



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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MARCH, 2001

The March Meeting
Friday, March 9, 2001
GUILDERLAND PUBLIC
LIBRARY
WESTERN AVENUE
GUILDERLAND, NY

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

CDCWRT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Round Table will be Friday night, March 9th, at the Guilderland Library at 7:00 P.M. Our speaker will be Michael Russert. His topic will be fascinating and very informative: MAJOR GENERAL HENRY W. SLOCUM: THE STEADFAST WARRIOR.

Slocum was born September 24, 1827 at Delphi, NY, and graduated from the USMA in 1852. He resigned from the Army in 1856, but remained active in the militia. He was made colonel of the 27th NY and was wounded at First Bull Run. He was promoted to brigadier general in August 1861, and major general in August 1862. He resigned his commission in September 1865, and returned to practice law and politics. He died April 14, 1894 in Brooklyn, and was buried there in Greenwood Cemetery.

The talk will examine the career of New Yorker, Henry Slocum, who has become a virtually forgotten corps commander who served with distinction in both the Eastern and Western Theaters. This presentation will be an overview of his military career, with an emphasis on his neglected role especially at Gettysburg and during the Atlanta Campaign and the March to the

Sea and through the Carolinas. The lecture will show that Slocum, while not a general of the caliber of Hancock, was a dependable general who performed much better than average on the battlefield.

Mike has been a longtime member of the CDCWRT. He is a graduate of Buffalo State and SUNY Empire State and his field of expertise is American Studies. Mike taught for 35 years, and was Outstanding Teacher in the Capital District in 1995, and was in Who's Who in American Teachers for 1996 and 1997. He is Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society, and is a book reviewer for The Civil War News.

CDCWRT NEWS

FEBRUARY MEETING

The Saturday February meeting was a great success with 90 in attendance to hear David Bastian's fascinating talk about Grant's Canal as part of Lincoln's western strategy to control the Mississippi River. There were many questions and comments after the presentation, and this is always a good sign of audience participation.

The meeting was preceded by a lunch provided by the RT consisting of deli-sandwiches, chips, cookies and drinks. In the audience there were Civil War buffs from the Green Mountain CWRT in Vermont as well as some from Massachusetts. Counting the speaker, this was a 4 state event!

The Slavery exhibit, set up by Lew Warner, was a superb history of this complex issue. It was truly a professional exhibit worthy of an award. The exhibit will be up until the end of February. The RT is also contributing to the March exhibit, and the Slavery exhibit may remain up a few more days in early March. If you have not seen it, DO SO!!!

BOARD MEETING

The February Board Meeting was held on Wednesday the 21st. Treasurer Paul Rivenburgh reported \$815 in the general account, and \$450 in the Hennessy Preservation account, not counting monies previously committed to preservation groups and monies on hand for the Gettysburg trip. The Covermania Show brought in approximately \$500 in stamp and cachet sales for the preservation account.

The following letter was received and read at the meeting. It is excerpted here.

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust wishes to extend to you its sincerest thanks for your most generous donation of \$4000. It is the dedication of groups such as yours that inspires us in our efforts to save hallowed ground. Thanks to generous donors like you, in December of 2000 we were able to pay off the note on the 25 acres of the Talley Farm. John D. Mitchell, President. Added as a hand-written P.S.

This is a most wonderful gift given by a group of Americans who feel deeply grateful to the men who died and suffered on Virginia soil. Thank you again and may God Bless America!

Program Chair, Sue Knost, outlined the meetings for the next full year. These will be listed in the newsletter and the Web site. President, Tom Smith, unveiled plans for a new initiative that will be presented to the membership later in the year. The next meeting of the Board will be held at Holmes and Watsons Restaurant in Troy (next to the Post Office) at 7 PM on Wednesday, March 21st. The membership is encouraged to attend.

PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

By Tom Smith

March 1861

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States of America, was in Washington for less than two weeks after leaving his home in Springfield, Illinois. His waking moments were filled with daily pressures requiring a deep intensity of thought that tested his extraordinary political acumen. Much of that time was taken

with cabinet selections and the development of his inauguration speech. The latter was masterfully crafted and flawlessly delivered on March 4, 1861. In it, Lincoln pledged to hold federal property.

The next day, March 5, 1861, Lincoln was informed of a report by Captain Robert Anderson that the garrison at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, would run out of provisions in about six weeks. Lincoln was faced with a dilemma, and his decision could determine further dividing or uniting the border states and the North, in general. To determine the proper course of action, he sought the input from many of his closest advisors.

Some of those were quite disparate. For example, Winfield Scott, Lincoln's General-in-chief and native Virginian, endorsed the evacuation of Fort Sumter. Dissimilarly, William Seward, the Secretary of State from New York, wanted to engage France and Spain in a war over Santo Domingo and Mexico to reunite the country. Seward is also accused of leaking information to the press, falsely asserting that Lincoln was going to abandon Anderson's men.

