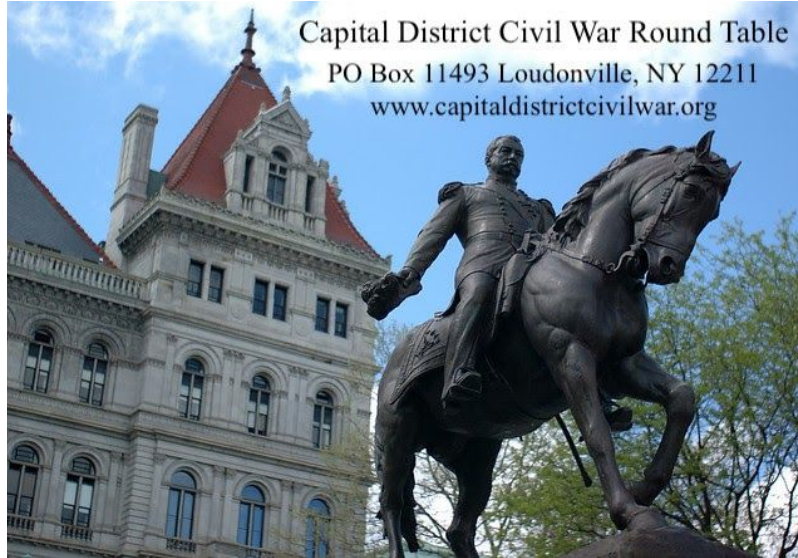


The Dispatch

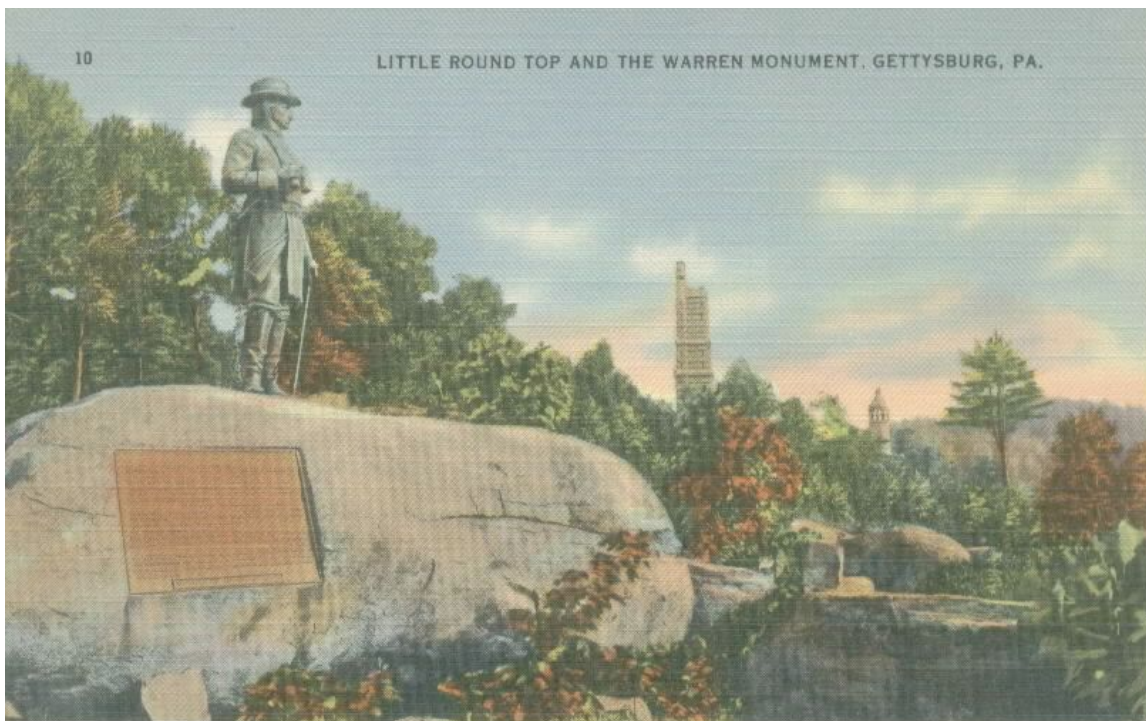
Volume 37, Number 6

October 2020



Capital District Civil War Round Table
PO Box 11493 Loudonville, NY 12211
www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org

