



The Dispatch



Newsletter of the

Capital District Civil War Round Table

P.O. Box 14871, Albany, NY 12212-4871

Volume 13 Number 1

September 1995

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

FRIDAY, SEPT. 8, 1995

Bethlehem Public Library
Delaware Avenue, Delmar NY

Doors Open: 7:00 PM

Program Begins: 7:30 PM

Our season opening September meeting features **Earl B. McElfresh** as speaker. His topic will be "Rapid Field Sketching: Making Maps for Civil War Armies." This will be a nontechnical talk describing the problems and vagaries encountered by the mostly nonprofessional cartographers of both armies, as they sought to prepare maps for active field operations. This problem of an untrained corps of mapmakers was compounded by a near total lack of prewar maps of the areas which would become the sites of conflict during the war.

Earl is the President and chief cartographer of the McElfresh Map Co., of Olean, NY. His company has produced a number of historically accurate maps of various Civil War battlefields, sized as both wall maps and as tactical field guides. One of his latest projects is his twin Gettysburg maps, which he has generously donated to our Round Table for use as a raffle prize at the November banquet. He has lectured at a number of geographical and historical organizations.

CDCWRT CALENDAR

SEPT. 17 BALLSTON SPA POSTAL CANCELLATION: Sales of the Civil War commemorative stamps and our own postal cachets at the Doubleday memorial nostalgia baseball game.

SEPT. 23-24 SHIPWRECK WEEKEND '95:

In Saratoga Springs, sponsored by Bateaux Below, Inc. Featuring lectures on the archaeological investigations on the ironclad C.S.S. RALEIGH, as well as reports on the U.S.S. MONITOR National Marine Sanctuary. Additional details inside.

SEPT. 23 LINDENWALD POSTAL CANCELLATION: Civil War Day at the Kinderhook home of Former President Martin Van Buren. Living history demonstrations by the 125th NYVI and others.

OCT. 1 "CIVIL WAR LETTERS AND SONGS" at the Guilderland Public Library. A reading by **Alice Begley** of a soldier's letters along with his wife's responses, set to period music. **Ray Smith** and **Barbara Quackenbush** will also have a memorabilia display booth set up, from mid-September through the event.

**OCT. 11 SCHENECTADY ARCHIVES
DAY POSTAL CANCELLATION:**

Details to follow.

OCT. 13 MEETING: Our own **Mark Bodnar** will speak on "Lt. William Pohlman, an American Hero." Pohlman served with the 59th NYVI until his fatal wounding at Gettysburg. Mark has spent several years researching Pohlman's life and career, and will address the ways that such research can be done.

NOV. 10 V.A. HOSPITAL POSTAL CANCELLATION: In Albany. Set to coincide with the Veteran's Day celebration.

NOV. 11 ANNUAL FALL BANQUET: This year we are honored to have the return of noted author and historian **John Hennessy**. You know this will be a good one! More details will follow.

DEC. 3 VICTORIAN STROLL POSTAL CANCELLATION: In beautiful and historic Troy, NY. Will also include another opportunity for us to copy old military photos for sharing with the US Army Historical Institute at Carlyle Barracks.

DEC. 8 MEETING: Our annual potpourri night where members who don't have enough material to do a full lecture get to do short presentations on the topics of their choice. Always an interesting evening of historical vignettes, relics and memorabilia, family histories, etc.

JAN. 12 '96 MEETING: **Dan Carhart** will speak on the Watervliet Arsenal, and it's industrial and economic contributions to the Union war effort.

CDCWRT NEWS

DUES NOTICE AGAIN

Last issue's notice about dues arrearages worked pretty well in jump starting some of our procrastinators. However, there appears to be some confusion over a few renewals, mainly those which were paid in cash at the door. If you have a circle around the expiration date on your mailing label, you are now overdue and it is time to cough up. [Come on now. You can't see two movies for the \$15 that we charge for the whole year. We're a pretty cheap date when you stop to think about it.] If, perchance, you are circled and disagree about your status, please call Michael Barrett at the number on the back page, and we will get it squared away.

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JUNE MEETING

Ray Smith closed out our season with an excellent lecture on the American army's experiences during Winfield Scott's Mexican campaign in 1847. Due to the small size of our standing army at that time, many of the professionally trained junior officers of that campaign went on to achieve prominent positions during the Civil War. A good many of them actually found themselves facing their friends and former comrades-in-arms from opposite sides of the picket lines. Their experiences gained and the tactics learned in Mexico were directly transferred into their planning and execution of duties in the Civil War. Thanks, Ray, for a very well received lecture!

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Matt Farina reports that our current balance as of August 30, 1995 is an astonishing \$9,539.87. Of this amount, \$5,946.77 is the current net sum attributable to the sale of the Civil War series of postage stamps, and limited edition cachets. Further information on this will be found in the next section.

