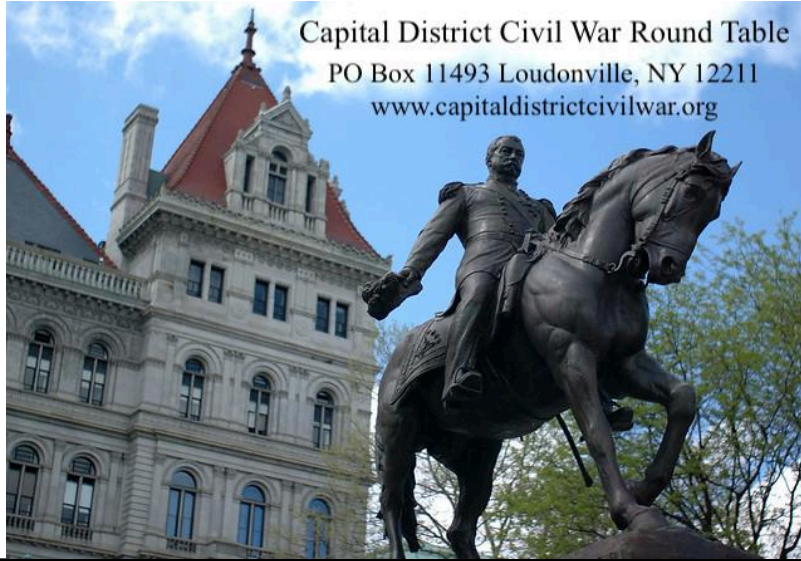


The Dispatch

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The End is Here



“The Room in the McLean House, Appomattox C.H., in which GEN. LEE surrendered to GEN. GRANT”
Image from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003671638/>

MARCH MEETING

Friday, March 8, 2024

**AT THE WATERVLIET
SENIOR CENTER**

**Jan Wojcik
“The Pivot Point at
Appomattox”**

Social Hour	6:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Presentation	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Union’s popular practical motive for fighting the Civil War, began as anger at Southern hostility, its secession from the United States, and determination to keep slave labor from infesting the Territories. It steadily morphed into a campaign to end chattel slavery. White admiration for Black Americans rose steadily higher during the Civil War, in the minds of Union Soldiers, President Lincoln, and the Union public.

The Confederacy’s motive for instigating the war was overtly to preserve Black slavery as the foundation for an aristocratic life of pleasure infused with and justified by a belief in White supremacy. It never changed, as the Planter Political Power resisted even to the end of the war even the militarily advantageous recruiting of Black men as war labor and even soldiers.

At the moment of the surrender at Appomattox and continuing through the end of Reconstruction, the

antagonism between North and South, Black and White hung in a balance, at which pivot point the tendency towards equality stood just higher than racial bigotry. And still vital. Then the hope for racial equality slid backwards into the mindset of Whites in both the South and the North in what we can only hope was itself another pivot point—sharp and long—lasting 100 years until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. And of course, still wavering.

The slideshow pictures the rise to and the beginning of the fall from the pivot point at Appomattox.

Jan Wójcik was educated at Boston College and Yale University, taught at Purdue and Clarkson Universities, and belongs to the Saint Lawrence County Civil War Roundtable. He’s presented more than twenty public programs on the social background of the American Civil War, especially as it developed in Northern New York.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 12: Chuck Veit returns to present on the Monitor Raid

May 10: Derek Maxfield will speak about Sherman.

June 14: Chris Bryan’s topic is still to be determined

THANK YOU, MEMBERS

The Round Table wishes to thank John Assini, Jeffrey Falace, Mark Koziol, William Schreiner, Joseph Prezio, Bart Cohen, Benjamin Mastaitis, and Matt George for their donations to the

Operating or Preservation funds. Thank you, as well, to Dean Long for providing refreshments at our meetings.

DUES ARE DUE

Just a reminder, the membership year began in January. Anyone may renew or join at the meeting, send memberships or donations to the Round Table's P.O. Box. or renew or join through our website: www.capitaldistrictcivilwar.org

Donations to the Operating Account and/or Preservation Account are always welcome.

BOARD UPDATES

The Executive Board met via Zoom on February 12. The Operating Account had a balance of \$4,878.79. The Preservation Account's balance was \$4,287.35. The Board voted to donate \$500 to the Watervliet Senior Center for use of their facility for our meetings.

Mark Koziol's social media report mentioned having 141 new followers on Facebook, bringing the total to just shy of 2,500. The Round Table now follows 97 Civil War pages, which amplifies our reach. Popular posts include ones about local regiments, Gettysburg, and reenactment news.

The Board also discussed other ways to spread the word, including press releases about our meetings to local news organizations. One of the challenges we've faced in recent years is a decline in local events and members who could travel to events in places like Gettysburg.

CELEBRATING THE APPOMATTOX SURRENDER: A 2015 REMEMBRANCE: PART ONE

by Rosemary Nichols

The second weekend in April 2015 a group of Capital District CWRT members took a lengthy road trip to Appomattox. We were at once celebrating the 150th anniversary of the ending of the Civil War and raising money for battlefield preservation.

Our friend, long time Round Table member, and regular trip organizer Al McLeod had arranged a series of visits on the way from the Richmond and Petersburg area to Appomattox. This trip was planned to leaven the long days we expected to spend selling the specially created cachets commemorating the event and the other memorabilia that was part of our customary offerings.

