



# The Dispatch

*Newsletter of the*

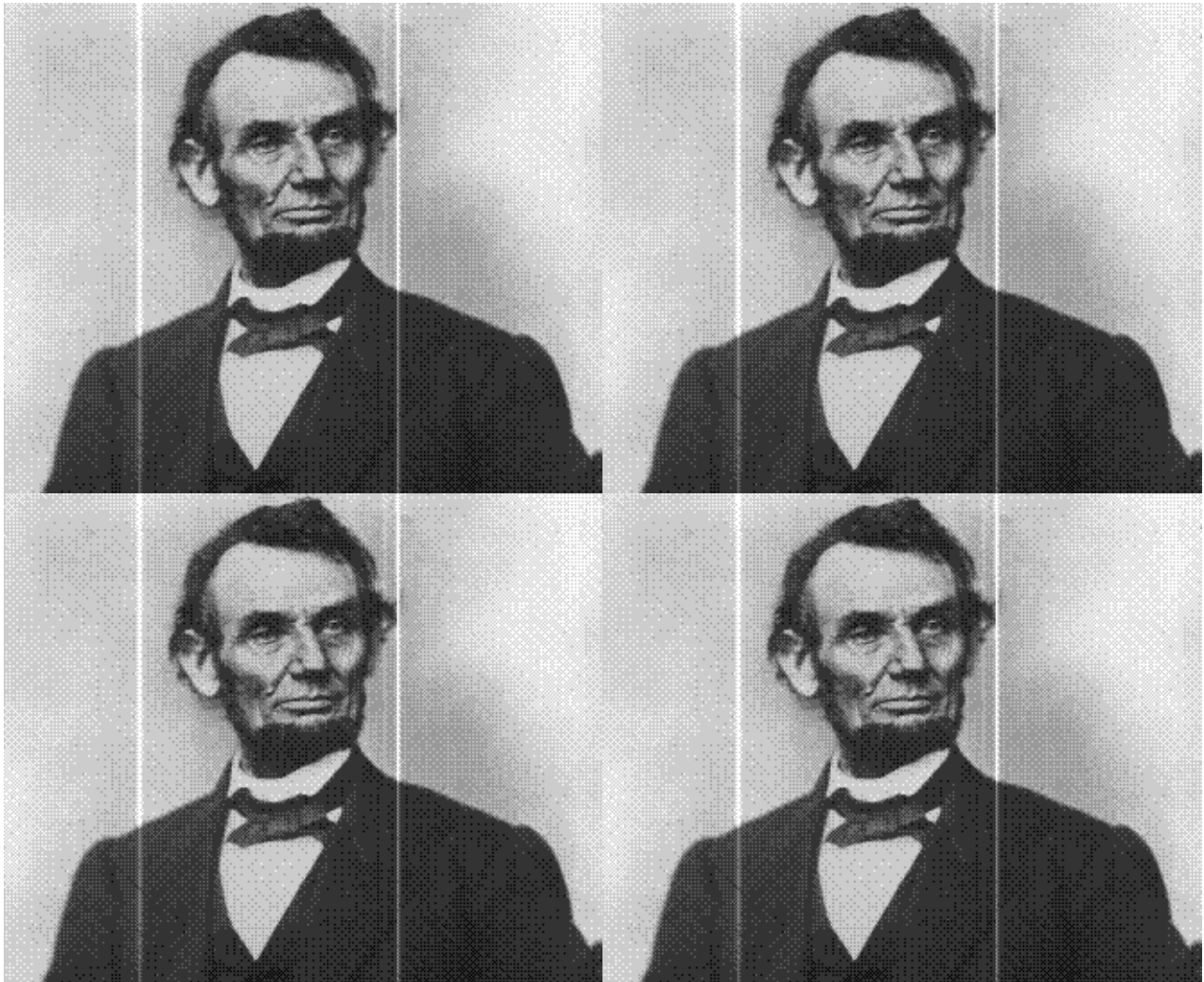
**Capital District Civil War Round Table**

P.O. Box 14871, Albany, NY 12212-4871

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

**Volume 18 Number 6**

**FEBRUARY, 2001**



The February Meeting  
Saturday, February 10, 2001  
GUILDERLAND PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
WESTERN AVENUE  
GUILDERLAND, NY

LUNCHEON 12:00 NOON  
BUSINESS MEETING 1:00 P.M.  
PRESENTATION 1:15 P.M.

