

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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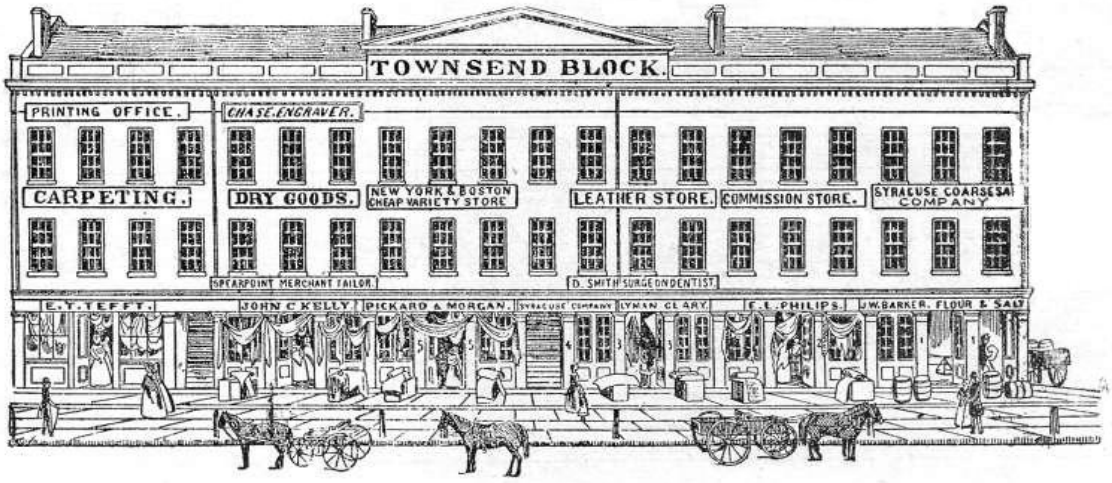
DARING RESCUE IN SYRACUSE AS FUGITIVE SLAVE IS FREED!



The Townsend Block.

(Syracuse, October 1851)

William "Jerry" Henry was arrested as a fugitive slave in Syracuse. He was held by police in the city jail located in the Townsend building. The antislavery Liberal Party was holding its convention in Syracuse, and when word of the arrest reached the convention, several hundred abolitionist broke into the jail and freed Henry.

Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, indicated earlier this year that the unpopular Fugitive Slave Laws would be enforced, even in Syracuse which is considered a hotbed of antislavery activities. Arrests of some of the abolitionists is expected since violence and destruction of government property occurred. The whereabouts of William Henry is unknown, but it is suspected that he will attempt to flee to Canada.

FEBRUARY MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2015

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

PREACHERS OF SEDITION: UPSTATE ABOLITION GOES TO WAR

JOHN M. RUDY

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.**

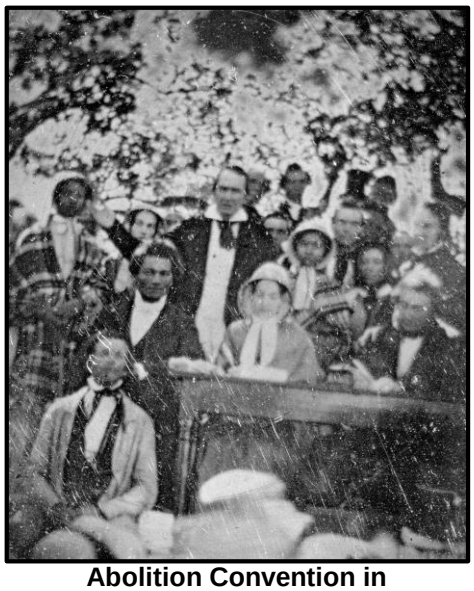
CDCWRT MEETING

***The February meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on February, Friday the 13th, 2015. We hope you are not superstitious because next month's meeting will also occur on a Friday the 13th. This month's very special speaker will be John Matthew Rudy, and the titile of his presentation is, "*Preachers of Sedition: Upstate Abolition Goes to War."**

The Civil War spills outside of the sharp boundaries of Sumter and Appomattox, with messy edges trailing across the 19th century. And for some citizens of New York, the real war started long before the shooting began, as violence and vitriol erupted in the streets of Central New York cities. The reaction to the fugitive slave law was divisive, stark and jarring for religious reformers and staunch patriots and signaled the coming of war a decade early.