We didn't have time to visit Pamplin Historical Park. Those of us who had not seen that property had it firmly placed in our bucket list. Sutherland Tavern, on Namozine Road, saw fighting on April 2, 1865 as the Confederate troops were fleeing westward toward Appomattox Court House where Lee hoped to obtain food and other supplies to keep his army together a little longer.

Four Confederate brigades were overwhelmed by Union troops under Major General Nelson Miles at the tavern. This victory marked the Union capture of the South Side Railroad which severed Lee's last supply line into Petersburg. After the battle the

Tavern, also known as Fork Inn, served as a field hospital for those wounded in the battle.

Namozine Church, our next stop, still has bullet holes in the building's walls from skirmishing near here on April 3, 1865. This was the first time the two armies clashed after Lee evacuated Petersburg and Richmond. Elements of Major General George Armstrong Custer's cavalry under the command of Colonel William Wells caught up with and engaged troops from the rear guard of the retreating Army of Northern Virginia, led by Major General Fitzhugh Lee's horsemen. The Confederates lost the skirmish, together with one gun, 10 caissons, and approximately 350 men captured. This church later served as a field hospital. Bloodstains from that use are still visible on the floor.

Twenty miles further west we came to Amelia Court House. The lone Confederate mortar on the lawn was captured by Union forces on April 5, 1865. Lee's army stopped here on April 4-5 in desperate need of rations. They were disappointed at the arrival of rail cars full of munitions. While better armed, the troops had to continue their hungry retreat.

Lee's plan had been to march south along the Richmond and Danville Railroad toward Danville and North Carolina where he hoped to combine forces with the Confederate army commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston. Without the expected supply Lee had to march farther west into Farmville, where rations actually awaited him.

Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park was in many ways the most interesting

stop short of the Appomattox site. On April 6, 1865, nearly a quarter of the soldiers remaining in the Army of Northern Virginia were wounded, killed, or captured here in a decisive defeat at the hands of Grant's Union force.

The Hillsman House, located across the battlefield from the State Park's visitor's center, was the site where 20 pieces of artillery under the command of Major Andrew Cowan bombarded the Confederate lines on the opposing ridge. Our guide, Al McLeod, is an artillery expert and was able to explain everything we were seeing. Within 72 hours of the horrific fighting at Sailor's Creek, Lee surrendered to Grant.

[Part Two will include the Farmville site with its famous High Bridge and our days at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, special commemorative events and touching reenactments of surrender.]

BUFORD'S VIEW

by Matt George

I just returned from Pat Schroeder's one day conference at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. The trip was long (12+ hours) but the conference itself was free. Three of the presentations were about lesser known battles in the Valley including Jack C. Davis's discussion of the Battle of New Market and Franz Sigal. However, the most interesting talk was by a historian from Virginia Tech named Kurt Luther. Kurt is an associate professor of both computer science and history. He is the founding member of the new Virginia Tech Innovation Campus in Alexandria, Virginia. He is also a senior editor at our good friend Ron Coddington's

Military Images Magazine. He has published a column on Civil War sleuthing for nearly a decade. He also has a B.A. from Purdue and a Ph.D from Georgia Tech. He uses modern photo identification techniques (such as you see in television crime dramas) to identify photos of Civil War soldiers. This was a truly fascinating presentation.

This past Thursday night I heard a panel (including Professor Jennifer Burns, our speaker at our last meeting) discussion of Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King and the Emancipation Proclamation). Dr. Burns was excellent as she was in her talk to us. It was held in Huxley Auditorium in the N.Y.S. Museum. Another panelist was Patricia Spears Jones, Civil Rights Activist and New York City poet. Her most recent poetry collection is entitled: "The Beloved Community" (2023). The third panelist was Dr. Jennifer Lemak, the Chief Curator of History at the N.Y.S. Museum. The preliminary copy of the Emancipation Proclamation which is possessed by the N.Y.S. Museum, will be put on display. This event was part of this year's long running Writers' Institute 2024 Spring celebration.

Another Writers' Institute event in celebration of women's history month will be a panel discussion by four women storytellers spinning yarns about strong and influential women past and present. This free event will be held March 3rd at Recital Hall SUNY Albany Performing Arts at 2:00PM.

On Thursday, March 14 Alice Green and historian Amy Godine will discuss Godine's new book "The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice on the Adirondack Frontier." It is about the 3,000 black families who lived in the Witherbee N.Y. area as mostly farmers on land gifted by upstate abolitionist Gerrit Smith. This briefly included John Brown and his family who lived in Timbuctoo one of the settlements there.

Harold Holzer's newest book on Lincoln was just released. It is entitled "Brought Forth on This Continent – Abraham Lincoln and American Immigration".

TRIVIA: For you baseball fans, what legendary Brooklyn Dodger pitcher (think 1955) came from Witherbee, N.Y.?

**CDCWRT
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_____ If checked, we have not received your membership renewal as of Feb. 12.

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
or email: cdcwrt@hotmail.com

THE OFFICERS

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At-Large	Rik Scarce	At-Large	(open)
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Refreshments	Dean Long and Luanne Whitbeck		
Webmaster			
Education	Matt George		
Newsletter	Rosemary Nichols and Erin Baillargeon		