

The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

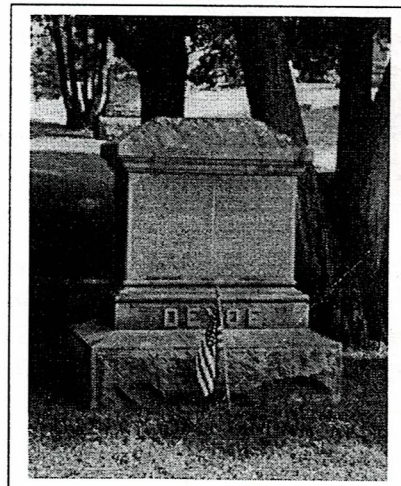
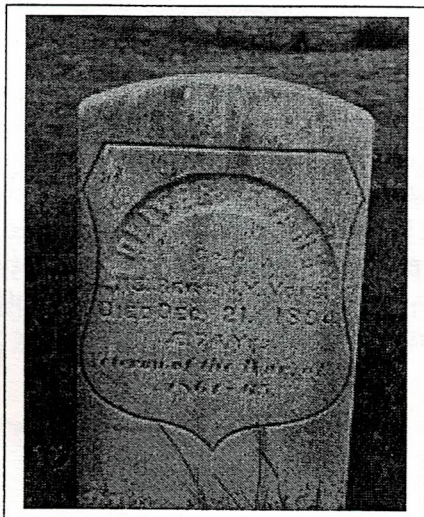
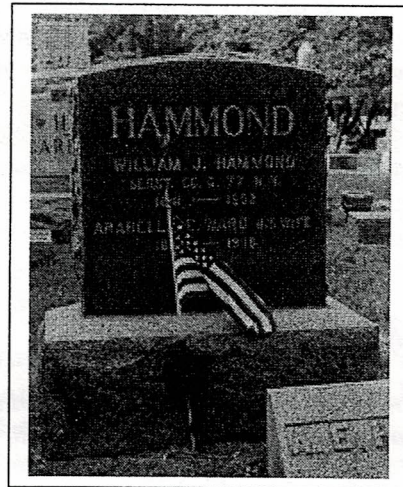
Capital District Civil War Round Table

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

CDCWRT's web site: timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt

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June 2004



June Meeting
Friday, June 11th, 2004
Guilderland Public Library
Route 20 Western Ave.
Guilderland, NY

SOCIAL HOUR	6:00PM
BUSINESS MEETING	7:00PM
PROGRAM	7:30PM

CDCWRT MEETING

The June meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Guilderland Library on Friday, June 11th. Our presenter will be Round Table member, Ray Wimple. Ray will speak on the CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY SIGNAL CORPS. Ray will discuss signal, ciphers, and the secret service. Learn how the U.S. Postal Service was involved in aiding the Confederacy.

Chief Signal Officer, William Norris, created an effective corps, initially using a different system of signaling, than that of the Union Army. Also developed was the 'secret line,' which provided continuous information of the enemy to the Confederacy.

Jefferson Davis wrote Norris the following: "Though communicating by signal is as old as the time of Polybius, its application to military correspondence and message on the field of battle had been so little systematized and developed when you were put in charge of the Confederate Signal Corps, that the art might for practical purposes be regarded as a new one. By judicious arrangement and administration, it attained a high efficiency, and to you, largely belongs the credit for that result.

The C.S.A. Army Signal Corps was formally established well before the Union Signal Corps and was much smaller in size. However, the C.S.A. Corps performed extremely well in

getting the messages through when it counted the most.

Ray has presented previously on the Union Signal Corps and Gen. A.J. Myer to the CDCWRT, The Schenectady Amateur Radio Association, and the Broadalbin Kenyetto Historical Society.

Wilderness & Spotsylvania

Congratulations to Art Eastman who noted the errors in dates of the burial of Jackson's arm, and the date of Warren's HQ at Elwood Plantation. (That will teach me to work on the NL late at night—Ed.)

May Events & Movie

I was unable to attend the May meeting on **Conserving New York's History: The NYS Battle Flag Preservation Project**. However it was reported that the speakers were excellent and very knowledgeable.

