

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 62, No. 7

568th Meeting

March 2013



- Guest:
**Brooklyn and the Civil War
Bud Livingston**
- Cost:
**Members: \$40
Non-Members: \$50**
- Date:
**Wednesdays,
March 13th**
- Place:
**The Three West Club,
3 West 51st Street,**
- Time:
**Dinner at 6:00 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm**

*You must call
718-341-9811 by
March 6th, if you
plan to attend the
March meeting.
We need to know how
many people to order
food for.*

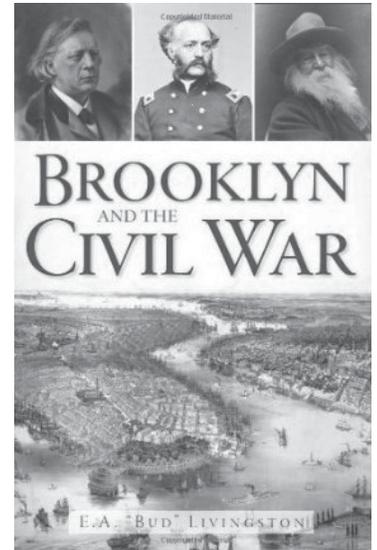
THOMAS, THE ROCK

With Ulysses Grant in Virginia, George Gordon Meade offered a short piece of speculation about the departure of Sherman for the sea. On November 11, he noted simply, “This is a bold move, the success of which will depend on Thomas’s ability to keep Hood out of Kentucky and Ohio.” For Meade, whose record included turning back a major offensive by Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia in Pennsylvania the previous year., the havoc that the Confederates might create could easily outweigh the impact of Sherman’s dramatic operation, and he knew that it was up to George Thomas to prevent anything untoward from happening in Tennessee. Sherman may have been thinking more of himself than of Thomas when he later insisted. “of course, General Thomas saw that on him would likely fall the real blow, and was

Bud Livingston Brooklyn and the Civil War

Our March guest is the oldest active member of the CWRNTNY, who has been around since 1974, when he showed up to hear Frank Cooling speak on The Scourge of Elmira. Since then he has been president, vice-president (thrice) and treasurer.

And considering that he is also the editor of “The Dispatch”, he wrote this introduction. He is currently teaching a course on the Civil War to the retired teachers (UFT); he lectures on baseball (The Brooklyn Dodgers 1939-1957, and Baseball in “41”); and his Ebbets Field rain check collection is in the Archives in the Baseball Museum in Cooperstown. He also leads unique New York City Civil War tours. In addition, he is also a devotee of Sherlock Holmes, has taught courses on Holmes at a variety of places, and is the author of two slim (very slim) volumes, *Anatomically Mr. Dr. Watson*, and *Some More Trifling Monographs*.



naturally anxious.” Lincoln confidants John Nicolay and John Hay maintained the “Rock of Chickamauga” had not been especially pleased with this assignment to defend Tennessee, but he “accepted it as he did every duty ever confided him with modest confidence and devotion.”

From *George Henry Thomas As True as Steel* by Brian Steel Wills

2013 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2013

• April 10th •

Fort Sumter
Rick Hatcher

• May 8th •

Fletcher Pratt Award
Tim Smith - Corinth 1862

• June 12th •

TBA
Dennis Frye

President's Message

As March arrives, we know that Spring, with all the possibilities of renewal and growth, is just around the corner. For Civil War armies, March represented the end of winter encampments, and the beginning of active campaigning. Supplies and equipment had been stockpiled, horses and mules ready, regiments back up to reasonable strength, and new recruits endlessly drilled. All awaited the inevitable orders that would arrive from the generals to march out on country roads towards some unknown battlefield.

