



# The Dispatch

*Newsletter of the*

**Capital District Civil War Round Table**

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

CDCWRT's web site: [timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt](http://timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt)

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## WHAT DID YOU DO THIS PAST SUMMER?

Remember when you had to write an essay about how you spent your summer vacation? Well some members of the Round Table could easily complete that assignment. This has been a busy summer and here are just a sampling of events.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Colored Cavalry at the Grand Review
- Bob Shuey speaking at the annual picnic
- Our own Harmony Grits musical group
- Friends in the 125<sup>th</sup> NYVI at an encampment at the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie

The September Meeting  
Friday  
September 8, 2000

BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
DELAWARE AVENUE  
DELMAR, NY

SOCIAL HOUR 6:30 P.M.  
BUSINESS MEETING 7:00 P.M.  
PROGRAM BEGINS 7:30 P.M.

## CDCWRT MEETING

*September 8<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of our 2000-2001 season after a one month hiatus in August. Our first speaker of the year will be one of our own members. Board member, Jeff Sauter, will speak on COL. WILLIAM A. JACKSON and MAJ. WILLIAM S. GRIDLEY and the 18<sup>th</sup> NEW YORK INFANTRY. This regiment was comprised of three companies from Albany and two from Schenectady. Jeff became interested in the 18<sup>th</sup> NYI when, four years ago, he stumbled upon the fact that he had THREE relatives in the unit. From that time on, he has spent numerous hours tracking down stories of the regiment and its soldiers.*

*The regiment was involved in every major engagement in the Eastern Theater in the first two years of the Civil War. Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> were discharged after the Battle of Chancellorsville. Jeff will also show some unpublished images of members of the 18<sup>th</sup> NYVI, and will have some interesting artifacts he has acquired.*

*Be sure to join us for this original presentation. Please note that Delaware Avenue from Albany to Delmar is now open.*

## CDCWRT NEWS

### JULY PICNIC MEETING

The weather gods worked with the RT on Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, and provided a respite area around Thatcher Park where rain did **not** fall. Those who attended the event (more than 50) enjoyed good food and fine conversation. The group, **Harmony Grits**, entertained with song and music. Thanks gentlemen! Special thanks to **Roxanne Wegman** who played her fiddle and dulcimer even though it was her last day before becoming a teenager! Because the weather was so threatening, Bob Shuey did not bring his Civil War Wagon. However he brought many artifacts and talked about the history of the wagon. Bravo, Bob! Finally, Phil Lechak devised a trivia contest that tested the memories of the members. It was based on facts that were covered in RT lectures throughout the year. The North won again! It was not a 'lost cause' for the South since everyone when home with a Gettysburg cachet cancelled on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day the Tower fell.

### BOARD MEETING

The August meeting was held on August 17<sup>th</sup>. The Treasurer's report indicated that there is over \$12,000 in the Preservation Account.

The October trip, *On to Richmond*, was discussed. Southwest Airlines required the names of those flying by August 23<sup>rd</sup> and payment by August 25<sup>th</sup>. Thirty-three members had confirmed by that date, so the trip is a GO. There will still be an opportunity for late-comers to join us, but you will have to make your own flight arrangements or land travel arrangements in order to be at the Baltimore-Washington Airport

A major theme of this trip will be to study Robert E. Lee by visiting some of the important sites associated with the man, both as a general and civilian. Highlights of our trip will include

the Lee 2000 Exhibit at the Museum of the Confederacy. This is the largest and most significant collection spanning the lifetime of Robert E. Lee. We will visit the exhibit on Friday.

On Saturday, our battlefield walk will feature the Seven Days Campaign, where Malvern Hill will be the highlight. We will also review Richmond battlefield sites of the 1864-65 campaign, and see the places associated with the final days and the fall of the city.

Seeing little known and privately owned sites has always been a hallmark of our trips, and this tour will be no exception! Our guide and friend, Richard Hatcher, NPS Historian at Fort Sumter, is working on several surprises, including the spot where Lee and A.P. Hill last met. The Dinner Banquet will be at the renowned Halfway House Saturday night.

On Sunday, there will be an overview of Lee's last days and the final hours of the Confederacy in Peterburg. We will visit Blandford Church where the Confederate Memorial to all unknown dead is marked by a chapel full of exquisite Tiffany windows. We will then tour the new museum at Pamplin Park. This will be special for members of the CDCWRT since our own member, Ron Tunison, is the artist who sculpted the Soldiers' Monument, the centerpiece of Pamplin Park. Here we will also tour the trenches where the final breakthrough occurred which led to the abandonment of Petersburg. The park has agreed to a private, after hours reception and dinner banquet in the visitors' center, which will be open just for us.

