



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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**Cobb's infantry brigade in the Sunken Road behind the stone wall on
Marye's Heights in Fredericksburg**

Supported by Cooke's Brigade and the Washington Artillery, Confederate
forces stop Union forces of French's Division.

**November Meeting
Saturday 11/09/02**

Fall Banquet

**Best Western Sovereign Hotel
1228 Western Ave.
Albany, NY 12203**

SOCIAL HOUR	6:00 PM
BUFFET DINNER	7:00 PM
SPEAKER FOLLOWS	8:00 PM

Dr. Lowry's topic for the banquet will be Abraham Lincoln and Military Justice.

The cost of the Conference will be \$85 and includes morning reception, coffee breaks, lunch, and the evening banquet in addition to conference materials. The Conference only, will be \$60/person. The Banquet only, will be \$30/person. Mail checks to Paul Rivenburgh, treasurer, CDCWRT, before Wednesday, November 6th. For more information, call Cindy Schechter, (518) 371-2434. Raffle tickets which are included within this newsletter, can be returned to Paul Rivenburgh.

CDCWRT MEETING

The November meeting of the CDCWRT will be our Fall Banquet, which will be held on SATURDAY, November 9th, at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel. The banquet will be the evening event for the Round Table's Fifth Annual Northeast Conference on the Civil War. Details on the conference are included in this newsletter. The banquet will be a buffet dinner, with the social hour starting at 6:00pm.

The guest speaker for our banquet will be Thomas P. Lowry, M.D. Dr. Lowry is a graduate of Stanford University, where he studied history and medicine. He served as a captain in the medical corps in the U.S. Air Force, and was on the staff of the Masters & Johnson Clinic in 1972 and 1973. He has authored numerous history and medical journal articles and has 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 is also a co-author of The Attack on Taranto: Blueprint for Pearl Harbor, for those who also enjoy military history of the 20th century.

OCTOBER MEETING

A crowd of about eighty attended the October meeting in the Buhrmaster Barn at the Pruyn House on October 4th. The air was cool, but it was perfect weather for cider and donuts. The audience was entertained by multi-talented student member, Roxanne Wegman, who played Civil War and 19th century tunes on her fiddle. Roxanne by the way, ran well in the cross-country competition the next day. The music was the perfect prelude for the program. The audience listened spell-bound as Marcia Estabrook spoke as the runaway slave, Ellen Craft. For over an hour Ellen told of her childhood and adult life as a slave, and the harrowing escape to the North. The topic and the locale of the meeting, along with the musical prelude, all dovetailed to make a memorable evening.

BOARD MEETING

The October Board Meeting was held on Thursday, October 17th. The treasurer's report noted \$3076.36 in the general operating fund, and \$6940.71 in the preservation account. There were still some small outstanding bills yet to be paid from the Fall Trip. It was reported that the trip

was an outstanding success (see below). The November conference and banquet were discussed along with a program agenda for the next six months.

A proposed slate of officers and board members was discussed and will be voted upon at the December meeting.

<i>President</i>	<i>Joe Stracuzzi</i>
<i>Vice-President</i>	<i>Matt George</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>open</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Paul Rivenburgh</i>
<i>At-Large</i>	<i>Cindy Schechter</i>
<i>At-Large</i>	<i>Fran McCashion</i>
<i>At-Large</i>	<i>Mike Spaulding</i>
<i>Ex-Officio</i>	<i>Matt Farina</i>

Jon Olson has decided to step-down from the board, but will remain Webmaster. Matt Farina has agreed to remain editor of the newsletter. Sue Knost will remain as program chair. The Board is seeking a volunteer for Secretary, as well as volunteers for various committees. Anyone interested should contact any of the Board members.

At a newsletter mailing party last month, the Board discussed the results of the 140th Antietam trip. The threat of bad weather resulted in poor crowds on Sunday. The sale of cachets was modest and only a small profit was netted. Since life-time member, John Hennessey, was spearheading the Preservation Coalition activities at Chancellorsville, the Board agreed to donate \$1000 to the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust for land purchase. John also turned over a \$200 donation check to the RT to add to the \$1000. The sale of a few remaining 135th anniversary cachets netted another \$50, bring the total donation to \$1250.

At the October meeting the Board discussed other donations by year's end, but no decisions have been reached.

FALL TRIP REPORT

The fall trip to Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville may have just been the best trip that the RT has sponsored to date --- and that's a tough statement to make, since ALL of the RT trips have been memorable. Despite the unfortunate events in Virginia that put the group's hotel within 500 feet of the gas station where the Washington's sniper's Friday victim was shot several hours before our arrival, the tour was filled with filled with "firsts" for everyone in the group. Even "old timers" in the RT have not been in places where this tour went. To paraphrase Capt. Kirk, we went "where no man has gone before."