Join historian and park ranger John M. Rudy as he delves into the wild tale of the Jerry Rescue, Upstate New York's keystone fugitive slave case, and the massive impact it had on the evolution of abolitionism, the shifting ideas of violent action against slavery and the coming of war. Frederick Douglass, Samuel May, Jermain Loguen, Gerrit Smith and William Lloyd Garrison helped change the course of American history as they argued over how chains should be broken.

John Matthew Rudy has been studying the history of abolition, the coming of the Civil War and the impact of war on everyday Americans since 2003. Rudy holds an MA in Applied History from Shippensburg University and a BA in History, with a minor in Civil War Era Studies from Gettysburg College. Rudy works with the National Park Service's Interpretive Development Program in Harpers Ferry, WV, creating interpretive training materials for park rangers and interpreters across the entire park system. He also teaches undergraduate courses as an adjunct professor in the Civil War Era Studies Department at Gettysburg College.



Abolition Convention in Cazenovia, New York in 1850

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 12, 2015, Thursday, at the Marvin Library Learning Commons at HVCC there will be a talk entitled "Remarks from a Civil War Surgeon" by historian Paul Shipley at 1:00 p.m. This is in conjunction with a traveling exhibit from the National Library of Medicine entitled, "Life and Limb: The Toll of the Civil War." The exhibit rund from January 20th to February 27th.

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 April 11, 2015, Saturday, Siena History Day will take place on the campus of Siena College from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be re-enactors from various periods and educational exhibits for children and adults. Since Matt George will be at Appomattox that weekend, the round table is seeking volunteers to man an information table at the event. Contact Matt George for information.

On May 3, 2015, Sunday, the Ten Broeck Mansion in Albany will sponsor their History Day open-house. Local history groups, including the CDCWRT, will have information tables. Volunteers should contact Matt George for details. This is the ideal opportunity to get involved with round table activities for the public.

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.

June 13-14, 2015, Saturday & Sunday. This marks the 23rd Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend. Saturday starts with a Veterans procession led by A. Lincoln. Harold Holzer and Jan Reichard will be on hand for book signings and will exhibit their Lincoln funeral artifacts including a replica of the funeral casket. There will be exhibits, vendors, re-enactments and food. Patrick Schroeder will talk at 7 p.m. on the surrender at Appomattox. Adults $8.00. Check updates at civilwarweekend.sca-peterboro.org.

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 closed the last major seaport open for the

Confederacy –Wilmington, NC. This article, entitled ***Sherman's Final March,*** by Philip Gerard, has been summarized from the February issue of *Our State: Down Home in North Carolina* magazine.

In 1860 William Tecumseh Sherman is superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning & Military Academy. He loves the South and its genteel customs. He has no moral compunctions about slavery, and tells his brother-in-law, "I would not if I could abolish or modify slavery." In the presidential election of 1860, he does not vote for Lincoln, and in fact, he does not vote at all. When Louisiana secedes, he admonishes a pro-secession faculty member, "This country will be drenched in blood…. Oh, it is all folly, madness, a crime against civilization!"

Worse, to Sherman, secession is treason, so he reigns his teaching post and heads north. There is nothing in his character to indicate that in a short period of time, he will command a mighty army that will liberate tens of thousands of slaves and write the final chapter of the war.

In the winter of 1864-65 having led the Army of West Tennessee to a string of victories, he conceives a bold plan to restage his army in the east and support Grant's final move on Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia.

Sherman cuts a swath of destruction across Georgia, from Atlanta to the coast, and presents Savannah to President Lincoln as a Christmas present. Grant wires him to ferry his army up the coast on transport ships, but Sherman calculates that this will take two full months, and on his arrival, many of his troops will be weak and sickened from the journey. Instead, he proposes to Grant that he turn north and march his army toward southern Virginia. He argues, "I sincerely do believe that the whole United States, North and South, would rejoice to have this army turned loose on South Carolina to devastate that State in the manner that we have done in Georgia, and it would have a direct and immediate bearing on your campaign in Virginia."