## CDCWRT MEETING

*Our next regular meeting of the Round Table will be on a Saturday. Since Friday nights during February can be snowy and cold, we decided to try a DAYTIME meeting. A Round Table exhibit will also be in the library display cases, and this will allow members to see the exhibit also. Please note the site of this meeting will be at the GUILDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY. A luncheon consisting of sandwiches, snacks and drinks will be provided by the Round Table*

*Our guest speaker will be author, David Bastian, and his topic is entitled, "LINCOLN'S WESTERN STRATEGY: GRANT'S CANAL AND THE UNION ATTEMPT TO BYPASS VICKSBURG."*

*David will discuss Lincoln's adaptation of the Anaconda Plan, and his desire to cut the South in two by taking control of the Mississippi River. He took a special interest in the efforts to neutralize Vicksburg. Lincoln was a proponent of the engineering effort to divert the river away from Vicksburg by digging a canal. Our speaker will discuss Lincoln's relationship with Grant during the Vicksburg Campaign.*

*David Bastian is the author of Grant's Canal: The Union's Attempt to Bypass Vicksburg. He is a hydraulic engineer recently retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was also a diplomat of the State Department, stationed in the Panama. David lives in Annapolis, MD. Copies of his book will be available for \$7.00, and may be signed by the author.*

*Free copies of the February issue of the Civil War Times Illustrated magazine will be available also. This issue deals with Lincoln in crisis, and features an article by CDCWRT founding member and namesake for our Preservation Fund, John Hennessy.*

**THE FEBRUARY MEETING IS ALSO OUR CW MAGAZINE EXCHANGE MEETING. PLEASE DONATE YOUR OLD MAGAZINE AND BUY SOME NEW-USED ONE FOR \$0.50 APIECE.**

## CDCWRT NEWS

### JANUARY MEETING

A crowd of over 75 people attended our potpourri meeting. Matt Farina provided a Power Point presentation of 50 of the RT's commemorative cachets. He discussed the development of the cachet project, and gave examples of how the envelope, stamp and cancellation stamp were selected, and how they often tell a story.

This was followed by a fascinating presentation by Carl Blazejewski, who provided very useful information for evaluating old letters and envelopes. He displayed catalogs and portions of some superb collections from the area..

Finally Bob Rawls demonstrated his working models of the Burden horseshoe machines. The second model was capable of producing one horseshoe a second or 86,400 per 24-hour day,

and Burden had a number of machines doing this! This was a powerful example of the industrial might of the North. Almost as interesting was Bob's story of how he built the models with little information other than some sketchy blueprints.

Afterwards, the audience was invited to look at the collections and have Bob make miniature horseshoes from solder.

In the business meeting that preceded the program, new President, Tom Smith, spoke about his goals for the RT over the next year. The breakdown of the final \$16,650 donations for the year 2000 was as follows:

- Save Historic Antietam Found. \$6500
- Central Virginia Battlefield Tr. 3000
- Florence Stockade 1500
- Gateway Industrial Museum 1150
- Franklin Battlefield 1000
- Stones River Battlefield 1000
- Civil War Medical Museum 500
- Gettysburg Photo Archives 500
- Scoharie Stone Fort 500
- Civil War Preservation Trust 500
- Pruyn House 300
- Ten Broeck Mansion 200

The Florence Stockade donation will be used to purchase 15.6 acres of the prison grounds. A plaque commemorating CDCWRT member, Norm Sebastian, will recognize this donation.

## THE CHALLENGE

*By Matt Farina*

The follow is excerpted from my end of term address to the RT during the December meeting. It is applicable to our entire membership

It has been an honor and a pleasure for me to have worked with the old Board these past two years. There are two broad categories of members in the Round Table – those with a keen interest in the Civil War, and those with a passion about the Civil War. The old Board and your new Board, share that passion.

