



# 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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**The Chancellorsville house, Hooker's headquarters, May 2, 1863**

*Images from the Storm*

**Private Robert Knox Sneden**

**September Meeting  
Thursday 09/19/02**

*Sand Creek Mill School*  
**Guilderland Public Library  
2228 Western Ave.  
Guilderland, NY**

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

**CDCWRT MEETING**

*The September meeting of the CDCWRT will be held on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Guilderland Public Library. This will be the first meeting of the new 2002-2003 season, and marks the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the RT since its formal organization in 1984. This is the 20<sup>th</sup> volume of The Dispatch, our newsletter, because volume one appeared before formal incorporation, I believe. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATE TO THURSDAY, AND THE MOVE TO THE THIRD WEEK IN SEPTEMBER. THIS IS BEING DONE TO ACCOMMODATE OUR SPEAKER.*

*The mission statement of CDCWRT is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of all aspects of the Civil War period. Our first speaker of the program year is Mark Vinet, who will talk on "Canada and the American Civil War: Prelude to War." This topic has never been discussed in detail at any of our meetings in the past.*

*The American Civil War resulted in the deaths of at least 620,000 men, including thousands of Canadians. In accordance with British foreign policy, Canada was officially neutral. However, this did not*

*prevent over 50,000 Canadians from serving in both armies (about 50,000 in 250 Union regiments and 1500 in 50 Confederate regiments). Four Canadians were brigadier generals, and 29 were awarded the Medal of Honor. Throughout the war, Canadian opinion was divided for various reasons, including religious, cultural and economic backgrounds. The Civil War was the culmination of the reciprocal, sometime parallel, but often intertwining influence of both the U.S. and Canada on each other's historical, territorial, political and social development. Following the war, two new nations emerged.*

*In order to understand Canada in 1859 at the time of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, Mark will take us back 100 years to 1759 and the climatic battle on the Plains of Abraham in Quebec. This set in motion a century of events that help explain the relationship between the U.S. and Canada as neighbors during the Civil War. Using visual aids, he will cover the French and English conquest of North America, the French and Indian War, the American Revolution and the invasion of Canada, the American Loyalist immigration to Canada, the War of 1812, Canada's Civil War, U.S.-Canadian territorial expansion and border conflicts, and Canadian participation in the abolitionist movement.*

*Mark Vinet is an author, historian, professor and lawyer. He was born in Quebec Province of English and French ancestry. He is the founder of the Canadian Civil War Association and host of a radio show that deals with history related topics. His book, Canada and the American Civil War: Prelude to War, will be available for purchase and signing. He is presently working on his second*

*book, The Road to Secession: Canada and the American Civil War. This promises to be a unique introduction to this year's meeting schedule.*

## **JULY MEETING**

The July 14<sup>th</sup> picnic of the CDCWRT was held on Peebles Island on a perfect, sunny afternoon with a mild breeze coming off the Hudson River. About 50 plus people attended and they enjoyed a delicious meal and great entertainment that included a semaphore flag demonstration and Mike Sperenza's rope making machine. We want to thank Noreen Underhill for helping to organize the picnic.

## **BOARD MEETING**

The August Board Meeting was held on Thursday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The treasurer's reported \$3773.36 in the general fund account, and \$8351.88 in the Hennessy Preservation account. The summer was very successful for raising funds to support our preservation activities. A hard working, dedicated crew did a yeoman's job on these events.

Civil War Days in Peterboro, NY on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, raised \$690 and gave us the opportunity to talk with some other New York round tables who also attended. Although the 139<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg was an 'off year,' the round table netted \$3749 after expenses from June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 5<sup>th</sup>. Among our most popular sale items were our *Original New York Yankees T-shirts*, and the First Day of Issue cachets with the West Point stamp that was issued in March of this year. This was followed by Civil War Days at the Troy Masonic Hall on July 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, which netted \$495. The bonus however was the list of 26 people who signed up for our three months of complimentary newsletters. Finally, the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of

Fame Induction Day weekend, July 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, netted \$1625. The Board wishes to especially thank Mike Spaulding, who designed the cachets, printed them on his computer, put up the tent, and then worked the entire three-day event along with Sue Knost, Program Chair. The success of Cooperstown was largely due to his efforts. The Board also wants to thank Matt George, Joe Stracuzzi, Fran McCashion, and Matt Farina who worked at the other venues.