He will lead his combined forces --- the Army of the Tennessee and the Army of Georgia, more than 60,000 strong --- 450 miles to Goldsboro through Fayetteville, the head of navigation of the Cape Fear River from Wilmington and the site of one of the Confederacy's last arsenals. There, at the junction of the Wilmington & Weldon and the Atlantic & North Carolina railroads, he can refit his army and move on Virginia.

On Christmas Eve 1864, as the first shells are exploding against Fort Fisher, Sherman receives Grant's telegram of permission: **March.**

Sherman spends a month culling the sick and wounded; procuring fresh horses and mules; and restocking ammunition, food, and medical supplies. His quartermaster and commissary train of 2,500 wagons are loaded with plenty of ammunition but only 20 days rations. After that his men will live off the country. He has learned in Mississippi and Georgia that his army can live off the land.

Mostly his troops are men who reenlisted after hard campaigning. The slackers and green conscripts are long gone. The men regard their commander as invincible, almost godlike. One soldier writes, "[T]here was never such a man as Sherman or as they call him (Crazy Bill) and he has got him men to believe they cant be whiped."

(*Ed. Note: Author Jeff Shaara chose the title of his first book,* ***Gods and Generals,*** *because he felt that the Confederate soldiers considered their commanders … Lee, Longstreet and Jackson …. Gods, while the Union soldiers considered their commanders McDowell, Pope, Burnside and Hooker… mere men and generals in the worst sense. Only McClellan garnered respect. The Confederates felt they were invincible after Chancellorsville. The tables are now turned in the western theater of the war.)*

On February 1, 1865, Sherman's army begins its march north, with Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard in command of the right wing (Army of the Tennessee) and Maj. Gen. Henry Warner Slocum in command of the left wing (Army of Georgia). Brig. Gen. Hugh Judson Kilpatrick commands the cavalry, 4,500 troopers armed with breech-loading carbines. They surge through the Low Country in a swath 40 miles wide and 10 miles long. The wagon trains are drawn by 10,000 mules and are 25 miles long.

Sherman points his two wings in a Y-formation, with a reserve held in the center. He feints towards both Charleston, SC and Augusta, GA, forcing the Confederates to defend both cities. But instead, he goes due north for Columbia, South Carolina's capital--- the seat of secession and the home of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. Over the strenuous objections of Jefferson Davis, Lee calls upon Johnston to stop Sherman. (Davis feels that Johnston did not fight aggressively against Sherman in the Atlanta campaign, and had Johnston removed from command.) Johnston writes, "Be assured … that knight of old never fought under his King more loyally than I'll serve under General Lee."

Many Confederates don't believe Sherman's army can forge a road through the Low Country swamps, but Johnston knows his old, stubborn adversary better: [W]hen I learned that Sherman's army was marching through the Salkehatchie swamps, making its own corduroy road at the rate of a dozen miles a day or more, and bringing its artillery and wagons with it, I made up my mind that there had been no such army in existence since the days of Julius Caesar."

The going is tortuous, in steady rain, but time and again the pioneers fries to the task, chopping down trees and laying down the ever-lengthening corduroy roads. Meanwhile Kilpatrick's cavalry runs rampant across the countryside, burning houses and stores, and the legions of "bummers" strip the countryside clean of livestock, grain, and any valuables they can find.

Columbia falls with barely a fight, and the first Union troops rush in skirmishing with Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton's retreating cavalry. And here, one of the most shameful episodes of the war plays out, exciting accusations and denials for the rest of Sherman's lifetime: Columbia burns.

Cotton bales are set ablaze –either by Hampton's cavalry or U.S. soldiers --- and then more fires are ignited by freed Union prisoners and other bluecoats. Because Columbia was thought to be safe from the advancing Union army, its warehouses and homes are stuffed with all kinds of goods brought here for safekeeping, including hundreds of barrels of whiskey and thousands of bottles of wine and brandy.

The occupying troops lose all discipline and degenerate into a drunken mob on a spree. They loot and burn private home and shops, the Methodist Church, and even the Ursuline Convent. A number of them seize slave girls and women, rape them in gangs, beat, and even kill them afterwards. Sherman's conclusion of the burning of Columbia is characteristically candid: "Though I never ordered it and never wished it, I have never shed any tears over the event, because I believed it hastened what we all fought for, the end of the war."

