



The Dispatch



Newsletter of the

Capital District Civil War Round Table

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

Volume 12 Number 8

April 1995

APRIL PROGRAM

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 1995

Bethlehem Public Library
Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY

Doors Open: 7:00 PM
Program Begins: 7:30 PM

Our April program will feature our own **Michael Russert**, who will speak on the heroics offered up by Stannard's Vermont Brigade at the battle of Gettysburg. Being a brigade composed of ninety day volunteers, Gettysburg was their only battle. However, the part that they played in moving forward from the Cemetery Ridge line to provide enfilade fire on the right flank of Pickett's attack, and then wheeling to help force back Wilcox's attack, is seen by many as a major factor in the ultimate Union victory that day. A reference from a diary entry by a southern officer who was present on the Confederate right, who saw the Vermonters forming up on his flank, provides the lecture title, "We knew we were doomed."

Michael is a ten-year member of the CDCWRT, and is our recently retired Program Chair. He is a sixth grade teacher in a local school district. Besides working on a Masters degree in Civil War Studies at Empire State College, he teaches an honors level elementary program in history at the Shenendahowa schools. He also reviews new books for the Civil War News, and the Civil War Regiments series. In his spare time, he takes naps.

CDCWRT CALENDAR

- April 27:** **Friends of Grant's Cottage** - Trip to Grant's Tomb and West Point. Details inside.
- April 29:** **Revolutionary War Trip** - To Fort Stanwix and Wood Creek in Utica, and the Oriskany Battlefield. See details and flyer inside.
- May 12:** **Meeting: Nancy Shour** will discuss Capt. Henry Lee Higginson, of the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry.
- June 9:** **Meeting: Ray Smith** will speak on the Mexican-American War as the training ground for the officer corps of both the North and South.
- Sept. 8; Oct. 13; Nov. 11 (Banquet) and Dec. 8, 1995:** Meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year. Details to follow.

CDCWRT NEWS

USED MAGAZINE SALE

As a special event at this month's meeting, we will be holding a used magazine sale. All of you members who have old Civil War magazines lying around may bring them in to donate to the cause. They will all be displayed on tables before and after the meeting, and all attending can purchase them for the price of 50 cents each. This is a great way to "spread the wealth" of all of those magazines you just couldn't bear to throw away, but that you don't reread anyway. Besides, you can now pick up some new reading material really cheap. Such a deal!

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MARCH MEETING

The annual Cabin Fever Banquet was a big success, with 70 members watching author and historian **John Michael Priest** speak on the tactics that evolved of necessity during the confusion of the battle of the Wilderness, in May 1864. Using overhead maps as a visual aid, Michael proved to be an excellent and entertaining speaker, who brought an obviously tremendous grasp of the battle into play during the lecture. If his new work on the battle is half as good as his lecture, we are in for a literary treat.

Michael and his wife also fit right into the usual spirit of these dinner meetings, taking numerous cheap shots at **Lance Ingmire** and his personal favorite regiment, the 95th N.Y.V.I. "Running Dogs." [Just kidding, Lance.] On an even more interesting note, Lance brought with him the attractive and delightful **Susie Ingmire**, whom he claims is his wife. On the assumption that this might actually be true, we are now putting together a working hypothesis that bride buying is still practiced out there in the hinterlands near Rochester, and that Susie's family really got the worst of the deal. [Not kidding, Lance.]

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KUDOS

Our own **Michael Aikey** has published again! His latest article, entitled "Flamboyant Garibaldi Guards" appears in the May 1995 issue of America's Civil War magazine. This is the enthralling story of Colonel 'Count' Frederick G. D'Utassy, a Hungarian immigrant who bestowed upon himself a noble background and a military reputation as a European revolutionary, without either being founded in fact. D'Utassy commanded the 39th N.Y. Volunteer Infantry "Garibaldi Guards," until being cashiered and sentenced to Sing Sing Prison for certain financial irregularities, including the selling of government horses for his own benefit and the submission of fraudulent enlistment expense vouchers for reimbursement.

Most of you will probably remember that Michael spoke to us some time ago on this very subject, but with a much more interesting title. Such are the ways of editors.