The clock was ticking. And, Lincoln knew it.

(Primary Reading Source: McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 1988, pp. 267-271)

Web Site News

By Jon Olson

By the time you read this, hopefully I will have launched a new **Bulletin Board** page. On this new page you will be able to post research questions, seek information on your favorite regiment or person, look for unpublished source material, start a debate, etc. Just about anything goes, except no advertising or for-profit promotion is permitted. The ground rules are on the page which can be accessed either by clicking on the "Bulletin Board" link on the navigational rail on the Home Page, or via the special "Bulletin Board" link in the blue

bordered box right under the photo at the top of the Home Page.

Our site continues to be extremely popular. By the time you read this, we will have gone over the 14,000 visitor mark! More telling than the net number of visitors, are the number of “unique (i.e. first time) visitors” and “page views.” For the three month period November 2000-January 2001, **we averaged 269 unique visitors and 1,280 page views per month.** This level of activity puts us at or near the top of the most-accessed *Times Union* sites.

Remember, you can still order your **Doubleday T-shirt** via the Web site. You can access the page by either clicking on “Doubleday T-shirt” in the navigational rail, or the special link labeled “Offering,” which appears under the group photo on the Home Page. Note that although the T-shirts list for \$12 on the site, they are discounted to \$10 for members (plus S&H).

Finally, remember that I’m always looking for new material for the Web site. If you have original material or news about your Civil War related activities which you would like to share, please pass it along to me, preferably as an e-mail attachment. to: jonolson@nycap.rr.com. If you don’t have access to a computer, please mail hardcopy to me at P.O. Box 671, Newtonville, NY 12128-0671.

CDCWRT HISTORY/TRIVIA

By Fran McCashion, Historian

The first volume of the newsletter was published in September 1984. It was called “The Dispatch” but it was noted that this name was “not etched in stone.” If the membership liked the name, it would remain. A presentation of One Golden Minie’ Ball was to be made to the person suggesting the best name for the newsletter. The awarding of this “munificent” gift was to be made at the November 1984 meeting. Apparently no other suggestions were received because the name remained as *The Dispatch*.

The initial meetings were called musters, and were held bi-monthly. The newsletter was published quarterly. The first four musters were:

- 1st – Bill Howard spoke on The Common Soldier’s Life. He brought Civil War artifacts.
- 2nd - Dan Lorello spoke on the NYS Archives collection of Civil War records of NY soldiers.
- 3rd - David Bosse, curator of the Clements Library of the University of Michigan, spoke about Ambrose Bierce, map maker of the 9th Rgt. Indiana Volunteers.
- 4th – Dan Stedman spoke on The History of the Henry 16 Shot Repeating Rifle.

In the Fall of 1985, the de facto group running the RT drafted a constitution and by-laws. Elections were held in November of 1985.

Civil War Trivia Pursuit was created by Bob Mulligan, and was first printed in Vol.1, #2, January 1985 of *The Dispatch*. Try your luck on these items. Answers will be in next month’s newsletter.

- In what action would you expect to find-
 - a. The Dictator
 - b. Old Sacramento
 - c. Whistling Dick
 - d. The Swamp Angel
- Candy and Kane fought together in what famous battle?
- There were six general officers whose last name began with the letter **Z**. Can you name any?

UP-COMING EVENTS.

- **GETTYSBURG SPRING MUSTER 2001 ON MARCH 30TH TO APRIL 1ST. THE FINAL PAYMENT OF \$75 IS DUE BY MARCH 9TH. ONE SEAT IS STILL AVAILABLE. CALL PAUL OR JOE ASAP.**

This year's trip will cover the crucial decisions and actions of Confederate forces on July 1st. Why was the Army of Northern Virginia unable to capitalize on their major victory? Join us and find out what went wrong.

