January meeting the Board approved a donation of \$1000 to the

American Battlefield Trust (the new incarnation of the Civil War Trust) for a \$32.74 to \$1 match. This maintains our status as Regimental Color Bearers and helps to preserve land at Fort Blakely, Alabama, Wilson's Creek, Missouri, Rappahannock Station, Virginia, and Averasboro and Bentonville, North Carolina.

The Capital District Civil War Round Table continues to be among the American Battlefield Trust's 300 top lifetime donors. The Winter 2018 *Hallowed Ground* states that, collectively, these donors have dedicated more than \$102 million to the Trust and its predecessor organizations.

The Board also voted on our Non-Commissioned Officers at the January meeting. We would like to thank Dean Long, Luanne Whitbeck, Mike Affinito, Gene Gore, and Matt George for their contributions to the Round Table. Review their contributions on the back page of the newsletter. We certainly could not operate without their time and support.

Finally, the Board would like to sincerely and deeply thank Dr. Matthew Farina for his years of service to the Round Table. Matt has been our President, has designed and organized stamp cancellations at numerous events, including the Sesquicentennial commemorations, and has been our newspaper editor for nearly twenty years. Matt had been recognized with a life-time membership back in

2011 for his years of commitment to our organization.

Matt, thank you, THANK YOU, **THANK YOU!**

## **TECHNOLOGY WINS THE WAR**

Gary W. Gallagher in the "Insight" column in the April 2019 issue of Civil War Times (page 22) says that looking at multiple decades and the entire scope of society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century does not reveal a myopic preoccupation with sectional conflict.

"An observer seeking interpretive themes between 1830 and 1860 could craft a narrative largely devoid of section issues." He then goes on to discuss several themes. The first is technology.

"One theme involved a revolution in communications and transportation that dramatically shrank time and space. The electrical telegraph, first demonstrated by Samuel F. B. Morse in 1844, opened breathtaking possibilities. By 1861, Western Union lines connected the Eastern seaboard and California.

"Railroads expanded exponentially from just fewer than 3,000 miles of track in 1840 to more than 30,000 in 1860. The telegraph and trains allowed information, goods, and passengers to move much faster, increasing the pace of life and

commerce in ways that left observers somewhat flabbergasted.”

In Mr. Lincoln’s High-Tech War: How the North Used the Telegraph, Railroads, Surveillance Balloons, Iron-clads, High-Powered Weapons and More to Win the Civil War (National Geographic Books, 2009), Thomas B. Allen and Roger MacBride Allen analyze the new technology in terms of our Sixteenth President.

“In 1809 Abraham Lincoln was born into the last generation of Americans who did not expect technology ever to change. Young Abraham lived, with the rest of his family, in a series of dirt-floor cabins in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. Those cabins, the farm implements, the guns used for hunting, all the cooking utensils, and everything else the family owned would have seemed quite familiar to Abraham’s father, his grandfather, and his father before him – and not all that different from the things that Abraham’s great great great great-grandfather Samuel Lincoln might have used at the time he arrived in America from England in 1637. Samuel would have instantly recognized and known how to use nearly all the tools and farm implements that young Abraham would have worked with in the 1810s and 1820s. Even the flintlock gun in the Lincoln cabin wouldn’t have changed all that much in the last 150 years.

“But Abraham’s own father, Thomas Lincoln, would have been

dumbfounded by the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph, and the dozens of other inventions that came boiling out of inventors’ workshops in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

“By the start of the 1800s, technology had already begun to transform work, transportation, education, and other parts of life for Americans. . . .

“(In the 1840s) Lincoln was aboard a river steamboat that ran aground and had to struggle to get underway again. The mishap gave him an idea for a device that could be attached to the sides of a ship. Filling it with air would lift the ship and allow it to float over a shallow stretch of water.

“He began whittling a model that he took to a lawyer who specialized in patents. The lawyer prepared the necessary papers and sent them, with the model, to the Patent Office. On May 22, 1849, the model earned Abraham Lincoln Patent Number 6469 for ‘A Device for Buoying Vessels Over Shoals.’ Lincoln is the only President ever to be granted a patent.

