



The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

Capital District Civil War Round Table

P.O. Box 14871, Albany, NY 12212-4871

Volume 13 Number 2

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Due to construction at the Bethlehem Public Library, **the time and location of our meeting is being moved.** The October meeting (and possibly December, so watch this space for further details) will be held **Friday, October 13** at the **Guilderland Public Library** on Western Avenue. The doors will open at 6:30 PM and the **meeting will start at 7:00 PM sharp**, as we will be required to vacate the room by 9:00 PM. While we have not seen it yet, we are informed that the library offers a very large and comfortable meeting room.

From the east, Western Ave. is reached from the southern end of the Northway; take a right on Western to the intersection of Route 155. The library is on the left, just past the second light after crossing Rt. 155. From the west, it is on the right, past the second traffic light after passing Rt. 146 (the one to Altamont.)

Our October meeting features our own **Mark Bodnar** as speaker. His topic will be "Lt. William Pohlman- An American Hero." Pohlman, a transplanted Albanian, left Rutgers College in 1861 to enlist in the 1st New Jersey Volunteers as a private, was detached to the newly formed Signal Corps in 1862, and was promoted to a lieutenancy with the 59th NYVI in January 1863. His military career spanned the retreat from First Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Pohlman and the 59th were stationed in front of the Copse of Trees on Cemetery Ridge on July 2 & 3, 1863. During the cannonade prior to Pickett's Charge, Pohlman received a serious shoulder wound. Urged to retire to the rear, he

replied "Not while I have my sword arm left." An hour later, during the Charge, a minie ball shattered the hilt of his sword, penetrated his wrist and passed up his arm. One of his men pushed his ramrod into the wound to keep it from bleeding and bound up the arm, before Pohlman turned away and walked three miles to the Second Corps hospital. Believed to be recovering, Pohlman was moved into a private residence in the town, where a secondary hemorrhaging set in and he sank rapidly. His final words, delivered through his delirium, were an order to his men to "Cease Firing." He now lies under a magnificent stone in the Albany Rural Cemetery.

Mark is a three year member of CDCWRT

*Mark Silo
talked at fire house Euphrates Firehouse*

and presently serves as an At-Large Board Member. He is a Program Analyst at the Watervliet Arsenal and lives in Loudonville with his wife and family. He stumbled across Pohlman's stone in Albany Rural some years ago, and was smitten. He has spent the last five years researching Pohlman's life and family history, and has put together a very well designed presentation. He has lectured on the topic to a number of local historical societies and fraternal groups, and has several more on tap, including the Gettysburg CWRT in April 1996.

CDCWRT CALENDAR

OCT. 11 SCHENECTADY ARCHIVES DAY POSTAL CANCELLATION: Held at Schenectady City Hall from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Officials will be giving tours of the City Archives, and discussing the records available there.

OCT. 13 MEMBERSHIP MEETING: See the front page.

OCT. 19 LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Michael Barrett will be delivering his long awaited [to him] slide lecture "Troy in the Civil War." Eight PM at the Herman Melville house, in historic North Troy. Open to the public.

NOV. 10 V.A. HOSPITAL POSTAL CANCELLATION: In Albany. Set to coincide with the Veteran's Day celebration. Additional details will follow.

NOV. 11 SONS OF UNION VETERANS: A ceremony in Albany Rural cemetery to rededicate the grave monument of General von Steinwehr, which was damaged during a theft. More details next month.

NOV. 11 ANNUAL FALL BANQUET: This year we are honored to have the return of noted author, historian and

CDCWRT life member **John Hennessy**. John will be speaking on "The Flawed Machine: The Army of the Potomac at Antietam." You can be sure that this will be a good one! More details inside!

DEC. 3 VICTORIAN STROLL POSTAL CANCELLATION: In beautiful and historic Troy, NY, in conjunction with the annual Rensselaer County Historical Society "Greens Show." [Ed.: This alone would be worth the trip.] An expected two locations will give us another opportunity to copy old military photos for sharing with the US Army Historical Institute at Carlyle Barracks, as well as sell the postal cachets. More details will follow.

DEC. 8 MEETING: Our annual potpourri night where members who don't have enough material to do a full lecture get to do short presentations on the topics of their choice. Always an interesting evening of historical vignettes, relics and memorabilia, family histories, etc. There are still one or two spots available, so contact Nancy Shour or Mark Bodnar.