It has been that passion that has made the CDCWRT the premier Round Table in the U.S. --- not my phrase, but the phrase of Ed Bearss, former Chief Historian for the National Park Service, who travels all over the U.S., and lectures about the Civil War. Why are we number *one*? The purpose of this organization as stated in our mission statement, is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of all aspects of the Civil War Period.

To carry out this mission, the Round Table has provided monthly meeting since it was created in 1984. Topics have ranged widely and have covered *all aspects* of the Civil War Period. The Round Table has sponsored educational meetings in schools and libraries. To date we have donated almost \$100,000 to preservation activities, most monies raised by the sale of commemorative postal cachets. This is our main legacy in the Civil War world, and the basis for our national reputation. This is why we attract nationally known authors and lecturers for our meetings, banquets, and trips. In short, we put our money where our mouth is.

I want to thank all you as members of the Round Table for your support of our programs. I also want to issue a challenge. As retiring president, I can say what I want. In order for this organization to continue to grow and continue its mission, you must support it *even more*. Attend its meetings, banquets, and especially its conference and trips. The costs to you are *trivial*. I gassed up my small car for \$23.50 last night. For \$25 I can attend a banquet, hear a great talk, enjoy good food, and converse with friends about a common interest.

Bring a friend to a meeting! Talk about the Round Table at lunch! Get your spouse or child interested! Buy a raffle ticket! Better yet, buy five! Buy a commemorative stamp cachet! It's a nice hobby and they make nice conversation pieces and gifts, and they helped save Brandy Station from becoming a formula-one racetrack.

But here's the real challenge. Become **MORE ACTIVE** in the Round Table. Be a greeter, or help run a raffle, or help the Bergmans with snacks and drinks, or volunteer

to come to a local cachet event, or even a Board meeting. I *dare* you to be bitten by the CW passion bug. It's not fatal, it doesn't itch, and you might actually enjoy meeting and working with some of the best people I know. Thank you.

## PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

*By Tom Smith*

Greetings! Please allow me to continue with my theme of reflecting upon this year --- the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the American Civil War.

This is of course February – the month we generally remember and honor Abraham Lincoln, our 16<sup>th</sup> President. That is altogether proper and fitting. Indeed, he was a great man during a great time in our history.

However, in my recent readings, I came across some other points to give thought to about the many significant events of February 1861, as The War became all too inevitable. I would like to share some with you.

- Texas seceded February 1, 1861.
- The Confederate capital was first established in Montgomery, Alabama.
- “Jefferson Davis, who had served in the Mexican War and was U.S. Secretary of War during 1853-1857, wanted to serve the South as a general, but accepted the nomination of provisional president on February 9, 1861, at the Montgomery Convention. --- Both sides were girding for a war which they believed would be short, but which lasted for four bloody years.” (A. Slabaugh, Confederate States Paper Money, 2000, page 12.
- Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as President of the Confederate States of America on February 18, 1861.

Thank you.

## Web Site News

*By Jon Olson*

Have you checked out the Postal Cachet page yet? As you may know, we're selling postal cachets on the Web site. You can access the page by either clicking “Postal Cachets” in the navigation rail or the special link in the body of the text on the Home Page. We are continuing to feature a 20-cachet “Legends of Base Ball” set. Note that although the set lists for \$75 on the Web site, it is discounted to \$60 for members (plus S&H).

Also, the Doubleday T-shirts are being offered on the Web site. You can access the page by either clicking on “Doubleday T-shirt” in the navigation rail or the special link labeled “Offering”, which appears under the group photo on the “Home Page.” Note that although the T-shirts list for \$12 on the Web site, it is discounted to \$10 for members (plus S&H).

Our Web site continues to be very popular. We recently went over the 13,000 visitors mark. However, more meaningful than the net number of visitors captured on the counter on the Home Page, are the numbers for “unique visitors”, and “page views” captured by the *Times Union*. According to their statistics, for the six month period from May to October 2000, the site **averaged 303 unique visitors (i.e. new, first time visitors) per month**, and they viewed **an average of 929 pages per month**. With this level of activity, we are consistently at or near the top of the most accessed *Times Union* sites.