GOVERNEUR KEMBLE WARREN: THE HERO OF LITTLE ROUND TOP; THE GOAT OF FIVE FORKS



Postcards of Adams County, Pennsylvania, from
<http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/adams/postcards.htm>

OCTOBER MEETING

Friday, October 9, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING USING ZOOM

ROBERT GIRARDI Gouverneur K. Warren's Last Battle: the General and the Historians

Business Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Presentation	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Questions & Answers	8:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Robert I. Girardi has had a lifelong fascination with the Civil War. He has studied all aspects of the war, and has tramped over many of the battlefields and related sites. He has collected artifacts and memorabilia and has read through thousands of documents, letters, and diaries written by participants, thereby developing an understanding of the important issues of the war and a sense of what the soldiers experienced.

Robert earned his M.A. in Public History at Loyola University of Chicago in 1991. He is a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago and a past vice president and newsletter editor of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table. He belongs to two other Civil War roundtables in the Chicago area. He is a fellow of the Company of Military Historians and is an associate member of the Sons of Union Veterans. He is on the editorial review board of the Journal of the Illinois State

Historical Society and was the guest editor of the 2011-2014 Civil War Sesquicentennial issues. He was the winner of the 2010 Chicago Civil War Round Table's prestigious Nevins-Freeman Award. In 2012 he was named to the board of directors of the Illinois State Historical Society, and sat on the board of directors of the Camp Douglas Restoration Society 2013-2018. In 2014 he was awarded the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table's Iron Brigade Association Award for Civil War scholarship.

Gouverneur K. Warren is remembered as the Savior of Little Round Top. He was highly regarded for his education and competence, but also accused of being too cautious by the generals who removed him from command. His record belies this. But Warren has suffered in the history book because of the long reach of his enemies. Here, the facts are reevaluated with some unpleasant revelations.

ZOOM DIRECTIONS

- 1) **Download** Zoom program from Internet at: <https://zoom.us/download>
- 2) Once in Zoom, **create** a username and password **OR log in** through other methods such as your Facebook account username and password.
- 3) On the Zoom main page, you will see four icons. To join a scheduled meeting, click **"Join"** in the upper right side. Enter the meeting ID number and passcode. **Meeting ID: 815 2629 5935**
Passcode: 762708
- 4) Your computer **camera** will turn on. A pop-up box appears and asks if you

want to join with **computer audio**. Click the blue **“Join”** icon.

5) Click the **“mute”** button seen on the left side of the bottom black bar so a slash appears across the microphone.

Please keep your microphone **MUTED** during the presentation to eliminate interruptions of background noise.

To Activate the Chat Feature:

1) Move your mouse cursor to the bottom black bar of the video screen. Click **“chat”** (comic word bubble) and the vertical chat box appears.

2) Type the question you wish to send to the speaker.

You can also dial in using a telephone.

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

You will need the Meeting ID and passcode above.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Nov. 13: Bill Howard, who was scheduled to speak last December, has been rescheduled to speak on the battle of Ball’s Bluff.

Dec. 11: Bob O’Brien will speak on the Confederate raid on St. Albans, VT.

THANK YOU, MEMBERS

The Executive Board would like to thank the following people for their support and donations to the Preservation Fund: Nick Thony, Matt George, Byron Moak, and Mike Speranza (in memory of Sue Knost).

