

# THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 65, No. 4

595th Meeting

December 2015



• Guest:  
**Ed Bonekemper**  
**The Myth of the  
Lost Cause**

• Cost:  
**Members: \$50**  
**Non-Members: \$60**

• Date:  
**Wednesday,  
December 9<sup>th</sup>**

• 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  
December 2<sup>nd</sup> if you  
plan to attend the  
December meeting.*

*We need to know how  
many people to order  
food for.*

## Ed Bonekemper The Myth of the Lost Cause

Our December guest has a BA from Muhlenberg College, an MA from Old Dominion University and JD from Yale University. He became an adjunct lecturer in military history at his original alma mater, Muhlenberg, and for 8 years (2003-2010) he taught military history and writing skills on the Civil War and World War II.

Among his books are: *McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence, and Worse*, and *Grant and Lee: Victorious American and Vanquished Virginian*.



## A Civil War Ad

PLEASE HAVE THE KINDNESS TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING ADVERTISEMENT

### \$500 REWARD! MISSING MAN

LYNSEN Y. CLARK left his place of business about 5 o'clock P.M. the 5th of February last, with a bundle supposed to have been a violin.

He is an American, 39 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, and weighed 125 pounds, blue eyes, and head bald, except at the sides where the hair is brown, whiskers all around and a mustache.

He wore when he left, a pepper and salt business suit, and a waterproof coat – his underclothing was marked L.Y.C.; he carried a silver watch with a rubber chain; he had a habit of throwing back his head and applying his hand to his forehead, as if in pain.

\$500 reward will be paid for his recovery, or for his body, if dead. His family will be thankful for any information concerning him.

S.X.CLARKE,

Care of GEORGE W. WALLING, Inspector of Police, 300 Mulberry St.

Attached to this notice was a photograph of the missing man with the following notation:

At the time the photograph was taken he wore a wig, which he has since disused, leaving him bald. He also wore a mustache, not shown in the picture.

The photographer was Sherman (Brooklyn).

*Editor's note: This item was discovered in the archives. Along the right margin is written: C.S.A. SPY*

## 2016 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2016

• January 13<sup>th</sup> •

Jonathan Horn  
The Man Who Would Not  
be Washington

• February 10<sup>th</sup> •

Barondess Lincoln Award

• March 9<sup>th</sup> •

David Kincaid  
Union and Confederate  
Irish songs

## President's Message

In the midst of the Roundtable's 65th holiday season, we are reminded of the Civil War's great impact on the way we celebrate.

Although it was President George Washington who issued the first Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1789, President Lincoln officially made it a national holiday in 1863. There had been a public resurgence of interest in the Pilgrims in general, and Thanksgiving in particular, when (after being considered long lost) Governor William Bradford's history, "Of Plymouth Plantation," was rediscovered in England in 1855. Sara Hale, a 74-year-old magazine editor, urged the president, that as Thanksgiving was observed at different times in the various states, a national day of celebration was needed "to become permanently, an American custom and institution." Lincoln agreed, and on October 3, 1863 (exactly 74 years after Washington's edict) he issued a "Proclamation of Thanksgiving and Praise" making the fourth Thursday of November the day we all celebrate and feast.

Secretary of State Seward actually wrote the Proclamation, which declared gratitude for "fruitful fields and healthful skies" even "in the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity." It went on to "fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation . . . to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union."

Christmas time was particularly poignant during the war (on both sides), as fathers, sons, and brothers were long separated from the families, often for the first time in their lives. Christmas customs were much like today (Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" was written in 1849). Robert Gould Shaw of the 54th Massachusetts wrote, "It is Christmas morning, and I hope a happy and merry one for you all, although it looks so stormy for our poor country, one can hardly be in a merry humor." Well, on behalf of the officers and board members of the club, we certainly hope you maintain "merry humor" and have a wonderful Christmas, Hanukkah (which starts on the 7th), and any any other holidays you may wish to celebrate this year. And, of course, have the happiest and healthiest of New Years!

Just a reminder, to insure you have a place at our feast, please call in your intention to join us for dinner (718-341-9811) at least seven days prior to the second Wednesday. Thanks! And see you on the 9th to hear (and see) the eminent author, Edward Bonekemper, speaking on his new book, "The Myth of the Lost Cause."

*Paul Weiss*

### Dues are due

If you haven't already paid your dues, please send your checks in now. After October, the price rises to \$60. If we don't hear from you by January 1, we will be obliged to drop your name from our mailing lists. Sorry about that.

**We now have three yearly dues categories:**

	Individual	Family	
<b>Basic</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$70</b>	
<b>Silver</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$85</b>	
<b>Gold</b>	<b>\$110</b>	<b>\$160</b>	
<b>Out of Town</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>\$35</b>	(75 miles or more)
<b>Student</b>	<b>\$25</b>		

New members please add \$10 initiation fee

You may choose any appropriate amount to send in, but it will be greatly appreciated if you are able to remit the amounts in the second or third categories.

**Send dues to Treasurer Bud Livingston**

**616 South Orange Avenue, Apt. 6G, Maplewood, N.J. 07040**

**Do not include your dues and dinner payment on the same check.**

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**The Civil War Round Table  
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During business hours.

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## December During the Civil War

### 1861

**7** – President Lincoln’s Happy Chanukah card to Judah Benjamin is returned unopened.

**31** – President Lincoln tries to goad someone (McClellan et al.) into doing something (like a menacing advancement). The year ends with nothing to look forward to but blood, toil, tears, and sweat (where did we hear that before?)