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MORE KUDOS

Word has reached me that author, historian and our one and only life member **John Hennessy** has been promoted by the National Park Service. Sometime later this year, John will be assuming the position of Assistant Superintendent of the Fredricksburg National Battlefield Park. One unexpected bonus of this promotion is that John now becomes the boss of that Yankee-baiting **Bob Krick**, who most of you will recognize as our Fall Banquet speaker from last year. Congratulations, John! [Say, if we come down to Fredricksburg on the Fall trip this year, can you make Bob fetch the coffee, or some other equally demeaning act? We'll have to talk about this!]

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TREASURERS REPORT

Matt Farina reports that our current balance, as of March 28, 1995, is \$3,400.85. This includes the Banquet figures, which involved a "loss" of \$3.09, after payment of all expenses, including transportation, room & honorarium for Mr. & Mrs. Priest. Additionally, the raffle of the Dale Gallon original pen and ink sketch brought in \$193.00, for which we need to thank **Matt Farina** for the donation, and **Kathy Silo** for the framing.

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TRAVELING COMPANION WANTED

Russ Denegar advises that he will be driving down to Tupelo, Mississippi for the annual meeting of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites. As the lovely **Catherine** will not be joining him on this jaunt, he is looking for an amiable companion. He will be leaving on or about May 1, and returning on May 8 or 9, 1995. If anyone is interested, please contact Russ at 439-1610 for details. As an interesting bonus, Russ intends to arrive in time for the special Vicksburg tour that is offered for APCWS life members, of which he is one. As this Roundtable is also a life member, the potential "road tripper" will be able to act as our delegate on this tour. Not a bad deal!

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REVOLUTIONARY WAR TRIP

As has been previously announced, we are running a bus trip to Fort Stanwix and Wood Creek in Utica, and the Oriskany battlefield, on April 29, 1995. Our guide is **Anthony Wayne Tommell**,

Chief Historian at Fort Stanwix, T.V. historical personality, and former student of **Bob Mulligan** (although I daresay he would probably list these in a different order.) **Mark Silo** reports that tickets are moving briskly, so grab the enclosed flyer and return it *today*. If you get shut out of this one, you will really regret it.

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NEW BOARD MEMBER

Richard Becker's resignation as a Board member has been sadly accepted. In his place, the Board intends to appoint **Mark Bodnar**, who volunteered to serve during the Banquet meeting. [In a break with long standing tradition, we didn't even have to remind him the following morning that he had agreed!] We would all like to take this opportunity to offer our thanks to Richard for his service over the years, as well as to Mark for picking up the banner.

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FRIENDS OF GRANT COTTAGE TRIP

The Friends bus trip to the Grant Tomb in N.Y.C. and West Point on April 27, 1995, is now reported to be sold out. A short waiting list will be maintained, so if you are interested but failed to act when you were first told to, please call (518) 584-2472 as soon as possible.

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G.A.R. MEMORIAL BOOK

The New York Department of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is offering a memorial book commemorating 125 years of the Grand Army of the Republic in New York State. This soft-cover book features photographs and descriptions of G.A.R. and other Civil War monuments in cemeteries and parks throughout N.Y.S., as well as several extant G.A.R. halls.

The cost of the book is \$6.50 which includes shipping. They are available by writing to Danny Wheeler, N.Y. Dept. of S.U.V., 501 Willow Ave., Ithaca, NY 14850. Checks may be made payable to the Sons of Union Veterans.

S.U.V. GRAVE MARKER CAMPAIGN

[We have recently received a press release from the Sons of Union Veterans that we believe deserves to be run in its entirety.]

ALBANY, NY - The growing collector

interest in Grand Army of the Republic memorabilia has led to an increase in the theft of G.A.R. grave markers from cemeteries. Veterans' grave markers and flag holders are frequently found for sale at antique shows and flea markets. The New York Department of the Sons of Union Veterans is disgusted at this trade in the grave markers of their ancestors and is determined to stop it.