JAN. 12 FIRST '96 MEETING: Dave Carhart will speak on the Watervliet Arsenal, and it's industrial and economic contributions to the Union war effort.

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CDCWRT NEWS

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The season opening meeting was a resounding success, due in part to the large number of new faces present. This was due to a combination of the 80 complimentary copies of the Dispatch which we mailed out to those who signed up at the stamp cachet sales locations, as well as a nice article in the previous day's issue of the Albany Times-Union. This article featured the historical map making work of our speaker, **Earl McElfresh**, and the company which he founded with his wife. His Civil War battle maps have been accepted into the collections of the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and Harvard University,

among others.

The 102 members and guests who came to see Earl discuss the trials and travails of the Civil War topographical engineers and mapmakers were richly rewarded. Earl was a very lively and humorous speaker, making liberal use of anecdotes and amusing historical vignettes. The only downside that can be reported is that due to Earl's warming to the subject, and a goodly number of audience questions, the social hour afterwards was necessarily abbreviated. So for those of you who came hoping to mingle and make some new friends, please make the effort to come back this month, and we'll make sure that there is enough time for us to do so. [Ed. note: After all, we certainly couldn't be rude to Earl and cut him off when he was obviously having such a good time. But this month, we have our own **Mark Bodnar**, and... well, to be frank, some of us absolutely delight in being rude to Mark, even though it's awfully easy.]

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MASON-DIXON LINE

During the mad rush to clean up and get out after the last meeting, someone (and I can't for the life of me remember who) asked about the Mason-Dixon line. Courtesy of Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia, here is the one minute paraphrase of the answer:

The original line was surveyed between 1763-67 by two British astronomers, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, in order to resolve a dispute between Maryland's Calvert family and the Penn's of Pennsylvania. The conflict arose under William Penn's charter description in 1681, which appeared to grant him a sizeable piece of northern Maryland, which had already been granted to the Calverts. The line was drawn from the Delaware River to a point 244 miles west, and despite the need for fine tuning in 1773 and 1779, became the agreed boundary between the two colonies.

The term Mason-Dixon Line came into popular usage to designate the line dividing the free states from the slave states during the Congressional debates leading to the Missouri Compromise of 1820. That legislation forbid the extension of slavery into any of the Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36.30', excepting Missouri. So, as used in this sense, the term meant not only the old disputed border line but also the line of the Ohio River from the Pennsylvania boundary to it's mouth, where it flows into the

Mississippi, then up and around the east, north and west boundaries of Missouri, and then westward along the 36.30' parallel. The term is still used occasionally to refer to the separation of the country into northern and southern regions.

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NOVEMBER BANQUET

As you know from the calendar, the annual November banquet will feature our one and only CDCWRT life member, **John J. Hennessy**, as speaker. John is the author of two books dealing with the two battles at Manassas, as well as a goodly number of magazine articles dealing with various incidents and issues of the war. His first book The First Battle of Manassas- An End To Innocence, was published in 1989 as part of the 100 volume Virginia Civil War Battles and Leaders Series. His second book, the critically acclaimed Return to Bull Run- The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas was published by Simon & Schuster in 1993. He is in great demand as a tour guide, and I doubt if any of our members who took the trip to the Manassas battlefields with John two years ago will ever forget the sheer joy of walking the ground with the acknowledged expert. His tremendous knowledge and easy going manner makes him a natural on the "cannonball circuit" and he speaks to a number of historical organizations every year. John is currently working on his *magnum opus*, a study of the subordinate command of the Army of the Potomac. This probably explains his topic for our banquet, "The Flawed Machine: The Army of the Potomac at Antietam." Those of you who know John, or have seen him in action, know what an absolute treat we are in for, and you others will just have to take my word for it. Take this as fair warning; if you have the opportunity to come, and you miss it, you'll hate yourself afterwards when everyone talks about what a great night it was. The reservation flyer is enclosed. Send it in now, as this one will be a sell-out.

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SPRING BANQUET

The Executive Board has been discussing moving the annual Spring "Cabin Fever" banquet from March to April, in order to help alleviate the possibility of bad weather as a factor, although we have been awfully lucky in this regard up to this point. This would start in 1997, if we do it, as we

are close to confirming another excellent speaker for March '96. There are good points on both sides of the issue, so we have decided to throw the question open to the membership. Do you have thoughts on the matter? Please feel free to discuss this with any Board member at your convenience.

