



# The Dispatch

*Newsletter of the*

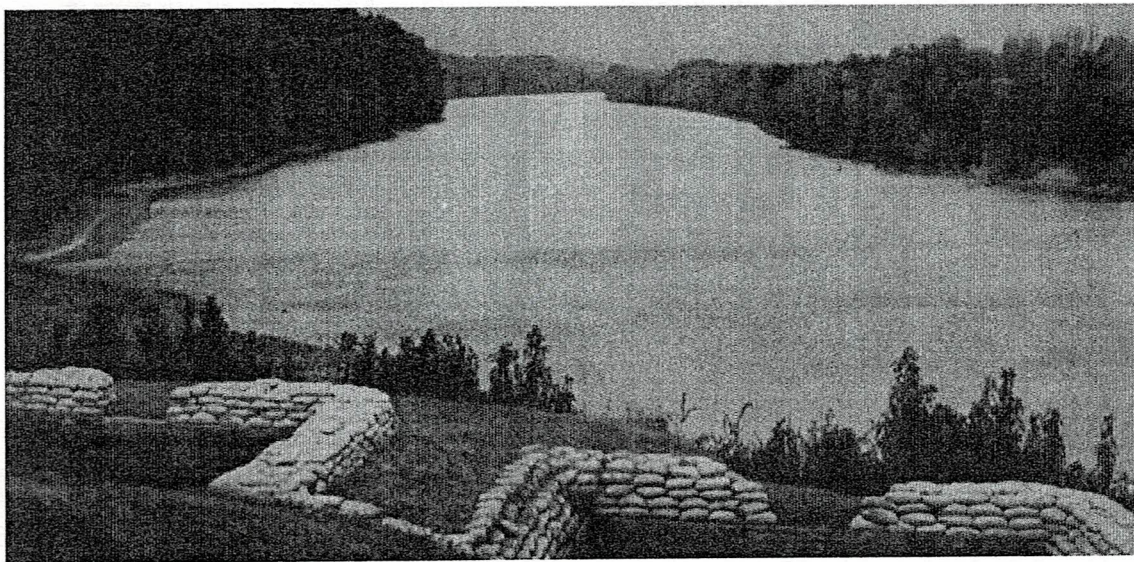
**Capital District Civil War Round Table**

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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**November, 2001**



Pictured above is Fort Donelson on the Tennessee River. The view is north or downriver. The loss of the fort and its army of 17,000 was a blow to the Confederacy. It left a gap in the Confederate line in the West, and resulted in the loss of Nashville and western Kentucky. It was Grant's first major victory. He became known to President Lincoln. He learned the lessons of supply and cooperation with other military units, such as the U.S. Navy. Grant would put these lessons to work in the Vicksburg campaign in 1863.

**November Meeting  
Friday & Saturday  
November 9-10  
Best Western Hotel  
1228 Western Ave.  
Albany, NY  
Fourth Annual Northeast  
Conference on the Civil War**

### **CDCWRT MEETING**

*The November meeting of the CDCWRT will be the annual fall conference. Details of events for Friday's book night, Saturday's conference, and Saturday's dinner are extensively covered later in this newsletter.*

### **OCTOBER MEETING**

Eric Campbell's presentation of the letters and sketches by Charles Wellington Reed of Bigelow's Massachusetts was greatly appreciated by a full house at the Guilderland Library. Many of the sketches appear in Campbell's book. The sketches are in the public domain, and have appeared in early Civil War publications. A number of the books were sold at 40% off, and were autographed by the author. A few still remain, and will be sold at the November meeting for \$32.00.

### **BOARD MEETING**

The October Board Meeting was held on Thursday, October 18th. The treasurer's report indicated \$2056.32 in the general fund and \$8463.45 in the Hennessy preservation fund. The fall trip to Tennessee was an overwhelming success, and even finished with a slight positive cash balance to be reported next month when all bills have been paid.

The Board discussed a slate of candidates for the up-coming year. Matt Farina was asked to run for president for the up-coming year 2002. By-laws indicate that a president not serve more than two consecutive years. Matt was ex-officio for 2001, and is serving as acting president after Tom Smith resigned in May. The Board did not feel this was a third consecutive year. The remainder of the slate of officers is also unchanged.

