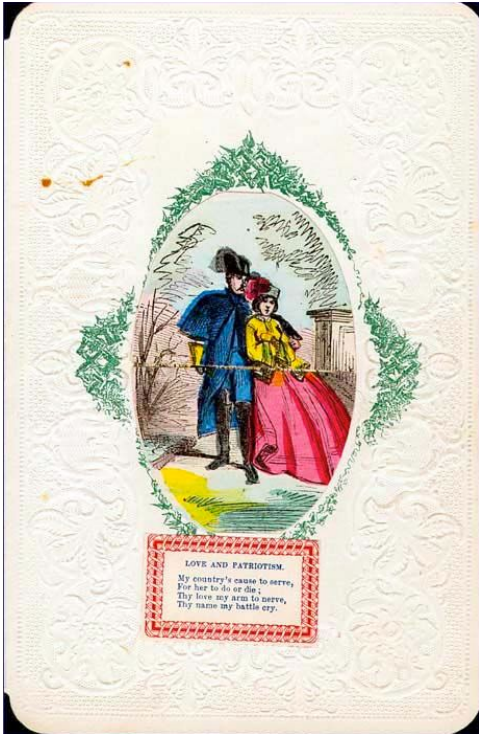


Volume 37, Number 2

February 2020

VALENTINES IN THE CIVIL WAR



FEBRUARY MEETING

Friday, February 14, 2020

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

TED SHUART: the U.S. Signal Corps

Social Hour	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Presentation	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Questions & Answers	8:00 – 8:30 p.m.

The regular meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, February 14, 2020.

Our speaker is Schoharie County Historian Ted Shuart, who will tell the story and share the personal diary of Civil War United States Army Signal Corps 2nd Lieutenant William H. Hill.

Ted Shuart was appointed Schoharie County Historian in 2013 following his service as Cobleskill Town and Village Historian. He is a Master Interpreter in the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, since 1996 and has been a member and Board member of the Cobleskill Historical Society for nearly 30 years. Mr. Shuart, a graduate of Cobleskill Central School, is a long-time Civil War reenactor who participated in the filming of the 1993 movie Gettysburg and many other events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 13: Chris Gwine will present "Why We Fought" about Union veterans' reminisces of Gettysburg.

April 10: Ralph Siegal will discuss controversies surrounding the Peach Orchard.

May 8: Phil Vitiello will present a program on the *CSS Hunley*.

DUES, DUES, DUES

The Round Table membership year started January 1. The dues level is \$35, and members can also make donations to the Operating and/or Preservation accounts. Payments in cash or check can be mailed to the Round Table with your name, newsletter preference (email or paper copy), updated email or street address, and distribution for any additional donations. Credit card payments can be made at the February meeting.

Whose Dues? Treasurer Steve Muller reports that someone gave him \$35 cash at the end of January's meeting, but Steve didn't catch his name. If this was you, please call Steve at 518-274-0846, email him at smuller1@nycap.rr.com, or see him at the February meeting.

THANK YOU, MEMBERS

The Executive Board would like to thank the following people for their support: Robert Mungari, Mary Heisinger, Norman Kuchar, Steve Muller, Rosemary Nichols, Gene Gore,

Nelson Gillespie, Erin Baillargeon and
Byron Moak.

VALENTINE'S DAY IN THE CIVIL WAR

by Rosemary Nichols

According to greeting card statistics, Valentine's Day is almost a national holiday, at least among folks who still send mail through the postal service. Given our Civil War interest, what about valentines to and from the camps where soldiers north and south spent their winters? February is a dreary time in almost all the areas where there were major encampments, Union and Confederate, and mail from home in whatever form was cherished.

The valentine was not a new invention in the Civil War. The earliest existing valentine was sent to his wife Bonne by Charles, Duke of Orleans, from his captivity in England after the battle at Agincourt in 1415. Charles was 21 years old. A member of the French royal family, Charles was not made eligible for ransom. He was finally freed after 25 years in England.

British merchants were the first to market valentines in the 1830s, but their American counterparts weren't far behind. Much of the credit for US valentines goes to an 1847 Mount Holyoke graduate, Esther Rowland, whose stationer father had previously imported valentines to Massachusetts. Esther thought the English valentines were pretty, but believed she could do better. She began selling her own versions in the 1840s to great success.

Her business was well established by 1860.

In the prewar years, Americans became accustomed to sending commercially produced greetings. Popular choices included fancy cutwork cards, lacy stationery, and real lace embellished with hand-painted birds and flowers, or pasted-on colored decals of cupids and hearts. Some were so elaborate they had to be mailed in boxes. There were also rebus valentines: riddles that omitted words and replaced them with symbols.

In an article published in the February 2008 issue of *Civil War Times*, author Ruth Ann Coski shared a variety of Valentine's Day quotations on the theme, "Amid the grim reality of civil strife, soldiers' thoughts still turned to romance on Valentine's Day."