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U.S.S. MONITOR

Joe Zarzynski of Bateaux Below, Inc. recently sent us a posting from the Internet which should be shared. If I am reading correctly through all of the gibberish, there has apparently been a rumor circulating that the U.S. Navy has been attempting to remove the anchor from the wreck of the U.S.S. Monitor. In order to clarify the situation, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has posted a mission summary with a request that it be disseminated to all interested groups.

"During August-September 1995, NOAA initiated the Monitor Archaeological Research, Recovery and Stabilization Mission (MARRS'95) at the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. NOAA was joined in this effort by the U.S. Navy, The Mariners' Museum and the National Undersea Research Program of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The mission consists of two segments: one, a NOAA diving reconnaissance operation, and the other a major effort to stabilize the stern and to recover and remove its propeller.

In 1991, a private fishing vessel anchored illegally on the Monitor. The incident apparently resulted in an increased rate of deterioration of the Monitor's stern. The skeg, which once supported the propeller and the rudder, was torn loose from the lower hull and now lies off to the side, exposing the aft end of the machinery space and providing no further support to the propeller. Other catastrophic changes to the stern have also been recorded since 1991.

MARRS'95 was interrupted by the threat of hurricanes and tropical storms. On September 2, the Navy salvage ship USS Edenton was forced to leave the sanctuary and return to its base in Little Creek, VA. The Navy is examining its schedule to determine if the Edenton will be able to return to Hatteras to complete MARRS'95 later this year.

If the propeller is recovered, it will be transported to The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA where it will be conserved, treated to reacclimatize it to the air and placed on exhibit.

The Mariners' Museum is the official museum for the curation and interpretation of the Monitor Collection of artifacts and archival material."

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VIDEO LIBRARY

Joe Stracuzzi, our new video librarian, has requested that the titles of our current films be listed. These tapes are available for loan at the monthly meetings, for one month periods, free of charge. The only thing we ask is that they be returned promptly, either in person or by mail, so that the other members may also enjoy them. We are also more than happy to accept donations of additional tapes that you may have collecting dust on your video rack.

NON-BATTLE OR FICTION

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. Andersonville Trial
3. Red Badge of Courage

CDCWRT FIELD TRIPS

4. Antietam and Harpers Ferry
5. Fredericksburg-Chancellorsville-Wilderness-Spotsylvania
6. The Wilderness Safari

SERIES

7. Classic- Battle of Antietam
8. Classic- Battle of Shiloh
9. Smithsonian- Volumes 1 through 7

SINGLES

10. Antietam- The Bloodiest Day
11. Battle of Chicamauga
12. Battle of Gettysburg
13. Battle of Spotsylvania
14. The Civil War (two tapes)
15. Grant's 1864 Campaign

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CORRESPONDENCE

We have received a letter (forwarded through **Bob Mulligan**) from a lady in Massachusetts who is researching a CW soldier, and seeks assistance. For the sake of brevity, I will paraphrase the information. She is looking for information about Thaddeus Hyde, of Pittstown, NY, who mustered with Company D of the 125th NYVI on August 27, 1862. He was wounded and captured at the Wilderness on May 6, 1864, which resulted in imprisonment at the P.O.W. compounds at Andersonville, GA, and later at Florence, SC,

Capital District Civil War Round Table

presents



The 1995



ANNUAL FALL BANQUET

Saturday, November 11, 1995

"The Flawed Machine" The Army of the Potomac at Antietam

We are extremely pleased to feature noted author, historian and our one and only CDCWRT life member, JOHN J. HENNESSY, as this year's speaker. John is the author of two books dealing with the two battles at Manassas, as well as magazine articles too numerous to enumerate here. His first book, The First Battle of Manassas- An End To Innocence was published in 1989 as part of the Virginia Civil War Battles and Leaders Series. His second book, the critically acclaimed Return to Bull Run- The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas was published by Simon & Schuster in 1993. He is in great demand as a battlefield tour guide and lecturer and he speaks to a number of historical organizations every year. John is currently working on his *magnum opus*, a study of the subordinate command of the Army of the Potomac

ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER
WASHINGTON AVENUE EXTENSION
ALBANY, NY

