

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
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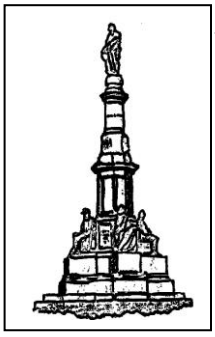
A VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY AT GETTYSBURG



151st Anniversary of Gettysburg Address
Remembrance Day Station
November 19, 2014
Gettysburg, PA 17325



Among the sights at the National Cemetery at Gettysburg are the two pictured above. The Soldiers' Monument drawing was the postmark for last year's anniversary of the Cemetery dedication and Gettysburg Address. Next to it is one of the famous known soldiers, Sergeant Amos Humiston, who was found as an unidentified soldier killed on day one of the battle. He was later identified through an ambrotype of three young children he held in his hand. The children later became known as the orphans of the battlefield.

JUNE MEETING
FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2015

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

THE SOLDIERS'
NATIONAL CEMETERY
AT GETTYSBURG

JOHN Mc TAGUE

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 – 7:15 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:15 – 7:45 p.m.**
Discussion	**7:45 - -8:15 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

The June meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, June 12, 2015. Our special guest speaker is historian John McTague, and his presentation is entitled, "**The Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg."***

John will give a history and description of the National Cemetery, its monuments, and the brave soldiers who fought the battle. McTague is a Gettysburg Licensed Town Historian and Guide for the past eleven years. He provides walking tours of the town to visitors that include general tours, military tours, and tours of Lincoln's visit to Gettysburg at the dedication of the cemetery.

John is also a member of the Abraham Lincoln Association, the Gettysburg Foundation, and the Adams County Historical Society.

BOARD MEETING

At the May 18, 2015 meeting of the board, $1000 was donated to the Civil War Trust to purchase some 40 acres that lie in the middle of the Antietam battlefield. This land has somewhat suddenly come up for sale. It is the doughnut hole of the battlefield. Every historian considers this purchase the single most important purchase in recent years. Go look it up at the CWT website and see what your Round Table's preservation monies can do.

There are two events that are listed here. CDCWRT presence is anticipated (and expected from the editor's point of view). The Masonic event at the King Solomon Temple Chapter will be held in North Troy Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7, 2015.

This is one of the region's few encampment events and it should be supported with our attendance to see exhibits, drills, and a skirmish or two.

Harder to attend, but well worth the drive on NY route 20 is the Peterboro Civil War Weekend with excellent lectures, exhibits, reenactments, food, Civil War children's games, etc. There is a small admission fee. Pay it! It's less than the movies at the mall. It's less than the popcorn at the movies at the mall, and it won't give you gas.

The CDCWRT will be represented at each event. A recent Wall Street Journal article reported that only 18% of 8th graders have competency in history or social studies. While STEM topics have increased, history remains basically unchanged over the past 5 years. Remember these kids will be deciding your Social Security in not too many years --- that is if they are interested enough to vote.

UP-COMING MEETING/ EVENTS.

June 13-14, 2015, Saturday & Sunday. This marks the 23rd Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend. Saturday starts with a Veterans procession led by A. Lincoln. Harold Holzer and Jan Reichard will be on hand for book signings and will exhibit their Lincoln funeral artifacts including a replica of the funeral casket. There will be exhibits, vendors, re-enactments and food. Patrick Schroeder will talk at 7 p.m. on the surrender at Appomattox. Adults $8.00. Check updates at civilwarweekend.sca-peterboro.org.

August 14, 2015, Friday, will be the annual picnic at Schuyler Flatts. Mark your calendar now.

On August 15-16, 2015, Saturday and Sunday there will be the Schuyler Flatts event. I believe this will NOT be Civil War related but will be some other period such as the French and Indian War or the Revolutionary War. Details will come out later.

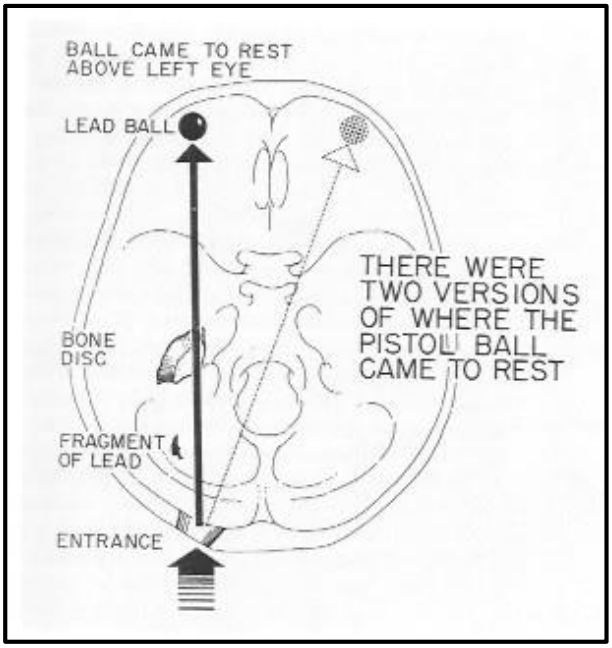
On September 11, 2015, Friday, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT at the Watervliet Senior Center will feature David Hochfelder who will talk about the telegraph and railroad during the Civil War.