Our battle guide was Frank O'Reilly, who graduated from Washington and Lee University and who became full-time historian at the "Stonewall" Jackson Shrine in 1990. John Hennessey introduced Frank as the most knowledgeable historian on the Fredericksburg campaign, and after this tour, we would add Chancellorsville to that. We started our tour at Burnside's headquarters at Chatham House and then went down to the river crossings. From there we proceeded to the flats below Prospect Hill, several miles downstream from Fredericksburg. In order to understand Burnside's attacks on Marye's Heights, one must understand the attack on Jackson's position at Prospect Hill. The chain of events at this location was the real Battle of Fredericksburg. The futile assaults at Marye's Heights were an attempt to hold the Confederates there and prevent Longstreet from supporting Jackson.

Frank took the group to the crossroads where the "Gallant Pelham" with one 12-pounder Parrot stopped the initial Union assault on Prospect Hill. We were perhaps the last group of Civil War visitors to see this vista, for in November, construction of a

new mall will forever alter the landscape. Later, on the top of the hill, we explored the woods where Meade's disorganized units strike a gap in the Confederate defenses, and then expand that into a major breach in Jackson's defenses. Fredericksburg could have been a Burnside victory, but Frank explored the different ways in which Union commanders reacted and compared it to the responses of Confederate commanders. The battle was lost (or won) in these moments.

We then returned to Marye's Heights and stood at the wall where 13,000 Federal casualties were sustained. The assaults had taken on a life of their own, as Burnside could only focus on what was occurring before him. This is the Fredericksburg with which we are familiar. As the first Battle of Marye's Heights draws to and end, we retired to a delicious banquet in a period restaurant near the location of the upper pontoon bridge location.

Saturday morning we started the Chancellorsville campaign of Gen. Joseph Hooker. On 5/1/1863 near Zoan Church, Hooker yields the initiative to Robert E. Lee, when he pulls back from open ground to fortified positions near the Chancellor House. Once again, we learned that we may have been one of the last groups to survey this open vista before a miniature city occupies much of the site of the "minor" battle. This is the land that CVBT and John Hennessey and the coalition are fighting to preserve. Aided by Chris Kolakowski, park historian, and new CDCWRT member, Frank took us through the events of May 1st and May 2nd, 1863. We stood on the spot where Jackson and Lee, sitting on discarded cracker boxes, discussed, "How can we get at those people?" We then followed Jackson's flank march to the point where he prepared for his famous flank attack.

We followed the advance along the Plank Road, but soon the bus turned off onto a long unpaved driveway to a parking area. There on a hillock was the location where Jackson's force struck the 11th Corps. When it was private land, it was barely visible from the road. But now standing at the site and walking the terrain, it was easy to understand why 11th Corps collapsed so quickly. A long swale behind the Union regiments along the Plank Road protected and hid the Confederates, and allowed Jackson's forced to penetrate deep behind the Federals before turning and striking the rear and flank simultaneously.

Jackson's attack drove the Federals back almost 2 miles before it stalled. He then rode out in front of his forces around 9pm to determine the location of Federal forces. He used Mountain Road, which paralleled the turnpike for about one half a mile, and as everyone knows, was accidentally shot by his own forces. A monument, seen from the turnpike, supposedly marks the spot, but this is where A.P. Hill's staff were struck. A boulder, behind the monument, supposedly marks the "true" spot. However Bob Krick and Frank determined a while ago, the actual spot. This is an unmarked location on a slightly cleared section of the Mountain Road trace, behind the Visitor Center. It was at this location where Frank talked about Jackson's wounding. A few feet away, he identified the spot where Jackson was taken off his horse.

After we had dinner with John Hennessey and representatives of CVBT, we drove to Guinea Station, where Jackson spent his last week. Frank had gone on ahead, and the small building was lit by candle-light. We went inside the building known as the "Stonewall" Jackson Shrine, and heard of his last days. Frank led us into the bedroom where the original bed still

stands. The same clock that measured Jackson's last days, was heard ticking on the mantle as Frank described Jackson's last hours. We had traced the general's last movements from the formulation of his bold plan, to its implementation; from the pinnacle of success to his death in a plantation business office. There was only one other "loose end." The next day we drove to Elwood Plantation and had our group photo taken at the burial site of Jackson's left arm.

On Sunday we also finished the Chancellorsville action, from Hazel Grove to Hooker's final position. Frank spoke above the roar of traffic at the crossroads in front of the foundation of the Chancellorville Inn. We tried to imagine what it would sound like with an additional 70,000 autos per day when the proposed miniature city becomes a reality. Before visiting Hooker's final position, the CVBT staff took us into the woods of a recent CVBT purchase. There we saw the gravesites of several Civil War soldiers. This site was so new, that even Frank had not been on the land before. We finished at the apex of Hooker's last position. Even at this point, Hooker still had an opportunity to salvage a victory from defeat, by staying in his strong defensive position and letting Lee attack. Frank covered in detail the council of war, which sealed Hooker's fate and thrust Meade into the forefront of the Army of the Potomac.

