

# The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

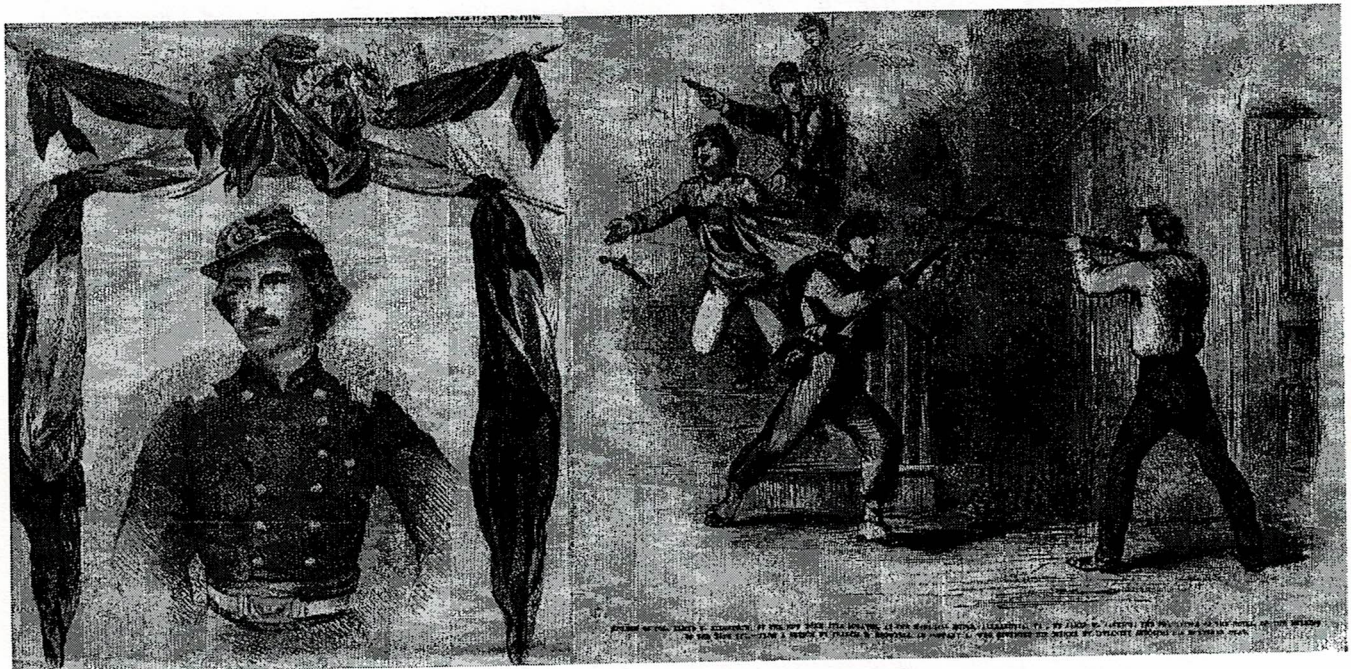
Capital District Civil War Round Table

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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Murder of Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth, of the New York Fire Zouaves, at the Marshall House, Alexandria, Va., by James W. Jackson, the proprietor of the hotel, on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> ult. — from a sketch by Francis E. Brownell, of Company A, who revenged his officer by instantly shooting his murderer dead.

*From Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, June 1, 1861*

The May Meeting  
Friday May 11, 2001

GUILDERLAND PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
ROUTE 20 WESTERN AVE.  
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, May 11<sup>th</sup> at the Guilderland Public Library. Our speaker will be Paul Cimbala and his presentation is entitled, THE VETERAN'S RESERVE CORPS. Dr. Cimbala is a full Professor of History at Fordham University, and he is also the editor of North and South, the official magazine of the Civil War Society.*

*The Veteran's Reserve was sometimes the butt of jokes or derisive songs during the Civil War. However members served in very valuable activities, including guard duty and hospital assistants. Dr. Cimbala will discuss the role of the Corps and will familiarize us with this often forgotten unit.*

## CDCWRT NEWS

### APRIL MEETING

Approximately fifty round table members and friends enjoyed a good dinner and an outstanding presentation by Bud Hall. The evening began with the sale of a number of Civil War books that Norm Sebastian donated before his untimely passing. A number of exceptional books have been put aside for future raffles. At the banquet, book sales netted \$396 and the

book raffle, \$102. Special cachet sales netted \$107. The total of \$605 will go towards preservation activities.