A BURNING QUESTION

Now that the Civil War Sesquicentennial is winding down, and Lincoln is back in Springfield and has been planted in his vault, you are probably wondering, "What if Lincoln were shot today? What if modern treatment of head wounds were available in 1865? What would have been the outcome?"

Well it just so happens that these questions were part of the 1865 library exhibit sponsored by the Rufus Barringer CWRT in Southern Pines, NC. Read on.

Booth fired a .44-caliber bullet from a Derringer at close range. The bullet entered the back of Lincoln's skull to the left of the midline and severed the left lateral sinus *(a large venous channel that drains blood from the left side of the skull).* It penetrated the dura mater *(outermost covering of the brain)*, passed through the left cerebral hemisphere of the brain, the left lateral ventricle, and came to rest just above the anterior portion of the left corpus striatum in the forebrain. It fractured both orbital plates of the frontal bone, causing the eye sockets to become engorged with blood and pushing fragments of bone into the brain.



As it traveled through the brain, the bullet created pressure waves that damaged the brain stem *(upper spinal cord),* it produced intra-ventricular bleeding *(into the inner cavities of the brain);* it lacerated the left cerebral hemisphere, and produced subdural hematomas *(pools of blood on the surface of the brain).* These primary injuries and secondary damage produced by lack of oxygen and low blood pressure cause pressure within the skull *(the intracranial*

pressure or ICP) to rise, compressing the brain *(herniation of the brain).*

Lincoln's case was discussed at one of the nation's oldest trauma centers, and took into account modern advances in neural injury and neural rehabilitation.

The process begins with a preliminary assessment at the scene of the injury with stabilization of the patient including assisted respiration with oxygen and administration of intravenous fluids. After rapid transport to the trauma center there is a re-evaluation and appropriate radiographic studies. Lincoln's dilated left pupil reflected impending herniation of the brainstem, and would have been treated with concentrated IV solution to decrease tissue edema in the brain and with hyperventilation to help reduce very high intracranial pressure *(ICP).*

Within 15 minutes of his arrival in the center, Lincoln would have been taken to the O.R. for an emergency craniotomy to evacuate the acute subdural hematomas, debride the bullet's entry wound, and repair the damaged dura. Catheters would be placed inside the skull to monitor ICP, cerebral blood flow, brain oxygen levels, and to remove cerebrospinal fluid as needed to lower ICP. Another head CT would be performed looking for evidence of secondary damage that might require additional surgery.

Traumatic brain injury is a systemic disorder that can cause dysfunction of every organ system, especially circulatory and respiratory. A full-blown inflammatory response can result in renal failure, intestinal dysfunction and inappropriate clotting of blood.

Antibiotic and anticonvulsants would be started. If high ICP is refractory to treatment, a decompressive craniotomy *(removal of a bone plate)* may be necessary to prevent further brain injury due to brain swelling that interferes with brain blood flow and glucose delivery. This has been necessary in 80% of cases and achieves a survival rate of 78% with a favorable neurologic outcome in 50% of such patients.

Optimal management, combined with early mobilization and early aggressive rehabilitation might have saved Lincoln, but it could not have restored his neurological function to normal. At best, he would have been left with several permanent neurological deficits.

Almost certainly he would have been left with right hemiplegia *(paralysis of the right side)* and homonymous hemianopsia *(blindness in the right half of the visual field of both eyes),* as well as dyslexia, dysgraphia *(difficulty writing),* and dysphagia *(difficulty speaking).* Patients surviving injuries like his tend to have increased impulsivity, lack of emotional control, decreased problem solving ability, and impaired hand-eye coordination. However because his frontal lobe was largely spared, his cognition likely would have remained reasonably intact.

His rehabilitation would have been long and difficult and at a minimum would have involved a team consisting of a physiatrist, a neuropsychologist, a speech therapist, a physical therapist, and an occupational therapist. The full extent of his recovery would have taken several years of intensive rehabilitation.

