

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 60, No. 4

545th Meeting

December 2010



• Guest:
Jeff Richman
Green-Wood Cemetery

• Cost:
Members: \$35
Non-Members: \$45

• Date:
Wednesday,
December 8th

• Place:
The Three West Club,
3 West 51st Street,

• Time:
Dinner at 6 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm

*You must call
718-341-9811 by
December 1st, if you
plan to attend the
December meeting.*

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

54th Annual Battlefield Tour

“For A Good Time, Jine The Cavalry”

This year’s tour will focus on the battle of Cedar Mountain, and the two largest cavalry battles fought during the Civil War – Brandy Station and Trevilian Station. We will also tour Mosby’s Confederacy. Our tour guide will be cavalry expert Bud Hall. So saddle up with Stuart or Custer and ride to the sound of the guns on May 19th–22nd, 2011.



Call the Round Table number for details: 718-341-9811.

A \$100 deposit to reserve your place can be mailed to our HQ at 139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y., 11422.

Jeff Richman Green-Wood Cemetery

Our December guest has been the historian at Green-Wood Cemetery since 1999. He is the author of *Final Camping Ground: Civil War Veterans at Brooklyn’s Green-Wood Cemetery, In Their Own Words*. Since



2002, he has been leading Green-Wood’s unprecedented Civil War Project which, through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, has identified 4,500 Civil War veterans there. Jeff has written a biography for all, gathered hundreds of photographs of them, and obtained gravestones from the Veterans Administration for 2,000 of them, who until now, have lain in unmarked graves.

60/150

Next year marks the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, and May 11th will mark the 60th anniversary of the Civil War Round Table of New York.

And we’re going to celebrate in style.

We’ve already ensured the presence of Bud (James I.) Robertson, Harold Holzer, and noted Civil War artist Mort Kunstler. The Fletcher Pratt winner will also be invited, of course. There’ll be other surprises, fun and music, so we need you to make your reservation as soon as possible, and to pay in advance (you needn’t pay as soon as you make your reservation – payment will be due by March 31st.) We want to be able to give an accurate count for the evening (the program will be 6:00 to 10:00 that night) and to avoid having to collect money then. We’ll have a cash bar as usual, and we’ll be charging \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members to cover a special menu. You may, of course, reserve for guests as well as yourselves, but be aware that we will open this event to the general public as of January 2011, and we’re giving our members priority notice. So call the Round Table number (be sure to specify if it’s for the 60th anniversary), or come up to Joan at the meeting to get your name down. **It’ll be a blast.**

2010 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2011

• January 12th •

Steve Laird
Lee and Jackson at
Chancellorsville

• February 9th •

TBA

• March 9th •

TBA

**Don’t forget the
60th Anniversary
festivities!**

May 11th, 2011

President's Message

December is here again, and with it the end of another year. This has been a great year at the CWRT of NY and next year will be even better. Next year marks our 60th Anniversary and Pat Falci has updates on the planned festivities in the Dispatch.

I want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Kwanzaa and especially a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

— Charles Mander

Book Review

George Gordon Meade and the War in the East

by Ethan S. Rafuse

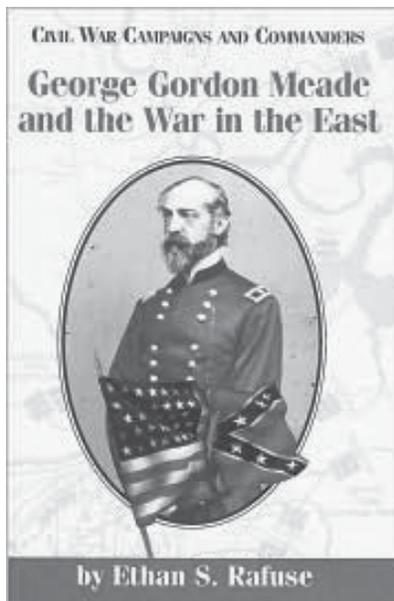
This splendid little book (171 pages, 2003) is a well written, carefully referenced examination of the strategy followed by – strike that: *imposed* on – the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War, and the relations between General Meade, the non-political consummate professional, and other generals in this hapless, but eventually victorious, army.

Rafuse is a professor of military at the U.S. Army Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I particularly enjoying his *McClellan's War* (2005) a balanced, favorable biography of one of the Union's most criticized generals.

Rafuse repeatedly reminds the reader that Meade, Grant and McClellan (and almost all the West Point generals) were correct in advocating the James River as a base of operations in attacking Richmond. Indeed, in January 1864, Grant replied to Henry Halleck's inquiry as to his preferred strategy, asking "whether an abandonment of all previously attempted lines to Richmond is not advisable and in lieu of those one be taken farther south." Rafuse adds, "The suggestion that the Federal army attempt anything that resembled McClellan's Peninsula Campaign evidently so disturbed Halleck that he was unable or unwilling to grasp Grant's point that a force of 60,000 men in North Carolina would cripple Robert E. Lee's logistics and render him incapable of conducting a major operation north of the Potomac."