A crowd of 62 people enjoyed the presentation by David Gould and the movie, **The Great Locomotive Chase**. The Civil War movie series is quickly becoming a popular event.

The May Board Meeting was held on May 23rd. The Peebles Island Open House was well attended and two pages of potential new members signed up for information at our booth. Cachet sales amounted to \$65. Sue Knost and Mike Spaulding manned the RT booth at the 140th Anniversary of Spotsylvania. Sales of silk-screened cachets grossed \$2264.

Chris Kolakowski's resignation as an at-large board member was accepted. Chris has started work at CWPT in Washington after he received his Masters degree at the University at Albany. Congratulations to Mary Ellen Johnson who was appointed new at-large member.

A number of the board had the opportunity to see **The Andersonville Trial**, which was performed by the Albany Civic Theater. The cast did a superb job and deserved the excellent reviews and accolades they received. The RT will be sending an official thank-you for the powerful production.

UP-COMING EVENTS

CIVIL WAR FILM (AND LECTURE) FESTIVAL continues on Wednesday, June 9th, at the Guilderland Library at 7:00 with the movie, *The Red Badge of Courage*. Historian and Round Table member, Robert Mulligan will be the featured speaker. This series is jointly sponsored by the Library and the CDCWRT.

The Red Badge of Courage, by Stephen Crane, was an immediate bestseller when it was published in 1895. It has been read by millions since then, and is required reading for most high school and college students today because it is very likely the most perceptive and powerful exploration of the psychology of the individual in combat, the essential nature of courage and cowardice.

Other movies to follow are:

Glory – July 14th.

Friendly Persuasion – August 11th.

Andersonville – September 15th.

Shenandoah – October 20th.

The first large display case in the library corridor will be made available to the RT throughout the year for exhibits that will tie-in the movie. Please look for the item in the display case, and if you have an item that is pertinent to the movie, and would like to display it, please contact Lew Warner at 458-2282.

From May 15th to December 23rd, the Rensselaer County Historical Society in Troy will present an exhibit entitled, “War on the Home Front from 1775-2003.” Hours are from 12 Noon to 5 pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays. More information can be obtained from the website, www.RCHS.online.org.

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On Saturday, June 12th, at 12:30pm, the Second Annual Women’s Military Forum will take place at the NYS Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. Admission is FREE. Call (518) 226-0991 to reserve seating. The Forum Moderator will be Benita Zahn of WNYT. The Forum will honor those brave women who have served, and who are currently serving in our Nation’s Military. A number of guest speakers will present.

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Other up-coming events in which you Round Table is involved, are listed below:

On June 12-13th, the 12th Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend will feature three Civil War reenactment bands – the 77th NY Regimental Balladeers, Harmony Grits, and the Excelsior Cornet Band. This town event will host various history groups, tours of Underground Railroad sites, skirmishes at 2 pm, craft demonstrations, period entertainment, sutlers, and food vendors. Anyone interested in joining the RT at our booth should contact Sue Knost or Joe Stracuzzi. For information, call (315) 684-9022 or www.geocities.com/sca-peterboro.

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On June 26-27th Civil War Days will be held at the Masonic Temple in Troy on

Brunswick Ave. There will be an encampment and skirmishes daily with cannon fire. The Round Table will be selling cachets, T-shirts and other items.

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On July 1-5th at Gettysburg, the 141st Reenactment entitled “Crossroads of Destiny,” will take place. The Round Table would like to staff two different sites this year. Our usual location will be in the Cyclorama. This will be the last time before it is torn down to restore Ziegler’s Grove to its wartime appearance. The second location will be in the vendor area. We are looking for volunteers to work with our ‘regulars’ so that we can operate the two locations. A portion of the motel bill will be paid by the Round Table. Anyone interested should contact Sue Knost or Joe Stracuzzi.