In 1865, if Lincoln had survived, the political situation might have been chaotic because no provision existed for the Vice President or anyone else to take over as chief executive for an incapacitated president. At that time, the Constitution contained provisions for the transfer of such power only when the president died. Not until 1967, was the 25th Amendment passed specifying the procedures by which the government deals with an incapacitated president.

On January 27, 2011, Representative Gabrielle Giffords suffered a similar wound with the bullet traveling the same path as

Booth's bullet. She was treated using a similar protocol and has made a remarkable recovery. But there were important differences. The bullet travelled only through the left side of Giffords' brain, while the bullet in Lincoln's brain may have crossed the midline into the right cerebral hemisphere. In this case, Lincoln's chances of surviving his injury would have been minimal, even if treated in a modern trauma center.

Of On January 4, 2006, Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of Israel, suffered a massive stroke. In spite of quick, decisive intervention using a host of aggressive measures, including several surgeries, Sharon never regained his cognitive abilities and was in a persistent vegetative state until his death in January 2014.

Thus modern technology can produce tragic failures along with spectacular successes. It is because of this uncertainty that knowing when NOT to treat can be more difficult and more important than knowing HOW to treat.

Lincoln died in 1865 because of both cerebral herniation and significant hemorrhaging. He did NOT die because his doctors probed the wound with both finger and silver probe to prevent clot from accumulating within the skull and compressing his brain. For a time, this maneuver relieved intracranial pressure and improved Lincoln's respirations. Dr. Charles A. Leale first examined Lincoln in the theater and he knew immediately that, "His wound is mortal; it is impossible for him to recover."

THE SURRENDER OF CONFEDERATE ARMIES

Continuing In the same theme, now that the Sesquicentennial is over, exactly when did the Civil War end?

It is well known that Robert E. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House on Sunday, April 9,1865. Many assume the Civil War ended with that event. However Jefferson Davis and the Cabinet were headed for Danville, as was Joseph Johnston and his army. We covered that in last month's newsletter,

It is much less well-known, even to citizens of North Carolina, that Joseph E. Johnston surrendered army of mixed units to William T. Sherman at the Bennett Farm near Durham Station on April 26, 1865. The process was more involved with the initial terms of surrender of April 18th, rejected by President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of War Stanton. Johnston surrendered almost 90,000 troops including some naval units.

On May 4, 1865 Gen. Richard Taylor surrendered his force of some 12,000 troops of the Department of Alabama, Mississippi and East Louisiana to Gen. E.R.S. Canby at Citronelle, Alabama, about 40 miles north of Mobile. On May 10, 1865, President Jefferson Davis was captured in Georgia.

Gen. E. Kirby Smith commanded the Trans-Mississippi Department. In early May, surrender terms could not be agreed upon. The last land battle of the war occurred May 12-13 at Palmito Station, and was a Confederate victory over a larger Union force. It was then learned that Lee had surrendered more than a month earlier. Morale collapsed, and while Kirby was travelling to Houston to rally his men, Gen. Simon Buckner surrendered the department on May 26, 1865. At Houston, Kirby learned he had no troops. About 2000, including Kirby fled to Mexico in small groups.

Stand Watie was a Cherokee chief and general in the Confederate army. He commanded a Confederate Indian force until June 23, 1865 when he surrendered to Lt. Col. Asa Matthews near Ft. Towson in Indian Territory. Watie was the last Confederate general to surrender.

Capt. James Wadell of the *C.S.S. Shenandoah* in the northwest Pacific heard of Lee's

surrender on June 27th. To avoid being tried as pirates, Wadell sailed his vessel over 9000 miles to surrender to the British at Liverpool. The British Admiralty court exonerated the crew of violating the laws of war at sea. The *Shenandoah* was the only Confederate ship to circumnavigate the globe. The ship was sold to a sultan of Zanzibar in 1866.

On August 20, 1866, President Johnson declared the war over by proclamation.

CACHETS FOR SALE

As you may know, I, as editor of the newsletter and organizer of postmark events since the death of Sue Knost, I have decided to no longer plan new postmark events. I have wanted to carry the program through the end of the Sesquicentennial, and that for the most part has occurred. This was not an easy decision for me because I have greatly enjoyed this activity for many years. But the writing has been on the wall the past 5 years now.

Stamp collecting in general has fallen off, and new, young collectors have not taken up the hobby. A stamp or an envelope often told a story – a story about a person, an event, or a place. I learned much geography through foreign stamps, as well as history. There was the imagination of a 9-year old looking at a beautiful stamp with an exotic African animal or flower, which stimulated me to read more about the stamp and the country it came from. There was the thrill of finding a missing stamp in your collection in that "one pound of stamps for only $1.99" that you saw in the back of a comic book.