The meeting also served as a happy occasion to make several announcements. Deborah Fitts and Bud will be married on May 5<sup>th</sup> in Gettysburg. Many members who have known them for a number of years congratulated the couple. Bud also indicated that his book on Brandy Station is progressing, and may be in print next year. He then spoke more about preservation activities at Brandy Station. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001, the first 14 acres of Fleetwood Hill will be owned free and clear by the Foundation. Our RT made the down payment for this at the closing several years ago. Bud stated that our RT "**has done the most of any round table in the country to save Brandy Station.**"

Changing his topic slightly, Mr. Hall then proceeded to discuss the ascendancy of the Federal cavalry over the next 45 minutes. In this brief but lucid outline, he discussed in broad strokes, the events that brought about changes that affected events in the Eastern theatre of the war. Bud first reviewed the mission of the cavalry and the long list of Southern officers who understood that mission. On the other hand, Winfield Scott believed cavalry would be "unimportant and secondary." This set the attitude of Union generals early in the struggle. Four actions explain the emergence and ascendancy of the Federal cavalry.

First, Gen. Joseph Hooker consolidated the cavalry into a corps with three strong divisions. Stoneman's raid behind the Confederate lines during the battle of Chancellorsville was an independent action not seen before in the Union cavalry. Secondly, this is followed by a budding aggressiveness as demonstrated at Brandy Station where the Union horsemen "came to kill the king." This aggressiveness follows through at Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville. Third, was the arrival of Phil Sheridan as cavalry commander in the East. Later in March of 1865, it was Sheridan who sealed the fate of Lee's army by getting ahead of it, capturing the supply trains near Appomattox, and blocking Lee's

army from joining Joe Johnston in North Carolina. Finally, it was the death of J.E.B. Stuart at Yellow Tavern on May 11, 1864.

If this talk was a prelude to the book, make certain you buy it when it's published and be prepared to "jine the Cavalry."

## BOARD MEETING

The April Board Meeting was held on Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. The treasurer's report indicated about \$730 in the general fund and over \$2000 in the preservation fund that is still uncommitted. The Gettysburg trip was a great success with many positive comments. Although a goal of the trip was not to raise funds, the full bus and shrewd business acumen of Program Chair Sue resulted in modest surplus of funds. Final figures will be available after all bills have been paid.

Our own Webmaster, Jon Olson, has been chosen as one of four finalists for Outstanding Webmaster in the *Times Union* Community Partners. Jon will be honored at a dinner sponsored by the newspaper. Far dinkham, Jon! It was decided to select the best books that Norm Sebastian donated, and use these for up-coming raffles. The remainder will be priced and offered for sales at the banquet and future meetings. Cachet events for the next several months were announced and are listed in this newsletter. The next meeting of the Board will be Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, at Tom Smith's house.

## PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

*By Tom Smith*

This month represents the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth on May 24, 1861. I wanted to share with you some information about it as reported in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* of June 1, 1861.

Ellsworth was born in Saratoga County, New York State, on April 23, 1837. His early adult life took him to New York, Boston, and

Chicago. Later, moving to Springfield, Illinois, he became a student in Mr. Lincoln's law office. As a close friend of the president-elect, he accompanied the Lincolns on their tour to Washington. Upon the "breaking out of the present trouble," Ellsworth went to New York where he raised a regiment of 1,100 firemen, and outfitted them in uniforms and drilled them in the style of the French Zouaves of the Crimean War. They became known as the New York Fire Zouaves and were stationed in Washington.