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ED BEARSS

From *The Civil War Times* magazine:

“We’ve received news that legendary Civil War Historian Ed Bearss has passed away. A decorated WWII Marine Corps veteran, Bearss, who was 97 years old, rose to national prominence as a talking head during the Ken Burns documentary “The Civil War,” but that is only a small part of his fantastic legacy. Among his innumerable accomplishments, Bearss was the former chief historian of the National Park Service. He was known for his discovery of the ironclad USS Cairo in the Yazoo river and his efforts to have it raised and preserved, his tremendous efforts to protect hallowed ground, and for giving countless battlefield tours across the spectrum of American military history, but with a focus on the Civil War. As anyone who attended his tours can attest, his indefatigable energy and vigor put many decades younger than him to shame. Bearss lived a long and fruitful life pursuing his passion for history, and engaging others in his interest. We won’t see the likes of this amazing charismatic personality again. He was one of a kind. Rest in peace.”

At the request of the Bearss Family, in lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Ed Bearss may be made to the American Battlefield Trust. Recognizing the special place that these battlefields held in his heart, gifts to the Edwin C. Bearss Memorial Fund will be used to secure additional lands associated with the Vicksburg Campaign. <https://www.battlefields.org/preserve/champions/rememberingbearss>

GOUVERNEUR KEMBLE WARREN, THE HERO OF LITTLE ROUND TOP; THE GOAT OF FIVE FORKS

by Rosemary Nichols

There is a tendency to think first of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain or Chamberlain's commanding officer, in connection with the strategic defense of Little Round Top on the Second Day at Gettysburg. But Colonel Strong Vincent's set up of troops and his order to Chamberlain that the 20th Maine must at all costs defend against the flank attack of Longstreet would almost certainly not have been made if Warren had not identified the critical threat to the Union line and summoned forces to defeat that threat.

What was it about Warren's relationship with Philip Sheridan that motivated Sheridan to thoroughly destroy the career of another Union general in conjunction with the Battle of Five Forks on April 1, 1865 in Virginia? Sheridan is well-known as what we would today call a "Nasty Piece of Work." Was his choice to destroy another, more respected general driven by envy? Did he really think that Warren's troops were in fact "slow" and therefore jeopardized the success of the Battle of Five Forks? Or was Sheridan, as was his wont, simply not feeling well that day and chose to take his ill health or ire out on an inferior officer because Grant had told him he could?

Gouverneur Kemble Warren was born in January, 1830 in Cold Spring, Putnam County, NY. He was named for Gouverneur Kemble, a prominent local political figure and the owner of the West Point Foundry, which produced massive amounts of iron items, including Robert Parker Parrott's cannon, in vast quantities for the Union arsenal. The West Point Foundry, which closed in 1911, is a beloved industrial archaeological site on the National Register of Historic Places in Cold Spring.

Warren graduated at twenty-second in his class of forty-four in 1850 and for the next decade served as surveying engineer on a wide variety of army explorations in the American West and its river systems. In 1859 and 1860 he was teaching mathematics at West Point. He was given leave to raise a regiment and became the lieutenant colonel of the 5th NYVI in May 1861. The 5th fought at the Battle of Big Bethel near Fort Monroe in Virginia in June 1861, after which Warren was appointed colonel and regimental commander in September 1861.

In the Peninsular Campaign Warren served as Assistant Chief Topographical Engineer as well as continuing to command his regiment. He commanded the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, V Corps during the Peninsular Campaign. He conducted a brilliant defense at the Battle of Malvern Hill, where he stopped a Confederate division. Even though wounded, Warren refused to leave the field. He was promoted to brigadier general in September 1862. Warren and his

brigade fought in the Battle of Fredericksburg in December. When Joseph Hooker reorganized the army he appointed Warren Chief Engineer. After Chancellorsville Warren received battle leadership commendations.

Then came Gettysburg and Warren's great save on the second day in discovering Longstreet's End March and persuading troops, especially Strong Vincent's brigade, to counter it. He was appointed to head the II Corps from August 1863 to March 1864 during the convalescence of the wounded Winfield Scott Hancock. Then Warren was rewarded with command of the V Corps.