- **March 7-27th** The Guilderland Public Library has been chosen as a host site for the panel exhibition entitled **“Free at Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America.”** This exhibition was developed by the Gilder Lehman Institute of American History. It is based upon rare documents, photographs, prints and cartoons that trace the movement to abolish slavery from the framing of the Constitution to its abolition during the Civil War. It illuminates shades of opinion within the ranks of the famous and the ordinary, free and slave, men and women, who come to see slavery as incompatible with the ideals upon which the nation was founded. The exhibition will provide insights into how abolition became a national issue; how the idea of progress drew politicians and moral reformers together; how the efforts of escaped slaves contributed a human face to the horrors of slavery; and how individual presidents and citizens struggled to understand and resolve the most perplexing questions of their age.
- CDCWRT member, author, and Professor of History at the University at Albany, Allen Ballard, will read passages from his novel, *Where I'm Bound*. This will take place at the Guilderland Library on **March 7th at 7:00 P.M.** Those who heard Dr. Ballard at the November Conference know what a spell-binding reading he provided, along with a couple of songs accompanied by a guitar.
- **Saturday, March 10th, Conference on New York Women and the Civil War. INSERT IN THIS NEWSLETTER** This is a day-long conference is co-sponsored by the CDCWRT and the Guilderland Library in honor of Women's History Month 2001. Speakers will talk about the crucial roles women played during the War. The conference is free but attendance will be limited to the first 100.
- **Sunday, March 11th, Concert featuring the 77th New York Regimental Balladeers at the Guilderland Library.** The featured Balladeers will play and sing songs as they would have been performed in camp or in the family parlor during the Civil War.
- **Thursday, March 15th, Re-enactor Lee Griffin presents Frederick Douglass, The Story of an American Slave.**
- **Saturday, March 17th, St. Patrick's Day. March with the 125th NYSV and the Irish Brigade!** Members of the 125th are bussing to NYC on the 17th, leaving 7 AM, arriving at the 69th Armory (**THE 69th of CW and WWI fame**) where you can view the museum, then watch or march in the parade, returning 6 PM, and all for **\$26. Call Scott Cetnar, President of 125th, at 843-1560 or 'Goose' Gosling at 765-4041 ASAP.**
- **Friday, March 23rd, Wellness Day at the Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland.** Last year several members of the RT participated in an all-day event where students attended sessions that ranged from health to hobbies. The Life of the Civil War Soldier was presented and each class could then ask questions and take the discussion where ever they wanted to go. Over 150 students attended our

sessions and evaluated them afterwards. The RT presentations were among the most popular and educational. We are invited back for a repeat performance.

MISCELLANEOUS

A Ron Tunison sculpture entitled "Stonewall" Jackson at Cedar Mountain is available from the RT for \$449. This an artist-proof, signed cold-cast bronze sculpture, limited edition of 12, selected specifically for the CDCWRT. There is only one left. The usual cost for this piece would be \$495 plus tax of \$39.60 plus \$15 S/H. The \$449 price is complete. Ron has made a generous donation to the RT preservation fund by making these special sculptures available at cost, and the RT has passed part of that savings on to its members. The Tunison donation will amount to about \$1200. This sculpture was on display at the Guilderland Library in December 2000. The detail is exquisite. The piece comes with a signed collector's certificate. Please contact Matt Farina or Sue Knost if interested.

It's working! Last month's newsletter carried the challenge that Matt Farina issued to the RT membership. One of the officers of the Old Baldy CWRT of Philadelphia called us. We exchange newsletter with Old Baldy. The officer remarked that he is accepting our challenge and he plans to encourage his RT to raise more money for preservation activities. Our Board was delighted, and wishes Old Baldy great success.

Covermania, a stamps, postcard and cachet show, was held in Albany February 17-18th. The CDCWRT is a co-sponsor of the event, and a special postal cancellation was held at the show. The RT netted about \$500 in sales. Anyone interested in obtaining cancelled cachets for this an other events should complete the order blank below and return it to Matt Farina or Sue Knost. The orders will be filled AFTER the meeting. If you would like the order mailed to you, please include \$1.00 more for postage.

- First Night -Celebrate the Century Express
- First Night – Albany Skyline
- Lincoln's Gettysburg Address-cancelled in GB
- Hillary Clinton-1st woman US Senator NYS
- Victorian Stroll December 2000
- Covermania #3-Albany Skyline
- Veterans' Day 2000
- Legends of Baseball single cachets

These cachets are \$3.00 apiece, or 2 for \$5.00. Buy two and get a **FREE** postal commemorative book or a CD of Native American music in addition.

The RT was able to acquire some cancellations from the centennial of the Civil War. These will be sold in pairs with newer cachets for \$5.00. The older cancellations are at least 35 years old and will make unique items or gifts. The pairs all vary. An example is:

-Lincoln's GB address & a centennial Lincoln cancellation.

The RT also has obtained on consignment several CW items (ephemera) with older cancellations. Among the items are:

- 4/18/71 Lincoln 4 cent cancellation @ \$5.00
- 2/12/59 Lincoln 1 cent cancellation @ \$5.00
- all 5 centennial stamps on large card @ \$10
- 5/17/69 first day of issue of Memphis stamp, program signed by last living Confederate widow @ \$20.00 (she is still alive in 2000!)
- 2/27/59 first day of issue of Lincoln 3 cent stamp, program commemorates 99th anniversary of Lincoln's address at Cooper Union @ \$20.00
- 7/1/63 cancelled centennial mailer GB at \$5.00

BOOKS, BOOKS, AND MORE BOOKS

We still have copies of several books at significant discount. These can also be ordered.

- Where I'm Bound* – Allen Ballard, signed \$20
- Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* – Carol Reardon, \$20
- Charlie's Civil War* – Brand Livingstone, \$20
- Lee's Retreat-A Field Guide*, Chris Caulkins, signed \$8
- The Civil War in Depth*, Bob Zeller, 3-D photographic history, 1st volume \$18, 2nd volume \$20, 3rd volume \$18, all three \$45.