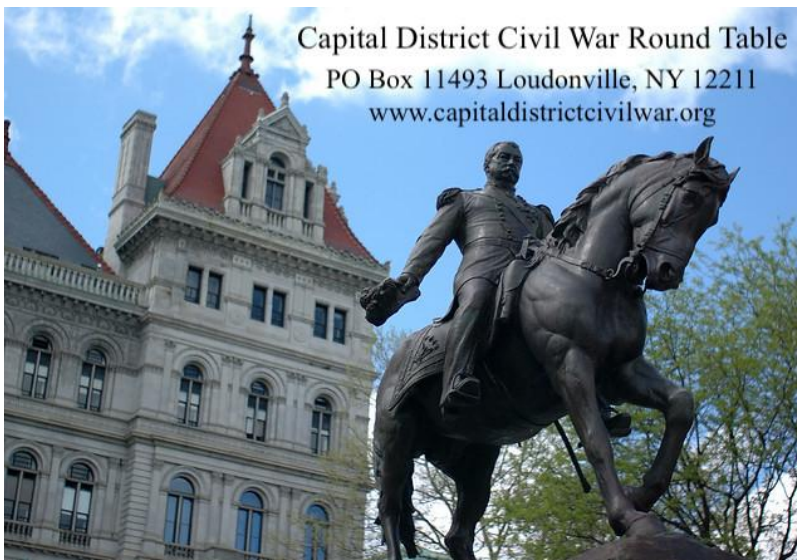


# The Dispatch

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## The Proposed Secession of New York City



An 1860s political cartoon lampooning New York City mayor Fernando Wood.  
<https://militaryhistorynow.com/2013/06/10/big-apple-secessionists-new-york-citys-forgotten-pro-confederates/>

## MAY MEETING

Friday, May 13, 2022

### IN-PERSON MEETING AT THE WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

#### LEON REED

“New York Mobilizes for War”

Social Hour	6:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Presentation	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Questions & Answers	8:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Leon Reed will speak to us on New York mobilizing for the war.

He is a former Congressional aide (US Senate Banking Committee), defense consultant, and US history teacher. He now lives in Gettysburg, where he photographs the park, volunteers helping people research their civil war ancestors in the Visitor Center, heads up the county’s 2020 Census Complete Count Committee, and writes military history.

He is the publisher at Little Falls Books and the co-author, with his wife Lois Lembo, of *A Combat Engineer With Patton’s Army: The Fight Across Europe With the 80th “Blue Ridge” Division in World War II*. He has also written *No Greater Calamity for the Country: North-South Conflict, Secession, and the Onset of the Civil War* and *Stories the Monuments Tell: a Photo Tour of Gettysburg, Told by its Monuments*.

## MASKS ARE RECOMMENDED DUE TO RISING POSITIVITY RATES.

We will not have refreshments available.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 29 - Oct. 16: the CDCWRT will be at the Jay Street market in Schenectady. See Matt George’s column for details.

June 10: Wayne Motts will talk about Gettysburg Park renovations.

September 9: Chris Mackowski’s program is yet to be finalized.

### THANK YOU, MEMBERS

The Round Table wishes to thank Matt George for his donations to the Operating or Preservation funds.

### PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR

No Civil War library is complete without a set of the 10-volume *Pictorial History of the Civil War*, published on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. And it so happens that the Hart Cluett Museum in Troy is deaccessioning this work from their library, and making it available for free. The ten volumes are organized by topic, such as cavalry, fortifications, Navy, etc. The volumes are in very good condition considering that they are more than 100 years old. If you are interested or have questions,

contact Steve Muller at [stevemuller207@gmail.com](mailto:stevemuller207@gmail.com) Steve will bring the entire set to the May meeting.

## BOARD UPDATES

The Executive Board met on April 18, 2022 via Zoom.

The Operating Account balance is \$4,609.54, which represents money from donations and 40 paid members. The Preservation Account balance is \$3696.67. In the past month, we've received over two hundred dollars to the Preservation Account from donations, the April book raffle, and merchandise sales.

Matt George, the Program Chair, has speakers arranged through June, 2023 - a full year in advance! He has also arranged for the Round Table to have a table at the Jay Street market in Schenectady. This is an important opportunity for the Round Table to earn preservation funds and educate the public on the Civil War. Volunteers are needed and greatly appreciated. Please see Matt's column for details.

Rosemary Nichols presented an idea for an event focused on Kate Hewitt's life. She was the fiancée of General John Reynolds and lived in the Capital District at the end of her life. Details will be shared once they are set.



## THE PROPOSED SECESSION OF NEW YORK CITY by Rosemary Nichols

*Mayor Of New York Proposes To Create A Free City To Avoid Losing Business Revenue From The Cotton Trade*

On January 6, 1861 Mayor of New York City Fernando Wood made an extraordinary proposal. The city, then the island of Manhattan, together with Staten and Long Islands, should secede from the state in order to preserve its prosperity from trade with the seceding Southern states, especially those that grew cotton. Said the mayor in his address to greet the New Year:

“When disunion has become a fixed and certain fact, why may not New York disrupt the bands which bind her to a venal and corrupt master - to a people and a party that have plundered her revenues, attempted to ruin her commerce, taken away the power of self-government, and destroyed the Confederacy of which she was the proud Empire City? Amid the gloom which the present and prospective condition of things must cast over the country, New York as a Free City may shed the only light and hope of a future reconstruction of our once blessed Confederacy.”

