



The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

Capital District Civil War Round Table

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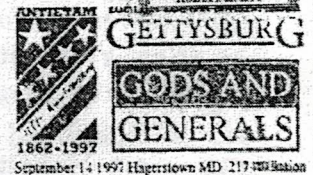
CDCWRT's web site: timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt

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Last meeting of Generals Lee and Jackson, morning of May 2, 1863. This early engraving correctly shows the two generals mounted during their final brief meeting.



Pictured above are two of our most photogenic cachets from the 135th anniversary of the battles of Antietam and Chancellorsville. There are three postal cancellation stamps for each battle. Author, Jeff Shaara, gave permission to the CDCWRT to use the title of his then new book, *God and Generals*. A limited number of these cachets are still available for \$5.00 apiece. A protective archival sleeve is free with a purchase of a set of three for \$15.00. Both battle sets of six cachets with sleeve are available for \$25.00. A limited number of autographed cachets are available for \$10.00 apiece. The authors signed these cachets to assist the CDCWRT in fund-raising for preservation. Cachets have been signed by Jeff Shaara and historian-author, Ed Bearss. A few cachets were signed by actors, Patrick Gorman, who portrayed John Bell Hood, and Brian Mellon, who portrayed Winfield Hancock in the movie, *Gettysburg*. Contact Matt Farina if you want to acquire any of these items.

**March Meeting
Friday 03/14/03
Guilderland Library
Route 20 Western Ave.
Guilderland, NY**

SOCIAL HOUR	6:00 PM
BUSINESS MEETING	7:00 PM
PROGRAM	7:30 PM

CDCWRT MEETING

The February meeting of the CDCWRT will be held on Friday, March 14th, at the Guilderland Public Library. The social hour will start at 6:00pm, with a business meeting at 7:00pm. The scheduled program will start at 7:30.

Our speaker for this meeting is Christopher L. Kolakowski, who will talk on "New York City's Civil War." Chris is a graduate of Emory & Henry College with a B.A. in History and Mass Communications. He was born and raised in Fredericksburg, VA, and has worked as a historian with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park for eight years. He is the author of several articles on the Civil War and Napoleonic Wars, and he wrote a biweekly column for the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star. Chris is also researching a book on the Battles of Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church. In August 2002 Chris took a leave of absence and began studying for his M.A. in Public History at the State University of New York at Albany. He also now works in Albany as a researcher for Saratoga National Historical Park and other organizations. He is a member of the CDCWRT and a good friend.

In his presentation, Chris will provide the insider's explanation, via accounts, letters and first person reminiscences, of what convulsed New York City from 1860 to 1865. He will discuss the city in 1860 as the War begins, the Lincoln election of 1860, the secession crisis, the Draft Riots, and the 1864 election, concluding with NYC's reaction to Lincoln's assassination.

We will also have a NEW SUPPLY of used Civil War magazines dating back to the early 1970s at the bargain price of \$0.50 apiece, or 3 for \$1.00. In addition, the latest issue of GETTYSBURG MAGAZINE VOL. 28, JANUARY 2003 is available for \$5.00, less than the subscription price.

FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting was attended by an overflowing crowd to hear Frank O'Reilly talk about Lincoln's involvement in the battle of Fredericksburg. Frank answered many questions formally after the talk, and informally in the social hour after the meeting. This was a topic that evoked a great deal of interest in the political decisions that affected military actions. Most of the copies of Frank's new book were sold, but a few are still available.

BOARD MEETING

The January Board Meeting was held on February 24th. The treasurer's report noted \$1680.09 in the regular checking account before purchasing mailing stamps, and \$3948.63 in the preservation account. The preservation balance does not include monies deposited for the up-coming trips. A contingent of 63 members has signed up for the April Full Duty Banquet in Vermont. President, Joe Stracuzzi, reported on a donation from the Champlain Rifles to the

CDCWRT as a donation to the Civil War Preservation Trust. Program Chair, Sue Knost, outlined meetings for the next six months (see details below).