If you are a regular member or are receiving a complimentary copy of the newsletter, and you would like to receive e-mail messages notifying you of updates to the Web site, please send me your e-mail address, and I'll add you to my mailing list. Note, to protect your privacy, I send out such messages using the Blind Carbon Copy feature of my e-mail program so your name and address will **NOT** appear on the notices.

Finally, remember that I'm always looking for new material for the Web site. If you have original material or news about your Civil War related activities which you would like to share, please pass it along to me, preferably as an e-mail attachment. to: [jonolson@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jonolson@nycap.rr.com).

If you don't have access to a computer, please mail hardcopy to me at P.O. Box 671, Newtonville, NY 12128-0671.

presented by Joanne Lilliard. This will occur on **Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M. in the Helderberg Room.**

## UP-COMING EVENTS.

- **GETTYSBURG SPRING MUSTER 2001 ON MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> TO APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>, ONLY \$199/PERSON IF YOU HAVE ALREADY MADE A DEPOSIT, A SECOND PAYMENT OF \$75 IS DUE BY FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>. THE FINAL PAYMENT OF \$74 IS DUE BY MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup>. THERE IS ROOM FOR ONLY ONE MORE PERSON. IF YOU WANT TO SIGN UP NOW, \$125 IS DUE ON FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>.**

This year's trip will cover the crucial decisions and actions of Confederate forces on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Why was the Army of Northern Virginia unable to capitalize on their major victory? Join us and find out what went wrong. Call Sue or Paul or Joe for more information and itinerary.

- In celebration of Black History Month, February 2001, the Guilderland Public Library will be one of ten member libraries of the Upper Hudson Library System hosting a series of programs illustrating the African-American struggle for freedom. The series, called *Fabric of Freedom*, stems from the theory that slaves created quilts coded with patterns to help one another flee to freedom. The goal of the series is to bring the struggle for freedom alive through library-based programs, and to increase public awareness and sensitivity to this critical part of our collective national history. A program hosted by the Guilderland Library as part of the *Fabric of Freedom* will be *Design Secrets: Hidden Messages of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*,

- **February 17-18<sup>th</sup> Covermania #3 Stamp Show** at the Quality Inn on I-90 and Everett Road will be a RT stamp cancellation event. Volunteers are needed to work anytime during the hours of 8:00-5:00. Civil War CDV's, letters, and ephemera will also be available. Why not come out and see how your RT raises funds?
- **February 22<sup>nd</sup> A Soldier's Life** This presentation is for students, and covers the life of the Civil War soldier. Re-enactor members of the RT will talk about how the soldier spent his time when not in battle. This presentation will occur in the Guilderland Library throughout the day.
- **March 7-27<sup>th</sup>** The Guilderland Public Library has been chosen as a host site for the panel exhibition entitled "**Free at Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America.**" This exhibition was developed by the Gilder Lehman Institute of American History. It is based upon rare documents, photographs, prints and cartoons that trace the movement to abolish slavery from the framing of the Constitution to its abolition during the Civil War. It illuminates shades of opinion within the ranks of the famous and the ordinary, free and slave, men and women, who come to see slavery as incompatible with the ideals upon which the nation was founded. The exhibition will provide insights into how abolition became a national issue; how the idea of progress drew politicians and moral reformers together; how the efforts of escaped slaves contributed a human face to the horrors of slavery; and how individual presidents and citizens struggled to understand and resolve the most perplexing questions of their age.

