

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.cdcwrt.net



Volume 32, Number 1 January 2015

ROUND TABLE DONATIONS AT $1,344,944 IN ACTUAL & MATCHING FUNDS

2014 DONATIONS

1. **Watervliet Senior Center - $400**
2. **Civil War Trust - $200 South Mountain 4:1 match = $800**
3. **Civil War Trust - $200 Stones River – no match**
4. **Civil War Trust - $500 Glendale for 4.25:1 match = $2125**
5. **Civil War Trust - $1000 for 4 battlefields for 10:1 match = $10,000**
6. **Franklin's Charge $1000 in memory of Israel Jennings**
7. **Civil War Trust $500 for North Anna for 10:1 match = $5000**
8. **Longstreet Society – 200 cachets valued at $1000**
9. **Underground Railroad Conference - $150**
10. **Gettysburg Foundation - $200**
11. **Bennett Place Support Fund - $250**
12. **Civil War Trust - $1000 Lee's HQ Gettysburg for 5:1 match = $5000**
13. **Civil War Trust - $1000 Franklin Battlefield for 14:1 match = $14,000**
14. **Civil War Trust - $1000 Chancellorsville for 9.29:1 match = $9290**
15. **Civil War Trust - $2000 for 8 battlefield for 31.11:1 match = $62,220**

TOTAL DONATIONS INCLUDING MATCHES $111,635

JANUARY MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2015

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

MEMBERS'
POTPOURRI MEETING

TOM TIMMONS
REGINA DALY

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 January meeting of the CDCWRT is our annual potpourri meeting where members can do short presentations, talk about a Civil War relative, or display some Civil War memorabilia or collectibles. Presentations can be a brief as 5 minutes or as long as one half of an hour. It will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center.

The first presenter will be Tom Timmons, and Tom will talk about the Battle of Fort Harrison.

Now there are two Fort Harrisons. One was built in 1811 near Terre Haute, Indiana, and was named after Gen. William Henry Harrison. On September 2, 1812 the fort was attacked by a force of 600 Potawatomie, Miami, Kickapoo and Winnebago Indians.

The other Fort Harrison was part of the Confederate defenses near Richmond. It was named after Lt. William Harrison, a Confederate engineer. On September 29, 1864, it was attacked by a force of 2500 Union soldiers from Ben Butler's army.

Come and see which battle Tom will discuss!

The second presenter is CDCWRT member, Regina Daly, who will discuss the battle to capture Fort Fisher on the Cape Fear River. The same Ben Butler was in charge of the first assault which was unsuccessful, and added to the discontent of command in Washington of Gen. Butler's performance.

The second assault in early 1865 was successful and the story of this attack dove-tails with the article in this newsletter about the fall of Wilmington.

Regina spoke in the past about the Antarctic explorer, Ernest Shackleton.

A third presenter had to withdraw. Program Chair, Matt George, did not have a replacement at the time the newsletter had to be submitted for printing. I am certain Matt will have one or two more presenters by the time of the meeting.

ADDENNUM

In last month's editorial I commented that some members of the CDCWRT provided financial support for the conference, even though some could not attend due to previous commitments.

I also want to recognize two anonymous members who each donated $2000 to Franklin Charge in 2014. This was combined with the round table's $1000 to make a total $5000 donation. Look inside to SEE the effects of some of our donations.

.ELECTION OF NEW BOARD

At the Board meeting on Monday, November 24th, the following was approved to submit to the membership at the December meeting.

1. **Request a 1 year waiver of Article II, section 2 of the by-laws, limiting the term of president to not more than 2 successive terms**
2. **Proposed slate for 2015:**
   President – Rosemary Nichols
   Vice-President - Mark Koziol
   Secretary – Erin Baillargeon
   Treasurer – Fran McCashion
   At-Large – Art Henningson
   At-Large – Steve Muller
   At – Large – Tom Timmons

The first order of business at the January meeting will be the election of a new Board for 2015. The above slate was submitted to the membership in December. Any member in good standing (dues paid to date) may vote. Candidates in good standing may be nominated from the floor.

DUES! DUES! DUES!

The membership may recall that dues for 2015 were increased from $25 to $30 by action of the Board this past fall. The primary reason for the increase was to off-set newsletter printing costs. In the past, the CDCWRT was blessed with free printing of newsletters. Unfortunately that is no longer available.

UP-COMING MEETING/ EVENTS

On February 13, 2015, Friday, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT at the Watervliet Senior Center will feature John Rudy, who will talk about Abolitionist, Samuel May, in Syracuse in 1861.