COCKTAILS.....6:30 TO 7:30 p.m.
DINNER.....7:30
PRICE.....\$23.50 PER PERSON

where he died October 19, 1864. The writer has a tintype photo, forty letters that Thaddeus wrote to various family members [Ed: Ssssh! Listen carefully and you can hear all the 125th people panting] and a poor condition lithograph listing all the members of his regiment. She seeks any further information, and offers to pay costs. Also included in her letter is a fair amount of his family information, so if anyone is interested in assisting, let me know and I will turn over the letter. She may be reached at: Nancy K. Ayers, 33 River Park Drive, Hampden, MA 01036.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Our Treasurer *extraordinaire* **Matt Farina** reports that the current balance as of September 27, 1995 is \$8,891.95, with the lion's share of that being attributed to the very strong postal cachet sales which we have been discussing here for the past few months.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The Board met on September 27, 1995, at Holmes and Watson in historic downtown **Troy**. [Please remember that these meetings are open to all members, whether you have something to discuss, or are just looking for a good reason to get out of the house and have a beer or two. The next Board meetings are scheduled for 10/25, 11/22 and 12/27/95, and start at 7:30 PM.]

The Board discussed the Fall and Spring banquets, which are reported elsewhere. Also addressed was the issue of expenses for these dinners, as we have been consistently flirting with the break-even point over the last several years. The dinners are not seen as a major fund raising event, but they are supposed to pay for themselves, and hopefully make a small profit, which can be plowed back into our preservation and educational missions. Unfortunately, that has not always happened. To help remedy this situation, the Board voted to raise the fee for dinner by one dollar per person. That extra \$70-90 should ensure that the break-even point is met.

Sue Knost reported on the CW commemorative stamp and cachet sales program which has been ongoing since the end of June. Sales continue to be strong, and there are several more locations currently on tap until the end of the

year, and which are listed in the calendar. Volunteers are always welcome, and will be especially needed at the Victorian Stroll celebration in December [Where's that you say? Why in beautiful and historic **Troy**!] We are anticipating having two locations, one inside and one outside. The inside spot will give us an opportunity to set up another copy stand to reproduce military images brought by attendees, for sharing with the US Army Historical Institute at Carlyle Barracks. We would also like to have interested individuals set up displays and exhibits, so that we have a very strong presence at the event. Please contact **Sue** or **Dan Lorello** if you'd like to help out.

Raffle tickets for the McElfresh maps of Gettysburg are selling well. The drawing will be done at the November banquet. There is an alternate prize of a \$200 savings bond, in case your friends and family members aren't interested in these lovely framed maps. We would like to ask that all those who will be coming to the October meeting bring in the stubs and money that they have already collected, in order to make the tallying easier. All those who have tickets outstanding and will not be coming to the meeting or the banquet will need to get them to a Board member before the dinner. Of course, there are still tickets available, in case you have thought of some other people you haven't harassed into buying a few tickets. Contact any Board member for assistance.

We have also received the special print of Don Troiani's "The Lone Star" which is a gift in appreciation of our recent donation of \$750 to the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. We had originally planned on using this as a raffle prize for the Spring banquet, but there is now a rumor floating around that the Postal Service is so pleased with the success of the current CW commemorative series that they are considering a second series. This new set would use personalities and images which didn't make the cut for the first series, and thus could be brought out fairly quickly. If this second set becomes a reality, we will put together another cachet sales program and use the Troiani print as a raffle prize during the life of that program, which would push the drawing off until next Fall. This enables us to hawk tickets to many more people than we normally can reach, which of course means more money to give away. If this does come to pass, we will need to find something else appropriate for the Spring banquet raffle. Any suggestions [preferably spelled "d-o-n-a-t-e-d"] will be gratefully accepted.

CDCWRT
P.O. Box 14871
Albany, New York 12212-4871



Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly at the Bethlehem Public Library in Delmar, New York. This newsletter is published ten times per year. Annual dues are \$15. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.



To join or renew membership, send \$15 to the CDCWRT address below.

The Officers

Chairman	Dan Lorello
Vice-Chair	Sue Knost
Treasurer	Matt Farina
Secretary	Robert Johnson
At-Large	Mark Bodnar
At-Large	Joe Stracuzzi
Ex-Officio	Michael Barrett

The Troops

Programs	Nancy Shour
Newsletter	Michael Barrett
Preservation	Richard Becker
Field Trips	Mark Silo, Kathy Silo
Banquets	Michael Aikey, Kathy Silo
Refreshments	Nancy Shour
Membership	Kathy Silo, Russ Denegar
Video Library	Joe Stracuzzi
Historian	Ray Smith