Now days a kid with his Samsung Galaxy-6 phone can access that information in seconds. Miraculous! All that knowledge at his fingertip! But chances are, he will read only a few lines about the topic before moving on, he will retain little if any information. The brain take a little while to catalog knowledge into a more permanent file in the brain. That's why you may have no recent memory after a head injury. It never got moved to permanent file.

Your child's hand-held device may keep track of how many powers his mythical character has accumulated in his mythical world, but a month from now or a year from now, who will give a damn. There is no collection to review or touch, just an electronic signal.

In 1995 we realized that Civil War enthusiasts were interested in acquiring an envelope with a Civil War stamp (even a new stamp) with a postmark at the event they were attending. This has been very successful for us, and to the best of my knowledge, no other round table has done this regularly for 20 years.

But you may argue there are millions of envelope postmarked each day, so what is so special? A stamp dealer recently reported the following. He has made arrangements with utilities and credit card companies to collect their envelopes that customer mail bills in. Most postmarks today are ink-jet sprayed (remember the fuzzy Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer on your Christmas mail). The drum roller postmarks will rapidly disappear this year. Hand cancelled postmarks were rare. In only 42 envelopes over 2 year did he find a commemorative stamp that was hand cancelled in the over 40,000 envelopes he sorted.

I tell customers at an event, that this is the only place in the known universe you could get that cachet. You either had to buy it at the event, or buy it from someone who was at the event, or send in your own envelope to the local post office for the 30 day period after the event. The cancel stamp is then destroyed. When the CDCWRT cancelled 300 silk-screened envelopes at Bennett Place near Durham, they are the only 300 in existence. That's why they are collectable.

This year is the 175 birthday of the British penny black, the first postage stamp. You can buy one for $500 to several thousand dollars depending

on the quality of the stamp. The most expensive stamp in the world is a Civil War stamp that's cancelled by a so called Z-grill. It was valued at $3 million and was traded for the $3 million plate block of the upside down Jenny stamp. A $6 million deal.

Now if you take your stamp collection to a dealer, you will get little for it. A dealer may pay you face value for unused stamps. You established your collection in the heyday of stamp collecting. A lot of people are selling their collections. But 50 years from now when virtually all mail will be electronic, paper cachets will be unusual and rare.

Wouldn't it be unique to leave a gift for your yet to be born great-grandchild (whom you will probably never know). A conversation may go like this.

"Johnny, you never knew your great-grandfather (you may substitute great-grandmother), but he was very interested in the Civil War. You know from school now days that the 19th-Century and the War were the most critical time for the United States and affects us even today. The Bicentennial starts in a few months. We are so glad the Board of Regents was replaced with educators who believe that history should be taught as most likely happened and not as previous educators believed the public should know.

How lucky you are to spend a whole semester on the Civil War with parallel teaching in History, Social Studies and English Literature as well as Art. Well your great-grandfather was so perceptive that he knew that someday the Department of Education would realize this. He left you a small collection of items some of which date back to the Civil War itself.

There are 3 minie' balls. Fifty years ago the Department of HEW decided to eliminate lead products. A bounty of a new Galaxy-23 phone was paid for every 500 minie' balls turned in. It was estimated that 95% of these collectibles from the War were turned in, just like the penny a few years earlier.

There are 2 GAR ribbons a soldier wore at reunions. And there are some commemorative envelopes from the Centennial and Sesquicentennial with paper stamps on them and a special design to cancel the stamp and tell you where that occurred. You learned that 20 years ago with all the world having email, there was so much communication, that it took 3-5 days to receive an email. That's when the Post Office proposed an electronic priority system with the first electronic stamp. When you pay your 1/16 of a bit coin your mail is guaranteed to arrive in 10 minutes. The U.S. adopted it and now other nations are using electronic stamps. All those other slower emails we now call "junk-mail."

Wow! This neat! Thanks Mom and Dad, and thank Great-grandpa for me!"

So there you are, a hero after you are dead. Moreover, you are a visionary! So buy some cachets and cement in your future.

Our supply of all silks will be $8 apiece. We now have the First Day of Issue cancels for Five Forks and Appomattox, as well as some Petersburg and Mobile Bay from last year. These are more common because the Post Office handles the cancellation. But there are only 234 Bennett Place silks left and only 300 were done because I designed the postmark and cancelled the envelopes myself. These will be the rarer ones.

We have a good variety of the smaller #6 envelopes for $4 apiece or 3 for $10.00. There First Day of Issue postmarks for Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Petersburg, Five Forks and Appomattox. Some of the Appomattox cancels I designed have the wrong zip code which the P.O. did not correct before the cancel stamps were made. Another I submitted for one date but the P.O. confused it with a similar cancel for another date. So these are unique postal oddities which some collectors like.