On March 13, 2015, Friday, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT at the Watervliet Senior Center will feature Pamplin Park Historian, A. Wilson Greene. This special program will occur in conjunction with the Avon Historical Society in Connecticut.

On April 10, 2015, Friday, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT at the Watervliet Senior Center will feature one or two members (Sharp Swan and Phil Jackson) of the 118th N.Y. Volunteers, also known as the Adirondack Regiment.

On May 8, 2015, Friday, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT at the Watervliet Senior Center will feature Britt Isenberg, who will talk about the 11th Corps Field Hospital at the Spangler Farm during and after the Battle of Gettysburg.

On June 12, 2015, Friday, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT at the Watervliet Senior Center will feature John McTague, who will provide a tour of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg.

ABOUT THE COVER

The January cover of our newsletter lists the donations that were made by the CDCWRT to various organizations in 2014. Almost all went for preservation projects, and almost all of that went to “buy dirt” or purchase battlefield land. Almost all of the money spent to buy dirt, went to the Civil War Trust. The CWT has the highest rating a charity can attain with almost all (there’s that word again) of its monies going for the purchase of dirt.

All members are encouraged to join the CWT. The least expensive category of membership is $35. With over 70,000 members, it is the largest Civil War preservation group in the U.S. It is not necessarily your level of membership, but rather the number of members that provides the CWT with clout. It is now a well-oiled machine that can quickly and efficiently organize a campaign to acquire land by tapping into federal matching funds, state matching funds, private matching funds, donations from its board members, and donations from its grassroots members. As a

result, some of our donations have be leveraged by as much as 30:1.

Thus the approximately $9000 we donated for preservation activities was leveraged to over $111,000. That's over 12 fold, kind of like the fishes and the loaves. We estimate the CDCWRT has donated in actual value some $203,384, starting with $25 in 1985 for restoration of the Civil War monument in Elmira. Although book raffles, print raffles, profits at dinners and trips, and later T-shirts and sweatshirts sales were the main sources of revenues until 1995, it has been the sale of postal commemoratives that has provided the lion's share.

But alas, that is changing. The peaks of sales and re-enactment were in the late 1990s. I have spoken to many people about this and all agree that re-enactors are aging and new members are less. Crowds watching re-enactors are also significantly less, even during the Sesquicentennial cycle. The reasons are many and complex.

The CDCWRT is planning on finishing the 150th cycle this spring. We are planning for postal cancellation events for Appomattox and Bennett Place in North Carolina, where Gen. Joseph Johnson surrendered almost 90,000 Confederates, compared to 24,000 in Lee's army. Yet Bennett Place is small and not well known, but it is within minutes of the greater Raleigh area. Hopefully crowds will be sizeable.

The last major battle in the Civil War took place at Bentonville in North Carolina in March of 1865. At the 145th anniversary in 2010, at the height of the recession, over 30,000 people attended each day of the two-day re-enactment. The 150th should be similar, but unfortunately the staff responsible for the state-owned site could not find room for the CDCWRT in the vendor area.

If postal cancellation events are to continue for the CDCWRT, new volunteers will be necessary. A 5-year cycle may replace yearly events, and local events may replace distant sites such as Gettysburg. If you are a collector or if you just want some 150th anniversary souvenirs, you should place your order now. We will use our existing envelope stock and will not replace sold out envelopes or stamps. By the time you read this newsletter, the USPS will no longer sell the stamp sets from 2011 (Sumter and Bull Run), 2012 (New Orleans and Antietam) and 2013 (Vicksburg and Gettysburg). E-mail orders will still be filled for the 2014 set, but local post offices have not had that set for months now.

I am hopeful our two 2015 events will be very successful. It has been my honor to have participated in this venture with postal commemoratives since 1994. However, since I am now spending most of my time in North Carolina, it is time for me to step down. I will assist new volunteers who might want to assume this responsibility.

THE CIVIL WAR IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1865

While siege activities slowed in the winter months in Virginia in 1865, Sherman's army in Georgia started its South Carolina campaign. Meanwhile, on coastal North Carolina, a combined naval and infantry campaign began to close the last major seaport open for the Confederacy – Wilmington, NC. This first would involve the capture of Fort Fisher at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. CDCWRT member, Regina Daly will talk about the 150th anniversary of this action in the Potpourri Meeting this month. This article, entitled ***The Union Takes Wilmington,*** by Philip Gerard, has been summarized from *Our State: Down Home in North Carolina* magazine.