On Monday we will conclude our tour with a visit to the new Richmond National Battlefield Park Visitor Center and the Tredegar Iron Works. We will also see the POW exchange point at Belle Isle and the site of Chimborazo Hospital. We then return to BWI and an evening flight home.

## WEB SITE NEWS

*By Jon Olson*

Have you checked out the new Postal Cachet page yet? As you may know, we now sell postal cachets on the Web site. Each month we offer different individual cachets, or a set of cachets. This month we are featuring a 3-cachet set, "Gettysburg 2000," commemorating the 137<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. The set cost \$8.00, plus \$1 for S&H. There is a special link on the Home Page that you can use instead of the link on the navigation rail. Be sure to check out the page.

I'd like to remind you that if you are a regular member (or if you are receiving a complimentary newsletter) and you'd like to receive e-mail messages notifying you of updates to the Web site, please send me your e-mail address and I'll add you to my Address Book. Note, to protect individuals' privacy, I send such messages using the Blind Carbon Copy feature of my e-mail program so your name and address will **NOT** appear on the notices.

Remember that I'm always looking for material for the Web site. If you have original material or news about Civil War-related activities, which you'd like to share, please pass it along to me, preferably as a file attachment to an e-mail message to [jonolson@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jonolson@nycap.rr.com). If you don't have access to a computer, please mail hardcopy to PO Box 671, Newtonville, NY 12128-0671.

## CDCWRT ACTIVITIES AROUND THE REGION---- DURING THE SUMMER

The Summer was a busy time for the CDCWRT. Educational exhibits were displayed at the Bethlehem Library in June, and the Ten Broeck Mansion in July and August.

Members of the RT sold cachets and answered questions at the following Civil War events.

- June 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, The Civil War Days, Peterboro, NY
- June 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Grand Review, Harrisburg, PA
- July 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, the 137<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, Gettysburg
- July 22<sup>nd</sup>, Living History Day at Ten Broeck Mansion, Albany, NY
- July 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, Induction Day and Game Day at the Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY
- August 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, Civil War Weekend at the Old Stone Fort, Schoharie, NY

These activities netted almost \$8000 for the Round Table Preservation Fund, not to mention potential new members, new contacts, and the opportunity to “educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.” (from our Mission Statement)

On behalf of the Round Table, the Board would like to thank the following members for their efforts in manning the tables at the above events. They have done so at their own expense, paying for their own travel and lodging at distant events. The list includes (in alphabetical order) Charlie R., Dave, Diane, Donna, Joe, Jon, Matt F, Matt G, Paul, Phil, Sheila, Sue, and Tom.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- September 9<sup>th</sup>: A tour of the studio of Ron Tunison, artist and sculptor—limited to the first 30 who responded to the flyer in August
- September 12<sup>th</sup>: Matt Farina presents to the Green Mountain Civil War Round Table
- September 14<sup>th</sup>: Matt Farina presents to Joshua Chamberlain Round Table

- September 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>: At Fort Pickett, VA, the 137<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville – our RT is planning on being there, but we are seeking volunteers
- October 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>: CDCWRT ‘s Fall trip to Richmond – those with **confirmed** airline reservations are requested to make their **second payment of \$175** by Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, and the balance **(TBA) by September 30<sup>th</sup>**.
- October 13<sup>th</sup>: The speaker and topic of the Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will be announced in next month’s newsletter
- October 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>: National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, MD –dedication and reopening of the expanded museum –The CDCWRT will participate with a stamp cancellation event
- November 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northeast Civil War Fall Conference at Saratoga –**American Photography and Memory** – details will be included in the October newsletter.
- November 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>: Remembrance Day Weekend at Gettysburg –the 137<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address—the CDCWRT will be there
- December 1<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>: At the Guilderland Library – a retrospective of the life and works of Ron Tunison – Ron is being honored as the artist of the year by the CDCWRT. Ron will also be the speaker at the December meeting and season party which will be on Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

## LOCAL INTEREST

Alice Begley, Historian for the Town of Guilderland has provided to Matt George, several letters written by local residents at the beginning of the Civil War. The RT has permission to include them in our newsletters and Web site over the next several months.