The Board voted to donate \$1000 to the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway Challenge Grant. The Gateway was just \$6000 shy of raising \$125,000 to obtain a large matching grant. The deadline was October 19<sup>th</sup>, and the CDCWRT's donation was announced at the fund raiser that night.

### **UP-COMING EVENTS**

Remembrance Day, the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, is a HUGE event in Gettysburg. This year is the 138<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The CDCWRT has several rooms reserved, starting **Thursday November 15<sup>th</sup> until Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>**, for about \$100 a night. If you are interested in all or part of this weekend, contact Sue Knost ASAP. There are no rooms available in the Gettysburg area for this event. The hotel is closest to the battlefield, and is the best place from which to watch the parade. If you join the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania for \$10.00, and send \$16.00 for the luncheon at Gettysburg College on November 19<sup>th</sup>, you will hear Dr. Kenneth Winkle, Chair of the History Department at the University of Nebraska, speak on "Abraham Lincoln from Springfield to Gettysburg." Reservations must be **postmarked by November 10<sup>th</sup>**. Send to Lincoln Fellowship of PA, P.O. Box 3372, Gettysburg, PA 17325.

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The Victorian Stroll in Troy will take place *Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>*. The CDCWRT will again be ensconced in the Troy Post Office. Patrick Sisti will also appear in the Post Office as Father Christmas. This is a local event, so why not join us for the afternoon as a volunteer. You do not need to know anything about cachets, but just be willing to meet people and talk about your interest in the Civil War.

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Our December meeting, election of officers, and Christmas party, will occur on *Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>* at the Guilderland Library. Our speaker will be Steve Hollingshead, producer of *Secrets of the Gettysburg Battlefield*.

## THE NOVEMBER RAFFLES

A generous benefactor, the Evergreen Cemetery preservation group, has donated a limited edition cold-cast bronze statue to the Round Table for our November Conference Raffle. It is the Gettysburg Civil War Women's Memorial by our resident sculptor, Ron Tunison. This is a model of the statue that will be dedicated on November 16, 2002. The Special Edition sculpture is limited to 500, and includes a piece of brick from the Evergreen Cemetery gatehouse, the home of Elizabeth Thorn during the Battle of Gettysburg.

With the help of her elderly father, and while six months pregnant, Elizabeth Thorn buried 91 soldiers during the weeks after the battle. Her post-war reminiscence is one of the best-known civilian accounts of the battle.

Several raffle tickets are enclosed with this newsletter, and may be purchased for \$5.00 apiece. Money and the tickets should be returned to Paul Rivenburgh, treasurer. Additional tickets may be obtained by calling Matt Farina, or they may be purchased at meetings, right up to the drawing in November.

If you are lucky at love, but unlucky in raffles, you can purchase a Women's Memorial statue to add to your Tunison collection. The limited edition statue sells for \$400, but can be purchased through the RT for \$350. A Regular Edition, limited to 1500, but without a piece of the brick, lists for \$275, but can also be purchased through the RT for \$250. A certified whole brick from the Evergreen Cemetery Gatehouse, can be purchased for \$200. These items and others relative to the gatehouse will be on sale at the November conference and dinner meeting.

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A second raffle, will have a variety of prizes. This will be the regular 'book' raffle, but the main prize will be an autographed edition of *A Shower of Stars: The Medal of Honor and the 27<sup>th</sup> Maine*, by John J. Pullen.

## CORRECTION!

This book was donated by Round Table member, Dave Wilcox, for the raffle, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Joshua Chamberlain Statue Fund. Other raffle prizes include books, stamp cachets, a poster, and pins. Tickets for this raffle are \$2.00 apiece, or 3 for \$5.00. The drawing will continue until all prizes are distributed. You really have an excellent chance to win something! Tickets can be purchased at the conference and the banquet.

## MISCELLANEOUS

The July 2001 issue of *Gettysburg Magazine* is available from the Round Table for \$5.00. A supply will be present at the November meeting.

