

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

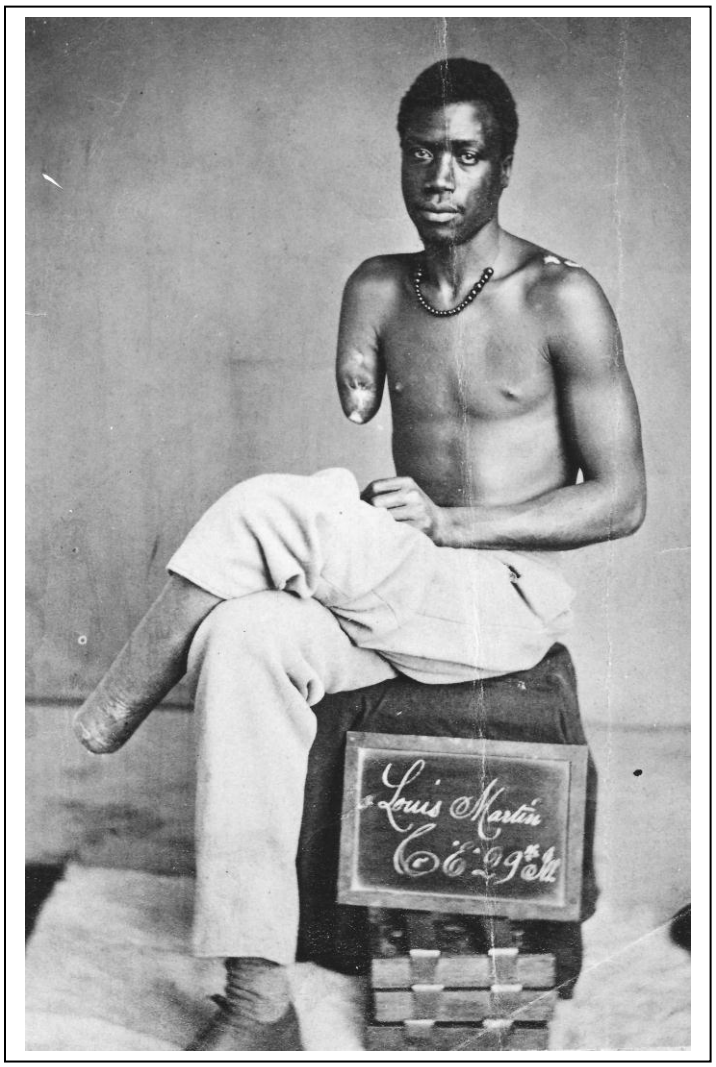
CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.AlbanyCivilWar.org



Volume 29, Number 5 February 2012

Pvt. Louis Martin, Co. E, 29th USCT



FEBRUARY MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2012
WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

Uplifting the Race: The United States Colored Troops

Dr. Harry B. Mathews

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 – 7:30 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:30 – 8:30 p.m.**
Questions & Answers	**8:30 – 9:00 p.m.**
More Socializing	**9:00 – 10:00 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

The February meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be on Friday, February 10, 2012. This meeting will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center, 1541 Broadway in Watervliet. Our very special guest speaker will be educator, historian and author, Dr. Harry Bradshaw Matthews. The title of his presentation is: "Uplifting the Race: The United States Colored Troops Link to the Freedom Journey and the Civil War."

This power point presentation, with images, will reveal the connection between African American abolitionists and the eventual enlistment of 200,000 black soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War. An exhibit of related items will complement the presentation.

Harry Bradshaw Matthews is Associate Dean and Director of the U.S. Pluralism Center at Hartwick College. He is also the founding president, senior fellow, and director of the United States Colored Troops Institute for Local History and Family Research at Hartwick College, which has been designated by the National Park Service as a facility of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. Matthews is the author of several books, including "African American Freedom Journey in New York and Related Sites, 1823-1870," which includes references to USCT in New York and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. His research, presentations and writings have been honored with proclamations from former NY Governor George E. Pataki, both houses of the New York State Legislature, the Maryland House of Delegates and the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust.

