



# The Dispatch



Newsletter of the

**Capital District Civil War Round Table**

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

**Volume 12 Number 8**

**May 1995**

## **MAY PROGRAM FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1995**

Bethlehem Public Library  
Delaware Avenue, Delmar NY

Doors Open: 7:00 PM  
Program Begins: 7:30 PM

### **MAY PROGRAM**

**FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1995**

Our May program features Nancy Shour, who will speak on the citizen-soldier, Major Henry Lee Higginson, of the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry Regiment. Nancy's lecture, titled "A Life of Memory," details Higginson's war service including a severe wounding at Aldie Gap just before Gettysburg, as well as his service on Barlow's staff until his resignation due to the cumulative effects of his injury. Higginson had been a friend of many of the members of the famed 20th Massachusetts "Harvard Regiment" which had seen hard service and great casualties, and he devoted the remainder of his life to the honor of their memory. As just one example of his tireless devotion to the men of the 20th, Higginson founded the Boston Symphony as a memorial to their war service.

Nancy Shour is an Assistant Professor of American Literature at Union College in

Schenectady. She received her Ph.D. in Literature from the University of California at Berkeley. She is a five year veteran of Capital District Civil War Roundtable service, and has recently taken on the position of Program Chair.

### **CDCWRT CALENDAR**

**June 9 MEETING: Ray Smith** will speak on the Mexican-American War as the training ground for the officer corps of both the North and the South.

**Sept. 8 MEETING: Earl McElfresh**, of the map company of the same name, will speak on the process and problems of Civil War map making.

**Oct. 13; Nov. 11 (Banquet) and Dec. 8, 1995:** Meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year. Mark them down now! Details to follow.

### **CDCWRT NEWS**

#### **EDITORIAL APOLOGY:**

Many of our members received their copies of the newsletter very late last month, and in fact some were not delivered until after the monthly meeting. This stemmed from a number of factors, one of which was my inability to complete the edition by the normal deadline. However, this delay was compounded by confusion at the printers relating to the number of copies which were to be

made up, and thus the first mailing was greatly deficient. Hopefully, the matter has been set straight, and I will do what is necessary to avoid any recurrence. If any of you were prevented from attending the April meeting due to this problem, I extend my sincere apology. [I also note that I am still waiting to hear a second to my motion to the Board to fire the Editor for incompetence.]

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### APRIL MEETING:

Approximately 70 members watched **Michael Russert** live up to his reputation for excellence during his lecture on Stannard's Brigade during Pickett's Charge. This group of 90 day volunteers from Vermont spent their one and only battle wading into the thick of the fight in front of the Union line, acting as a wedge to split the right flank of Pickett's attack, and greatly disrupt the coherency which was required if that attack were to succeed. Many historians credit Stannard and his rookies with being a major factor in the Union victory on that third bloody day. Thanks, Michael, for a job well done.

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### USED MAGAZINE SALE:

The Board would like to extend our gratitude to the heart-warmingly large number of members who brought their old magazines to the April meeting. There was a very brisk flurry of activity as folks stocked up their libraries for those upcoming lazy days of summer. **Matt Farina** reports that we sold in excess of 100 magazines, and that he has a supply of leftovers in his car which will be brought to the May meeting. So if you missed out last month, be sure to bring a few extra dollars this month, and give Matt his trunk back. Remember, they all only cost 50 cents each, and all money raised goes directly to battlefield preservation.

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### REVOLUTIONARY WAR TRIP:

Due to some late cancellations, the bus trip to Fort Stanwix and the battlefield at Oriskany was less than a sellout. [As a matter of fact, it was less than a success.] However, the fourteen intrepid sojourners who did make the trip report that it was even better than expected. Our guide, Mr. Tommell, Chief Historian at the fort, detailed not only the historical background that led to the fighting during that stage of the war, but also described the long archeological process required to recreate the fort as it existed at the time of the Revolution. After touring the Oriskany field, the tour arrived back at Stanwix after closing time, and Mr. Tommell re-opened the fort for a private tour for the group. This included access to the bookstore, where, I understand, CDCWRT did yeoman's duty in taking the economic sting out of the closing of the Rome Air Force Base.

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### TREASURERS REPORT:

**Matt Farina** reports that our current balance, as of May 3, 1995 is \$3,520.61, which includes the projected loss of \$110.00 from the Oriskany trip, as well as the receipts from the used magazine sale.

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### BOARD MEETING:

At the May meeting of the Executive Committee, held on May 3, 1995, Chair **Dan Lorello** advised us as to the raffle plans for the maps which have been donated to us by the McElfresh Map Co. These two maps show the geographic northern and southern portions of the battlefield at Gettysburg, and are suitable for framing, which will be done by **Kathy Silo**. This will allow the maps to be carried around to the various sites where we will be selling the postal cancellations this summer. The donation also includes smaller versions of the maps which are encased in plastic sleeves for use while touring the battlefield. The drawing of the prize winners name will be at the November banquet. As an option designed to increase the drawing power for non-

CW buffs, the Board voted to establish an alternate prize of a \$200.00 savings bond.