Section 450-a of the New York State General Business Law forbids "the buying or selling of metal cemetery markers and flag holders bearing the insignia of any veterans' organization placed upon the graves of veterans" except by veterans organizations and manufacturers of such items. Violators are subject to a fine of \$500.00 and/or 15 days in jail. The Sons of Union Veterans wishes to inform the antique-collecting community in New York that trade in such items is illegal. Beginning immediately, the Brothers of the Sons of Union Veterans will launch a drive for maximum enforcement of this section of the law. Members will visit antique shows, flea markets, dealers, and other places where these items are usually sold. If they see veterans' markers for sale, they will return with the police.

For further information, contact Lewis Warner, N.Y.S. Dept. of the Sons of Union Veterans, c/o Col. George L. Willard Camp, P.O. Box 13681, Albany, NY 12212.

As a follow up to the above, I am pleased to report that there have been two separate related incidents reported in the local papers. On March 21, 1995, the Times Union carried a story about Doug Smith of Altamont, S.U.V. state vice commander, confronting a seller at the Saratoga Springs gun show. When the seller refused to comply with a request to remove a grave marker from his sale table, Smith brought back the police, under whose guidance an agreement was reached whereby the marker was given over to Smith. The marker was then carried to the Albany Rural Cemetery, where it was installed on the grave of an 18 year old drummer boy from Albany who was killed at Antietam, and whose original marker had disappeared.

On March 29, the Times Union reported that a Vietnam vet, who had seen the previous

publicity, spotted a G.A.R. marker at an auction in New Lebanon. **Ross Jones**, of East Greenbush, advised the auctioneer of the law, but was rebuffed. Quoting from the article:

"I attempted to convince the auctioneer it wasn't an appropriate thing to sell. He told me it was part of the estate and he was bound to sell it," said Jones. Jones said he decided to force the issue. "I said 'I'll give you one \$10 bid on it and guarantee I will donate it'" to someone for placement on a veteran's grave. Apparently won over by his zeal, no one else in the crowd made a bid, and he was the owner of the marker.

Jones is now working with S.U.V. Camp President **Bill Halpin** to find an appropriate grave on which to install Jones' medallion. Additionally, due to the publicity, a third medallion has been turned in to the S.U.V. by an anonymous citizen, who desired that it find its way home to a veteran's grave.

[Ed. note: Is it just my nitpicker training, or did anyone else pick up on the fact that Ross Jones, no matter how well intentioned his motive, is now also technically guilty of unauthorized buying of a grave marker? In such gray areas do lawyers earn their sustenance.]

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BOARD MEETING

At the April meeting of the Executive Committee, held on March 29, 1995, a number of issues were discussed. Taking them slightly out of order to maintain continuity with the above article, the Committee voted unanimously to endorse and support the Sons of Union Veterans in their campaign to prevent the continued desecration and theft of veterans' markers from our cemeteries. We would like to encourage every member to assist in this process, and make your thoughts and concerns known promptly if you should encounter any of these markers in locations or situations that suggest impropriety. If we don't protect our honored dead, who will?

Further issues discussed were the Treasurers, and Banquet reports which are detailed elsewhere, and the obtaining of new stationary for the organization. With the current advances in desk top publishing, it appears that we may be able to

save a substantial sum by preparing our own stationary rather than looking to a printer. This would also allow us to customize and update the papers as needed.

The Fort Stanwix/Oriskany trip is now less than one month away, and should be a sell out.

The Board voted to donate \$100.00 to the Blue & Gray Band of the Lisha Kill School, to help defray their expenses for a trip to Gettysburg this coming July. As most of you may know, this is a grade school group of musicians who play C.W. period music, and they have played at various locations around the area. They have now incorporated as a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the music of the period. We should all wish them well in their studies, and good luck in their endeavors.

Lastly, **Sue Knost** reported on her project of using a series of pictorial stamp cancellations as a fund raiser for our organizational preservation efforts. This would tie in to a new series of Civil War stamps that will be issued this summer, and would entail establishing temporary postal "stations" at various locations and events throughout the season. These would be located throughout the Capital District, as well as Lake Placid (the John Brown farm.) While we would have no financial obligation toward this, there is a distinct possibility of earning some serious money from the stamp collectors and souvenir hunters out there. What we will need to pull this off is a constant group of warm bodies to assist with the sale of the postal covers, and possibly, to talk up the Roundtable to potential members. More details will follow, but we really do need each member to start thinking about donating a little bit of time, so that only a few of us don't have to think about putting in a whole lot of time.

