

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.cdcwrt.net



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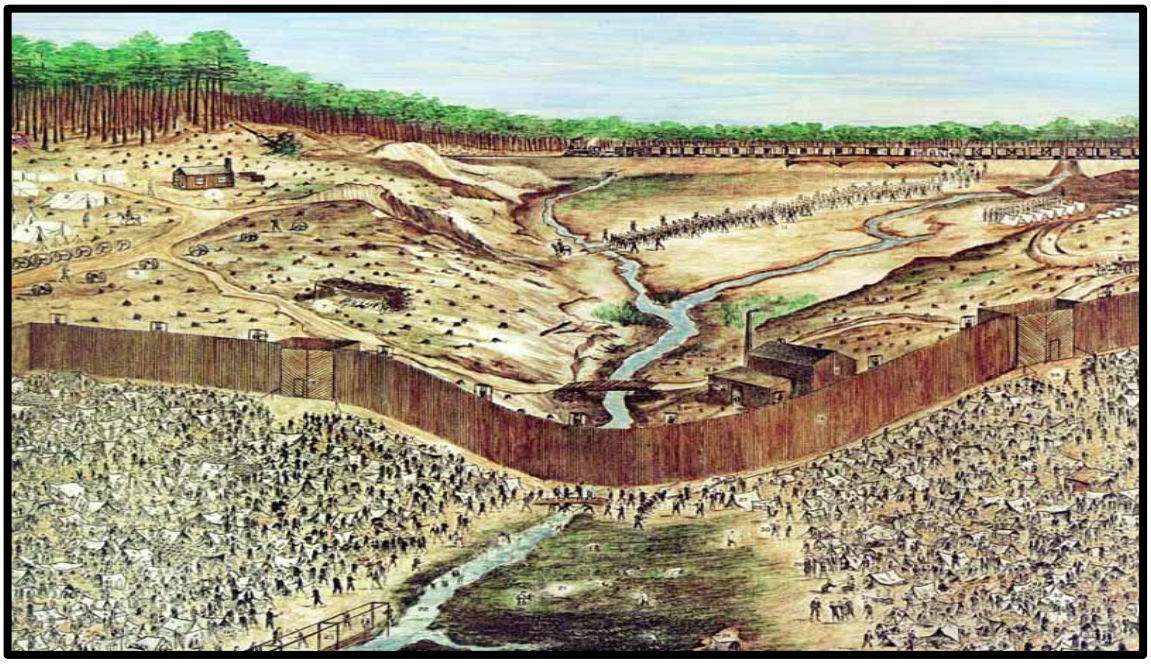
ANDERSONVILLE DEPICTED BY THOMAS O'DEA



O'Dea sailed from Ireland to Boston as a child. He was in his teens when he enlisted in the 16th Maine in 1863. He was captured in the Battle of the Wilderness and was sent to Andersonville. He was released on February 24, 1865, emaciated and ill. He returned to Boston but his family was gone. In the early 1870s he moved to Cohoes, NY and worked as a mason.

Photographs of Andersonville and its prisoners were viewed by many, but it was O'Dea's lithograph of a bird's eye view of the prison that sold over 10,000 copies, up to $5 each. He was successful and moved from the town's mill section on Summit Street to the fashionable homes on Walnut Street. Because of his fame, he was able to reunite with his brother after 25 years. Thomas returned to visit Andersonville in 1914 on the 50th anniversary of his capture.

He married Catherine McGuinness and had 5 children. He died in 1926 and is buried in St. Agnes Cemetery. His large Andersonville drawing was donated by his daughter to the Fenimore Cooper House for the Centennial of the Civil War. The original sketch has disappeared.

5DECEMBER MEETING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2014

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

AN IRISH IMMIGRANT SOLDIER

DAN CURRY

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 – 7:15 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:15 – 7:45 p.m.**
Discussion	**7:45 - -8:15 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

The December meeting of the CDCWRT is also the annual Holiday meeting. It will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center, and our very special speaker will be Dan Curry. Dan will speak about his relative in a talk entitled, **"The Story of an Irish Immigrant Soldier."**

Dan says, "I'm my talk." He will follow the life of Thomas J. Curry and his sister, Anne. Their stories are a testament to the Irish struggle in America around the time of the Civil War. As a people, the Irish have endured racism, and hate, and poverty. The Irish had to sacrifice everything in the bloodiest war that claimed over 700,000 lives. "Without Thomas's and Anne's sacrifice, I would probably not be here today."