UP-COMING EVENTS

March 7th-9th, 2003 is the Spring Muster at Gettysburg. The balance of the cost of the trip was due by February 21st, so please mail checks to the CDCWRT mailbox, marked GB TRIP. An itinerary has been sent to those going on the trip. The brown bus from the **Brown Bus Company** will leave at 7:00 am, Friday, March 7th, from the upper parking lot at Filene's at Crossgates. Look for the brown **Brown Bus** and other members of the CDCWRT. The main-desk contact phone number will be (717)334-1103 at the Quality Inn Gettysburg Motor Lodge.

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The Full Duty Banquet in Montpelier, VT on April 12, 2003 is the annual event of several Round Tables in Vermont and New Hampshire. Remember that this will replace our regular April Meeting!!!! This year's guest speaker will be **Ken Burns**. As of this date we have 63 attending. Banquet tickets are still available through the CDCWRT, but you will need to car pool to Vermont, since the bus is full. There will be a special tour of the Capitol building and its Civil War artifacts. On the return trip we will see gravesites of several famous Civil War soldiers (O. O. Howard and Stannard) at Lakeview Cemetery in Burlington.

Attendees have already paid a \$50 deposit. Joe Stracuzzi will be happy to accept the balance in two installments between now and March 31, 2003. It will be a great weekend. Deposits should be mailed to Joe Stracuzzi, 3 Bradbury Street, Clifton Park, NY 12065.

May 9th is the monthly meeting at Guilderland. Janet Bucklew will speak, in costume, about the Sisters of Charity at Gettysburg.

May 10th is the 125th NYSVI bus trip to West Point. If you are interested, contact President Joe Stracuzzi for details.

May 17th, Saturday, is the Annual open house at Peebles Island. This is an opportunity to explore the state historical preservation facilities. The RT will have an information booth at the openhouse. **Volunteers are requested to contact Joe or Sue.**

On June 14th and 15th, Saturday and Sunday, Civil War Days will be held in Petersboro, NY. This is also Flag Day Weekend and it promises to be a big event. Each year re-enactors, historians, history groups and vendors gather to celebrate the region's Civil War heritage. This has been a cancellation event for the CDCWRT for several years now.

June 13th, Friday, the monthly meeting of the CDCWRT will be held in the Guilderland Public Library. Member, Ray Wemple will speak on *The Signal Corps at Gettysburg*.

June 28th, Saturday, to July 6th, Sunday, will mark the '140th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. More than 25,000 Civil War re-enactors are expected to be on hand for the celebration. This will be the major event for 2003. Volunteers are being recruited to man possibly two booths. This will be your opportunity to see Pickett's Charge on a life-size scale.

The July Picnic will be held on Saturday, July 12th at the Peebles Island Pavilion.

More details will follow in later newsletters.

MISCELLANEOUS

The answers to last month's questions are listed below.

Q. Who rode, at various times, the following horses?

Chancellor - *Jeb Stuart*

Charlemagne - *Joshua Chamberlain*

Cincinnati - *Ulysses S. Grant*

Don Juan - *George Custer*

General - *Jeb Stuart*

Hero - *James Longstreet*

Sam - *William T. Sherman*

Skylark - *Jeb Stuart*

Little Sorrel - *Stonewall Jackson*

Virginia - *Jeb Stuart*

Q. John Wilkes Booth killed Abraham Lincoln. If George Atzerodt had carried out his assignment and killed Vice-President Andrew Johnson, who would have become president?

The answer is U.S. Senator Lafayette Sabine Foster, and this question stumped everyone. The laws for succession in 1865 called for the Senate's president pro tempore to serve as acting president should the president and vice-president be killed or incapacitated.

Foster was born on 11/22/1806, in Franklin, CT. He graduated from Brown University in 1828, and was admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1831. He served in the Connecticut House of Representatives in 1839 and 1840, and was speaker of the House from 1846 to 1849. He was the Whig nominee for governor in 1850 and 1851, but lost both times. In 1854 he filled a U.S. Senate seat that was vacated. He opposed slavery on principle, and voted against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He was re-elected in 1860, and during the secession crisis, he

supported sectional compromise. However when the war began, he associated himself closely with Lincoln. He lost in the 1866 elections, and in a final attempt at election into the House of Representatives in 1874. Foster died in Norwich, CT on 9/19/1880.