Regarding the postal cancellations project, **Sue Knost** reports that plans are now firm to have Albany be one of the sites for a very limited simultaneous release of the up-coming CW series of stamps issued by the U.S. Postal Service starting on June 29. (Limited release means that the collector value of a "first day" cancellation is thereby increased.) It now appears that this event will take place at the Colonie Center mall, although confirmation of this site is still pending. Wherever it will be, a large ceremony is being planned for the 29th and 30th of June, and the possibility exists of the CDCWRT making a substantial amount of money as a sponsor of the cancellation project. Sue adds that her current plans are to establish between 20-30 of these cancellation events at various locations through the end of the year. Already set are events at the Empire State Plaza in Albany on the 4th of July (where we will be allowed two tables next to the Postal Service truck to pitch CDCWRT membership); July 29 at the John Brown Farm in Lake Placid; July 30 and 31 at the Hall of Fame ceremonies in Cooperstown; and August 12 in Cherry Valley. Tentative events are being planned for the State Museum, Watervliet Arsenal, State Archives, etc. Anyone knowing of other appropriate events is requested to contact Sue.

Another interesting possibility that Dan is looking into for drawing people to these events would be to advertise that we are willing to photograph or otherwise copy military photos. **Mike Winey** of the U.S. Army's Historical Institute mentioned to Dan that he is always looking for images for the period ranging between the Mexican War and Spanish-American War. We are thinking that we could use a selected group of the stamp events, and advertise that we are willing to copy images for sharing with the Institute. This could present us with some interesting chances to increase membership, as well as help preserve and disseminate some fragile pieces of history.

Now for the bad news. As noted in last month's Dispatch, if we are to pull this off, we will need warm bodies to assist in these events,

especially those which include an opportunity to "press the flesh" for membership. (The straight postal cancellation events are largely run by Postal Service staff, with some limited assistance from the sponsoring group.) We now need people to call Sue and commit to help out with this project. If we all give just a little time, then only a few won't have to give up a lot of it.

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### KUDOS:

Our own John Hennessy publishes again! This time, he has an article in the June 1995 issue of Civil War Times Illustrated, regarding J.E.B. Stuart's revenge for the (to him) humiliating loss of his famed plumed hat to Union General John Pope's cavalry raiders at Verdierville, Va., in August 1862. Stuart's retaliation came during his own cavalry sweep behind Pope's line on the Rappahannock, which was intended to cut Pope's supply line as a first step in Lee's Second Manassas campaign. His troopers hit the Union railroad at Catlett's Station, and while failing to burn the bridge because of the driving rain, succeeded in seizing several hundred prisoners together with large quantities of supplies. Also captured was the Headquarters train, with over a half-million dollars in greenbacks and gold. But to Stuart, the most important capture was a fancy hat and dress uniform coat bearing a name tag reading "John Pope, Major General." Before sending it off for display in Richmond, Stuart sent a letter through the lines noting that Pope had J.E.B.'s hat, advising Pope of his coat's fate, and proposing a meeting "for the fair exchange of the prisoners." Pope, never known as a good loser, refused to respond and Stuart had his vindication.

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### MORE KUDOS:

**Michael Russert** has been honored by inclusion in the Albany Times-Union's special section on high school students who have displayed excellence in educational pursuits, and the teachers who most influenced them. The student who credits Michael notes that she had always been a

lackluster student until the sixth grade, when he showed her the joy of hard work in reaching an educational goal. Congratulations, Michael.

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### PARENTAL PRIDE KUDOS:

One of our younger members, **Sara Barrett**, has been honored by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth. This is a program in which certain advanced 7th graders are selected for educationally challenging work (frequently done at local colleges), as well as enabling them to take the verbal and math sections of the S.A.T. exams while still in Junior High. Sara took those exams in December, and scored in the top 25% of the CTY students in the verbal portion (she also bested over 89% of the college bound seniors who took the same exam!), and for this she has received special recognition as an NYS winner from the CTY program. As part of this honor, she has now been invited to attend summer courses at Skidmore College. [Ed. note: And they say the nut doesn't fall far from the tree. Ha!]

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**VOLUNTEERS WANTED:** The Twin Rivers Council of the Boy Scouts of America has requested our assistance with a program relating to Civil War history, to be given this summer at their Camp Boyhaven. This is a camp for Cub Scout level boys, aged between 8-10 years.

One of the themes for the summer session is American History, and one week will be devoted to our Civil War. The first of two requested dates would be Saturday, July 15, 1995, which would be a day of Scouts, parents and family and assorted staffers. It is possible that this date will largely be taken up by C.W. reenactors, although other activities are desired and encouraged. The next date is Wednesday, July 19, which will be a day devoted solely to Scouts and staff.

