

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
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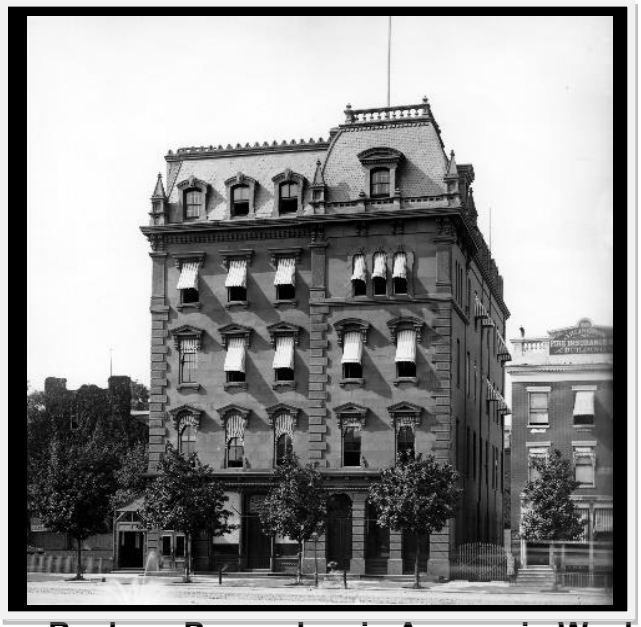
FREEDMEN'S SAVINGS BANK FAILS!



Freedmen's Savings Bank on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

On June 29, 1874, the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company was officially closed by Congress. It was incorporated on March 3, 1865, having been created by the United States Congress to aid the freedmen in their transition from slavery to freedom. In 1868 the bank headquarters was moved from New York City to the expensively built new headquarters in Washington.

Lavish spending, fraudulent management at upper levels, and the Panic of 1873 lead to its failure. Frederick Douglass had been recently elected president of the bank, and invested $10,000 of his own money in the bank. He then realized the true state of affairs and in June petitioned Congress to close the bank.

JUNE MEETING
FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2016

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

The Freedmen's Saving Bank

Prof. David Hochfelder

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:00 – 8:00 p.m.**
Discussion	**8:00 - 8:30 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

***The June meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, June 10, 2016. The Round Table's special guest speaker will be Dr. David Hochfelder, and the title of his presentation is* "The Freedmen's Saving Bank."**

The Freedmen's Saving and Trust Company, popularly known as the Freedmen's Savings Bank, was a private corporation chartered by the U.S. government to encourage and guide the economic development of the newly emancipated African-American communities in the post-Civil War period.

Dr. Hochfelder is Associate Professor of History at the University at Albany of the State University of New York. He received his Ph.D. in History from Case Western Reserve University. David is the author of numerous articles on engineering and history. He has received awards for his presentations. He has published a book entitled "*The Telegraph in America" *and is present working on* "98 Acres in Albany" *which will document the neighborhoods lost to the South Mall project in Albany.

BOARD MEETING

The Board of the CDCWRT met on April 18. 2016. The Treasurer reported $1636.40 in the regular account and $4976.12 in the Preservation account. Paid membership stands at 53 members. The CDCWRT will participate in Civil War Days in Troy at the Masonic temple on June 4 & 5, and at the Peterboro event on June 11. There will also be a postal cancel in Gettysburg July 1-3. The annual picnic will be August 19 at Schuyler Flatts.

The CDCWRT has received notification that the round table is at the Brigade Level of Color Bearer of the Civil War Trust. This denotes over 100 donations have been made.

CDCWRT'S NEW WEBSITE

After several months of problems with the old website, our webmaster has set up a new website. It is:
www.Capitaldistrictcivilwar.org
The new website is also listed in the letterhead of the newsletter.

UP-COMING MEETING/ EVENTS

On July 1-3, 2016, the 153rd Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg will take place in Gettysburg, PA. The CDCWRT will be sponsoring a postal cancellation at two locations. A cancel stamp has been designed for the 3 day event. A cottage has been rented for attendees from the round table and volunteers are encouraged to talk to Matt George. More details will follow.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 19-21, 2016 at Schuyler Flatts on the Hudson River, the annual historic military weekend will occur. The CDCWRT has scheduled its annual picnic on Friday of this weekend. Save this date.

On Friday, September 9, 2016, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor former Capital District resident (but still a member of the CDCWRT), Bruce Venter. Bruce will talk about the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid. This is based on his book, ***Kill Jeff Davis,*** which was released with good reviews in January 2016.