And so it was 150 years ago on St. Patrick's Day in 1863. A small action, as battles go, was fought near a crossing known as Kelly's Ford. The Union high command decided it wanted to know what the Rebs were up to out near Culpeper, Va., and a small contingent of cavalry was sent to investigate. The Confederates responded by drawing up a line of battle, and a sharp engagement took place with several hundred casualties. At the end of the day, the Union cavalry retreated, and nothing much was decided. But one of the mortally wounded was a rising young star in the Army of Northern Virginia. A fearless, talented artilleryman by the name of Major John Pelham just happened to be near the action, and rode to the sound of the guns. At first only a bystander witnessing the battle, he was caught up in the excitement, and ended up leading a cavalry charge. Standing up in his stirrups, urging the Confederates on, he was struck in the head by a fragment of a Yankee shell, and the "Gallant Pelham" would never regain consciousness, dying at the age of 24. He would be mourned by JEB Stuart and Robert E. Lee, and he came to represent so many of the "lost" generation in this war. Young and heroic, he was laid to rest as the landscape all around began to awaken, and with Spring just around the corner.

— *Bill Finlayson*

CIVIL WAR VOCABULARY

Surprisingly, a number of the period terms from the Civil War era are not only with us today, but retain a similar meaning. Here are some 1860s terms that you might still find in use:

Baloney: nonsense (actually Gaelic in origin)

Bloke: a man

Booze: the liquor itself. As well as to drink until drunk

Filch: to steal

Gyp: to be cheated

Gimmick: a way to cheat

Hang out: to reside or spend time

Hoof it: to walk

Kick the bucket: to die

Okay: all right or fine

Pot Luck: take it as it comes

Shark: swindler

Smithereens: all in pieces

Snob: stuck up or overly proud

Sucker: a naive person easily fooled; an easy victim

From *The Watchdog* by Craig L. Barry *The Civil War News* December 2012.

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**The Civil War Round Table
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139-33 250th Street,
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During business hours.

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March during the Civil War

1862

4 – H.H. Sibley leaves his tent and takes over Santa Fe, N.M. Territory.

4 – In one of his worst fits of pique, F.H. (Fighting Henry) Halleck removes Grant from command of the Tennessee River Expedition. He reports rumors saying that Grant has taken up bad habits and failed to communicate with him. F.G. (Fighting George) McClellan advises Halleck to arrest Grant if necessary. Nice.

1863

3 – President Lincoln approves “an act for enrolling and calling out the National Forces and for other purposes.” This sets the stage for Bob Hope’s 1940s movie, *Caught in the Draft*.

8 – Caught in his p.j.s, General E. H. Stoughton surrenders to the Gray Ghost, John S. Mosby, in Union headquarters in Fairfax County Court House, Va.

1864

1-2 – Judson Kilpatrick kills more than cavalry as his raid on Richmond is ignominiously thwarted. His co-leader, Ulric Dahlgren, loses his life in an ambush. Did he really carry those incriminating papers?

8 – The future general-in-chief of U.S. Armies finally gets to meet his commander-in-chief, as Grant sees Abraham Lincoln for the first time.

1865

4 – Andrew Johnson’s medications (probably liquor) do him in at his swearing in and he rambles like some famous actor talking to a chair. The rambler will be the new president in just over a month.

14 – Joe Johnston finally decides to attack and he hits the Federals hard at Bentonville, N.C. An oddly named Union general stops him there: Jefferson C. Davis.

BRAXTON BRAGG’S PROBLEMS

It appears then that Bragg has been maligned by history, that the instances where he failed in the field were the fault of his subordinates. This presumption, however, ignores the fact that as their commander, he was responsible for his officer’s actions. And Bragg could have done more to assure their and his success.

Except for Shiloh, Bragg usually remained in the rear during a battle. This, he said, made him readily accessible to all of his generals at the front. It also relieved him of seeing his men bleed and die. And it prevented Bragg from knowing what was taking place. Word regarding the ebb and flow of the combat came far too late for him to make timely decision especially at Murfreesboro, Tullahoma, and Chickamauga. He was essentially a non-participant in these engagements.