Incredibly, as Ron Soodalter reports, the Common Council – a group known informally as the 'Forty Thieves' – approved Wood's proposal and had copies generally printed. For a brief period it appeared as if the North's major commercial port and business center would join the South in rebellion. The council reversed itself in

April, when Southern forces bombed Fort Sumter.

When the Lincoln Administration took office in 1861, changes came to New York. The corrupt municipal officials were replaced; the manipulation of the laws to falsely bond slave ships so

they could return to their nefarious activities ceased; and one captain of a slave ship, Nathaniel Gordon, was hanged for his violation of the nation's slaving laws. Most surprising of all to New York's mayor, in the election of 1862 Wood was replaced by a staunch Lincoln Republican.

Once the war began, New York rallied to the cause and supplied invaluable troops and support to the Union effort. In the words of historian Murat Halstead, "The thunder of Sumter's guns waked the heart of the people to passionate loyalty. The bulk of the Democrats joined with the Republicans to show by word and act their passionate devotion to the Union."

Soodalter comments dryly, "The city came alive with mass meetings and patriotic rallies and, never one to miss an opportunity, one of the most vociferous in his support of the Union and condemnation of the rebellious South was Fernando Wood."

## **BUFORD'S VIEW**

by Matt George

Anyone interested in helping to raise money for the Round Table and battlefield preservation can volunteer for a few days this summer and fall. We have been able to secure a spot at the Jay Street Merchants Saturday/Sunday

Open Market in Schenectady. We have a total of ten Saturdays and Sundays between May 29 and Oct. 16. The market is open for four hours from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. I really could use some help in setting up the tent and five-foot tables. Parking is free on the weekends. You do not have to volunteer for every date. A minimum of 2 or 3 would be helpful. The dates we have reserved are: Saturdays –May 29, June 5, July 17, August 14, August 28, Sept. 11, Sept. 28, and Oct. 16; Sundays – August 13, Sept. 10. Let me know if you would like to help on any of these days.

On May 13 our speaker will be Leon Reed. The title of his talk is "N.Y. Mobilizes for War." Our speaker in June is the incomparable Wayne Motts of the Gettysburg Foundation. Wayne will talk about the Gettysburg Renovations at Culp's Hill and Little Round Tap. In fact Little Round Top is currently closed for improvements.

In May several of our members (including J.J. Jennings, Rosemary Nichols, Al McLeod and myself) will be attending The American Battlefield Trust Conference in Chantilly. In June I'll be attending the Civil Institute Conference in Gettysburg. So, again we will need volunteers not only to attend but to help set up the meetings.

Now that the pandemic is very slowly winding down, our Round Table would really benefit from an increase in membership. I encourage all current members to be on the lookout for people interested in not just the Civil War, but history in general. We need people who would be pro-actively involved in joining an organization that is nationally known. We are able to

acquire nationally known speakers such as Wayne Motts or Frank O'Reilly (often for minimal or no honorariums) because of our reputation for raising money for battlefield preservation. To maintain this reputation we need more active, dedicated and supportive members.

On June 4 there will be a special grave dedication ceremony at Albany's Rural Cemetery for Civil War Veteran Sgt. William Van Zandt at 11:00 AM. I plan to be there in uniform. I'm also scheduled to do a living history presentation for the Princetown Senior Citizens group on May 10.

I received an extremely complimentary email from our last speakers Julianne and Lynn Herman from State College Pennsylvania. They commented on how much they enjoyed speaking to us, the knowledge level of the audience and the conversation we had at the dinner after the meeting. Julianne also emailed me a list of their Round Table's

upcoming speakers and their contact information. This should prove helpful in the future.

**TRIVIA QUESTIONS:** Any one who responds with the correct answers to these three trivia questions will earn a free book at our next meeting. Email your responses to: [jbuford63@aol.com](mailto:jbuford63@aol.com)

1) Two well-known names in Albany's political history appear in a list of dignitaries on a "castle" monument on Little Round Top. Which regiment has this monument, and what are their names?

2) Whose nose do you rub for good luck on a monument on Little Round Top? (Not good luck for him...he was killed there.) For which NY regiment was he the colonel?

3) There is a monument to Gouverneur K. Warren on Little Round Top. Where was he born?

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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  
our website: [www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org](http://www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org)  
or email: [cdcwrt@hotmail.com](mailto:cdcwrt@hotmail.com)

**THE OFFICERS**

<b>President</b>	Erin Baillargeon	<b>Vice-President</b>	Mark Koziol
<b>Treasurer</b>	Steve Muller	<b>Secretary</b>	Rosemary Nichols
<b>At-Large</b>	Joyce Brooks	<b>At-Large</b>	(open)
<b>At-Large</b>	(open)		

**THE NONCOMS**

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<b>Membership</b>	Erin Baillargeon and Steve Muller		
<b>Refreshments</b>	Dean Long and Luanne Whitbeck		
<b>Webmaster</b>			
<b>Education</b>	Matt George		
<b>Newsletter</b>	Erin Baillargeon and Rosemary Nichols		