On Friday, October 14, 2016, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Vernon Benjamin, who will talk about the Hudson Valley during the Civil War.

On Friday, November 11, 2016, Veterans' Day, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Neil Yetwin, who will talk about Reverend Day.

On Friday, December 9, 2016, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Ed Bonekemper, who will talk about the Myth of the Lost Cause.

FROM THE SOUTH

This is a continuaton of the Rufus Barringer CWRT of Southern Pines, NC April exhibit in the library of the Sandhills Community College. For the past 5 year, there has been an exhibit of events that occurred that year in the sesquicentennial cycle – 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864 and 1865.

This year's exhibit deals with events up to the 50th reunion at Gettysburg in 1863. It is an overview of the period which is often ignored in public school education.
The main theme is:
Reconstruction & Remembrance:
Binding Old Wounds & Inflicting New Ones

RECONSTRUTION: Carpetbaggers, Scalawags, and the Rise of the KKK

In United States history, a "carpetbagger" was a Northerner who moved to the South after the American Civil War, during the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877). Beginning in 1862, northern schoolteachers and religious missionaries arrived in areas in the South that had fallen under Union control. Some were abolitionists who sought to continue the struggle for racial equality. They often became agents of the federal Freedmen's Bureau, which started operations in 1865 to assist the vast numbers of recently emancipated slaves. The bureau established schools in rural areas of the South for the purpose of educating the mostly illiterate black population. Other Northerners participated in rebuilding railroads that had been previously destroyed during the war.

During the time blacks were enslaved, they were prohibited from education and attaining literacy. Southern states had no public school systems, and white southerners sent their children to private schools or else employed private tutors. After the war, hundreds of northern white women moved south to teach newly freed African-American children. While some northerners went south with reformist impulses, many others went south merely to exploit the chaotic situation for personal gain. Almost all carpetbaggers were Republicans, as were almost all freed slaves. "Scalawags" were white Southerners who supported the party. Sixty Carpetbaggers were elected to Congress from the South, and they included a majority of Republican governors in the South during Reconstruction. White Southerners denounced them fearing they would loot and plunder the defeated South. "Carpetbagger" was a pejorative term referring to the carpet

bags (a form of cheap luggage at the time) which many of these newcomers carried. The term came to be associated with opportunism and exploitation by outsiders.

Many carpetbaggers were businessmen who purchased or leased plantations and became wealthy landowners, hiring freedmen to do the labor. Most were former Union soldiers eager to invest their savings in this promising new frontier, and civilians lured south by press reports of the fabulous sums of money to be made in raising cotton.

Many Northern and Southern Republicans shared a modernizing vision of upgrading the Southern economy and society, one that would replace the inefficient plantation regime with railroads, factories and more efficient farming. They actively promoted public schooling and created numerous colleges and universities. The Northerners were especially successful in taking control of Southern railroads, aided by state legislatures. In 1870 Northerners controlled 21% of the South's railroads (by mileage); 19% of the directors were from the North. By 1890 they controlled 88% of the mileage; 47% of the directors were from the North.

Though some carpetbaggers undoubtedly lived up to their reputation as corrupt opportunists, many were motivated by a genuine desire for reform and concern for the civil and political rights of freed blacks.

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), or simply "the Klan", is the name of three distinct past and present movements in the United States that have advocated extremist reactionary currents such as white supremacy, white nationalism and anti-immigration, historically expressed through terrorism aimed at groups or individuals whom they opposed. All three movements have called for the "purification" of American society, and all are considered right wing extremists organization.

The first Ku Klux Klan was founded in Tennessee by six former members of the Confederate army as a fraternal social club, and flourished in the Southern United States in the late 1860s. By 1867 there was a gradual change in its character, and it became part of an insurgent movement to overthrow the Republican state governments in the South during the Reconstruction Era. As a secret vigilante group, it sought to restore white supremacy by threats and violence including murder, against black and white Republicans. By 1870, the Ku Klux Klan had branches in nearly every southern state.

Even at its height, the Klan did not boast a well-organized structure or clear leadership. The organization’s membership crossed class lines, from small farmers and laborers to planters, lawyers, merchants, physicians and ministers. In the regions where most Klan activity took place, local law enforcement officials either belonged to the Klan or declined to take action against it, and even those who arrested accused Klansmen found it difficult to find witnesses willing to testify against them. Other leading white citizens in the South declined to speak out against the group’s actions, giving them tacit approval.