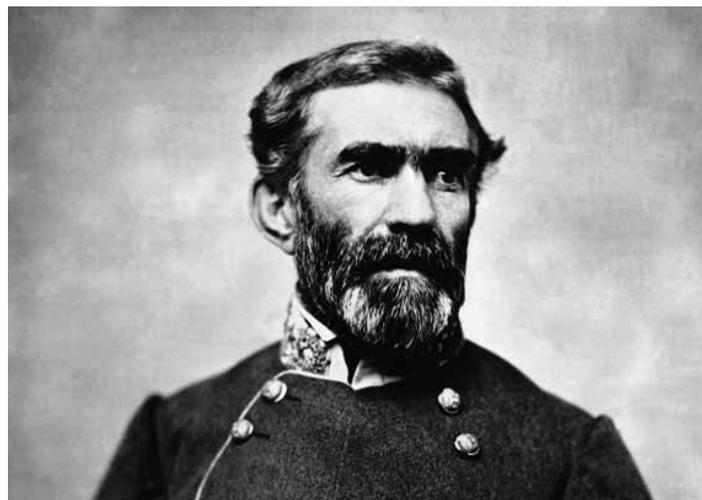
When Bragg did issue orders, they were often ignored by his generals, such as Leonidas Polk, D.H. Hill, and James Longstreet. Once might have been forgivable, but repeated refusals to obey his instructions should never have been allowed. Bragg needed to assign an aide on site to report back when his plans were not being fulfilled. His failure to do so often resulted in missed opportunities, as in Kentucky, at McLemore’s Cove, then initially at Chattanooga. Bragg then added to his problems by not chastising the generals who had been subordinate.

From *General Braxton Bragg*, C.C.Z. By Samuel J. Martin.

A RARE BASEBALL CARD

Six-figure bids are expected when an auction house sells a rare 148 year-old baseball card that was discovered at a yard sale in rural Maine, the auction house manger said Wednesday. It’s not the same as a modern baseball card which became commonplace beginning in the 1880s. Instead it’s an original photograph from 1865 of the Brooklyn Atlantics amateur baseball club, mounted on a card. The card shows nine players gathered around their manager. The priciest baseball card ever is a 1909 Honus Wagner card, which sold for \$2.8 million in 2007.

Clarke Canfield, *Associated Press* January 2013



56TH ANNUAL BATTLEFIELD TOUR

October 11th, 12th + 13th 2013
Shenandoah at War – 1864

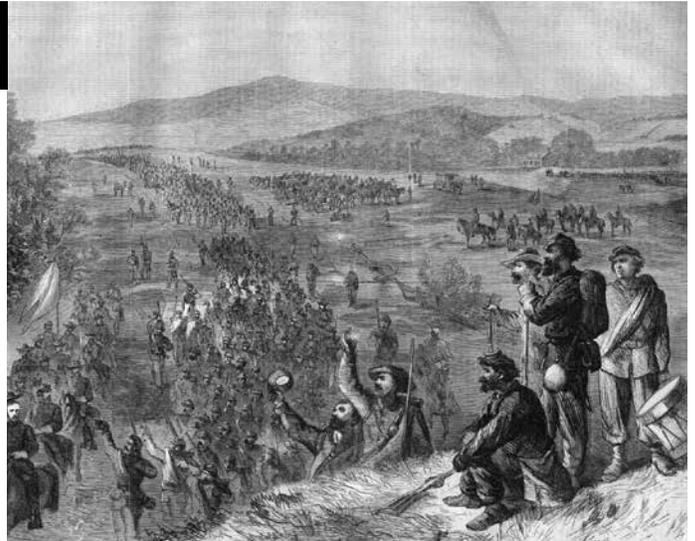
Sharpen your sabers as you ride up and down the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia alongside those colorful characters, Jubal Early, John Mosby and Grumble Jones as they battle Phil Sheridan, George Custer and David Hunter. Our tour guides will be Col. Keith Gibson of the Virginia Military Institute, and Dennis Frye, chief historian at Harper's Ferry. As a bonus, we will be at the Lee Chapel on the anniversary of the famous general's death.

So saddle up with a \$100 deposit made out to **CWRTNY Tour**, to reserve your seat on the bus. You can bring it to the meeting or mail it to our HQ at 139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, NY 11422.

For details call 718-341-9811.

New Recruits

Martin Gilbert, a friend of Tom Mosely, who is interested in Gettysburg



ATTENTION MEMBERS OF THE CWRTNY

Puh-leeze call in your intention to come to our meeting. But if something unexpected happens and you cannot make the meeting, please call to cancel. Unhappily, if we call in for 50 dinners and only 40 people show up, we are charged for 50 dinners. And if we call in 40 and get 55, we're scrambling for seats and set-ups at the last minute.



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