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BOARD MEETING

At the August 30 meeting of the Executive Committee, Chairman **Dan Lorello** advised us that the raffle tickets for the two framed Gettysburg maps and the pocket sized battlefield guide, donated by the McElfresh Map Co., have been selling fairly well at the various sites that CDCWRT has been set up at, selling the postal cachets. The winning ticket will be drawn at the November banquet. An alternate prize of a \$200.00 savings bond is also being offered. Members are urged to bring their money for sold tickets to the September meeting, to help us keep a handle on the progress of sales. Of course, additional tickets will also be available so that you can continue to bother your family and friends until they buy a book apiece.

Dan also showed us a letter which he has received from NYS Senator Hugh Farley, announcing the signing into law of the bill establishing a 13-member advisory committee to develop a comprehensive plan for restoring and preserving the State's battle flag collection. This issue, and the need for us to press this with our legislators, was addressed in last month's Dispatch, and Farley thanks us for our support. A list of names of appropriate people to serve on this committee is now being put together, and hopefully they will begin work before the year is out. [Ed. note: The one major change to the legislation from that initially proposed to that signed by the

Governor is that the Trust Fund established to hold all donations need no longer be matched by appropriations by the Legislature. If they do, they do, and if not... well, you know how that goes.]

Due to **Sue Knost's** absence from the meeting [she was out at the Fonda Fair selling stamps and cachets, so she is forgiven], Dan made as much of a report on the postal cancellation project as was possible. The genesis of this project of Sue's has been detailed over the last two issues of the Dispatch, with a prognosis that we could raise some serious money for our preservation and educational work. As you know, we have currently netted almost \$6,000 from this effort so far, and there are still a number of events scheduled or possible yet to come. The "first day of issue" event at the Colonie Center on June 29 was incredible. We sold out our limited edition cachets in one hour, and people continued to line up for hours afterwards to order additional. The sales at Gettysburg were apparently slowed by bad weather, but word is that some of our items turned into the hot collectable souvenir at this year's anniversary festivities. We also had excellent sales at our other sites as well. There will be a formal report on the project issued, once those involved get a chance to catch their breath.

Over all, this is turning out to be one of our most successful fund raising projects in years, and we will have quite a sum of money to be distributed. To get the ball rolling, the Board voted to send \$750.00 to Save Historic Antietam Foundation, to help them retire the mortgage on the Grove Farm property which they purchased several years ago. The Grove Farm was McClellan's headquarters post-battle, and was the site of the famous photos of Lincoln and "Little Mac" in his tent, and of the two of them standing outside with staff, with the farm house in the background. The site was being offered for sale as development property a few years ago, and SHAF stepped in to save it by taking on a much larger purchase price than their budget would normally

suggest was feasible. CDCWRT has made two previous donations to help defray this burden, and we are thrilled to be in a position to assist once again.

Any member who may have any other particular CW related preservation or educational cause or organization which you would want considered for a donation is asked to contact any Board member with your thoughts. Phone numbers for the Board members are listed on the back of this issue.

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EDITORIAL SOAPBOX

I am going to take this opportunity to repeat a paragraph from last issue:

“While Sue has done, and will continue to do a large amount of work on this project, the one important issue that needs to be addressed now is one of manpower. If this project is to work, *we need warm bodies to assist in these events*. We cannot continue to rely on the same eight or ten people to do all of the work, especially on a project of this size. *We need you to volunteer some time*. Pick up the phone and call Sue or Dan (their numbers are on the back page of this and every issue) and offer up three hours of your time. I promise, you’ll have fun, you’ll meet some really nice people, and you’ll even get your name in this newsletter. [That may not sound like much until you stop to think that the more real news I have to write about, the less room I’ll have to talk about Troy. From some of the comments I’ve received, that may be the best “big stick” that I have to use, since speaking softly doesn’t always seem to work so well.]”

I am pleased to report that several folks have made the effort to assist in this project. I don't want to mention names now, for fear of

missing someone, but they will be acknowledged at the time of the formal project report. I am willing to bet that any of them would concede that the promises I made have been borne out. So won't you please consider volunteering some time? You can see from the numbers that the work is profitable to us, and that the benefit to preservation and education can also be real and substantial. Over the past decade, the CDCWRT has developed a reputation as a preeminent member and contributor to these causes, with over \$20,000 dispensed so far. It is our history which we deal with, and our future which we donate. Isn't that worth a few hours of your time?