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Members of the CDCWRT were present at the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Battle of Manassas. This starts the 140<sup>th</sup> year cycle, and promises to be a very busy five-year cycle. The holidays are coming soon, and souvenir-seekers and collectors might like to start with these special sets. A 3-cachet set with flag stamps sells for \$10.00, while a 3-cachet set with Civil War stamps sells for \$15. Cachets include Lee, Sherman, Early, Custer, Jackson, Sullivan Ballou, and a single cachet featuring McDowell, Beauregard and Johnston.

Each set is accompanied by the official commemorative program of the event, and a copy of the September 2001 issue of *America's Civil War* magazine. Historian, author and RT member, John Hennessy, has the lead article entitled, "**First Manassas: Confusion and Carnage on Henry Hill.**" These are in limited supply, so don't miss out!

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I know there are many baseball fans in the RT. On June 28, 2001, a ten stamp series of legendary baseball stadium was issued by the Postal Service. This is a highly desirable and collectible series, especially when combined with the Legends of Baseball set from last year. Sets of the stadium stamps will be available after the November conference and banquet at \$3.00 apiece, or 2 for \$5.00, or a complete set for \$25.00

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Thomas Publications will have a variety of books for sale at the November conference. Books will be available at a 20% discount with no NYS tax. A Thomas representative will not be present, so the RT will sell the books. Please bring checkbooks or have exact cash available.

### TENNESSEE TRIP (PART ONE)

The trip began at Albany Airport where the group left for a blessedly uneventful trip to Nashville. The bus and its driver, Tex from Virginia, were there to meet us. Unlike other trips, the bus ran flawlessly. Our first stop was Fort Donelson with guide extraordinaire, Bill Bazar.

The capture of Fort Henry, which was poorly situated, marked Grant's first major victory and his first coordination with the Navy. Halleck wanted Grant to return to base, but Grant saw the opportunity to move on Fort Donelson and possibly trap the Confederate army. The Confederates tried to force a breakout, but Grant rallied his forces and drove the Rebel army back into the fort. Some units escaped during the night, but the next day, Buckner asked Grant for the terms of surrender. "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted," replied Grant. Hence he became known as Unconditional Surrender Grant. This was a watershed victory for Grant and the Union. The Confederates abandoned Columbus, Kentucky, the Gibraltar of the West, middle Tennessee and eastern Kentucky with its supply of mules and horses. Union gunboats traversed the Tennessee River to Florence, Alabama. Albert Sidney Johnston and the Confederates were now on the defensive.

Our group then had the opportunity to tour the building in which the surrender of Fort Donelson occurred. The bus then drove onto Shiloh after stopping for a typical, fried catfish/chicken dinner. It rained that night, but cleared Saturday morning when we began the tour of Pittsburg Landing with historian, Stacy Allen. The day was sunny and breezy, and Stacy's thoughtful analysis of the battle provided insight into the events that unfolded at Shiloh.

The Tennessee River influenced the entire campaign. The Landing allowed ships to dock and unload. A good road network existed to Corinth, Mississippi where the east-west Memphis & Charleston Railroad crossed the north-south Mobile & Ohio Railroad. Halleck recognized this valuable junction, and ordered the consolidation of four Union armies at Pittsburg Landing, where he, himself, would lead the forces to capture Corinth. Grant was under strict orders to NOT provoke a battle before the armies consolidated. Johnston recognized Halleck's plan almost before Halleck conceived of it. Rather than wait in fortifications for the Union army, he decided to strike it at the river's edge before it gathered all its strength. He moved the Confederate army to within a mile of Grant's forces virtually undetected. Union patrols were kept to a minimum to avoid bringing on a battle. Grant knew that Rebels nearby but failed to recognize that it was the entire Rebel army, and that the concentration was strategic and offensive. Because of rain, the Confederates were slow to get to Shiloh.