*To: Mr. Peter J. Veeder  
No. 54 Summit St.  
Brooklyn, NY*

*Callanan's Cors. May 3, 1861*

*Frieend Peter,*

*Yours of April 24 came duly to hand and as the 1<sup>st</sup> of May is past, and there can be no danger of this miscarrying I shall endeavor to attempt a reply.*

*I presume you are enjoying all the beauties and comforts of Spring. I wish I could say as much. The weather here is extremely cold for the season: Very few of the farmers have sowed any and none of them have finished. The season is extremely backward indeed.*

*It must be very stirring times in New York. The War fevor is at its height now and every man considers himself a hero. Well, let them "phight." I am not going until damn obliged to. And then will array myself in all the panoply of War and "go in leisure." I wonder how "old Abe" likes being President as far as he's gone. Where's the peace that Seward promised us in sixty days after the inauguration? I wonder if "Honest Old Abe" regard this matter as a "Minor panic" yet?*

*Can you not persuade Old Greeley to enlist. Do so if you can. You can put the old white-coated philosopher in the front ranks.*

*Have you not heard the scrape that John Cromme got into. It seems he was in Albany and talked secession and expressed sympathy for the South.*

*That language did not suit some who were present, and as the story goes, they*

*pitched into him and knocked him down. Whereupon, Cromme righted on his feet and took leg sail. (?), his opponent chasing him. He finally escaped. I heard he was in Albany a day or so afterward, and went through the streets carrying a revolver in his hand. Probably this will be a warning to Cromme and he will keep a closemouth hereafter.*

*Ex-Sheriff McEwen was in Albany the other day and commenced talking secession doctrines and immediately a man jumped up and allowed that it was useless going South to fight as long as there were Tories at home. He started for the Sheriff, hit McEwen decrying "discretion the better part of valor," left on suspicion, and went down Washington Street at a 2/40 gait.*

*Several of the Guilderland boys have enlisted and gone in for their share of glory. Young Fish LePearl, Jim Reynolds and Case Spawn are among the immortal number. I hope they will do honor to the Town. Why cannot the immortal "Jug Co" be organized and do something for their country. With a little or rather a good deal of the "ardent" to fortify their courage, I think they might render a good account of themselves. I hope you will give this proposition something more than a passing thought.*

*Your interview with Major Anderson's command must have been very pleasant. I presume that the gallant Major has recovered from the effects of the terrific broadside of hot shot th was poured into him by that doughty soldier, General Webb of the Convier & Enquiver.*

*I have been up home since I wrote you last, and found Helen better than I expected. She was better than she had been. I presume you will head home about the middle of May will you not?*

*Give my regards to your brother and family. Write soon and give me description as pleasing as the last of matters & things in New York.*

*Yours Truly,*  
*A. DeGraff*

There will be another letter next month.

## EDITORIAL OPINION

I have been reading my recent issues of *The Civil War News* and I would like to comment on some of the letters and articles.

First, there was an excellent review of the book, *The Union Preserved: A Guide to Civil War Records in the New York State Archives*. The RT celebrated the release of the book last year at a special June meeting attended by Gov. Pataki and Jeff Shaara along with many other notables. Members had an opportunity to purchase autographed copies at that meeting. The book may be found in major book stores and at the NYS Museum Store, and certainly is an important book to the Civil War researcher.

The theme of the next several articles is preservation. A small group attempting to save the Kernstown, VA battlefield has signed a contract to buy 315 acres, and is now looking for help in meeting the \$4 million price tag. The Kernstown Battlefield Association has already secured \$2.5 million in local, state and federal grants.

Plans for a \$25 million USS Monitor Center were unveiled before the City Council of Newport News, VA. The museum would comprise 85,000 square feet and may display a life-sized reproduction of the Union ironclad as well as the actual propeller, steam engine, and 120-ton turret. The Mariners' Museum is requesting \$500,000 from the city to help plan the project. It has already received a \$750,000 state grant to help with preliminary design and to pay for temporary conservation facilities.

Spurred by the Civil War Preservation Trust, the Mississippi legislature has approved \$2.8 million to preserve land at 11 battlefields in the state. This money will be combined with \$1.4 million in federal funds and should secure virtually all the Mississippi sites listed in a

1993 landmark congressional study of significant battlefields

One of only three houses in the Manassas National Battlefield Park remaining from the Civil War, will be saved from decay under a \$250,000 plan. The house, often called the Sudley Post Office, may be used as an interpretive center for summertime programs, or may just serve as a battlefield artifact.