He is a resident of Oneonta/Davenport, NY. He has traced his family lineage back to 1762 in South Carolina and the Killingsworth surname to 1215 A.D. He is also the author of the 2007 revised edition of African American Genealogical Research: How to Trace Your Family History; and the 2008 writing, African American Freedom Journey in New York and Related Sites, 1823-1870. Matthews was placed in the C-SPAN Video Library for being the keynote speaker at the USCT Grave Site Salute at the Gettysburg National Cemetery during the 2008 Commemorative of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. He also served as a confidential researcher for the NBC show, "Who Do You Think You Are?" that profiled actress Vanessa Williams family research to a USCT.



UP-COMING EVENTS

The following list of up-coming events is provided to help Round Table members plan their long term calendars. These are events that involve our Round Table, especially events that provide opportunities to raise funds for our preservation activities. Some events may change as the year progresses, so members should check the list monthly. Details of Sesquicentennial Civil War events can be found on the web-site: www.nycivilwar150.org.

Friday, March 9, 2012 will be the regular scheduled meeting of the CDCWRT. Our Special speaker will be John McTague, a licensed Town Guide from Gettysburg. The title of his slide and lecture presentation will be "…. Never forget what they did here …: Abraham Lincoln's Visit to Gettysburg, November 18-19, 1863."

Friday, April 13, 2012 will be the regular scheduled meeting of the CDCWRT. Our special presenter will be Joseph W. Zarzynski, underwater archeologist and documentary film maker. His presentation is entitled *"The Search for the Jefferson Davis: Trader, Slaver, Raider."*

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 13-15, 2012 are the dates for the annual Underground Railroad Conference which will be held at Russell Sage College in Troy. Details will follow in future newsletters.

Friday, May 11, 2012 will be the regular scheduled meeting of the CDCWRT. Our presenter will be Joe Collea and he will be speaking about the 5th New York Cavalry.

Saturday and Sunday, June 2-3, 2012 is the Troy Civil War Weekend at the Masonic Temple in Troy. This is an encampment and skirmish with artillery. There are a variety of exhibits and organizations represented. The CDCWRT participates. Volunteers are needed to help man our tent the two days. Contact Matt George.

Friday, June 8, 2012 will be the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our speaker will be Dennis Gaffney and he will talk about his book, *Civil War Week by Week.*

Saturday, June 9, 2012 the CDCWRT will get culture! Albany Pro Musica, a highly respected choral group, will present a special Civil War music program. They have asked the CDCWRT to help promote this event. More details will follow, but mark it on your calendar now and tell your friends about it.

Friday, August 17th is the CDCWRT picnic. Saturday and Sunday August 18-19,2012 is the Schuyler Flatts Civil War Weekend. Join us for the picnic and activities on the weekend.

WANTED

The Round Table is **still** looking for someone or several members to serve as Refreshment Chair. The Round Table provides a budget for soda, water and snacks for meetings, but we need some volunteers to bring the items, set up for the meeting, and clean up afterwards. We generally have 10 meetings a year so if the task is divided by several volunteers, it would amount to 3-5 times per year. Anyone interested should talk to Fran McCashion or Mary Ellen Johnson.

JANUARY BOARD MEETING

The January Board Meeting was held on January 16th. The proposed slate was voted upon at our January meeting. The Board for 2012 is as follows:
President – Matt Farina
Vice-President – Gene Gore
Treasurer – Fran McCashion
Secretary – Mary Ellen Johnson
At-Large – J.J. Jennings
At-Large – Art Henningson
At-Large – Erin Baillargeon

The treasurer reported $1006.39 in the regular checking account and a little over $5000 in the preservation account. Speakers are set through the end of 2012. The November Conference at Siena College has all speakers confirmed. It will be from Friday night through to Sunday afternoon, November 2-4, 2012.

A letter from Jim Lighthizer, President of the Civil War Trust, was read. It thanked the CDCWRT for the generous $3000 gift donated in memory of Sue Knost for 285 key acres of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield. Quoting parts of the letter:

"This is one of the most important battlefield preservation efforts, and greatest opportunities, the Trust has ever engaged in."
"As a result of your generousity, we will be able to expand the protected portion of this great battlefield by 400%."
"I am so proud to be working with you on this crucial effort…Ms. Knost's name will be included on a commemorative display that will be erected on ths hallowed ground….Please accept these humble but heartfelt offerings to thank you for your remarkable leadership and philanthropy."