On February 20th, Sherman resumes his march. Soon his army crosses into North Carolina --- to Sherman, friendlier territory. A member of his staff writes, "Our men seem to understand that they are entering a state which has suffered for its Union sentiment, and whose inhabitants would gladly embrace the old flag again if they can have the opportunity."

Sherman now orders restraint. Gen. Slocum counsels his officers, "It should not be assumed that the inhabitants are enemies to our Government, and it is to be hoped that every effort will be made to prevent and wanton destruction of property, or any unkind treatment of citizens." Although foraging to feed the army and its livestock is as necessary as ever, strict protocols are now in force. Soldiers are forbidden from entering private

homes under any circumstances. Only food, livestock, and forage for horses and mules may be commandeered.

But among the contraband of war are naval stores --- tar, pitch, and turpentine camps in the great forests of longleaf pine. Warehouses stacked with barrels of tar, turpentine stiffs, tools, and equipment all are put to the torch, and inevitably, the thick stands of highly volatile pine trees catch fire. The route of the march is marked by areas of flaming forests and plumes of thick, tarry smoke.

The blue columns cross the Pee Dee, the Lumber and the Cape Fear rivers, the cavalry scouting ahead. On March 10th, at Monroe's Crossroads (*now inside the U.S. Army's huge Fort Bragg and in pristine, unchanged condition)* 15 miles south of Fayetteville, Kilpatrick's cavalry is surprised by the dawn attack of Gen. Hampton's cavalry --- buying time so Johnston's main force can concentrate ahead of Sherman. (*This another one of Kilpatrick's skeddaddles.)*

In the fierce skirmish that follows, the Union cavalry are first routed, but regroup when the starved Confederates stop to devour the breakfast being cooked in the Union camp. The Union cavalry regroup and counterattack, recapturing their camp and breakfast. They fend off one of last great cavalry charges of the Confederacy. Both commanders exaggerate the enemy's casualties and minimize their own, but by any account the dead, wounded, and captured number in the hundreds.

The following day, Sherman occupies Fayetteville and establishes his headquarters at the arsenal. It is a magisterial structure, both beautiful and functional, occupying 90 acres of meadows shaded by stands of hardwoods. The main citadel which took more than 20 years to build and was completed on the eve of the war, is a fortress 500 feet by 500 feet, with guard towers rising four stories high at the corners. The brick and sandstone walls are painted in a yellow wash, and inside, the doors are mahogany, strapped with brass hinges and locks --- not the usual wrought iron.

It is a showplace, but also a factory that has turned out for the Confederacy 10,000 Fayetteville model rifled muskets and nearly a million paper-wrapped cartridges, along with gun carriages, artillery fuses, and ramrods. Four thousand people work at the arsenal, including the women who make the cartridges, The people of Fayetteville regard it as a civic monument, and on weekends and holidays, the grounds are crowded with picnickers and strolling couples.



FAYETTEVILLE MODEL IV RIFLED MUSKET

Sherman writes Secretary of War Stanton, "I cannot leave a detachment to hold it, therefore I shall burn it, blow it up with gunpowder, and then with rams knock down its walls. I take it for granted the United States will never again trust North Carolina with an arsenal to appropriate at her pleasure." (*Ed. Note: Fort Bragg in Fayetteville is now the largest U.S. Army base in the U.S. and has two Air Force bases attached.)*

Sherman is wary of his old adversary, Johnston, who even now is concentrating the remnants of the Army of Tennessee, coastal artillery units from Charleston and elsewhere, and state militias on the ground in Sherman's path.

To Col. Orlando Poe and the 1,000 men of the 1st Regiment of Michigan engineers falls the task of destroying the arsenal. They spend March 12th smashing with sledgehammers whatever equipment they can find inside the walls --- the rest has been spirited off to be secreted in coal mines in Egypt, NC, in Chatham County.

The next day they rig iron rails as battering rams and knock down the walls. Finally on the third

day, they dynamite the remains and set them on fire. The flames burn so high and hot that the wind whips the fire to neighboring homes and they, too, burn. The arsenal's outbuildings are torched. Sherman's men fire warehouses and factories, confiscating whatever they can use.