Pennsylvania State Rep. Harry Readshaw put his sneaker to the cause and ran in his own 5K event to raise money to maintain the state's monuments on the Gettysburg battlefield. The Monument Challenge raise \$27,000, and puts the total raised to date at \$200,000 with a goal of \$750,000.

A group of homeowners has banded together and has joined with the Civil War Preservation Trust to purchase a 144-acre tract abutting Manassas Battlefield Park. The land was the scene of fighting during Second Manassas. The Trust will take ownership and eventually donate the land to the park.

After 136 years on the bottom of Charleston harbor, the CSS H.L. Hunley, a Confederate submarine was raised on August 8<sup>th</sup>, culminating a ten year, \$17 million effort. The conservation project is expected to take about seven years, after which, the sub will go on permanent display at the Charleston Historical Museum. Funding for the project is from federal, state, local, National Parks Service, and educational sources.

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine's newly renovated building will reopen in October in Frederick, MD. The building has been undergoing a \$2 million renovation. The state of Maryland matched the \$1 million donation from the Judge Edward S. Delaplaine Charitable Trust of Frederick. The state also contributed \$750,000 toward the design and construction of the new exhibits.

And now, with bold italics from the editor, I would like to conclude with something local. The New York State General Assembly appropriated **\$175,000** to help preserve the state's 1500-banner collection, which includes the *nation's largest collection of Civil War flags. The long-neglected collection, holding some 1000 Civil War battle flags*, received the money through the efforts of Rep. Ronald

Tocci, who got the funding included in the budget. *The money was to be matched by an appropriation from the state Senate, but that did not occur because the Senate was forced to make choices, and preserving the flags was not a priority. "When it came right down to it, they didn't have the money."* It is estimated that it will cost \$15 million to restore the entire flag collection over the next ten years. The state has spent about \$1 million on its military collections in recent years, and fifteen of the flags have been preserved.

Recapping articles in the past two issues of *The Civil War News*, the state of Virginia had committed hundreds of thousand of dollars this present year to preserving Kernstown and the USS Monitor and the Mariners' Museum. Mississippi has committed \$2.8 million; North Carolina has committed millions for the CSS Hunley; Maryland, \$1 million; the NPS, 250,000 for a building; Virginia homeowners, \$300,000; joggers in Pennsylvania, \$200,000; and the NYS Legislature \$175,000.

There are approximately 200 Confederate battle flags in the state collection. Most of the other Union states returned their captured Confederate flags to the former Confederate states sometime after the Civil War. The Sons of Confederate Veterans made an offer of \$350,000 to New York State if the state returned the captured Confederate flags. A response was that the state's history is not for sale. Yet there is a split personality approach to emblems of the Confederacy, but that is the subject of a future editorial.

The state would like to see private individuals, organizations, cities and towns, and counties "adopt flags" and fund restorations. We are such an organization, but I believe there is a need for the state to **lead** in this venture. There must be a real financial commitment, not just a token one. We are in the midst of a golden time with our strong economy. We are in the midst of a revival of public interest in the Civil War. We need a passionate leader for our historical collections, and if one can rise, I believe many groups and organizations will follow. We are like the

Union Army awaiting a General Grant. We know we can win, but we await a leader who recognizes our strengths and knows how to use us effectively.

## ODDS AND ENDS

The July 2000 issue of *The Gettysburg Magazine*, volume 23, will be available for \$5.00 at the meeting. This journal quality magazine is the best magazine that deals with the Gettysburg campaign. Many of the articles are masters papers by historians. Newstand price is \$7.95, and mail price is \$11.15. You will not find the magazine cheaper at any place. And there is no sales tax!

The Guilderland Library has indicated that they will establish a Civil War section in their shelves. This is the result of the interest of our RT, the quality of our exhibits, and the caliber of lecturer at our meetings. The RT will donate several books to start the ball rolling. These include *The Union Preserved, Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* by Carol Reardon, *Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men* by Jeffrey Hummel, and *Civil War Curiosities* by Webb Garrison. The RT will also be donating several other books from our raffle reserve. Anyone who would like to donate good quality books to the Library should contact our Treasurer, Joe Stracuzzi. A special bookplate has been designed and will go in the book. A letter will be issued, recognizing your charitable donation for IRS purposes. The value of the donation should be over \$25.00. As usual, donations for raffles will be graciously accepted by Paul Rivenburgh.

In addition to our usual book raffle at meetings, there will be a 50/50 raffle. Your generous support of these raffles is most appreciated, and the prizes are often quite nifty. Volunteers as greeters and to help out with soda, snacks, and clean up afterwards will be looked upon as heaven-sent!