“Lincoln understood the importance of inventions – and patents like his – to the country. Patents, he said, ‘secured to the inventor, for a limited time, the exclusive use of his invention; and thereby added the fuel of interest to the fire of genius, in the discovery and production of new and useful things.’

“Decades later, as President during the Civil War, he would see the military importance of the telegraph and railroads and many other ‘new and useful things’ long before his generals did. Lincoln became the first U.S. President to step fully into the role of Commander in Chief in wartime. Within six months of taking office, he took control of the North’s railroads and telegraph lines, introduced aerial surveillance to the Union army, urged the production of advanced weaponry, ordered the building of ironclad ships, and began a naval blockade that strangled the South’s economy.”

For more reading about technology and the Civil War, consider the following:

Thomas F. Army, Engineering Victory: How Technology Won the Civil War (Johns Hopkins Press, 2016);

Jeffrey D. Wert, Civil War Barons: The Tycoons, Entrepreneurs, Inventors, and Visionaries Who Forged Victory and Shaped a Nation (Da Capo Press, 2018);

William G. Thomas, The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America (Yale University Press, 2011);

Charles D. Ross, Trial By Fire: Science, Technology and the Civil War (2009);

Tom Wheeler, Mr. Lincoln’s T-Mails: How Abraham Lincoln Used the Telegraph to Win the Civil War (Harper Business, 2008);

Shane Mountjoy, Technology and the Civil War (Chelsea House Publishers, 2009);

John E. Clark, Jr., Railroads in the Civil War (LSU Press, 2004)

## **BUFORD’S VIEW**

by Matt George

I spent a very rewarding day on Saturday, January 1 at the N.Y.S. Museum’s “Great Places and Spaces” event. Despite the extremely cold weather, it attracted a surprising number of students including many Cub Scouts. I would like to thank J.J. Jennings who came to help. Without his assistance, it would have been much more difficult for me with my new knee. We even made \$22.00. I know I’m getting older as far too many Cub Scouts inquired whether I had fought in the Civil War.

There are three changes in the speaker schedule for 2019. Because of changes in Will Greene’s travel schedule he will not be speaking to us in February. However, he will be speaking on June 7 when he will be traveling north to continue his research on volume two of his detailed study of the Battle of Petersburg. Our June speaker Sue McLane will be moving to November. The new speaker for February will be Dave Hochfelder, Professor of History at SUNY Albany. Professor Hochfelder has spoken to us twice in the last five years. He will be

revisiting his field of expertise with a discussion of railroads, telegraph, technology and the North during the Civil War.

There are many upcoming Civil War Conferences and events in 2019. A few of these I and some of our members will be attending. Although I cannot attend, Pat Schroeder (our December speaker) will be holding a free Civil War Conference on February 9 at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. One of the featured speakers will be Ed Bearrs.

On February 8-10, J.J. Jennings, Rosemary Nichols and I will be attending the Civil War Trust Conference in New Orleans. One of the tours will be to Mobile Bay. Although not Civil War related, a second tour will be to the World War II Museum. This will be of personal interest to me because I hope to verify my father's name on a plaque which I paid for many years ago and have never seen.

The Underground Railroad History Project Conference is March 29-31. Our Round Table supports this event every year and we will again have a display/information table there as well. Paul and Mary Liz Stewart will be at our March meeting with more information. Paul and Mary Liz will also be giving a related

talk at the Mabee House on Saturday, January 26 at 2:00 PM.

The Civil War Institute of Gettysburg in partnership with the newly formed Civil War Round Table Congress will be hosting a Civil War Conference at Gettysburg College June 14-19. Because of our Round Table's affiliation with the CWRT Congress our members would qualify for a 15% discount.

From May 28 through June 2 the Civil War Trust is holding its annual Conference in Lexington, Kentucky.

Of course, our Round Table will be raising money with a postal cancellation in Gettysburg in July.

The 6th Annual Emerging Civil War Symposium will be held at Stevenson Ridge in Spotsylvania County in Virginia August 2-4.

How many of these I will be attending I'm not sure. I'm also serving on a planning Committee for UCALL's new summer program. One of the trips we are considering this summer is a day trip to Grant Cottage. So there will many opportunities for you to immerse yourself in Civil War History over the next few months.

**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 \$35. 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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