Even in a nation divided, commerce thrived, as did enthusiasm for St. Valentine. Early on, the press tended to describe Valentine's Day in martial terms. The February 9, 1861, issue of the Leavenworth, Kansas, *Daily Times* noted: "Most...readers are probably aware that St. Valentine's Day occurs on the 14th of the present month. The artful archer, Cupid, will be in his glory on that occasion, and is already at work filling his quiver with the missiles of lovely warfare."

As the war continued, newspapers still reminded readers of the holiday. An ad in Chicago's *Daily Tribune* of January 22, 1862, proclaimed: "Valentines for 1862 My stock for the approaching season will be entirely new, and will far surpass that of former years. Valentines, Single, from 1 cent to Twenty Dollar....Comic and

Sentimental Valentines Assorted Patriotic comic Valentines, Envelopes, Cards, Writers, &c.”

Especially in the Confederate States of America, the war’s deprivations made it increasingly difficult to celebrate Cupid’s special day. The *Daily Chronicle & Sentinel* of Augusta, Georgia, wrote on February 6, 1862: “When our Southern land shall again bask in the broad sunshine of peace and prosperity, mayhap the observance of Valentine’s Day...will be general among us.” Richmond’s *Whig* of February 9, 1864, said soberly, “Although public attention should be diverted from levity whilst the alarms of war are heard at our very doors, we believe that on the 14th February, a large number of ‘Valentines’ will pass through the post office.”

Some Civil War-era valentine cards combined romantic love and love of country. The verse of one of the cards on our cover page, "Love and Patriotism," aimed at a federal audience, reads: “My country’s cause to serve, For her to do or die; Thy love my arm to nerve, Thy name my battle cry.”

There was the enamored Confederate soldier who anonymously dispatched an ardent message from “Gen. Cupid’s Hd. Qrs.” to Mollie Woodson of Appomattox Court House, Virginia, three years into the war.

The large paper valentine on our front cover has an embossed border. It is glued with scrap: a classical bust at top, floral spray at center, and leaves at the bottom. Between the leaves at the bottom of the card is a small piece of paper printed with this short verse:

“Fondly I gaze in Thy sweet face, And clasp thy little Hand in mine, Love swiftly speeds Us to the place Where I shall claim My Valentine”.

The other card pictured on our front page was sent by Joseph Forrest to Elizabeth Ehrhart during the Civil War. Joseph and Elizabeth, both residents of Macon County, Illinois, became engaged in 1858. They delayed marriage at first because of Elizabeth's young age, secondly because of some business concerns, and thirdly because of the war.

Joseph enlisted on July 25, 1861 at Decatur, Illinois. He was mustered into service as a private in Company A of the Eighth Illinois Volunteer Infantry. The couple decided to wed on Joseph's first furlough, which unfortunately for them didn't occur for another two years. When Joseph finally returned to Macon County to marry Elizabeth, he also was on a mission to uncover deserters hiding in the area. The couple married on August 9, 1863, and (according to family lore) spent much of their honeymoon riding around the countryside on horseback in pursuit of runaway soldiers.

The Eighth Illinois was involved in battles at Shiloh and Corinth (1862), and Vicksburg (1863). After three years of active duty, Joseph was mustered out and honorably discharged in early December 1863. A few days later, he rejoined the same outfit while it was in camp at Vicksburg, Mississippi. He served until honorably discharged at the end of the war.

Perhaps the most notorious Valentine ever was sent by John Wilkes Booth to Lucy Lambert Hale, the daughter of

John Parker Hale, U.S. senator from New Hampshire. Lincoln's assassin sent the Valentine to Lucy anonymously in 1862. "To see you has indeed afforded me a melancholy pleasure," he wrote. They flirted, they courted and then they may have gotten engaged. According to some accounts, Lucy dined with Booth two hours before he killed President Lincoln. A picture of Lucy Lambert Hale was found on his body. Lucy left the country after the assassination and married a former sweetheart, by then a New Hampshire lawyer, nine years later.

Author Coski wryly comments: "Despite the conflict's tragic losses, the uninterrupted observance of Valentine's Day throughout the war years proves yet again that love endures—along with the power of marketing."

WARM WISHES REQUESTED

Tom Broadfoot of the Broadfoot Publishing Company is circulating the following request:

"ED BEARSS, decorated Marine, wounded at Guadalcanal, author of many Civil War books, leader of thousands of Civil War battlefield tours, sought-after Civil War speaker, Chief Historian for the National Parks Service. If your interest is the Civil War Ed has contributed greatly to your interest.

"Ed is now 97, and confined to his apartment. He is quite hard of hearing so phone calls and visits are not beneficial.

"He much enjoys and appreciates letters, as his wonderful caretaker daughter Jenny says "letters make his day."

"So – consider taking a few minutes to write Ed. Ideas: talk about the books he authored, or recall a tour or speech he gave, thank him for his service as a Marine and a Parks historian; pen any stories you have of the Civil War. If you've purchased any books from our recent catalogues of Ed's books, (he's downsizing his collection), tell him how pleased you are to have books from his collection, etc., etc. Anything.