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July 18th - Sunday -CDCWRT Picnic at the Pruyn House 12:00 to 5:00 pm– Save the date! Rain or shine, we have the Burmaster Barn! The Round Table will supply hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls, buns, condiments, and soda. Please bring a favorite summertime dish or dessert to share with others. Call Noreen Underhill at 371-4312 to let her know what you plan on bringing. If you are undecided, she can make suggestions on what to bring.

The 125th NYSVI re-enactors will provide entertainment and will discuss the life of the Civil War soldier. Last year’s sing-a-long consisted of Union Army songs. This year’s sing-a-long will feature Confederate songs. Tours of the gardens and house will also be available.

Directions: From Albany, take exit 5 on the Northway; right at the light onto

route 155 west; take the second left onto Old Niskayuna Road just before the bridge; look for brown historical signs; Pruyn House is 0.6 miles on the left; park in the large lower lot.

From the north, take exit 5 off the Northway; left at the light onto route 155 east; pass under the Northway bridge; take the immediate right onto Old Niskayuna Road; look for brown historical signs; Pruyn House 0.6 miles on the left.

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July 23rd – 25th – Induction Day at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. This always has been a good day for Round Table sales of baseball T-shirts and baseball postal cachets. Volunteers are needed. Please contact Joe Stracuzzi.

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July 30th and 31st and August 1st – The 3rd annual Civil War Music Heritage Gathering at 91 Cross Road in Windham, NY. Some of the activities are: Regimental brass bands in concert; mid-19th century band memorabilia; Civil War art displays; Banjo and parlor guitar exhibits; Music workshops and jam sessions; 1864 Soldiers Relief Fair in Albany exhibit; Grand Review; Period Dance; Friday ice cream social; Saturday night barbecue. Call (518) 734-5655 or visit the website at www.77thballadeers.com.

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There was a time when the CDCWRT shut down for the summer with no meetings or activities during July and August. However, with the resurgence in interest in the Civil War in recent years, the summer has become filled with activities relative to the Civil War Period. We have listed only a

few activities, but since they are all in the Capital District, we urge you to support and attend some of these. The excuse that “there is nothing relative to the Civil War in our region,” no longer is valid. With the price of gasoline at record highs, these local activities are bargains. There are also daily activities at the **New York State Military Museum in Saratoga, and at Grant’s Cottage in Wilton. Even on a rainy weekend, you can take in the Rensselaer County Historical Society exhibit entitled, “Upstate New York Goes to War: War and the Home Front, 1775-2004.” And don’t forget the Burden Iron Works Museum in south Troy!**

TRIVIA

Our winner on the John Wilkes Booth tattoo was Lew Warner, who will get to choose a postal commemorative book. As a child, Booth tattooed his initials into the web of skin between the thumb and the index finger on his left hand.

This month’s trivia question is: **Who commanded the Army of Georgia?** The winner will be the earliest postmarked card mailed to Matt Farina, 1176 Delaware Turnpike, Delmar, NY 12054.

FALL TRIP

Although it’s not even summer yet, start thinking about our fall trip on Columbus Day weekend, Friday, October 8th to Monday, October 11th. Next year will be the 140th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. We will start early with our trip to Petersburg and Appomattox, following the last days of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The cost of the trip is not yet known, but it will be comparably priced like our other

trips. A deposit of \$150 per person is requested by the date of the July picnic, Sunday, July 18th. Deposits will be held until it is confirmed that the trip is a go. This will depend on the number of attendees. The balance will be due in two installments prior to the trip. As on this last trip, we plan to travel by air, but a bus will leave Thursday, October 7th, for those who do not wish to fly. The bus will stop for a while in Gettysburg on Thursday. The bus will meet the flyers on Friday. *Once you select your mode of travel, there can be no changes in transportation after airline tickets or motel reservations have been made. This will be a long ride back on the bus (10-12 hours) on Monday, depending on traffic.*

Those who have been on previous trips, know the quality and value of these outing. If you have never been on one, talk to any member who has, and I am certain you will hear about the educational and social enjoyment of our tours.

A LETTER

As many of you know, I have accepted a position as a Real Estate Associate with the Civil War Preservation Trust. On Tuesday I will be moving to Washington DC, and start work on 26 May 2004. I am excited about this opportunity, and look forward to making a difference.