A second letter from Tom Carroll, Executive Director of the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway to the CDCWRT was also read.

"I am pleased indeed to inform you that the Board of Trustees of the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway has voted unanimously and most enthusiastically to offer to name the CDCWRT as our annual Gala Honoree for 2012….In their deliberations for this year, the Board felt that the Round Table's substantial and long-standing support of the Gateway's coverage the area's commercial and industrial heritage related to the Civil War….We seek to honor you for such dedication to industrial heritage and to the region's Civil War legacy."

The Board of the CDCWRT has accepted,

JANUARY MEETING

Bitter January cold didn't prevent a hearty crowd from turning out for our annual Potpourri Night. Steve Muller began by describing his recent research documenting Troy's participation in the building of the Monitor. Knowing that John Griswold, owner of a Troy iron mill, was involved with the Monitor Muller turned to the Griswold papers at the New York State Archives where he uncovered a folder of invoices detailing the amounts of iron shipped from Troy to the Brooklyn shipyard along with the names of the steamboats hauling the cargo. Among the specific details was the information that the 150 tons of iron shipped downriver from Troy included 634 plates, 1,000 angle bars or strip iron and 33,000 rivets. The Virginia Mariners Museum has promised him to give Troy more credit in its Monitor exhibit now that he has documented the city's heavy involvement in constructing the Monitor.

Readers of the novel *Gettysburg* or viewers of the movie who were moved by the close friendship between Lewis Armistead and Winfield Scott Hancock depicted with its dramatic and emotional climax at Gettysburg should have heard the irrepressible J.J. Jennings separate fact from fiction. His lively presentation had everyone's attention.

good times there. In 1850 Hancock married wealthy Almina Russell, while by then Armistead had buried two wives and three children in four years leaving him a sad, embittered man. Along with Heth, Were Armistead and Hancock friends? Over the decades between West Point and the Civil War they certainly crossed paths many times and had many opportunities to form a friendship. They were both assigned to Ft. Towson in Oklahoma in 1844 and then later served together in the Mexican War. Along with Harry Heth, the three moved into a local

hacienda while on garrison duty and had Hancock and Armistead continued to serve in the Sixth Infantry in various parts of Indian Territory during the next several years.

By 1861 Armistead and Hancock were in California and at the outbreak of war were forced to choose sides. Southerners including Armistead who opted to fight for the Confederacy resigned their commissions. Before returning east to fight for the Confederacy, a sad, final farewell party was held attended by both Hancock and Armistead. There Armistead gave Almina his prayer book and Hancock his major's uniform as parting gifts.

With war underway Hancock's promotion to Brigadier General came within weeks and not long after he became commander of the Second Corps while Armistead never rose above brigade level and Heth division level. Fate brought the three men to Gettysburg in July 1863. The third day's battle found Armistead leading his men as part of Pickett's Charge to face Hancock's regiments. Both Hancock and Armistead were seriously wounded and as Armistead was carried off the field Captain Bingham, one of Hancock's staff, comforted him. Armistead gave Bingham his wallet, watch and stirrups to send to his family if he didn't survive. Moved to the Eleventh Corps Hospital at Spangler's Farm, Armistead died the next day. Unlike the fictional version, Armistead and Hancock had no personal contact at Gettysburg.

In the years after the war Abner Doubleday's claim that as he lay wounded, Armistead expressed regrets and sorrow that he had joined the Confederacy, something that seems highly unlikely and is generally discounted by historians today. Another book was written by Almina Hancock, who was left a widow in 1886 with only a military pension. In an attempt to earn some much needed cash by writing a book about her late husband, it is the source of some of the stories of the close friendship between Armistead and Hancock. The Winfield Scott Hancock Society feels much about their close friendship is overblown, but as J.J. pointed out, there is a kernel of truth in much writing that is based on historical research though it is often exaggerated. However, the novelist Shaara's tale of their encounter at Gettysburg is pure fiction.