- CDCWRT member, author, and Professor of History at the University at Albany, Allen Ballard, will read passages from his novel, *Where I'm Bound*. This will take place at the Guilderland Library on **March 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.** Those who heard Dr. Ballard at the November Conference know what a spell-binding reading he provided, along with a couple of songs accompanied by a guitar.
- **Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, the CDCWRT Meeting**. RT member Michael Russert is our speaker. His talk is entitled, **“Major General Henry Slocum: The Steadfast Warrior.”** Mike will examine the career of New Yorker, Henry Slocum, who has become a virtually forgotten corps commander who served with distinction in both the Eastern and Western Theaters. The lecture will show that Slocum, while not a general of the caliber of Hancock, was a dependable general who performed much better than average on the battlefield.
- **Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, Conference on New York Women and the Civil War.** This is a day-long conference co-sponsored by the CDCWRT and the Guilderland Library. Several members of the RT will be presenting vignettes about various women during the War. The March newsletter will have more details.
- **Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, Concert featuring the 77<sup>th</sup> New York Regimental Balladeers at the Guilderland Library.** The featured Balladeers will play and sing songs as they would have been performed in camp or in the family parlor during the Civil War.
- **Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, Re-enactor Lee Griffin presents Frederick**

### **Douglass, The Story of an American Slave.**

- **Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Wellness Day at the Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland.** Last year several members of the RT participated in an all-day event where students attended sessions that ranged from health to hobbies. The Life of the Civil War Soldier was presented and each class could then ask questions and take the discussion where ever they wanted to go. Over 150 students attended our sessions and evaluated them afterwards. The RT presentations were among the most popular and educational. We are invited back for a repeat performance.
- **Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, An American Girl Event.** This presentation will deal with Addy, a young American girl during the Civil War. This too will be at the Guilderland Library.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- The latest issue (January 2001 #24) of *The Gettysburg Magazine* has arrived. Articles included cover Jeb Stuart's fateful ride, Confederate artillery at Gettysburg, and Krzyzanowski's Brigade and the Union right flank on July 1<sup>st</sup>. If you order by mail it cost \$11.15; if you buy it on the newsstand, it's \$7.95. If you buy it from the RT, it's **\$5.00 while supplies last!**
- Norm Sebastian, former RT member, won a book from our book raffle at the very first meeting he attended. Before he died, Norm donated over 70 books to the RT to be used for book raffles. The Round Table graciously thanks Norm for his generous gift. In the last weeks of his life, he took time to remember us.

- David R. Logsdon of Nashville, TN is gathering material for *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Nashville*. He is looking for good, first-person accounts by soldiers, officers (especially lieutenants, captains, and majors), doctors, nurses, hospital stewards and civilians. He would be glad to share information he has gathered in putting together books in the *Eyewitnesses* series, which now includes the battles of Fort Donelson, Franklin, Shiloh, and Stones River. If you would like to help Mr. Logsdon, please contact Tom Smith.

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

***“The Civil War is the crux of our history. You cannot understand any part of our past, from the convening of the Constitutional Convention, down to this morning, without eventually arriving at the Civil War.”*** -- Bernard De Voto

The above is a quote I carry around in my briefcase, and I read it to anyone who asks why I'm interested in the Civil War. Many consider those 4 years an awful time in our country's history, so awful, that it is an embarrassment in our nation's otherwise unblemished past. How little they know and understand our history. Many would prefer that we 'forget' those awful years, the Late Unpleasantness.

Closer to our lives is the history of World War II. The generation that fought in that War is passing at the rate of 1000 deaths per day. Soon, only a handful will be left to lead-off our Memorial Day parades. World War II was an awful time in the history of mankind, a time of almost unspeakable horror that man inflicted upon mankind.

The Jews, as a people, suffered the most during the decade 1935-1945. But they do not want the world to forget what happened to them during those years, regardless of how awful they were. Hence we have the Holocaust Museum in Washington and preserved concentration camps in Europe.

We must accept our history, as Americans, and as members of Mankind. We are not an unblemished nation; we have our flaws and foibles. How we recognize these, how we try to correct or change them, and how successful we are, is the true test of our character as a people. Revisionism and denial, while they seem to be the correct approach for a particular time, only serve to mollify reality and lull us into feeling we are effectively dealing with the issue of our past. The Civil War will not go away. We should embrace the true history of that time, try to understand the motives, fears and feelings of that time, learn from it, and apply it to our lives today.

This newsletter lists a robust schedule of events for the next two months that deal with some of the key issues of the War. Take advantage of all of these events. Emerge yourself in history and learn. You will not find a schedule of events more chockfull even in the Mecca of Gettysburg.

Thank you for your attention.