He distinguished himself at the Battle of Bristoe Station, after which he was breveted to major general in the regular army. During the Mine Run campaign, Warren discovered a trap set by the Confederates and was ultimately credited by Army Commander Major General George Meade for refusing to attack and thereby saving his V Corps.

Warren led the V Corps through the Overland Campaign, the Petersburg Siege and the Appomattox Campaign until his disgrace at the hands of Commanding Major General Phillip Sheridan after the Battle of Five Forks. During these Virginia campaigns Warren established a reputation for bringing his engineering traits of deliberation and caution to the role of infantry corps commander. He won the Battle of Globe Tavern in 1864, cutting the Confederates critical Weldon Railroad connection as well as breaking Confederate lines on the Boydon Plank Road to Petersburg. Though he was initially blamed for failing to move his V Corps into

position for the attack on the Crater, he was able to prove that another out of position corps had prevented the movement of his soldiers.

Arguably the most important battle of the Appomattox Campaign was the Battle of Five Forks, which the V Corps won. Nonetheless Battle Commander Sheridan took advantage of the authority granted him by overall commander Grant and removed Warren from command. He was reassigned to the defenses of Petersburg and briefly commanded the Department of the Mississippi.

Gouverneur was very close to his sister, Emily Warren Roebling, the second youngest of twelve children born in Cold Spring. Emily was indispensable in aiding her ailing husband, Washington Roebling, the chief engineer on the Brooklyn Bridge, after her spouse contracted the crippling decompression sickness, then known as caisson disease. She basically became the chief engineer in the face of her husband's debilitating illness, and was so honored.

Warren resigned his V Corps command in protest after the Five Forks incident and reverted to his permanent rank as major in the corps of engineers. He spent the next seventeen years as a successful working engineer, regularly pleading and/or demanding an investigation to consider the appropriateness of his discharge at the hands of Sheridan. He achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel in the engineers in 1879.

Warren's requests for a court of inquiry on the Five Forks dismissal were either ignored or denied until Grant's second

presidential term was completed. President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1879 ordered a court of inquiry which, after one hundred days of testimony from dozens of witnesses, found Sheridan's relief of Warren had not been justified.

Unfortunately, Warren's vindication was not published at the direction of President Chester A. Arthur until after his death at fifty-two in August 1882 from complications associated with diabetes. He was buried at his request in civilian clothes and without military honors at his last post as district engineer for Newport, Rhode Island. He left a wife, a son and a daughter to mourn his passing.

A sad end to a brilliant military career. Like most military men who felt they had been unfairly treated, Warren mourned the rest of his life.

BOARD UPDATES

The Executive Board met via Zoom on September 28.

The Operating Account has \$2,792.17 in it. The Preservation Account has \$1,909.41 after paying \$564 for our storage shed and receiving \$42 in merchandise sales and \$240 in donations.

Board members gathered at our storage shed one Saturday morning to clean out the cobwebs and organize the books we raffle off. Erin Baillargeon donated an additional set of shelves, which were quickly filled with Round Table books board members had been storing at home.

For the past several years the Round

Table has held the status of Regimental Color Bearer in the American Battlefield Trust. This level requires making donations that total \$1000 in a calendar year. In January we made a \$500 donation to preserve land at Bristoe Station, a \$500 to \$1 match. We are looking to make another donation of \$500 before the end of the year.

You can help by mailing a check to the Round Table, or donating directly using the PayPal link on our website (www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org).

We are also looking for a new person to join the Executive Board as an At-Large member. What would your responsibilities be? Honestly, not that much. At-Large members are asked to attend monthly Board meetings that usually last one hour and help the other members run the organization. The intensity of your involvement is up to you.

BUFORD'S VIEW

by Matt George

I'm almost finished reading an excellent book by Pulitzer Prize winning author David Zucchino entitled "Wilmington's Lie – The Murderous Coup Of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy". While it does not take place specifically within the Civil War/ Reconstruction period, it is directly related and has strong implications for today.