The battle that evolves is known as a soldier's fight because commanders lost control of units as the battle developed. Union division commander, Gen. Prentiss, sent out a reconnaissance in force in the dawn, on April 6, 1862. It engaged Rebel

skirmishers, and the fight grew rapidly. Officers lost control as the fight spread from a 250 yard front to a three mile front. The Union center camps were overrun. The Confederates were on the verge of a great victory, but the Rebel army slowed down to enjoy the largess of the abandoned camps.

Johnston announced to his staff at mid-morning that Grant was checkmated. He believed Grant was situated in an east to west line. His plan was to attack the Union left and roll it up while holding the Union right fixed. In the second phase, he would trap the Union forces with a swamp to the rear. Grant was situated more in a north-south direction. Johnston believed he had broken into the Union rear when in fact he had just buckled the middle. A staunch Union resistance developed in a wooded area that later was called the "hornets' nest." About 5800 men and 25 artillery pieces held against seven, uncoordinated brigade-size attacks by the Confederates. The unbalanced Rebel assaults folded the Union right, and the Federals were forced instead to the Landing where Grant was preparing a final defense. Meanwhile, Johnston did not know that he was struck in the right leg, behind the knee, and eventually bled to death. He had apparently been injured in a duel years before, and lost all sensation in his right leg. He and his staff did not realize the extent of his injury.

Grant was reinforced by forces ferried across the river, and held a strong position as the Rebel attack finally faded. He had 25,000 men, 75 guns, and two gun boats to hold a 2600 yard front.

Next month, summary of the rest of the tour will be presented. Our guide, Stacy Allen, is author of a SUPERB guide to Shiloh in a new *Blue & Gray Magazine*.

*Fourth Annual Northeast Conference on the Civil War*

**Bridging the Gap Conference Series**

**November 9 - 10, 2001**

**New York and the Civil War: The Capital Region & Upstate New York**

**Location:** Best Western Hotel, 1228 Western Ave, Albany NY 12203 **Guilder Room** **Doors open at 6 pm**  
**Preconference:** Authors' night & Book Sale, Friday 6:30 pm - 10 pm **Saturday 8:30 - 4:30** **Banquet 6 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 in the upstate area surrounding the greater Capital District. As we search to understand what life in those times was like, it is more powerful to view that time in the context of home, looking through the eyes of the people who lived in the regions of the Erie Canal and the bustling cities and towns along its route, especially Albany, the capital city.

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 military charges brought against New York General Henry Slocum, and discover the story of the heroic 115<sup>th</sup> NY, a local regiment whose record is included in Fox's "Fighting 300". We will conclude the conference with the real story of the Iron Brigade, and how New Yorkers first held that title of honor, as related by banquet speaker Tom Clemons, President of Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF).

**Speaker Program: New York and the Civil War: The Capital Region & Upstate New York**

**Friday Preconference: 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 6:45 pm on Friday** **FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**The Journal of Women's Civil War History; From the Homefront to the Front Lines Vol. 1**, edited by Eileen Conklin. **Kim Howe** contributed her research on Schoharie nurse Catherine Lawrence to this new book on women's history, published this spring. Kim will speak briefly about the book, and will be available for signing copies during the break.

**"Flying Infantry: The Civil War Odyssey of the 115th New York."**

The 115th New York Volunteer Infantry was a Capital-area outfit whose story is quite unusual. After suffering mass surrender at Harpers Ferry and mass arrest for arson in Chicago, the 115th became involved in some of the lesser known campaigns of the Civil War, such as Olustee, Bermuda Hundred, and Fort Fisher. While today the 115th New York is as little-known to Civil War enthusiasts as some of the "sideshow" in which it fought, its battle record gained for it recognition as one of Fox's "Fighting 300" Union regiments.

**Mark Silo** is a Civil Engineer with a B.S. from the University of Notre Dame and master's from Cornell. Mark currently works for NYSDOT as head of highway and bridge design for Capital District area. Member of CDCWRT since 1987, Mark served in various times as secretary, treasurer, newsletter editor, and field trip meister, (setting the standards for all trips taken by the CDCWRT ever since, we might add! Editor)

**Memoirs of the 149th NYV. A dramatic reading by Nellie and Bill Edmonston.**

Formed in Onondaga County, NY, the 149th fought at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, where it withstood Ewell's assault on Culp's Hill with its sister regiment, the 122nd NY. After Gettysburg and combat at Wauhatchie and Lookout Mountain, the 149th joined Sherman for the Atlanta Campaign, the March to the Sea and northward through the Carolinas.