At the June meeting, the Board also discussed the issue of dues. The operational budget for the round table comes from dues only. These funds pay for printing costs, stationary and mailing costs, meeting room charges, snacks and soda, banquet expenses, and any speaker related expenses including honorarium, travel, meals and motel. The majority of our speakers do not charge. The charges for our trips are calculated to have all expenses covered by those going on the trip. **After some discussion and review of charges by other round tables, which range from \$15 to \$60, the Board voted unanimously to raise our dues to \$25 starting January 1, 2003. This is only the second time dues have been raised. One-year renewals, postmarked before January 1<sup>st</sup>, will still be \$20.**

Several Board members were concerned about the 'disappearance' of some familiar faces from RT activities and membership. Some times this occurs because renewal of dues is forgotten, and before long, the newsletter stops. A re-enlistment letter will be sent to inactive members, and a trial of a new method to advise expiring membership will be put in place. The Board also discussed up-coming meetings, the October trip (see later in this newsletter), and the November conference and banquet. The next meeting will be brief on September 19<sup>th</sup>, after the general meeting that night.

## IN MEMORIUM

**Anne Bergman**, beloved wife of Stan Bergman, and Co-Chair of the Round Table refreshment committee, died Sunday afternoon, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. Anne was a life-long volunteer for many organizations, and always had a friendly smile and a greeting for everyone. At her memorial service, her commitment to the Round Table was mentioned in her eulogy. We were honored by her presence. A donation from the Preservation Fund will be made to Anne and Stan's favorite Civil War site.

**Bryan "Goose" Gosling**, one of the founding members of the CDCWRT, died Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002, after a long battle with cancer. "Goose" was an avid re-enactor and belonged to the 125<sup>th</sup> NYVI among other organizations. He was also 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the New York State Military Heritage Institute. On August 20<sup>th</sup>, at a bedside ceremony, members of the 125<sup>th</sup> presented him with a canteen engraved to "Lt. Col. Bryan H. Gosling, brevet Private, a legend in his own time." A donation from the Preservation Fund will be made to the NYS Military Institute.

## UP-COMING EVENTS

**The 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam will be celebrated on September 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> near Hagerstown, MD.** This is expected to be the largest reenactment event in 2002 with over 15,000 re-enactors expected. CDCWRT will be at this event and volunteers are needed. The RT is holding a block of rooms at the Four Points Sheraton for \$71.00 a night from Wednesday, 9/11/02 through Monday 9/16/02. Some rooms will be available after meeting the needs of volunteers. If you are

interested in reserving a room, check with Sue Knost soon. These will be on a first come basis and commitment will be necessary on a first come basis.

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This is the **225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Saratoga**, the turning point in the Revolutionary War. The battlefield is open daily, but there will be special events later this fall. **The NPS has asked for volunteers to help with activities on Saturday and Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.** Contact our Vice-President, Joe Stracuzzi at 229-1551 if you can help. **Remembrance of Saratoga** will be a three-day encampment on the battlefield September 27<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup>. On October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, there will be a re-enactment of the **Second Battle of Saratoga** on private land just north of the battlefield.

Richard M. Ketchum's book, *Saratoga: Turning Point of America's Revolutionary War*, published in 1997 is an excellent book to read beforehand. On October 19<sup>th</sup> there will be a re-enactment of Burgoyne's surrender march. There will be fireworks on the Hudson Rive that evening.

The Saratoga Monument in Schuylerville has reopened after 15 years. It was originally built from 1877-1887 to commemorate the surrender of Burgoyne's British Army to American forces under the leadership of Horatio Gates after the battles at Saratoga. The NPS completed a \$2.4 million restoration last year with re-pointing of the masonry, and replacing part of the old cast iron staircase with steel, installing windows, and cleaning of relief bronze plaques and wall trimmings. You can climb the 154-foot tower (188 steps) for a magnificent view of 3 states. The tower is open Wednesdays to Sundays from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

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The October meeting of the CDCWRT will be held on **Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at the Pruyn House**. This will be a change from the usual 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month. The meeting is co-sponsored with The Friends of the Pruyn House, and will be held in the Buhrmaster Barn. Doors will open at 6:30 pm for social time. Talented Round Table member, Roxanne Wegman, will provide musical entertainment prior to the meeting. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm. The business meeting will follow the program.

The speaker will be Marcia Estabrook, who will present a one-woman dramatization of the true story of **Ellen Craft**, a light-skinned Georgian slave who flees to the North in 1848. Marcia has appeared at thousands of interactive performances throughout the United States.