On display was John Ackner's fine collection of patriotic Civil War covers with many types of designs ranging from Lady Liberty and flags to generals or political figures. George Washington appeared on several with one labeling his portrait, "A Southern Man With Union Principles." A few pictured soldiers such as a Zouave or a kilted soldier from the 79th New York and others featured African-Americans in a very racist, politically incorrect way. Pat Loz had another display with information about two of her ancestors who were members of Mosby's Rangers. Henry Vanderwerken had a notebook filled with eyewitness accounts hand written by veterans who had actually seen Lincoln during the war.

Mary Ellen Johnson, the secretary for the CDCWRT, provided this excellent summary of the meeting.

DUES ARE DUE!

Annual dues of $25 for individuals or $25 for families are due in the month of January. Treasurer, Fran McCashion, will be available at meetings, or dues can be mailed in to the Round Tables address as listed on the letterhead on page one of the newsletter. Please don't risk being dropped from the mailing list.

KUDOS, KUDOS, KUDOS

Special recognition and thanks are given to several Round Table members. MATT GEORGE has portrayed a fictitious Union soldier in the 134th NYVI as a living history program for historical societies, senior centers and schools.

GENE GORE gave a presentation for the Coeymans Historical Society. He generously donated his $50 honorarium to the CDCWRT.

MIKE AFFINITO has managed our website the past 2 years and we now have a simple, easy to remember address.

www.cdcwrt.net

Please visit the website and let your family and friends know about it.

MATT FARINA recently spoke to the Wade Hampton Camp No. 273 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in Columbia, SC at their Annual Lee-Jackson Banquet.

DONATIONS TO DATE

Each year at the end of the year the CDCWRT lists the donations made that year for preservation activities. This is the list for 2011.

1. Donation to Underground Railroad conference - $150
2. Donation to Civil War Trust (CWT) for Gettysburg - $500
3. Donation to CWT in memory of Virginia Dolins to the Slaughter Pen - $50
4. Donation of commemorative cachets to the Chamberlain House in Maine - $50
5. Donation of framed commemoratives for the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway auction – valued at $200
6. Donation to CWT in memory of Sue Knost for Gaines' Mill - $3000 for a 2.67:1 match for full donation of $8010

The running grand total of actual funds and matching funds to date is at least $817,752. In past years we did not tabulate matching funds. In actual funds donated, the figure is around $300,000.

The sources of our funds are varied, but the largest share is from the sales of postal cachets. This is followed by shirt sales, book sales, raffles, and excess trip/banquet/ conference proceeds. This is why we encourage you to buy a book or a t-shirt or a postal cachet at meetings. You not only get a nice item for yourself or someone else, but you also help preserve a battlefield.

THE STORY ABOUT OUR COVER

Private Louis (Lewis) Martin of Company E, 29th USCT, was enlisted at Alton, Illinois on February 9, 1864. Five months later he fought in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia. Shell fragments and bullets so mangled his left leg and right arm that they were amputated. Buckshot wounds in the head and left shoulder resulted in painful scars. After field hospital treatment, he convalesced at Harewood Hospital in Washington, DC.

The photograph on the front cover was taken at Harewood by Dr. Reed Brockway Bontecou. Bontecou was a surgeon and photographer in Troy, New York before the war. He rose in prominence in both fields and was known to President Lincoln and Matthew Brady. Bontecou compiled a collection of some 1200 photographs of men and their wounds, and was a major contributor to the Atlas of War Injuries in the War of the Rebellion.

Lewis Martin was back with his regiment at Appomattox when Lee surrendered. On December 6, 1865, he was discharged as totally disabled and was given a pension of $20 per month. In 1872, this was increased to $24. He later requested an increase because of shoulder pain. But in spite of the scar clearly visible in the photograph, the existence of such a wound was denied.

In 1869 he was wed to Mary Jones. In 1895 he was dropped from the pension rolls for failure to claim his check since 1892. No widow's claim was ever filed.