**Nellie & Bill Edmonston**, professors (now retired) own Edmonston Publishing. We have been pleased to present their books at each conference. The Edmonstons will be offering a selection of new titles and out of print books during the conference weekend.

### Opening session: "NYS and the Civil War."

Historian Robert Mulligan will open our conference on NY and the Civil War, and follow the themes presented in his article in Military Images Magazine. Bob will discuss troops raised, moneys spent, the Erie Canal, political developments, etc. to set the stage for us to understand what happened in the state that supplied more men and material than any other state in the war.

Robert Mulligan is recently retired from his position as Associate Curator, New York State Museum, Albany, NY where he was responsible for collections in the areas of Military History, Medical History & Costume. This included aspects of every facet of collecting, cataloging, conserving & interpreting. His education includes a B.A. 1961, State University of New York at Albany; History/English M.A. 1962, State University of New York at Albany; American History Permanent Teaching Certificate; M.A. 1973, State University College, Oneonta Museum Administration

### Albany Army Relief Bazaar

In February 1864, the city of Albany and the surrounding areas came together and held one of the largest, and most successful, fundraising fairs in downtown Albany, on a site that today is known as Academy Park, right in front of Albany's City Hall. This fair was not only great entertainment; it raised an enormous amount of money for the US Sanitary Commission to relieve the sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals. It was one of the largest moneymakers of all the fairs in 1864, and was unique because it cut across social, ethnic, and class lines to unite people in this fundraising cause. Organizers of the Albany fair procured Lincoln's original handwritten draft of the first Emancipation Proclamation. Today that document is one of the treasures belonging to New York State in Albany. There are some very rich photos and documentation of the fair and events surrounding the time. Historian Christine Robinson will share some of her research into this fascinating aspect of the Civil War in Albany, New York.

Christine Robinson is the Curator for the Saratoga National Historical Park, and Curator, Historical Society of Saratoga Springs.

### The Military Order Of The Loyal Legion Of The United States : Its Formation And Search For Identity

The Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS) was the first Civil War veterans' organization to form. It differed from any other Union veterans' order in that it only allowed officers and their direct male descendants to join. MOLLUS incurred a great deal of criticism because of that requirement, and throughout the later 19th century, struggled to find a publicly acceptable purpose for the order's existence.

Dana B. Shoaf is the editor of America's Civil War magazine and serves on the board of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. He is completing his dissertation on the Loyal Legion at Kent State University.

### "The Steadfast Warrior: The Military Career Of Henry Slocum"

Michael Russert will provide an insightful overview of Slocum's military career with an emphasis on the Civil War. Mike will especially examine the charges brought against Slocum at Gettysburg by O.O. Howard, where he claimed that Slocum was too slow in moving forward. Slocum was a NY native, born and raised near Syracuse. After the war, he became a lawyer and a politician in the city of Syracuse.

Michael Russert is a longtime member of the CDCWRT. He is also a member of The Company of Military Historians, a member of the New York State Civil War Flag Commission, and is an advisor to the new Military Heritage Museum.

### Banquet program The 22nd New York and the First Iron Brigade

The term "Iron Brigade" has become cemented in Civil War history to be synonymous with three regiments from Wisconsin and one each from Indiana and Michigan. Less well known that their western brethren, the New York Iron Brigade actually held the title first, and these facts are well documented. How and when the New Yorkers acquired the famous nickname will be presented, and be prepared for a few surprises.

Banquet speaker Tom Clemens holds a B.A. & M.A. from Salisbury State College, and is currently finishing his dissertation at George Mason University. History Professor at Hagerstown Community College, President Save Historic Antietam Foundation, Inc. long time volunteer and tour guide at Antietam, author of several articles and living history reenactor for 25 years, Tom is a well-known authority on the Civil War.