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**The Fall Trip will occur on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> to Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>**. It is entitled, **From Fredericksburg To Chancellorsville: The Last Battle?** The cost will be \$499/person, and includes airfare to Baltimore, bus to the battlefields, 3 nights motel, most meals including banquet, entrance fees, tour guides, and lectures. A separate mailing has already been sent to the membership in late August. There is a **non-refundable confirmation deposit of \$200** (unless the whole trip is cancelled). The deposit must be paid by **Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>**. **The deposit can be mailed to the RT mailbox, attention Treasurer.** The balance is due by the time of the round table meeting, Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>. **Time is short**, because the USAir failure resulted in a change to Southwest Airlines.

There will be some extra room on the bus for those who do not want to fly. Arrangements will be made for a meeting

site. The banquet will be at a historic home at the site of one of the pontoon bridges over the Rappahannock River. The tour will also include a visit to the Jackson Shrine and a piece of historic Baltimore (not Camden Yard). Flight departure time will be 7:30am from Albany Airport on October 11<sup>th</sup>, and return time will be 7:10pm at Albany Airport on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

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**The November Conference will be Friday 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>, with the Fall Banquet on Saturday evening, November 9<sup>th</sup>**. The conference is entitled, ***Remembrance of the Civil War Through Letters, Drawings and Artifacts***. It will tie-in with the ***Eye of the Storm Exhibit*** at the New York State Museum. The exhibit runs from October 5<sup>th</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, and features one of the most remarkable Civil War collections ever uncovered. It is the written and watercolor collection of Pvt. Robert Knox Sneden, which began to surface in 1993, and was published in the fall of 2000. The conference will be held at the NYS Museum.

The guest speaker for our fall banquet will be **Thomas P. Lowry, M.D.** Dr. Lowry is a graduate of Stanford University, where he studied history and medicine. He has authored numerous journal articles and had practiced medicine and psychiatry for more than thirty-five years. Two of his Civil War books are ***The Story the Soldier Wouldn't Tell: Sex in the Civil War***, and, ***Tarnished Scalpels***, a book about the court-martials of over fifty Union physicians. Dr. Lowry will talk about President Lincoln and court-martials. More details will follow in next month's, newsletter, but mark these dates down now!

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## ODDS AND ENDS

### Why the change in trip plans?

By Sue Knost

We continue our study of CW battlefields with the 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg, where the Confederates seize the initiative from the Federals, and then look at how they maintain their hold through the Battle of Chancellorsville in May of 1863. Our study will bring forward what we learned about Lee and his generalship over the past few years, and look at what historians often call Lee's greatest victory, which occurs at Chancellorsville.

This is a change in our trip plans, announced in June 2002. Critically important in this year's tour is the inclusion of the extremely threatened parcel of property at Chancellorsville. Originally, our fall tour was an in-depth look at Fredericksburg in its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and also to pick up where we left off with Lee on the spring Antietam tour. The tour was designed to cover Fredericksburg 1862 in detail, with a look at Old Town Fredericksburg and its historic buildings.

Now, however, a severe and immediate threat to the Chancellorsville Battlefield has prompted us to revise our trip to include a tour of that hallowed ground as well. Developer Ray Smith, president of Dogwood Development Group of Reston, Virginia, plans to build a new town of Chancellorsville - a 2,350-house development complete with 2.4 million square feet of commercial and office space in the middle of the battlefield area. (The original Chancellorsville consisted of a single tavern that was destroyed during the war.) This proposal is an overwhelming menace to the historic site. The full plan for 2,350 single-family homes, townhouses,

condominiums and apartments and 2.4 million square feet of commercial space - is set for a rezoning vote this fall, which we have just learned will occur the day after we conclude our trip. If rezoning is approved, construction will begin immediately. This could very well be our last chance to see Chancellorsville before it becomes the next victim to a developer's bulldozer.

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This fall we move into a busy time for the round table. There will be a multitude of Civil War events occurring locally and nationally. WMHT will be airing the Ken Burn series of the Civil War. The movie, *Gods and Generals*, may be released before the end of the year to make it eligible for the next Academy Awards. It will be 3 and ½ hours as a movie. The longer version of 5 and ½ hours got rave reviews this summer. Remembrance Day at Gettysburg will also occur in November. Ron Tunison's statue dedicated to women during the Civil War, will be unveiled at Gettysburg on Remembrance Day. We hope to be there also selling some special cachets. The Victorian Stroll in Troy will be earlier this year. Suddenly it will be time for our December meeting and party.

**We are seeking several working volunteers.** We need one or two people to stuff envelopes with pre-printed letters once a month (6-12 letters/month on average). We need one or two people to help with refreshments and clean-up at regular meetings. We need one or two greeters/registrars for meetings, conference and the banquet. We need one or two people to help at cachet events locally. None of these require more than an hour a month on average, but can help the Board in a tremendous way. Please talk to any board member if you are interested. Thank-you.