After 1870, Republican state governments in the South turned to Congress for help, resulting in the passage of three Enforcement Acts, the strongest of which was the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871. Certain crimes committed by individuals were federal offenses, including conspiracies to deprive citizens of the right to hold office, serve on juries and enjoy the equal protection of the law. The act authorized the president to suspend the writ of habeas corpus and arrest accused individuals without charge, and to send federal forces to suppress Klan violence.

However, even as Klan power declined, white supremacy gradually reasserted its

hold on the South as support for Reconstruction waned. After the backroom Compromise of 1876, President Rutherford withdrew federal troops by the end of 1877, and the entire South was under Democratic control once again.

In 1915, the second Klan was founded in Atlanta, Georgia as a formal fraternal organization with a state and national structure. The national headquarters made its profit through a monopoly of costume sales, while the organizers were paid through initiation fees. It grew rapidly nationwide at a time of prosperity, and at its peak in the mid-1920s it claimed to include about 15% of the nation's eligible white male population. There were over 30,000 members in New York State in 1925. Its official rhetoric focused on the threat of the Catholic Church, and its appeal was directed exclusively at white Protestants. The KKK opposed Jews, blacks, Catholics, and newly arriving Southern European groups such as Italians. There were nationwide rallies and violence in the South in particular.

Internal divisions, criminal behavior by leaders, and external opposition brought about a collapse in membership, which had dropped to about 30,000 by 1930. It finally faded away in the 1940s.

The third version of the "Ku Klux Klan" consists of numerous independent local groups opposing the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation especially in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, they often forged alliances with Southern police departments, as in Birmingham, Alabama, or with governor's offices, as with George Wallace of Alabama. Several members of KKK groups were convicted of murder in the deaths of civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964 and children in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham in 1963. Today, researchers estimate that there may be 150 Klan chapters with upwards of 5,000 members nationwide. Today, most sources classify the Klan as a subversive or terrorist organization.

A Repeated Wound: Presidential Assassination

Abraham Lincoln's assassination by Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth was not the first attempt on an American president. Seven of our 44 presidents have been targeted.

On January 30, 1835, an attempt had been made on the life of our 7th president, Andrew Jackson, by Richard Lawrence, an unemployed house painter from England, who believed he was the dead king, Richard III. Both pistols misfired. Lawrence was judged insane and was institutionalized.

On April 14, 1865, the 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated by actor, John Wilkes Booth, at the Ford's Theater in Washington. This occurred 5 days after Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his Confederate army to Gen. U. S. Grant. Booth's initial plan to kidnap Lincoln and hold him for ransom of Confederate POWs, changed into an attempt to decapitate the Federal Government with assignation of the Vice-President and Secretary of State in addition. Booth was hunted down and was mortally wounded during his capture.

On July 2, 1881, the 20th president, James A. Garfield, was assassinated by a political office-seeker, Charles J. Guiteau, at the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station in Washington. Guiteau told reporters that God had told him to kill the president. On trial, Guiteau himself, insisted that although he was legally insane at the time of the shooting, he was not medically insane. He was found guilty, and was hung.

On September 6, 1901, the 25th president, William McKinley, was mortally shot by Leon Czolgosz, an unemployed factory worker who had become an anarchist. In spite of security at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY, Czolgosz approached the President in a reception line with his pistol concealed under a handkerchief. Czolgosz was found guilty and was electrocuted.

All four presidents had shunned security and usually travelled in public without security. In 1902, the Secret Service began to provide continuous security without a legislative mandate. Congress formally authorized the Secret Service for this task in 1906. But even with the Secret Service on duty, three more presidents would come under fire.

On February 15, 1933, the 32nd president-elect of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was almost shot by Giuseppe Zangara, an Italian immigrant and unemployed bricklayer. Roosevelt was about to give a speech from the back of his automobile in Miami, FL when Zangara fired 5 shot while standing on a wobbly chair in order to get a clear view of the President. Five by-standers were hit, one mortally, the mayor of Chicago, Anton Cermak. Zangara boasted that he would kill kings and presidents. With Cermak's death, Zangora was sentenced to die in the electric chair.

John F. Kennedy, the 35th president, was assassinated on November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas. He was fatally shot by Lee Harvey Oswald while travelling in a presidential motorcade. Two days later, Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby while being transferred to the Dallas County Jail.

Ronald Reagan, the 40th president, was shot by John Hinckley Jr. on March 30, 1981, but survived the assassination attempt due to excellent emergency medical care. Also wounded were press secretary James Brady, a police officer and a secret service agent.

Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS)

On April 15, 1861, the day Lincoln died, three Union Army officers met in Philadelphia to discuss events and the concern over a conspiracy to destroy the Federal government. A mass meeting of veterans was held on April 20th to pledge loyalty to the Union and to make arrangements for Lincoln's funeral in Philadelphia. The three officers served as an honor guard for Lincoln's funeral cortege. Afterwards they established a permanent organization of officers and former officers and chose the name, the *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS),* with its first meeting on May 31, 1865 at Independence Hall.

They stated as their purpose the cherishing of the memories and associations of the war waged in defense of the unity and indivisibility of the Republic; the strengthening of the ties of fraternal fellowship and sympathy formed by companionship in arms; the relief of the widows and children of dead companions of the order; and the advancement of the general welfare of the soldiers and sailors of the United States.

At its peak in the late 19th-Century, There were over 8,000 members including presidents Grant, Hayes, Arthur, Harrison, and McKinley. Membership has included over 12,000 members into the 20th Century, including Dwight Eisenhower.

The modern organization is composed of descendants of the Civil War officers (hereditary members), and others who share the ideals of the Order (associate members). MOLLUS also has amassed a large collection of Civil War photographs.

The Grand Army of the Republic

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), established on April 6, 1866, was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army, Union Navy and the Marines who served in the American Civil War for the Northern forces. Founded on the principles of "Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty," it was among the first advocacy groups in American politics. The G.A.R. supported voting rights for black veterans, since many white veterans recognized black's patriotism and sacrifices. The organization provided one of the first racially integrated social/fraternal organizations in America. Black veterans, who enthusiastically embraced the message of

equality, shunned black veterans' organizations in preference for racially integrated groups.

The G.A.R. also promoted patriotic education, helped to make Memorial Day a national holiday, lobbied Congress to establish regular veterans' pensions, and supported Republican political candidates. But when the Republican Party's commitment to reform in the South gradually decreased, the G.A.R.'s mission became ill-defined and the organization floundered, almost disappearing in the early 1870s.

In the 1880s, the G.A.R. revived under new leadership that provided a platform for renewed growth, by advocating Federal pensions for veterans. As the organization revived, black veterans joined in significant numbers and organized local posts. The national organization, however, failed to press the case for similar pensions for black soldiers. Most black troops never received any pension or remuneration for wounds incurred during their war service.

The G.A.R. was organized into "Departments" at the state level and "Posts" at the community level. This pattern of organization was subsequently used by other veterans' organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion. The G.A.R.'s political power grew in the latter part of the 19th-Century. For a time, candidates could not get Republican presidential or congressional nominations without the endorsement of the G.A.R. veterans' voting bloc.

The G.A.R. reached its largest enrollment in 1890, with 490,000 members. It held an annual "National Encampment" every year from 1866 to 1949. At that final encampment in Indianapolis, Indiana, the few surviving members voted to retain the existing officers in place until the organization's dissolution, since membership had been limited to "veterans of the late unpleasantness." In 1956, after the death of the last member, Albert Woolson, the GAR was formally dissolved. However, the organization had endorsed its heir, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The S.U.V.C.W. was formed in 1881 and was chartered by Congress in 1954. Incorporators included Gen. Douglas Mac Arthur and Gen. Ulysses S. Grant III. Membership in the S.U.V. was about 145,000 in 1890, but is approximately 6,000 today. There is today a female auxiliary to the S.U.V.

United Confederate Veterans

The United Confederate Veterans association was formed on June10, 1889 in New Orleans. It was formed from many local veterans' organizations and the declared purpose was emphatically non-military --- to foster "social, literary, historical and benevolent" ends. Its historical mission was to gather authentic data for an impartial history of the War Between the States, and to preserve the relics of that conflict. Similar to the G.A.R. in the north, the organization vowed to care for the disabled and extend a helping hand to the needy, and to protect the widow and orphan, and to make and preserve the record of the services of every member as far as possible.

The last article in its constitution provided that neither discussion of political or religious subjects nor any political action would be permitted in the organization, and that any member violating that provision would forfeit his membership.

As a social organization, its annual reunions grew in attendance, splendor and length through the 1890s, and became the major social event for many members. In 1911 over 106,000 members and guests descended on Little Rock. At the 60th reunion, only one Confederate veteran could attend.

In addition to the annual reunions, the group published a monthly magazine, *The Confederate Veteran,* which recounted Civil War campaigns and personal experiences. The organization disbanded May 30, 1951. Its successor organizations are the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.