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BIG BET WON

I am pleased to announce that in response to a wager laid down by our former editor, **Bob Johnson**, I have managed to produce an entire issue of this newsletter without once mentioning the beautiful and incredibly historic City of Troy, N.Y. As a result, Bob now owes me. . . wait a second. . . what the. . . why do I suddenly feel like I've been snookered as bad as **Susie Ingmire's** father?

Capital District Civil War Round Table

Presents a Revolutionary Spring Battlefield Tour

Battle of Oriskany and Fort Stanwix

Saturday April 29, 1995

Guide: **Mr. Anthony Wayne Tommell**
Chief Historian, Fort Stanwix National Monument
Recognized Authority on the Campaigns of 1777
Featured on A&E Television's "The American Revolution"

Our Plan: We will depart at 8:30am from Crossgates Mall via Upstate Tours Bus. We will proceed to Fort Stanwix and join our guide for detailed tours of the Fort and the Oriskany battlefield. We will make a lunch stop at a convenient "fast food" restaurant. We expect to return to Crossgates between 5:00 and 6:00pm.

Cost: \$35.00 per person; \$20.00 students; \$80.00 family maximum

Mission: To see and learn a bit of our local history, have some fun, and raise a few bucks for battlefield preservation.

To sign up send this form and your check made out to "CDCWRT" to:
Mark Silo, 24 Cortland Drive, Loudonville, NY 12211-1319

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Amount enclosed: _____

BIBLIOGRAPHY RELATING TO BATTLE OF ORISKANY & FORT STANWIX

The literature on the Battle of Oriskany and Fort Stanwix is extensive and in no way does the following bibliography pretend to be a comprehensive listing of these works. Rather, the following items were selected because collectively, and in several instances independently, they provide a good overview of the events that occurred at Oriskany and Fort Stanwix in 1777. For those who would like to read further, it is suggested that the bibliographies contained in many of these works be consulted. All of the items listed below are available at the New York State Library.

Allen, Freeman H. "St. Leger's Invasion and the Battle of Oriskany," *Proceedings of the New York Historical Association* 12 (1913): 158-171. Allen provides a good summary about the character of New York's frontier at the time of the Revolution and the reasons why it played such a key part of the British plan of invasion for 1777. Allen also provides a good description of the Battle of Oriskany.

DePeyster, J. Watts. "Oriskany." *The Magazine of American History (With Notes and Queries)* 2 (1878): 22-29. DePeyster argues that "it was not the defense of Ft. Stanwix but the heroism of Harkheimer's (sic) militia that saved the Mohawk Valley, and constitutes Oriskany the Thermopylae of the American Revolution, the crisis and turning point against the British of the Burgoyne campaign and the 'Decisive Conflict' of America's seven years war of Independence."

Edmonds, Walter D. *Drums Along the Mohawk*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992. What else can be said of this classic work originally published in 1936? If you don't have time to read the book, you can always rent the video.

Luzader, John F. et. al. *Fort Stanwix: History, Historic Furnishing, and Historic Structure Reports*. Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1976. This is an invaluable source for those interested in Fort Stanwix. The historical report (pp. 2-71) provides much detail about the Oneida carrying place and earlier forts; the building of Fort Stanwix; the rebuilding of Fort Stanwix by the colonists; and the siege. The historical report also contains an excellent bibliography. In addition to the historical information, this work contains dozens of illuminating illustrations and plans of the fort.

Nickerson, Hoffman. *The Turning Point of the Revolution*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928. Nickerson's main focus is Burgoyne's campaign but Chapter 7 (pp. 193-223), "Stanwix Holds Out," contains an excellent overview of the Battle of Oriskany and the siege of Fort Stanwix.

Patterson, Gerrard A. "The Battle of Oriskany." *American History Illustrated* 11 No. 4 (July 1976): 8-17. A brief, generalized account of the battle; useful for those interested in just the basic facts.

Roberts, Elis Henry. *Battle of Oriskany: Its Place in History. An Address at the Centennial Celebration, August 6, 1877*. Utica, N.Y.: Roberts & Co., 1877. The most interesting and useful part of this work is the appendix which contains many reprints of original reports and other documents concerning the fight at Oriskany and the siege of Fort Stanwix.