This excitement is tempered somewhat by the many friend that I will be leaving behind in Albany. This roundtable is an outstanding organization, and I am proud to associate myself with it. When I attended my first meeting on 19 September 2002, I had no idea that it was the first step down a road that has been very rewarding for me (and hopefully for you all also). Thank you all very much for your many kindnesses and

accolades over these past two years. It has been an amazing period of my life, and I have enjoyed chatting/sharing ideas with each and every one of you.

A special thank you is in order for the graduation party the roundtable threw for me on the Wilderness trip last month. My whole family, especially my grandparents, still talk about that night fondly. That night was a very special moment in a special weekend. Thank you to all who conceived the party and put it together.

It has been a pleasure to call you all my friends. My membership will remain current; I'll be keeping tabs on the group from Washington. I look forward to seeing you all on the battlefield again soon.

Sincerely,
Chris Kolakowski

LEST WE FORGET

Kipling

I spent Memorial Day weekend in Alexandria, VA. I did not have an opportunity to visit the World War II Memorial, but we watched the ceremony on television. Quoting from the *Washington Post*, "From the German invasion of Poland in 1939 until the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay in 1945, the war lasted 2193 days and claimed an average of 27,600 lives every day, or 1,150 an hour, or 19 a minute, or one death every three seconds. In the time it takes to read this paragraph aloud, 10 people perished in World War II – an estimated total of 60 million."

"Inexorably, the day is approaching when not a single human alive has a personal recollection of the war, which then will slide fully into mythology, history and collective memory.

Although 16.4 million Americans served during the war, fewer than 5 million remain alive: the youngest survivors now are in their late seventies, and they are passing at the rate of 1,100 a day."

Perhaps this Memorial Day weekend when the traditional day and the celebrated day are on the same weekend, and the World War II Monument ceremonies, and the 60th Anniversary of D-Day will impress upon us the true meaning of the day. It is **not** the beginning of the summer, the day when the Indianapolis 500 is run, the time when Shrek 2 opens, the date after which white can be worn, or the time of proms, balls or graduations. **What should Memorial Day signify to Americans?** Let's read General John A. Logan's, General Order No. 11, issued on May 5, 1868 from Headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic in Washington, D.C.

"The 30th day of May, 1868, is for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form or ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

"We are organized, comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose, among other things, of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldier, sailors, and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion. What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead, who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foe? Their soldier lives were the reveille

of freedom to a race in chains, and their death a tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the Nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism or avarice or neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten, as a people, the cost of free and undivided republic.”

“If other eyes grow dull and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remains in us.”

“Let us then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us as sacred charges upon the Nation’s gratitude, - the soldier’s and sailor’s widow and orphan.”

“It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades. He earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this Order; and lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.”

The tradition has been expanded from this beginning to include our honored dead from all military conflicts. In a broader sense, many honor all our dead, especially our families on this day. On this particular weekend, Americans honored what has been called “the greatest generation” with a memorial to those who served in the Second World War.

The monument has not been without controversy, from aesthetics to land use issues. It has been suggested that we are uneasy about monuments, especially those made of stone, since this suggests that the idea or fact has “been placed in its ultimate form, beyond emendation and, often, beyond debate or contradiction.” St. Florian, the architect of the memorial, stated that “World War II is, in a sense, a glorious war – a triumph of democracy over totalitarianism. But at the same time, wars must be remembered but not glorified, because even with a war that has such noble intentions, there is also incredible suffering on both sides.” Some critics see the memorial as a monument to the military-entertainment industry complex.

Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial was controversial when new, but now has become almost a holy place of contemplation. But there is no room for 410,000 names at the WWII monument. However, the 4000 gold stars serve as that reminder. The purpose of this memorial is to honor the memory of those who answered the call of our nation to leave the safety and shelter of their homes to defend the country and the world from a madness. We as Civil War enthusiasts, realize that most CW monuments are to the men who fought for their ideals. The WWII monument is too new, and we have not yet come to know it. I hope in time that the public sees it as Lincoln did in his Gettysburg Address.