The director would like for five different people to lecture/ demonstrate/ show-off/ play with "toys" for about 40 minutes for each of five groups that will be rotating among the areas.

Hours would run from 11:00 A.M. until approximately 5:00 P.M. Participants on both days would be fed meals, and could also take part in evening retreat activities if desired.

Camp Boyhaven is located on Route 29, just outside of Rock City Falls, in Saratoga County. Further information may be had by contacting Sharon Bugbee, Camp Director, at the Council phone 518-869-6436, or 1-800-734-2721.

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### DUH, SHOULD I TOSS THIS JUNK?

[An unidentified member sent in a newspaper clipping which is worth the read.]

CRANSTON, R.I.-- Security officer James Bailey went into the basement of the state's 122 year old prison to clear out the piles of junk there which were deemed a fire hazard.

What the history buff found as he cast his flashlight across scurrying vermin and piles of paper was a treasure trove of Civil War memorabilia-- books containing battlefield maps, enlistment papers of volunteers, and orders written with quill and ink.

"I started working through the pile," Bailey said. "There were a lot of old prison commitment books from the early 20th century. And then I found this one book with ornate lettering. It said 'Special Orders, Second Regiment, RIV.'"

It was the hardcover handwritten orders of Elisha Hunt Rhodes and his Civil War regiment of Rhode Island volunteers. The book dated from May 30, 1861 through April 22, 1864.

The materials have now been put on display in the state archives office in Providence.

[Ed. note: Isn't it nice to know that NYS isn't the only state to ignore their history?]

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## CORRESPONDENCE:

South Colonie Central Schools  
Lisha Kill Middle School

April 21, 1995

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your donation to the South Colonie Blue and Gray Civil War Tribute. It is because of people like you that educational programs are allowed to flourish.

The students involved in this project now know the meaning of community effort and that it takes total commitment to make an activity like ours succeed.

The student will perform in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on June 30, Washington, D.C. on July 1, and Alexandria, Virginia on July 2, 1995.

Please accept our invitation to a free concert to be given by this group on May 4 at 7:00 P.M. at the Church of the Immaculate Conception (next to the Governor's Mansion.) This event will be covered by the media and will be taped for release at Gettysburg.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Barbara Johnston, Band Director  
Daniel Turnell, Chairman

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## MORE CORRESPONDENCE:

Dear Michael,

Thank you all very much for the great time we had. My wife and I really enjoyed meeting your Roundtable. The accommodations, the food, and the people were first rate. Keep up the good work. Let everyone know how much we appreciated your hospitality.

Your friend,

Mike Priest

P.S. Thanks so much for the photograph! I

am very honored by it.

P.S.#2 Honest to God, she was married to Lance? What is it, woman don't get a choice up there?

[ All right, I admit it, I made that last one up. But I honestly believe he would have written it if he wasn't such a nice guy.]

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## EVEN MORE CORRESPONDENCE:

Dear CWRT member,

I am writing in regard to the possibility of exchanging Civil War information with you. I am in possession of original C.W. Muster Rolls from many states. These documents contain interesting information which I would be glad to copy in exchange for information that you may have. I am interested in any activities during March, April, May, June and July of 1865 relating to the surrender at Appomattox or afterward.

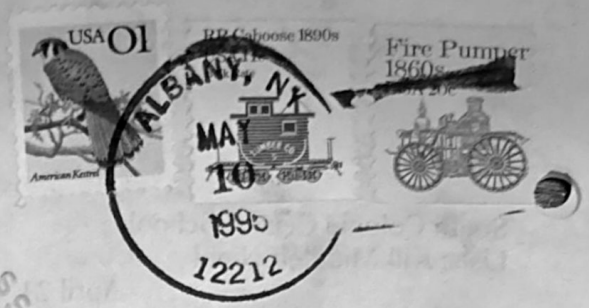
I am specifically looking for camp locations. This information can be found in letters, diaries, old maps, etc. If you have any of this information, please contact me at 419-529-5162 or at the address below. Thank you.

Sincerely

Tom Maiyer  
600 Wiles Road  
Mansfield, Ohio, 44903

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CDCWRT  
P.O. Box 14871  
Albany, New York 12212-4871



\*First-Class\*  
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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 at the Bethlehem Public Library in Delmar, New York. This newsletter is published ten times per year. Annual dues are \$15. 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**

Chairman	Dan Lorello
Vice-Chairman	Sue Knost
Treasurer	Matt Farina
Secretary	Robert Johnson
At-Large	Mark Bodnar
At-Large	Joe Stracuzzi
Ex-Officio	Michael Barrett

**The Troops**

Programs	Nancy Shour
Newsletter	Michael Barrett
Preservation	Richard Becker
Field Trips	Mark Silo, Kathy Silo
Banquets	Michael Aikey, Kathy Silo
Refreshments	Nancy Shour
Membership	Kathy Silo, Russ Denegar
Video Library	James Carey
Historian	Ray Smith

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To join or renew membership, send \$15 to the CDCWRT address below.

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