Colonel Ellsworth was ordered to occupy Alexandria, Virginia, on Friday, May 24, 1861. At about 6:00 a.m. that day, "passing with a handful of his men, the Marshall House, he saw a Secession flag waving above it. On the spur of the moment he entered the hotel, saying that he must have the flag." After trampling the torn down flag and beginning to leave the hotel, Ellsworth and his contingent encountered James E. Jackson, the proprietor.

Jackson, armed with a double-barreled shotgun, shot Ellsworth in the left breast, causing a fatal wound. Corporal Francis E. Brownell of Troy, among Ellsworth's men, then shot Jackson in the head and ran him through with his bayonet. This event drew a crowd of people that included Jackson's widow. "Her cries at the sight were heart rending, and affected the Zouaves so deeply, that forgetting their own danger, they endeavored to soothe and comfort her affliction."

Ellsworth's murder "was justly looked upon as a great calamity, and the flag at half-mast in city, town and village over thousands of miles, North, East, and West, attested at once the estimation of the promise of the man and profound sorrow for his loss." His body was prepared to lie in state in the East Room of the White House; displayed in the Governor's Room at City Hall, New York; and buried in Mechanicsville in upstate New York.

Bonus information announced at the Board Meeting was that Ellsworth was born in Malta, NY, and one of Fran McCashion's relatives helped carry the dead Ellsworth.

## Web Site News

BY JON OLSON

As you may know, the number of visitors to the Web site since April 1999 recently went over the 15,000 mark! The number of visitors to the site has been increasing at the rate of about 1000 every 7-8 weeks. There are two major reasons contributing to this rapid escalation: 1) I have registered our site with several search engines and, 2) on an ongoing basis, I have been asking other Webmasters to link to our site.

I have submitted our site for registration with the following six search engines via a free registration service: Alta Vista, Excite, Infoseek, Lycos, Webcrawler and Google. The submittals to Alta Vista, Infoseek and Google have been successful. In each case, our site is linked on the first page when you do a search for the "Capital District Civil War Round Table." In fact, on Infoseek and Google we're THE first hit on the page. If you'd like to see what one sees when they do a search for us, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and enter "Capital District Civil War Round Table" in the search box (use the quotes). Unfortunately, the registrations with Excite, Lycos and Webcrawler have not yet been processed. I have followed up with the service on our status with these three search engines, but I haven't received a response yet. It can take several weeks to process a registration.

On an ongoing basis I have been asking fellow Webmasters to link to our site and, in turn, I reciprocate. It's pretty difficult to get a handle on the exact number of Web sites that have linked to ours. But if you are interested in identifying some of them, go to [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com) and do a search for "links:www.timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt" (without the quotes). I estimate there are a couple of dozen additional links to our site that won't show up in a search. For just a few examples of such links, you can check out: [www.gettysburgbattlefieldonline.com](http://www.gettysburgbattlefieldonline.com), [www.civilwarnews.com](http://www.civilwarnews.com), [www.Angelfire.com/ny4/mattscivilwar/](http://www.Angelfire.com/ny4/mattscivilwar/), and finally, [phoenixdigitalservices.com/125thNYVI.html](http://phoenixdigitalservices.com/125thNYVI.html).

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](mailto: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

Civil War Trivia Pursuit was created by Bob Mulligan, and was first printed in Vol.1, #2, January 1985 of *The Dispatch*. Answers for the April questions are listed below.

- Who rode
  - a. Lexington and Sam - **SHERMAN**
  - b. Winchester and Rienzi-**SHERIDAN**
  - c. Old Baldy-**MEADE**
  - d. Cincinnati, Jack, Fox, Kangaroo and Jeff Davis-**GRANT**
  
- I was the daughter of one President and the wife of another. Who am I? **KNOX TAYLOR, DAUGHTER OF ZACHARY TAYLOR AND FIRST WIFE OF JEFFERSON DAVIS. VARINA HOWELL WAS 2<sup>ND</sup> WIFE.**

Memorial Day in May was originally started to remember our Civil War dead and those killed in other wars, and sometimes to remember all departed members of our families. My great grandfather on my maternal side was George E. Dutcher, a member of the 151<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry and the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Artillery Pennsylvania Batteries F and A. He led an interesting life in Pennsylvania, New York and Michigan, with a great love of the United States and the G.A.R. Several Memorial Days after the war, he spoke at Albany Public Schools, possibly at the request of his granddaughter. I recently found the

speech; it was evidently given about fifty years after the war, around '1915 when his granddaughter was about eleven.