On Monday we returned to Baltimore, toured Fort McHenry, the Baltimore Civil War Museum, and the waterfront area before returning home. We had seen land that our preservation efforts helped purchase, and saw for the last time, land that will disappear under the bulldozer. We stood where *"the valor of one side was matched by the valor of the other side. This*

was the connection of their generation. To study this is our connection with them, and it would not happen without dirt and grass."
(from Frank O'Reilly's final comments)

Frank O'Reilly's new book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign*, will not be released until early 2003. However an autographed copy, and your personal inscription, signed and dated December 13th, on the 140th anniversary of the battle can be obtained for \$34.95 as part of an order for CDCWRT. There will be **no shipping charge or tax, and \$10.00 of the purchase price of each book goes to CVBT.** See Matt Farina, Joe Stracuzzi or Sue Knost before December 1st for details.

UP-COMING EVENTS

November 16th & 17th is Remembrance Day Weekend in Gettysburg. Ron Tunison's sculpture of Elizabeth Thorn will be unveiled at the Cemetery Gate House. The CDCWRT plans a stamp cancellation for the event.

Sunday, December 8th, is the Victorian Stroll in Troy. A commemorative cancellation will occur in the Troy Post Office.

Friday, December 13th, is the CDCWRT meeting and Holiday Party at the Guilderland Library. Robert Mulligan will speak on War Gaming. Elections and our party will follow.

Friday, January 10th, is the CDCWRT Potpourri Night at the Guilderland Library.

March 7th-9th, 2003 is the Spring bare bones trip to Gettysburg. Mark this date on your calendar.

Fifth Annual Northeast Conference on the Civil War
Bridging the Gap Conference Series **November 8-9, 2002**

New York and the Civil War
Through Their Eyes: The Letters, Accounts, and Paintings of New York Civil War Soldiers

Sponsored by the Capital District Civil War Round Table and the New York State Museum

Main Conference Location: New York State Museum Cultural Education Center, Empire State Plaza, Albany
Saturday, November 9, from 8:30 am to 4 pm for feature presentations and exhibit viewing with curator's tour

Location: Friday & Saturday night - Best Western Hotel 1228 Western Ave, Albany NY (Doors open at 6 pm)
Preconference: Authors' night & Book Sale, Friday 6:30 pm – 10 pm Saturday Speaker Banquet 6 – 10 pm

NO OTHER ERA in American history so intrigues us as that of the Civil War. In our mind's eye, we form images of battles, strive to understand the horrors of war faced by soldiers, and play out countless scenarios described in pen and ink by historians from that time to the present. Memoirs by soldiers attempted to document what *really happened*, while historians of the present continue to sift through official records and countless personal papers in order to discover that elusive truth called history. The goal was then, and remains today, to describe for all time what existed in those tumultuous years of the war; to explain for themselves and future generations *what it was like*.

In this year's Bridging the Gap Conference, we will take an in-depth look at what that war meant to New York State, especially through an exciting exhibit of soldier art, displayed for the first time on tour in Albany. As we search to understand what life in those times was like, it is more powerful to view that time looking through the eyes of the people who lived in the various regions of the Empire State, in the same places where we live today.

The conference brings together an outstanding panel of scholars and historians who have spent decades researching the role of New York, its soldiers, and its citizens in the complex era of the Civil War. Original research, some of which has been or is about to be published, will be presented for the first time at our conference. Join us as we explore the political elements, homefront issues, and economic conditions of the state that contributed more men and material to the war effort than any other state during the war. Learn more about the little known art treasures that lay undiscovered for decades. We will conclude the conference with the real story of the Lincoln Courts Martial, as related by banquet speaker and noted author, Dr. Thomas Lowry.

Speaker Program: Friday November 9, 2002 6:30 – 10:30 pm

Friday Pre-conference: November 9, 2001 *Author's Night Booksigning- Guilder Room* Doors open 6:15 pm Conference registration and book sales open at 6:30 pm. Program begins 7 pm on Friday and is **FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Speakers: Cousins in Command: Family Relationship among Virginia General Officers of the Civil War

Explore the family relationships among the general officers, both Union and Confederate, and their resulting consequences in the conduct of the war with author/historian **Dr. James Kelly**, our feature presenter at Saturday's conference.

James C. Kelly has been assistant director for museums at the Virginia Historical Society since 1990. Previously, he was director of collections (1980-89) and chief of research (1977-80) at the Tennessee State Museum, and executive director of the Tennessee American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (1974-77). A native of Philadelphia, he received the Ph. D. in history from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1974.