### 1862

**13** – The slaughter pen at Fredericksburg. Old Burn does not quite shine but at least he has a bridge named after him (un ponte de guerre).

**30** – Where the *Merrimac* failed at Hampton Roads, Cape Hatteras succeeds. The *Monitor* goes down for the count and isn’t seen again for over 100 years.

### 1863

**16** – Mr. Davis holds his nose and appoints his least favorite general, Mr. J. E. Johnston as commander of the Army of Tennessee.

**28** – The Confederate Congress abolishes substitution for military service and they will no longer accept Confederate money for exemption from the Draft. Their official motto is “In God We Trust, but now you must pay in gold.”

### 1864

**15** – U.S. Grant is relieved not to have to relieve Slow Trot Thomas as the loyal Virginian storms out of his breastworks and proceeds to destroy the Army of Tennessee.

**22** – W.T.Sherman reaches into his bag of tricks and comes up with a major Christmas present for his weary president: the city of Savannah.

## More Sundays in the Field With George

Politicians were not alone in their failure to appreciate the need for field fortifications around Washington. What earth-works there were soon fell into a state of disrepair bordering on ruin. Timberwork and abatis often became tent floors and firewood. Officers not only condoned but frequently instigated these activities. The shortage of engineering officers and troops further retarded McClellan’s attempts to organize the construction of field works. Despite his pleas for engineering personnel a high proportion of the corps of engineers remained assigned to civilian work or to military tasks not connected to field operations, and only peripherally to the general conduct of the war. When his attempts to persuade Lincoln and Congress to place higher official priority on the mobilization of engineering troops met with apathy and limited success, McClellan unofficially improvised an engineering organization from the volunteer ranks. Not until July 1863 did Congress pass an act which accepted McClellan’s precedent of improvised engineering organization. At the time McClellan was still the only Union field commander to have improvised such an organization. Union field commanders in the western theatre did not follow suit until late in 1864.

McClellan also reorganized his field artillery for defensive concentration, a departure from the orthodox offensive organization of field artillery that drew considerable criticism. This criticism reflected a basic resistance to defensive tactics, considering that the United States War Department had eliminated the role of artillery in assault tactics, and generally deemphasized field artillery in tactical organization following an evaluation of the impact of the rifled musket in the Crimean War.

Edward Hagerman

From *Conflict and Command* edited by John Hubbell



## NEW Recruits

**Elaine Brown**, a professor from Huntington

**Anne Costello Coyne**, a publisher from Manhattan

**Lauren Smith and Edward Joyce**, both retirees from President Lincoln’s Third Largest City

## Query

Who was John Luke Porter’s role in the Civil War?

Answer on page 4

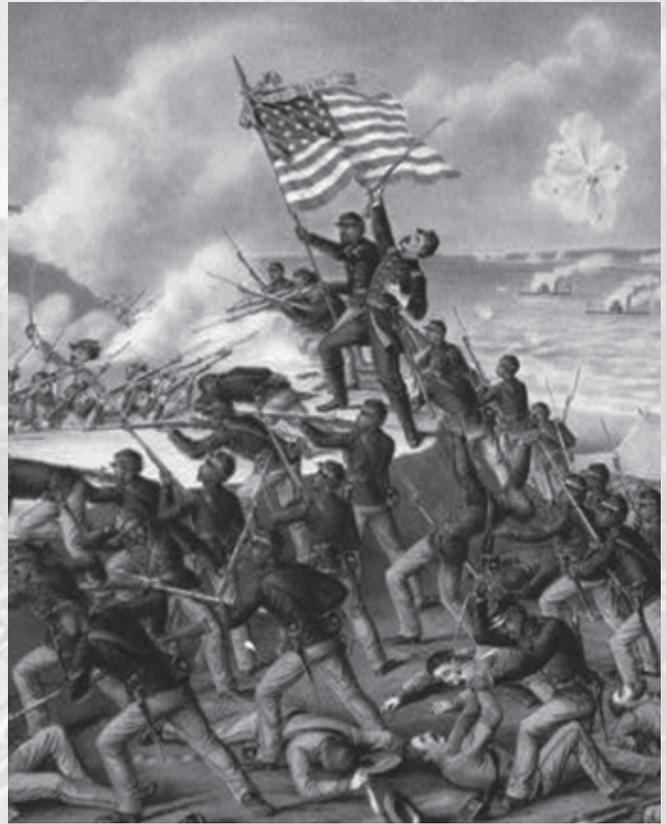
## A Famous Family

Thomas Ewing, Jr. was born in Lancaster, Ohio, into a privileged family. His father was Thomas Ewing, who served as a United States senator. His brothers were future Union generals Hugh Boyle Ewing, and Charles Ewing, and his foster brother (and later brother-in-law) was William T. Sherman. He fought to stop the admission of Kansas to the Union as a slave state and until the war served as Kansas' first supreme court justice. He joined the army in 1862 as a colonel in charge of recruiting for the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry. After commanding the regiment at the battles of Cane Hill and Prairie Grove, he accepted a promotion to Brigadier General, US Volunteers. Here he became known for issuing General Order Number 11, dictating the evacuation of 4 Missouri counties thought to contain Southern sympathizers harboring Colonel William C. Quantrill's guerillas. In 15 days all inhabitants were to leave these counties. His command, backed by an order from President Lincoln, was to execute all violators.

Thanks to Pottstown's Mike Snyder for this one.

## Answer

He supervised the conversion of the frigate *Merrimac* to the iron clad *Virginia* at the Norfolk Naval Yard.



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