A NEW QUESTION

The designation "4F," meaning exemption from military service for any physical disability, dates from the Civil War. What did "4F" stand for?

We received a notice from long distance member, Bruce Venter, of Alexandria, Virginia. His interest has been Civil War cavalry engagements. Bruce's article entitled "*The Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid on Richmond*" will be featured in the next issue of **Blue & Gray Magazine**, Winter 2003. The magazine should be in Barnes and Noble around the first of March.

JOE'S JOTTINGS

By Joe Stracuzzi

First of all, I thank all of you who came out for the February meeting, and special thanks to our Program Chair. Frank is a speaker who will be hard to top, but I know Sue will do it some how. Thank you again. Thanks also to Matt George for swinging into action and postponing the Board Meeting from the 17th to the 24th due to the storm. This was done while I was having phone troubles on one line. This occurred while I was happily on my cell phone, talking to Rich DeCarlo, one of our reenactor members. Through his efforts as preservation officer of the **Champlain Rifles**, they are donating, through us, \$600 to CWPT. Thank you Rich and the Rifles.

The History Channel has scheduled a program entitled, "History vs. Hollywood," based on "Gods and Generals." It will be shown on Monday, February 24th at 11:00pm-12:00am and on Tuesday, February 25th at 3:00am-4:00am. This way you can either stay up late, or get up early.

The 125th Regimental group is planning a FAMILY bus trip to West Point on May 10th. The cost is about \$22.00 a seat. If you want to see West Point, a bus trip like this is the best way. Contact CDCWRT and 125th member, **Terry Fishel at 383-7851 or reenactorterry@netzero.net** to make your reservations. With heightened security, it is easier to show and ID on a bus that has been cleared beforehand, than the scrutiny of an auto. Even after the recent storms, I'm sure the snow will be gone by then.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Well the reviews have ranged from euphorically positive to downright nasty and ridiculous. I talking of course about the movie, *Gods and Generals*. I was at a medical meeting in Orlando last week and I went to the opening night show in a theater that is opposite the Convention Center. There were about twenty people in the audience, and I paid \$7.75 for the ticket. Warner Brothers cancelled the pre-release showing of the movie that was to have occurred at Proctor's Theater because the moguls felt we could not handle an event that large. We felt we could fill the house, charge \$15 per ticket, plus a \$10 per ticket premium that WB wanted. It would have been a spectacular CW Gala Weekend.

A Washington critic said this movie had little plot, and would appeal only to history buffs. He's absolutely right. This is not like GWTW with the Civil War as the backdrop; this is the Civil War with the personal story of Jackson as the backdrop. We see some of Chamberlain's personal life, but virtually

none of Lee's life. The movie is more of a documentary or docu-drama. The battle of Antietam is dropped, but there is too much time spent in the beginning to show that soldiers came from all walks of life; the minstrel show was totally unnecessary.

For those with little CW background, the time line of events and people would be confusing. On Saturday, my son and I watched *Black-hawk Down*. To educate the audience about the situation in Somalia, the director flashed a brief summary during opening scenes. The same could have been used by Maxwell to improve understanding and flow. *After the Union disaster at Fredericksburg, Gen. Burnside was replaced by Gen. Hooker as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Hooker not only restored the Union Army in manpower, but also was able to threaten Gen. Lee's smaller army at Chancellorsville. Lee and Jackson devise a plan to attack the larger Union force.* Maxwell could then have proceeded with the Lee-Jackson meeting and the audience would have understood more of the significance of the battle. As my son pointed out, the movie, *Patton*, flowed, and he was able to follow the character and the story line without knowing much about the ETO in WWII.

Critics also complained that there was little said about slavery and the war. I shall not get into the root causes of the war here, but I will end with two observations. A *Washington Post* editorial by a historian on 12/30/02, commented that January 1st was the 140th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves in the South. On Lincoln's birthday this past month, the only mention of Abe I saw in the newspaper or on non-cable TV were the ads for cars and furniture that featured our 16th president. As critics, we have a lot more fence mending to do before we dump on Civil War movies. Yes, I will see it again, and I hope the 7-hour DVD fills in the gaps.