*The soldiers of the Civil War were in large majority, boys from 16 to 19 years of age. The enthusiasm of youth, fired by patriotism, instilled by long generations of forefathers, made an army that was tenacious of purpose and undaunted by hardship, looking forward only to results which would be for the best interest of our Republic. They could not foresee the magnificent development of our country which has resulted from the victory of our armies, and the establishment of our union undivided that we fifty years later can see. And even our southern friends, who fought against us, see that they are much better off than they ever could have been, even if they had succeeded in their efforts. In fact, they are glad at the South that we "licked" them, and today those who fought us, are our sincerest friends whenever we meet them at home or abroad. And no one would be quicker to rally to the defense of "Old Glory" than the loyal Southern boys should it need defenders.*

*Boys then, now grown to manhood, and some even on the declining slope of life. We look back upon those days of our youth almost as a dream, and the hardships we endured, and the pleasures of camp and field, are only a link that binds our past to the present, and makes our hearts glad that we had a part in the struggle that resulted in the preservation of our country undivided, rich and prosperous, and respected by all other nations.*

*It would ill-become us at this time to pass over without a few words of commendation, those loyal women who made the real backbone of our army, who remained at home and cheered loved ones who departed for the front. In my own case, too young to be*

*accepted without parents' consent, my mother and father gave it, and I went away to the front in 1862 for 9 months in the 151<sup>st</sup> Pa. Infantry; so with thousands of other loyal mothers, wives and sweethearts all over our land, and the letters from them cheered many a lonely hour in camp with words of encouragement and love. While their hearts were at times wrung with anguish of suspense, waiting for news of engagements with the enemy, in which loved ones were perhaps slain or wounded.*

*No one can measure the devotion of those at home to the cause of the Union, or all that they suffered and underwent by the privations caused of absent ones who were the bread winners. Too much cannot be said in their praise, and all that they have endured since, by the whims and caprices of those to whom their lives have been joined since the war — should entitle them to the consideration of a country which owes much of its prosperity to their love and devotion, and they should be given a voice in making the laws by their suffrage, which in my estimation, they have richly earned.*

*The presence of these noble defenders of the flag at our public schools each year before Memorial Day, and their stories to the children, is a living lesson in patriotism that strikes home to the young hearts, and their thoughts, and their love of the flag, and leads to better citizenship.*

## **UP-COMING EVENTS.**

Last year on Memorial Day Weekend, the Tryon family of South Bethlehem held an event called **Freedom Fest 2000**, to honor veterans of all U.S. wars and to celebrate the freedoms they fought to preserve. The activities included Revolutionary War demonstrations, essay

contests for students of all grades, live country music entertainment, dancing, cannons, bands, fireworks, and food. If anyone would like to see the program, contact Matt Farina.

This year's **Freedom Fest 2001, Saturday and Sunday, May 26-27**, promises to be bigger yet. Additional new events will include a classic car show, flea market, hay rides, National Guard Color Guard and flyover, re-enactors including Abe Lincoln, Uncle Sam, Patrick Henry, and George Washington. The CDCWRT has been invited to participate in the event and we will be there with information table, display tables, and of course cachet sales. We are looking for volunteers to staff our tables and we want to encourage all our members to consider attending the event. Put it on your calendars now. Look for details in a special flyer in the *Troy Record* the weekend before the Fest.

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The **June 8<sup>th</sup>** meeting will feature our own Troy historian, Michael Barrett. He will discuss the Troy draft riot of 1863, the second most destructive draft riot in the nation.

**Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**, marks the annual open house of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Resource Center at Peebles Island. There are Revolutionary War earthworks on the island and a picnic area. Examples of the preservation of paintings, metal works, textiles and papers will be presented. The CDCWRT will also have an information table and will be sponsoring a stamp cancellation. **Volunteers are needed to man the tables for a few hours. Even if you've never done this before, come and work with an experienced volunteer. If you like to read about the Civil War, you are qualified.**

**Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup>** will mark Civil War Days in Peterboro, NY near Syracuse. The RT has an information table and a stamp cancellation scheduled. This town was a stop on the Underground Railroad and the weekend is always interesting. Volunteers are needed to staff the tables.

Finally, our picnic will be **Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup>**. The picnic speaker will talk about researching your Civil War relative.

## MISCELLANEOUS

*IT'S WORKING!* A full column appeared in the April newsletter of the Old Baldy CWRT of Philadelphia, entitled *Who Knew?* The editor compares Old Baldy with the Northeast Kingdom CWRT in Vermont, which boasts a membership of 550, in a state with only a fraction of the population of Pennsylvania. (Hell, it's only a third of the population of Philadelphia -editor). He then encourages members of Old Baldy to bring a friend, or your kids, or even your spouse or brother-in-law to a meeting. Come on CDCWRT, let's do the same. This editor even brings *his mother* to CW banquets. If you don't want your mother-in-law learning about the Civil War, then at least bring a friend or neighbor. Are other Round Tables out there listening???

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Anyone interested in obtaining canceled cachets for this and other events should order them from Matt Farina or Sue Knost. The orders will be filled at 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-1<sup>st</sup> 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 was still alive in 2000!)
- 2/27/59 first day of issue of Lincoln 3 cent stamp, program commemorates 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln's address at Cooper Union @ \$20.00
- 7/1/63 canceled centennial mailer GB at \$5.00

By comparison, I have a catalog from Real US History.Com in which you can purchase centennial envelopes with first day of issue stamps for \$20.00 *apiece*.

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### **BOOKS, BOOKS, AND MORE BOOKS**

We still have copies of several books at significant discount. These can also be ordered, or purchased at the meeting.

- 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, 1<sup>st</sup> volume \$18, 2<sup>nd</sup> volume \$20, 3<sup>rd</sup> volume \$18, all three \$45.

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### **MEMORY & MEMORIAL DAY**

The following are some excerpts from a letter from Mike Stevens from the Central Virginia

Battlefield Trust. Mike thanks the CDCWRT for its generous support.. CVBT was organized in late 1996 with the mission to purchase significant CW battlefields so as to save them forever, and to put as much of every dollar given to CVBT into "dirt and grass." In its short existence, it has helped save over 175 acres, has grown from 8 to over 900 members, and has won several regional and national preservation awards. He commented on what motivates them and what is the source of their passion (there's that word again – editor)

"What has thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Using this verse, Mike commented that we hear the voices across time, of the men who fought and died in these fields; who look to us, the living, to protect their memories and their country, to protect that for which they were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. These fields have been tragically sanctified and consecrated by the blood of the men who fought there, and we believe that to deface that ground is to dishonor their memory. We are their link, their only link, to a future that preserves both their deeds and their stories.

It has been said that "poor is the nation which has no heroes, but shameful is the nation which has them and forgets." The stories of these men can teach us a lot, about the difference between values and interests, about living a life not of success but of sacrifice, about the higher virtues of honor, and duty, and love of God and country, of courage and self-sacrifice and loyalty to cause and comrade. Mike ended with a quote from a diary of Sgt. James Woodworth. I first heard this from John Hennessey during a reverent and almost mystical moment at Manassas. "Should it be my lot to die in the present struggle, let the thought that I die in the defense of my country console you. And when peace with its happy train of attendants shall once more visit this land, let it be your greatest joy to teach my child that I was one who loved my country more than life. This is the only legacy I can bequeath to him, but it is one that a prince might well be proud of." Thank you, Mike.