Therefore, it is always important to honor your ancestors, and find out their stories. "Hopefully, sharing this story will encourage others to look at history on a more personal level, and find it as the source of your very own life."

Some of the old-time members of the CDCWRT may remember Dan as a former student member of the Round Table. Dan is now a student at St. Rose College, and is studying to be a high school history teacher. When he was younger, he was introduced to the CDCWRT, which helped him maintain his love for the Civil War. He became a Civil War re-enactor with the 125th New York Infantry. We are honored to have him reunited with the CDCWRT so he can share his research and personal story.

It is suggested that attendees of the December meeting bring some holiday snack to share with others. The Round Table will provide the usual fare of drinks and snacks in addition.

BOARD MEETING

At the Board meeting on Monday, November 24th, the following was approved to submit to the membership at the December meeting.

1. **Request a 1 year waiver of Article II, section 2 of the by-laws, limiting the term of president to not more than 2 successive terms**
2. **Proposed slate for 2015:**
   President – Rosemary Nichols
   Vice-President - Mark Koziol
   Secretary – Erin Baillargeon
   Treasurer – Fran McCashion
   At-Large – Art Henningson
   At-Large – Steve Muller
   At – Large – Tom Timmons

At the 151st Remembrance Day at Gettysburg, Matt George, Rosemary Nichols and Matt Farina raised $601 in sales. The 4th Civil War conference lost $1207.

.ANOTHER EDITORIAL

Everyone who attended our 4th Civil War Conference would agree that it was an excellent conference. The buffet dinner was delicious and plentiful with plenty of doggie plates to take home. Chris Kolakowski then spoke about the collapse of the dangerous Confederate Navy on four fronts in 1864.

Saturday's speakers covered Civil War topics that are not commonly discussed and everyone gained new information and insight. The day ended with Frank O'Reilly's masterful discussion of the Overland Campaign and its impact on the 1864 presidential election. On Sunday we all learned about the USCT at Milliken's Bend, a small engagement that cast a large shadow on the hopes of the Confederacy. Then we were treated to an in-person presentation of Frederick Douglass by David Anderson. It centered on Douglass's feelings at the time two of his sons enlisted in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. David was given a standing ovation.

You will note from the Board meeting that the Round Table lost $1207 on the conference. This was due to a lukewarm turnout of members and local residents, and NOT because Matt George was too ambitious in his program. Out of town speakers were provided with transportation, room and food costs. We used Motel 8. I believe no speaker requested an honorarium, and Chris and Frank came in Sue's memory. As a member of the Round Table, I paid a full fee. In contrast, Jeff Shaara requires a $10,000 appearance fee.

Local papers provided absolutely no publicity support. In order to "get the word out," Matt George personally handed out conference information to libraries, historical societies, some clubs, college, history departments and at every living history presentation he did. One college professor even offered extra credit for students who attended. But the reality was that there were not enough cash-paying customers to provide revenue for expected costs.

Now I know every member had an excuse for not attending. I know that some were good and legitimate excuses, and my words are not for them. Three, Art Henningson, xxxxxx, and XXXXXX could not attend, but sent in sizeable donations as supporters, and they are to be a applauded for their generosity.

So what happens now? Potentially a great deal happens. While it is not the goal of the Round Table to make a profit on a conference, we do want to break even, or at worst, lose a few hundred dollars. The goal is to bring quality speakers to the membership to inform the membership and hopefully encourage others to join the group. We especially need to ignite interest in younger people. Today's social media represents an all-consuming force which leaves little time for studying our past in order to understand how and why we are where we are. As I write this, there are marches in multiple cities and violence in Ferguson. Does any member NOT believe this has its roots in the Civil War? Do our children or grandchildren understand this?

The Board will decide if there is to be a 2015 conference at all. I have announced to the Board that I will no longer be involved with postal cancelation events in Gettysburg. Interest in postal commemorative is waning also. Again, no new members have expressed interest in participating in fund raising. Since those who go to Gettysburg pay their own way, the personal cost in time and money is NOT off-set by the revenues generated for the Round Table. I will organize participation for Appomattox, Bentonville and Bennett Farm because they are nearer to my North Carolina home. But after these, fund raising activities for the CDCWRT will consist of raffles and book sales and maybe an occasional dinner.

I truly fear that the CDCWRT is waning and is threatened by the same lethargy that has affected other round tables in the country. Not enough members picked up the gauntlet from the October editorial. This year's conference title, ***The Beginning of the End,*** may have been prophetic.