"Ed probably won't reply so don't ask him questions or request he sign books, etc.

"Ed thanks you – Jenny thanks you – and thank yourself. Thank you.

-Tom Broadfoot"

ED BEARSS
1126 17th St. S.
Arlington, VA 22202

"P.S. Missives are better with larger script than smaller – perhaps 12-14 point or equivalent. [The body of this newsletter is in 12 point Arial font. The headings are in 16 point font.]

ELECTION RESULTS

The slate of nominees for the 2020 Executive Board was approved at the January membership meeting. One At-Large position remains open. People interested in serving on the Board should speak to a current Board member.

BOARD UPDATES

The Executive Board met on Monday, January 20, to discuss the business of the Round Table.

Program Chair Matt George updated the schedule of speakers, which is set through June, 2021 with very few openings.

The Round Table made a \$500 donation to the American Battlefield Trust on January 1 for their \$593-to-\$1 match for Briscoe Station.

The Board also voted to update our logo. We decided to choose an image that links us to the Capital District by using a photograph of General Sheridan in front of the NYS Capitol building.

Treasurer Steve Muller presented a reckoning of the Operating and Preservation accounts for 2019.

PRESERVATION ACCOUNT

Income

Book Raffle	\$ 681.00
Donations	\$ 606.21
Merchandise Sales	\$1,063.14
Interest	\$ 0.89

Total Income:
\$2,351.24

Expenses

A.B.Trust Donations	\$1,000.00
Other Donations	\$ 300.00
Insurance	\$ 767.63
Storage Unit Rental	\$1,222.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 32.38
Total Expenses:	\$3,322.01

PRESERVATION BALANCE: \$2,408.40

OPERATING ACCOUNT

Income

Membership Dues	\$2,085.00
Donations	\$ 445.62
Interest	\$ 0.66

Total Income:
\$2,531.28

Expenses

Newsletter Printing	\$ 635.00
Programs	\$ 442.89
Donation(meeting space)	\$ 400.00
Webpage	\$ 150.64

Total Expenses: \$1,628.53
OPERATING BALANCE: \$1,316.40

The next meeting of the Executive Board is Monday, February 17. If you wish for more information, please contact any board member.

BUFORD'S VIEW

by Matt George

From Jan. 31 to Feb. 2 I'll be attending Pat Schroeder's free conference at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. Pat is a longtime friend of our Round Table and has spoken to us numerous times including one of our sesquicentennial conferences.

Speakers at Schroeder's conference include Gary Gallagher and Elizabeth Varon. I am especially looking forward to hearing Elizabeth Varon, whose earlier book on Appomattox was excellent. Her newest book is "Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War".

I'm home for two days and then off by train to Savannah, Georgia for the Civil War Trust's Color Bearer Conference.

Although the train ride takes longer, it is cheaper, there is far less hassle, more leg room, and it provides the opportunity to catch up on my reading.

Last night I attended the Curtain Call Theatre's presentation of Richard Strand's play "Ben Butler". The four actors were quite good. I especially liked Mike Lake's portrayal of Shepard Mallory, a runaway slave who appears at Fortress Monroe and "demands" asylum from Ben Butler.

I had a chance to briefly talk to Chris Foster, the actor portraying "Beast" Butler. He said that the playwright did take some liberties with Butler and the historical facts. However, the major dilemma that Butler faced when he decided to accept runaways as "contraband" was very well explored. This was in 1861, very early in the war when Lincoln was still not prepared to make emancipation a war goal, and Butler's actions were seen as a premature political mistake. It should

be noted that Foster is considerably more handsome than the real Butler.

Another good friend of the Round Table, Pat Falci, has invited me to attend the Little Big Horn Associates Custer Conference which will be held at West Point this year July 9 – July 11. The Conference will include a visit to the Visitor's Center, the Museum and a special ceremony at Custer's grave at the West Point Cemetery. Many of the talks will be on West Point during Custer's tenure there, as well as some Native American perspectives on the Little Big Horn. Pat asked me to make other members of our Round Table aware of this event.

The Great Places and Spaces event at the New York State Museum on Jan. 11 went quite well with more people (especially young people) attending than last year. The weather was unusually warm which probably helped. We even made \$26.00

**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 in various locations in the Capital District. This newsletter is published eleven times per year. Annual dues are \$35. 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

President	Erin Baillargeon	Vice-President	Nick Thony
Treasurer	Steve Muller	Secretary	Rosemary Nichols
At-Large	J.J. Jennings	At-Large	Mark Koziol
At-Large	(open)		

THE NONCOMS

Program	Matt George	518-355-2131	Jbuford63@aol.com
Membership	Mike Affinito		
Refreshments	Dean Long and Luanne Whitbeck		
Webmaster	Mike Affinito		
Historian	Gene Gore		
Education	Matt George		
Newsletter	Rosemary Nichols and Erin Baillargeon		