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KUDOS

After being fired up with the “flag preservation fever” based on Chairman Dan's report at the June meeting, young **Mark Morrison** went home and prepared a petition urging legislators to support the flag bill. He made a personal presentation to his 4th grade classmates at Albany School #27, secured all of their signatures on the petition, and had his mother drive him down to present it to Senator Farley. This turned into a “photo opportunity” for which Senators Farley and Hoblock came out of session to pose with Mark in the Flag Room of the Capital. Our historian, **Ray Smith**, also happened to be present, and so acted as our representative and voiced our support of the legislation. Mark has proven himself to be a remarkable young CW enthusiast, and the Board extends our deep appreciation and congratulations to him for his spirit and dedication. Well done, Mark!

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STILL MORE FLAGS

The Summer 1995 issue of Park Bench, a publication of the state Department of Parks and Recreation, contains an article relating to the flag preservation effort. Apparently taking his cue from Assemblyman Morelli's funding of the restoration of the flag of the 95th NYVI, state Senator Owen Johnson procured the funds to conserve the national colors of the famed 5th NY "Duryea's Zouaves." The contract was awarded to the Bureau of Historic Sites, and fabric conservator Deborah Turpin was given the job. After unrolling the flag, it was discovered to be fairly large (approximately 80" square, excluding the fringe.) The design of the silk flag is similar to today's, except that the stars in the union were arranged in a star pattern, with the regiment's motto "Above us or Around Us" rendered in paint above the stars.

The condition of the flag was poor, due to years of use and display. About twenty-five percent of the silk on the fly edge is missing. There is also a large loss in the union with only eighteen stars or partial stars remaining, and many of the painted letters of the motto are cracked or missing. The remaining silk is very weak and the surviving painted areas are brittle.

Because of the fragile condition, Ms. Turpin proposed minimal treatment. The flag was gently vacuumed to remove surface soils, the creases were flattened and the flag was aligned. A padded, rigid "pressure mount" was prepared for the flag. After alignment of the flag on the padding, a sheet of plexiglass was placed over the mount and screwed down into it. The pressure created by the padding of the mount and the plexiglass is all that holds the flag in place. There is no stitching or gluing, and thus the procedure is reversible by simply removing the top sheet. The mount was then framed in a simple black wooden frame.

It has now been returned to the custody of Division of Military and Naval Affairs. DMNA

hopes to display it in the near future, and is also making plans to assess the condition of the remaining 2000 or so flags in their collection. The Park Bench article notes that the majority of the collection is still rolled up, and improperly stored, in large display cases in the Capital lobby.

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SHIPWRECK WEEKEND

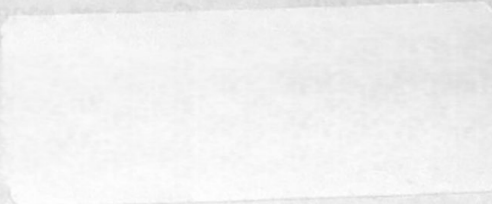
Bateaux Below, Inc. and New York Sea Grant are sponsoring the 6th annual Shipwreck Weekend at Saratoga Springs, on September 23 & 24, 1995. These are extremely informative and interesting seminars given by the foremost authorities in the field. The theme for this seminar is "Sunken Warships." Lectures will cover archaeological explorations of French and Indian War vessels in the St. Lawrence River; American Revolutionary fleets scuttled in the Penobscot River in Maine; British ships sunk in the 1781 Battle of Yorktown; and War of 1812 warships in Lake Chaplain.

Civil War era topics include the C.S.S. Raleigh, which served in the Cape Fear River. The Raleigh is the best preserved Confederate ironclad known to exist. Martin deB. Peebles will detail the ship's history, as well as the 1993-94 archaeological investigations. Also, John D. Broadwater of the U.S.S. Monitor National Marine Sanctuary will address the history, discovery and noticeably increased deterioration of this vessel. He will detail recent attempts to increase access to the site, and recent preservation attempts.

Prices for the two-day seminar start at just \$15 per person. Brochures will be available at the CDCWRT meeting on September 8, or for those who will not be able to make this meeting, by calling Michael Barrett for a copy, or E-mail SHIPWRKWKE@aol.com.

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CDCWRT
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Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly at the Bethlehem Public Library in Delmar, New York. This newsletter is published ten times per year. Annual dues are \$15. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.



The Officers

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| Chairman | Dan Lorello |
| Vice-Chairman | Sue Knost |
| Treasurer | Matt Farina |
| Secretary | Robert Johnson |
| At-Large | Mark Bodnar |
| At-Large | Joe Stracuzzi |
| Ex-Officio | Michael Barrett |

The Troops

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|---------------|---------------------------|
| Programs | Nancy Shour |
| Newsletter | Michael Barrett |
| Preservation | Richard Becker |
| Field Trips | Mark Silo, Kathy Silo |
| Banquets | Michael Aikey, Kathy Silo |
| Refreshments | Nancy Shour |
| Membership | Kathy Silo, Russ Denegar |
| Video Library | James Carey |
| Historian | Ray Smith |

To join or renew membership, send \$15 to the CDCWRT address below.