A dramatic reading by Nellie and Bill Edmonston; New York at Gettysburg

The dramatic readings by Nellie and Bill Edmonston have become a hallmark of our Friday evening preconference. Evocative of Civil War period entertainment, Nellie & Bill have developed and presented their dramatic reading series on NY soldiers as a special treat for Friday evening attendees. The Edmonstons own Edmonston Publishing, and have sponsored our author signing and lecture series yearly at each conference. The Edmonstons will be offering a selection of new titles and out of print books during the conference weekend.

Book signings and book sale will also be available on Saturday evening during the banquet reception.

Saturday Conference Speaker Program November 9, 2002 Morning reception 8:30 am, Program 9 am, Lunch included

Opening session: "'New York City's Civil War'"

Through accounts, first person reminiscences, and letters, this presentation by historian Christopher Kolakowski provides the insider's explanation of what convulsed New York City from 1860-65. He will discuss the city in 1860 as the war begins, the Lincoln election of 1860/secession crisis and how the city responds, the Draft Riots, and the 1864 election, concluding with NYC's reaction to Lincoln's assassination.

Christopher L. Kolakowski is a graduate of Emory & Henry College with a B.A. in History and Mass Communications. Born and raised in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Chris has worked as a historian with Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park for eight years, both as a volunteer and paid employee. He is the author of several articles on the Civil War and Napoleonic Wars, plus wrote a biweekly column for the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star. Currently, Chris is researching a book on the Battles of Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church. In August 2002 Chris took a leave of absence from the park and began studying for his MA in Public History at the State University of New York at Albany.

"Working with Primary Sources: The Charles Bowen Letters, New Yorker in the US Regulars"

Acclaimed as one of the one of the best collections reviewers have ever seen--and the best collection to date by a US Regular, is made especially more significant since Bowen was a New Yorker who left first-hand accounts of the war. Join historian Mike Russert as he explores the steps in working with the editor and the Bowen letters to bring this important collection to the public, and discusses the content and why they are so important in our understanding of the war.

Michael Russert has an MALS plus sixty hours in American Studies with a concentration in the Civil War Period. A member of the CDCWRT and Company of Military Historians, he is Coordinator for the New York State Veteran Oral History Program and Chair of the New York State Battle Flag Preservation Committee.

Images from the Storm: Soldier-artist Robert Sneden

In 1993 and 1997 Dr. Kelly discovered a five thousand page Civil War diary by Sneden, a soldier in the 40th New York (Mozart) Regiment, and one thousand watercolor drawings by him, the largest body of surviving Civil War art by any soldier or sailor in the conflict. This mass of unpublished material has given rise to two books, *Eye of the Storm*, which is an edited version of Sneden's diary/memoir (The Free Press, 1999) and *Images from the Storm* (The Free Press, 2001), which reproduces 300 of Sneden's watercolors with captions and connecting narrative. Dr. Kelly will share with us not only Sneden's compelling story, but also the fascinating account of how his diary and art were found after nearly a century of obscurity.

James C. Kelly has been assistant director for museums at the Virginia Historical Society since 1990. Previously, he was director of collections (1980-89) and chief of research (1977-80) at the Tennessee State Museum, and executive director of the Tennessee American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (1974-77). A native of Philadelphia, he received the Ph. D. in history from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1974. Dr. Kelly has been curator or co-curator for six exhibitions that have won the Award of Merit, the highest accolade of the American Association for State and Local History:

Eye of the Storm: The Civil War Drawings of Robert Knox Sneden
New York State Museum

When the Civil War ended, Private Robert Knox Sneden, a Union mapmaker, returned to his home in New York with a memory plagued by the brutalities of war, a body disabled from 13 months in Confederate prison camps, and numerous pencil sketches of his horrifying experience. He spent the remainder of his life turning his pencil sketches into hundreds of watercolors and to completing a 5,000-page diary/memoir, considered to be one of the richest and most detailed descriptions ever written of soldier life in the Civil War. Organized by the Virginia Historical Society, this exhibition is a new tour of over 90 images selected from Sneden's memoir. The State Museum features Civil War art from its own collections, including works by E. L. Henry and John G. Fay. An exciting footnote to the Sneden exhibit, which is being exhibited in this collection for the very first time in the US, is that the works by E.L. Henry are being publicly exhibited for the first time ever.

Nancy Kelley, Exhibition Coordinator, and Ronald Burch, Curator of Art and Architecture, will lead a gallery tour, discussing how arrangements were made for the exhibition to come to Albany and the process of adding significant objects from New York State collections to the Eye of the Storm exhibition.

Evening Banquet program Abraham Lincoln and Military Justice - Dr Thomas Lowry

For more information, call 518-371-2434 or visit our website at <http://www.timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt/>
Full program (two days), including all meals: \$85 Saturday conference only \$60 Saturday night banquet only \$30 **SAVE NOW!**