## **Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville: The Final Battle? October 11- 14, 2002**

- Lee Jackson Stuart Early Hood Longstreet Burnside Meade Hooker Sedgewick Gibbon
- Assault on Marye's Heights River Crossing Fighting in the Streets Prospect Hill
- Jackson's Flank Attack Hazel Grove Old Salem Church Jackson Shrine And more!!
- **\$499 for full trip: airfare, lodging, tours, and meals (except lunches where noted) Great value!!**

### **Our tour for 2002...**

The Confederate forces under Robert E. Lee seemed to be unstoppable in the early years of the war. In our other tours, we have looked at the strategies and leadership of Lee, beginning with his first campaign in May 1862 through Antietam. We will continue our study of Lee with this tour, and look at some of the factors that affect his continued success, such as the loss of Jackson at Chancellorsville and the attempt of other commanders to fill the gap. In an examination of the Federal failures, we will learn of some little known reasons why Burnside made certain crucial strategic decisions at Fredericksburg. We will see at Chancellorsville how Hooker was forced into adopting a defensive posture when pressed closely by Lee's advance, thus giving Lee the initiative, and the advantage, which continues until the fateful Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg.

Join us on our Fall 2003 tour with Acting Park Historian Greg Mertz as our lead guide, as we enjoy what may very well be one of the last best tours of the most threatened Civil War sites in America. Our tour will be full, covering two key battles, several museums and visitors' centers, with highlights to include a personal tour of Jackson's wounding and death site at the Jackson Shrine, Fort McHenry and other Baltimore area sites, with some of the best known guides and experts on these actions. Needless to say, our banquet will be a special treat too; at the Civil War era Smythe's Cottage and Tavern renowned for its regional favorites (and who will be closed to the public for our affair). Our other dinner will be at the famous Brock's Riverside Grille, located on the Rappahannock at one of the pontoon bridge sites during the battle of Fredericksburg.

### **Tour overview – firm itinerary to follow!!**

Friday Depart Albany Airport on Southwest flight 948 at 7:30 am (arrive airport at 6:30 and Bring picture ID!!!!)

Upon arrival at Baltimore, we'll take our motorcoach to Fredericksburg where we will have lunch (on your own) and then go to the Fredericksburg Visitor's Center for an orientation session and briefing by NPS staff. We will begin our afternoon tour by looking at some key strategies and positions at Fredericksburg, and will resume at Fredericksburg on Saturday morning to conclude the battle tour. For dinner Friday night, we have the banquet at Smythe's Tavern, with a special guest speaker.

Early start on Saturday to get our enthusiasts on the field! We will finish Fredericksburg and move to Chancellorsville Visitors' Center for a box lunch. We will begin our Tour of Chancellorsville and get on some little visited areas that afternoon. Wherever we finish for the day, we will pick up again on Sunday morning. After a full day of touring, we will have dinner at Brock's Riverside Tavern for a fun evening of just chatting with friends.

On Sunday, we will start early again to get to Chancellorsville, and move to other sites and end the day with a special tour of Jackson's Shrine, the site of Jackson's passing. Sunday evening is a free night with dinner on your own at any one of the nearby restaurants to our hotel.

Monday, we will depart the area and head for Baltimore to visit Fort McHenry and some other sites in that Civil War city as well, with lunch on your own along the way. Depart Baltimore airport at 6 pm, arriving tired and happy in Albany at 7:10 pm.

Final itinerary will be provided and dinner selections made in an upcoming mailing.

### **NOTE NOTE NOTE URGENT URGENT NOTE NOTE URGENT!!!!**

**We must have your commitment to attend in the mailbox by Wednesday September 4<sup>th</sup>!! If you want to go and do not get this mailing until too late to send your money, you can call in but a reservation made is a reservation paid!!! We will be paying for the airfare which is nonrefundable (but usable by customer) and other non refundable deposits on Friday September 6 at 3 pm. I must have your full name as it appears on your ID for ticketing purposes. A deposit of \$200 is required to reserve your space, and is nonrefundable. Send Attn Trip 2002, CDCWRT PO Box 14871, Albany NY 12212-4871. If we don't have 30 attendees on September 6<sup>th</sup>, we don't go and you will get your money back if the trip is cancelled. Ground arrangements can be made for those driving. The second payment of \$299, to pay in full, is due by October 4<sup>th</sup> at the CDCWRT meeting at the Pruyn House.**