In the 1890s, Wilmington was North Carolina's largest city and an extremely successful example of an expanding African American middle class. The city was run by a "Fusionist"

government of Republicans and Populists that included black aldermen, police officers, and judges. There were black owned businesses and even a black owned African American newspaper called the *Record*. It was run by a crusading young black editor named Alexander Manly.

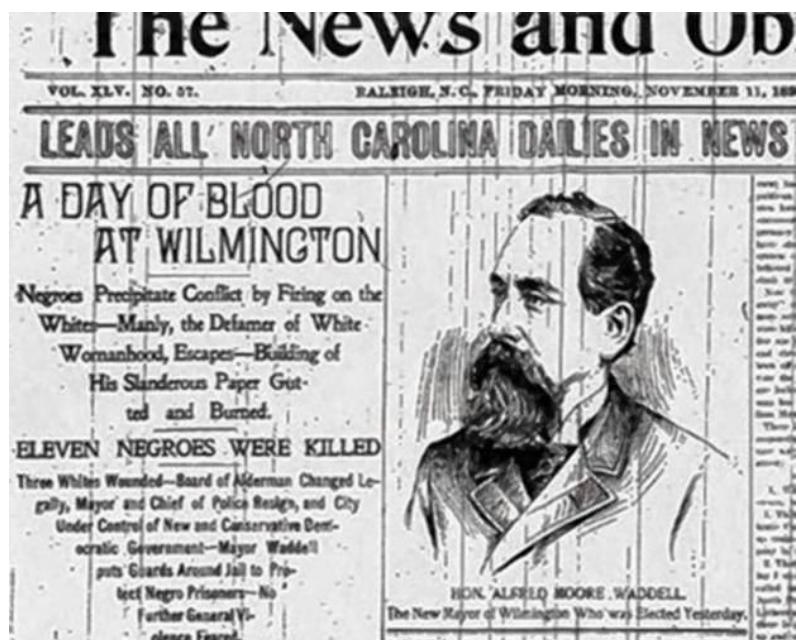
To southern Democrats and white supremacists such as the KKK and a particular vicious group of radicals called the "Red Shirts," all this was an anathema that could not be allowed to exist. So in November of 1898 they staged a well-planned race riot to actually overthrow the entire city government of Wilmington. It was led by wealthy white businessmen, politicians and former Confederate Army officers such as Colonel Alfred Waddell. This included large raucous rallies, race baiting editorials and sensational fabricated news stories.

Using intimidation and violence they totally suppressed the Black vote including stuffing the ballot boxes to win control of the state legislature on November 8. Two days later on the 10th, a 2,000 heavily armed force of Klan, Red Shirts and white militia invaded the city of Wilmington. They burned black businesses including the *Record* (Manly barely got away). They intimidated, and beat blacks and white Republicans. City officials were forced to resign at gunpoint and chased out of town. They were replaced by mob leaders. Hundreds of black families left town in terror. When it was over, sixty black men were lying dead in

the streets, shot down in cold blood. This was an actual overthrow of a legally elected government in the United States by a racially motivated rebellion of white supremacists. So much of this sounds vaguely familiar.

As many of you know the history community lost a true hero a few days ago with the passing of Ed Bearrs. Ed was a good friend of our Round Table especially the late Sue Knost. He truly deserved to have been awarded with our country's Medal of Freedom. This still should be done posthumously. He is far more deserving than the last recipient.

In my last column I told you about the new research on Kate Hewitt and General John Reynolds. Possibly sometime mid 2021, one or both of the authors (Mary Pitkin and Jeff Harding) may be willing to come to speak to us about their pending new book on the topic. Kate Hewitt (Pfordt) is buried in St. Agnes cemetery in Menands.



**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.

Contact the Capital District Civil War Round Table through
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or email: cdcwrt@hotmail.com

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