After the fall of Fort Fisher, Gen. Alfred Terry and Adm. David Porter envisioned a quick thrust up the peninsula to capture Wilmington while its shipyards and railroads were still intact and before ammunition, stores, and

hundreds of Union prisoners could be evacuated. Secretary of War Stanton brought personal congratulations and promotions from Lincoln. Grant ordered a 100-gun salute in each of the Union armies, and then headed to the Cape Fear for a council of war.

But the battle has been horrific and the victors are exhausted. They have suffered over 1000 casualties in the assault. In Richmond, Jefferson Davis is alarmed because Gen. Braxton Bragg had assured him that the fort was unassailable. Now residents fear that Bragg will abandon the city. He has already withdrawn his remaining forces under the command of North Carolinian Maj-Gen. Robert Hoke on the east bank of the river to a point about six miles above Fort Fisher.

On the west bank, Fort Holmes, Fort Caswell and Smithville have already been evacuated, leaving behind precious guns and ammunition. Forces under Brig.-Gen. Johnson Hagood concentrate at Fort Anderson opposite Hoke's forces on the east bank. Their combined force of 7600 soldiers will soon be outnumbered by at least 3 to 1. To make matters worse, 900 will desert their posts over the next few weeks.

The original Union assault force of 6000 men was battered at Fort Fisher. Gen. Terry sends a portion – 4th, 6th, 30th and 39th U.S.C.T.--- up the east bank to attack Hoke, but after a hot, 3-hour fight, they are unable to breach the Confederate line. The formidable trenches there are similar to those at Petersburg. This forces the Federal troops to endure the raw, primitive conditions of the sandy peninsula for a full month before reinforcements arrive.

The fleet disperses but 30 monitors and gunboats remain to support the infantry advance up the river. Admiral Porter has ordered the signal lights at the fort be maintained in order to lure in unsuspecting blockade runners who do not know that Fort Fisher has fallen. Porter orders Lt. William B. Cushing, the young, daredevil naval officer who destroyed the CSS *Albemarle* in the Roanoke River, snares the *Stag,* the *Charlotte,* and the *Blenheim* in a few nights.

Gen. Grant orders that Wilmington must be taken in order to supply Gen. Sherman with an open port. Sherman has started his march north from Savannah on February 1, 1865. Brig.-Gen. John M. Schofield and the XXIII Corps of 21,000 men are transported from Alexandria, VA to the Cape Fear.

A three-pronged attack pushes along both Banks of the river with the monitors in the middle of the river providing covering fire against Confederate batteries. Confederate shells bounce harmlessly off the monitors. The Third Brigade of 9 regiments of USCT troops leads the assault on the east bank. There are 9 Medal of Honor winners in its ranks.

Maj.-Gen. Jacob Cox has never seen black men fight. He observes with admiration, "They were well disciplined and well led, and went forward with alacrity in capital form, showing that they were good soldiers." One of them, a former slave, captured a Confederate officer and led him to the rear declaring, "He's my prisoner, ole massa is." Indeed, the prisoner confirms he once was slave master to the soldier herding him toward the holding pen. It is the first of several remarkable reunions.

The USCT pushes back parts of the lines, but the main Confederate line holds. Gen. Cox and 6500 troops are ferried over to the west bank, and guided by local blacks, they outflank Hagood in Fort Anderson. This fort is similar to Fort Fisher --- built in an L-shape with no battlements in the rear. The Federal troops unleash a bayonet charge, accompanied by the brass band of the 104th Ohio infantry playing. The Eutaw Regiment Band of the 25th South Carolina responds with its own tunes. Above the rattle of muskets and booms of cannon fire, there is the battle of the bands.

Hagood withdraws to Town Creek, a deep unfordable tributary of the Cape Fear River. With Fort Anderson in Union hands directly across the river, Hoke cannot hold his lines. He falls back to a position 3 miles south of Wilmington, where his men entrench behind heart-pine breastworks and mounded sand. Union forces regroup, and led by the 5th USCT,

attack the Confederate position. They are unable to dislodge the stubborn Confederate defenders. But events across the river decide the fate of Wilmington.

The only two bridges across Town Creek are sited with deadly, accurate artillery and musket fire by the Confederates. But a local slave shows Gen. Cox's scouts the whereabouts of a large cotton barge. Two brigades---75 men at a time--- cross Town Creek east of the Confederate position, and outflank Hagood again. Three thousand Federals charge with bayonets across a field of broomsedge. Hagood's men fall back and leave the road to Wilmington open. The bridges are burned, but Union engineers repair the bridges and forces reach the city the night of February 21st.