Meade totally agreed with Grant, which is one reason they got along well, with Meade willing to subordinate himself to Grant's command. In a letter to his wife, Meade wrote of Grant, "Take him all in all, he is in my judgment the best man the war has yet produced."

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During business hours.

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December during the Civil War

1861

9 – Edward Baker, the political colonel, and friend of the president is killed in the fiasco at Ball’s Bluff in October giving impetus to the forming of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War. Today it would be the JCCCW.

11 – Charleston, S.C. is ravaged by fire and half the city is beyond repair. The Confederate Congress blames William T. Sherman but they are three years premature.

1862

23 – Ben Butler’s egregious behavior is condemned by Jefferson Davis and chamber pot manufacturers now have his likeness on the bottom of their wares.

31 – The longest battle of the war (1862-1863) commences at Stones River and runs into the next year at Murfreesboro (Tn).

1863

14 – Confederate General B.H. Helm’s widow is given amnesty after she swears allegiance to the Union. Mrs. Helm’s half-sister lives in the White House.

31 – The Richmond (Va.) Examiner indicates that “Today closes the gloomiest year of of our struggle.” The Confederate Congress officially adopts the old Brooklyn Dodger motto, “Wait Til Next Year.”

1864

13 – Grant loses his cool and orders Black Jack Logan to replace George Thomas in Nashville. Thomas refuses to move until the weather clears which it finally does and his boys practically destroy John B. Hood’s Army of Tennessee.

21 – Sherman plays Santa Claus with President Lincoln, giving him the city of Savannah as an Xmas present.

Confederate Memories of Militia Man Philip Whitlock, a Richmond Grey

It is not my intention to write history, for many others have done that, but merely want to mention such matters that I was directly connected with. John Brown was condemned to be hung in December by the court that met in the city of Charlestown, Jefferson County, now W. Va. There was a rumor that a party was organizing in the North to rescue John Brown; therefore the Governor again called out the State Militia to go.

The 1st Regiment assembled on Broad Street...that was one Saturday night about the 1st of December, in the year 1859. Many of us were surprised to see John Wilkes Booth, who was then acting in the Marshall Theater in a Richmond Gray uniform. We afterwards were informed that he joined the Company in order to go along with us. He is the same John Wilkes Booth who shot Abe Lincoln just after the war. We got to Charlestown and there we met a great many soldiers from the whole state of Virginia. Among them were many who have made history since: General Lee, J.E.B. Stuart and many others.

We staid there three weeks until he was hung, in which our company was present as a Body Guard, being about 30 feet from the gallows, John Wilkes Booth, being about the same height as I, was right next to me in rank. When the drop fell, I noticed that he got very pale, and I called his attention to it. He said that he felt very faint and that he would give anything for a good drink of whiskey. Of course he did not get it then.

The Surratt Society Newsletter 2010

Query

Who was George Foster Robinson and what role did he play in American history? See page 4

Dues are due

If you haven’t already paid your dues, please send your checks in now. After October, the price rose to \$50. 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 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| First Category | \$40 | \$60 |
| Second Category | \$50 | \$75 |
| Third Category | \$100 | \$150 |

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.

Out-of-towners (75 miles or more) and students (full or part time and under 25) pay \$15.00 unless you are covered by your parent’s payment. If you joined up between January and March 2010, you owe only \$15.00. If you joined up in April, May, or June, you get a freebie.

**Dues should be sent to Charles Mander,
24 Wilcox Place, Fairlawn, N.J. 07410**

DO NOT include your dues and dinner payment on the same check.

Continued from page 2

Rafuse's military background and his writing skills combine to produce a clear description of Union and Confederate strategy at the significant battles involving Meade, including Antietam, Chancellorsville, Petersburg, and the controversial pursuit after Gettysburg. This book isn't for the general reader, but Civil War students will enjoy every aspect of this useful work.

By Michael Wolf



New Recruits

Andy Walters who is interested in battles, biography and regimentals.

Toni Gibbs, a library assistant who is interested in personalities and politics.



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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
OF NEW YORK

139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y. 11422

Answer

Robinson was a male nurse who was hired to help Secretary of State William Seward who had been injured in a carriage accident. Although he weighed only 100 pounds he wrestled with Seward's attacker, Lewis Powell, and kept him from killing Seward the night of the Lincoln Assassination.

From *The Surratt Courier* October 2010

A Special Grave

It really is a common gravestone, government issued, and the name is not unusual: Isaac Putnam Smith Serg

Co. G 84th NY INF 1836-1908

The 84th NY INF was better known as the 14th Brooklyn. So what is so special about this grave?

It is in Rookwood Cemetery, in Sydney, Australia!!