Scott, John Albert. *Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany: The Romantic Story of the Repulse of St. Leger's British Invasion of 1777 Told for the First Time in Chronological Order and in Detail*. Rome, N.Y.: Rome Sentinel Company, 1927. For those who wish to explore Oriskany and Fort Stanwix in detail, Scott's work is an excellent starting point. The volume contains detailed descriptions and accounts of the area and the events that occurred therein. Scott also includes many useful first hand accounts of various actions and events associated with the two events. Finally, the volume contains many interesting photographs of the two sites taken during the early twentieth century.

Stone, William L. *The Campaign of Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne, and the Expedition of Lieut. Col. Barry St. Leger*. New York: Da Capo Press Reprint Series, 1970. Originally published in 1877, Stone nevertheless remains useful for the detail he provides concerning the Loyalists and their Indian allies. Pages 141 through 222 covers St. Leger's Expedition.

Wood, W.J. *Battles of the Revolutionary War 1775-1781*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1990. Chapter Five, "Oriskany" (pp. 115-131), provides an excellent account of the Battle of Oriskany and St. Leger's expedition and their relationship to the Campaign of 1777 as a whole. If there was only one account you could read, this should probably be it.

April 1865

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| <p style="text-align: right;">2</p> <p>Lieutenant General A.P. Hill, CSA, killed in action.</p> <p>Union cavalry captures Selma, Alabama.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">3</p> <p>Evacuation of Richmond. General Ewell set the city on fire and destroyed the bridges; four ironclads and five wooden vessels were exploded and the Virginia was sunk in the river. Major General Weitzel, of the Twenty-fifth Army Corps, entered Richmond;</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p>President Lincoln visits Richmond, Virginia and holds a meeting in Jefferson Davis's abandoned home.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <p>A civilian government is restored in Tennessee.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">6</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">7</p> <p>General Grant sent a letter to General Lee suggesting that a surrender of his armies would prevent further bloodshed, and offering honorable terms; General Lee asked what terms would be offered.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">8</p> <p>General Grant replied that he should only require that the surrendered men should be disqualified for taking up arms against the United States until properly exchanged.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">9</p> <p>General Lee accepted General Grant's first proposition; General Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse -- 26,000 Confederates missing; Mobile, Alabama, taken.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">10</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">11</p> <p>Lynchburg, Virginia, surrendered to a lieutenant and a scouting party.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">12</p> <p>Secretary of War decided to stop all recruiting, to curtail purchases of army supplies, and to remove all restrictions upon trade and commerce so far as consistent with public safety.</p> <p>Union cavalry captures Montgomery, Alabama.</p> <p>Mobile, Alabama is captured.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p>Raleigh, North Carolina, taken; Governor Vance taken prisoner.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>President Lincoln shot at Ford's Theater, Washington, DC, by John Wilkes Booth, the actor; Secretary Seward was also assaulted at his residence and severely stabbed, but recovered from his wounds</p> <p>Arkansas ratifies the 13th amendment; the old flag was raised again on Fort Sumter by Major Anderson.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>President Lincoln died at the house of Mr. Peterson, 516 Tenth Street NW, Washington, DC, at 7:22 AM.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>Andrew Johnson takes the oath of office, and was declared President of the United States.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>General Mosby surrendered at Berryville, Va., 700 Confederates missing.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">18</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p>The funeral services of Abraham Lincoln were held in Washington, D.C., and it was a day of general mourning throughout the United States.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">20</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">21</p> <p>Macon, Georgia, captured by Wilson's Cavalry.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">22</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">23</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>Fifty-one Confederate flags captured by General Sheridan's Cavalry were presented to the War Department.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">25</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">26</p> <p>General J.E. Johnston, CSA, surrendered with 27,500 men. The Confederate Cabinet meets for the last time in Charlotte, North Carolina.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>John Wilkes Booth, the murderer of President Lincoln, shot and captured</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">28</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">29</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">30</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">31</p> | | | | | Compiled by Earle Lafean |

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Capital District Civil War Round Table

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.



The Officers

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Chairman | Dan Lorello |
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| At-Large | Richard Becker |
| 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 | James Carey |
| Historian | Ray Smith |

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