Some of Hagood's men remain behind to burn cotton bales, warehouses and the railroad trestle. They dump tobacco into the river. Easterly flames spread and destroy houses to the river. Hagood's cannon open fire on the 16th Kentucky and 65th Illinois, but the Ohio Light Artillery respond with accurate counter fire into riverfront buildings. Hagood orders his own guns to cease because he does not want the Union guns to level the city. Before dawn of February 22nd, the Confederates abandon the city, and Gen Schofield orders Gen. Terry to advance on Wilmington.

John Dawson, the mayor, waits on the steps at City Hall. "Then came Gen. Terry at the head of a column up Front Street, with the strains of martial music, and colors flying," he reports. Meantime USCT troops, "with burnished barrels and bayonets gleaming in the bright sunshine," sing a hearty rendition of "John Brown's Body." Although they march in the rear of the white troops, they are cheered by white and black citizens alike --- though the wealthy class is conspicuously absent. One mother embraces her son, who left home a slave and returns a free man in an army of liberation.

Terry and Dawson meet to arrange the details of the occupation. At noon, the fleet fires a 35-gun salute --- one for each state.

Before long, emaciated Union prisoners from Salisbury and Andersonville stream into the city at the rate of 1400 per day for a whole week--- nearly 10,000 in all. The prisoners are joined by as many as 10,000 "contrabands." The Stars and Stripes flies over the U.S. Army Headquarters in the finest mansion in the city, owned by Dr. John Bellamy. Bellamy had supported secession in North Carolina, and has been waiting out the war near Floral College. He and his family have been attended by nine household slaves and well-supplied with provisions from his plantations. He applies to Gen. Terry's Chief of Staff for permission to enter the city. The officer writes, "Having for four years been making his bed, he must lie on it for a while."

Permission is denied.

THE REMOVAL OF GEN. BUTLER

The following is the dispatch from City Point reporting the removal of Gen. Butler, and assigning reasons therefore. It is from a correspondent of the New York Herald:

"The news of the President's Order No. 1, series of 1865, removing Major Gen. Benj. F. Butler from the command of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina is causing much comment; but, so far as I can learn, little or no animadversion. Whether rightfully or not, Gen. Butler has for months past been losing the confidence of the officers of the army, until very few will regret his departure outside of those that swarm around and attach themselves to those in power. It has been Gen. Butler's misfortune to appoint too many of these selfish and irresponsible persons to official positions of trust and responsibility. Their indiscretions have often cost him dearly, and are supposed to be in no small degree instrumental in causing his present removal.

The ostensible grounds for depriving him of his command are undoubtedly his recent fiascos of Wilmington and Dutch Gap. But a mountain of dissatisfaction has been accumulating against him for months on account of alleged illegal and arbitrary arrests, imprisonments and punishments. It is said that many cases of glaring injustice have come to light, and many others are expected to be developed by his supersedure.

Major Gen. Butler is ordered to turn over his command, all moneys and government property, and the civil fund in his possession, to the person named by Lieut. Gen. Grant as his temporary successor, and to proceed to Lowell, Mass., and to report to the War Department by letter.

Major Gen. Edward O. C. Ord, commanding the 24th army corps, has been named the temporary successor of Gen. Butler, and will at once take charge of the department.

January 12, 1865

FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD

About 10 years ago the CDCWRT went to Tennessee for the fall trip. We toured a small museum in Franklin where we learned that 7 Confederate generals died in the battle. The numbers of men involved in the assault on the Union line was twice as many men as the Pickett-Pettigrew charge. The distance was twice the distance as Pickett's charge. The fighting lasted hours longer than Pickett's charge. The fighting continued into the night with fighting by torchlight. There was no pre-charge bombardment, and there was no artillery support for the Confederates. Yet few of us knew much about the Franklin Charge, compared to reams about Pickett's charge.

Part of the reason was that so little of the battlefield remained. Only the Carter house property had been preserved. We took a group picture standing around a 4x4 post that was stuck in the ground where Gen. Patrick Cleburne (Stonewall of the West) was killed. A small sign nailed to the post identified the spot. The post was in a small front lawn of a small single family home built in the 1940s. Next door was the back of a pizza shop and the parking lot was a few feet away. We made a donation to purchase a ¼ acre lot nearby and heard of a grassroots effort to buy more land. We were not optimistic but land was acquired. CWT became involved and the pizza hut was purchased and torn down. Then more lands acquired including a golf course that was part of the charge.

This past year at the annual meeting of CWT, the same site was toured. Matt George took this picture where that post once stood. It is now marked by a pyramid of cannonballs, and a wide park that is now part of the battlefield defines this sacred ground. This is one place where our donations buy "dirt."