An army comrade from prewar days seeks out Sherman at his headquarters, pleading with his old friend to spare his property. Sherman tells him, "You are here a traitor, and you ask me to be your friend, to protect your property …Turn your back to me forever."

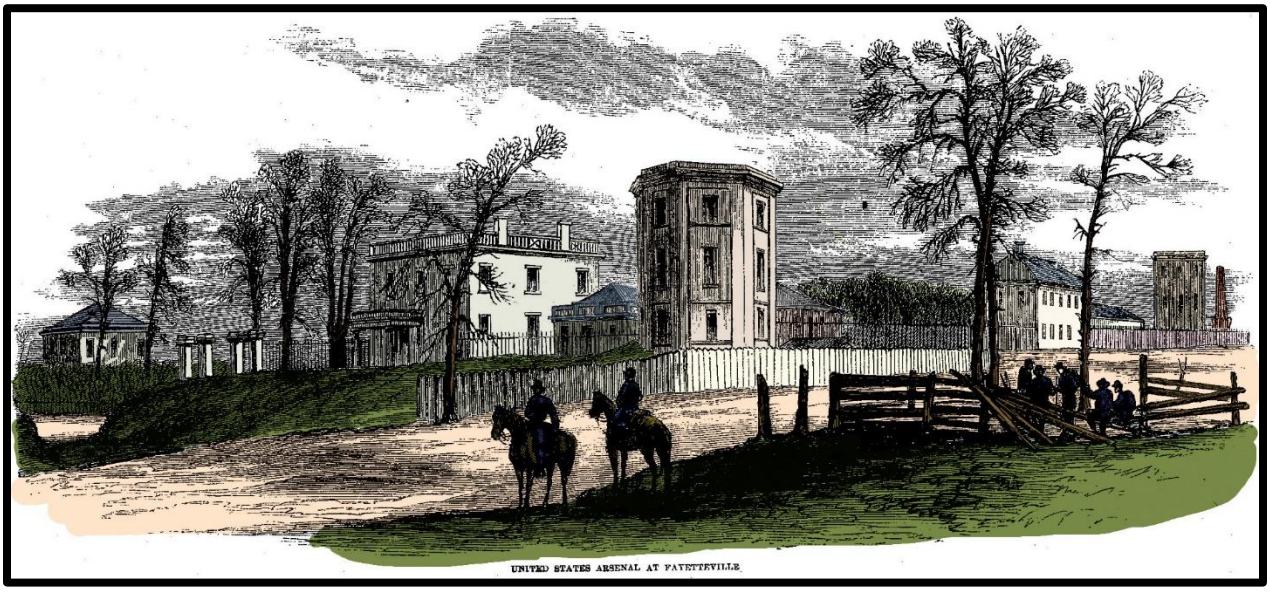
Sherman also holds the Fayetteville newspaper, *Fayetteville Observer,* in special contempt because it has been a loud champion of the Confederate cause and its stories have been reprinted far and wide in the South. The editor, Edward Hale, manages to rescue plates and some printing equipment, but his office, with everything in it, was burned along with a brick building owned by Hale.

The steamboat, *Davidson,* arrives from Wilmington which is now in Union hands, and Sherman opens regular communications with Gen. Terry whose troops will rendezvous with Sherman in Goldsboro, along with Gen. Schofield's regiments from New Bern. By steamboat and mule train Sherman sends 25,000 camp followers --- mostly liberated slaves --- downriver to Wilmington.

Meanwhile he orders Terry, "I want you to send me all the shoes, stockings, drawers, sugar, coffee, and flour you can spare; finish the loads with oats and corn. Have the boats escorted, and let them run at night at any risk."

The retreating Confederates burn the Clarendon Bridge across the Cape Fear River, but in less than a day, Union engineers lay down pontoon bridges. After a 3-day wait, Sherman quits Fayetteville --- now a ruined city --- and leads his army across the river where the enemy is waiting.

(Ed. – What happens next? Does Joe score a hit on Billy? Does Sherman ever make it to Virginia? Does the Confederacy have one last surprise for those "bummers?" Tune in again next month for the "thrilla from Manila" --- oops --- wrong fight


UNITED STATES ARSENAL AT FAYETTEVILLE