

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 62, No. 10

571st Meeting

June/July 2013



- Guest:
Dennis Frye
*September Suspense:
Lincoln's Union in Peril*
- Cost:
Members: \$40
Non-Members: \$50
- Date:
**Wednesday,
June 12th**
- 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
June 5th, if you
plan to attend the
June meeting.**

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

Dennis Frye

Our June guest is the chief historian at Harpers Ferry National Park. Writer, lecturer, guide and preservationist, Dennis has made numerous appearances on PBS, the History channel, The Discovery Channel, and A & E as a guest historian, and helped produce award-winning television features on the battle of Antietam and abolitionist John Brown. Dennis served as an associate producer of *Gods and Generals*, during which he recruited and coordinated nearly 3,000 reenactors for the film. He is co-founder and first president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and he is co-founder and a former president of today's Civil War Trust, where he helped save battlefields in 12 states. His two most recent books *Harpers Ferry Under Fire* and *September Suspense: Lincoln's Union in Peril*, issued in 2012, coincided with the anniversary of the first invasion of the North and the Maryland Campaign.

September Suspense

Lincoln's Union in Peril



Dennis E. Frye

56TH ANNUAL BATTLEFIELD TOUR

UPDATE

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

The time to enlist in the Army of the Valley is now! At New Market, you will walk on the field of lost shoes with the VMI cadets. In Lexington, you'll witness a special ceremony on the parade grounds, have lunch at VMI, and then pay your respects to General Lee at his chapel (where he is buried) on the anniversary of the day he died in 1870. Then you will draw your sabers as you ride with George Custer at Tom's Brook. All this, and the climactic Battle of Cedar Creek between Jubal Early and Phil Sheridan.

So saddle up with a \$100 deposit now and the remainder by August 1st (total cost - \$750). Our tour guides are Col. Keith Gibson and Dennis Frye.

Make your check out to **CWRTNY Tour**. Mail it to our HQ at 139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y. 11422.

For details call 718-341-9811.



2013 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2013

• September 11th •

**The Poetry and Prose of the
Emancipation Proclamation**
Harold Holzer

• October 9th •

TBA

• November 13th •

TBA

President's Message

June is always a month of such promise and possibilities. And so it was in 1863 for Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. For exactly one year, Lee had led his army through five major campaigns, from the Peninsula, to Bull Run, to Maryland's rolling hills, then to the Rappahannock. He had won four of those campaigns, and in the other, had fought to a draw. And just weeks before, he had prevailed at Chancellorsville against Hooker's mighty host. Now with the initiative and momentum on his side, his army was again on the march, as he crossed the Potomac, his sights set on Pennsylvania, and a victory on Northern soil. His veterans were tested and confident, and they knew that this was their chance to end the war. The pace quickened as June progressed, and all eyes turned to central Pennsylvania. The North was in a panic, with the fate of the Republic hanging in the balance. For the South, there would never be another such moment, where the dream of independence seemed just over the next hill, and all it would take would be one more good march, and one more hard fought battle. That battle would come at Gettysburg in early July, but it would be a different army that would find there the success that it had so long searched for. Defeated but still defiant, Lee and his men would soon be back in Virginia, and would follow the long, inevitable path towards Appomattox. But they would always think back to that June when it all seemed so possible. June always held such promise, but one could never be sure who that promise was really for.

It has been so rewarding to lead this amazing organization during these first two years of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. From local events and museum shows, to radio spots and 150th anniversary commemorations, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your president. For all its 63 years, I believe that this Round Table is as strong and engaged as it ever was, and our commitment to bring to you the very best historians and authors in the field of Civil War studies continues unabated, as is our mission. But the greatest part of being president has been the friendship that you have all shared with me. You have been incredibly supportive, and I thank you all. Now, I am proud to resume my place "back in the ranks" where I started some 33 years ago. The team that I have worked with since 2011 has been second to none, and I thank each and every one of them for all their help. And we have two exciting years ahead of us under our new president Marty Smith, including our tour of the 1864 Shenandoah Valley battlefields coming up in October. Don't miss this one!

Please remember that this organization is run by volunteers, and I hope that you will try to get involved in any way that you can, so that our unbroken tradition here in New York City will continue with new talent, new ideas, and new possibilities. And I urge you to continue to follow all the Sesquicentennial events. Gettysburg will be the highlight this summer, as will the Civil War shows at the Metropolitan Museum, the New-York Historical Society, and West Point. And this Fall, we will commemorate Chickamauga and Chattanooga. Visit a battlefield, read a book, ponder just what was happening exactly 150 years ago. That's what I'll be doing! My thanks to everyone, and I'll see you in September for an exciting new season here at the Civil War Round Table of New York. And always "Ride to the sound of the guns!"

— Bill Finlayson

A REPORT ON ANTIETAM

Reporter George Smalley of the New York *Tribune* set the terms for the journalistic coverage of the battle. He had ridden to Frederick on the night of the 17th to telegraph his story to the *Tribune*. The telegrapher sent it to the War Department by mistake, and gave Stanton and Lincoln their first information about the fight. Stanton had forwarded the dispatch to New York, and it appeared in the *Tribune* on September 19. Smalley's extensive, detailed, and vivid story of the fighting was the first published account of the battle, and its fair-minded treatment of McClellan gave it broad credibility despite its appearance in a radical journal. Although Smalley detailed some of the tactical errors that marred McClellan's performance, he presented the battle as a great and hard-won victory. He also stated his belief that an even greater triumph could be expected when, not if, the battle was renewed the next day. By the time the dispatch was published, both the War Department and the public knew that McClellan had not attacked on September 18, and that by the 19th, Lee was safe across the Potomac. Thus Smalley's account justified the *Tribune* editorial assertion that this was a "fatal Thursday" because McClellan had refused to attack and destroy the Rebel army. Greeley's front-page headline treated McClellan's claims of victory with contemptuous sarcasm: "Retreat of the Rebels...They Run Away in the Night Again...Stonewall Jackson Dead Again."

From *The Long Road to Antietam* by Richard Slotkin

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**The Civil War Round Table
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During business hours.

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May during the Civil War

1861

June 11 – General (Not so long ago, Captain) Nathaniel Lyon declares war on the pro-Southerners in Missouri.

July 11 – Old Rosie makes George McClellan look good as he receives a Rebel surrender at Rich Mountain.

1862

June 17 – President Lincoln receives good news at last: General John Fremont resigns.

July 1 – The American public receives bad news as the president signs an income tax law. There is a 3% levy on income from \$600 to \$10,000. Besides Peter Cooper, who earned \$10,000 in those days, an average man's salary was something like a dollar a day.

1863

June 9 – Brandy Station, and the Yankees show the Rebs that they can now ride and fight at the same time.

July 1 – John Buford and his men bump into A.P. Hill and his rebels, and you know what happens after that.

1864

June 3 – Cold Harbor and Grant's biggest mistake. Men pin papers indicating their name and address on the back of their uniforms, anticipating their death.

July 11 – The president gets expert advice at Ft Stevens in Washington: Get your damn fool head down. He does.



NEW | NEW | NEW | NEW

We are testing the emailing of the Dispatch. If you want it sent via email, please let the editor know: EABudlivingston@gmail.com.

AN INCIDENT ABOARD THE CREOLE

The *Creole* sailed out of Hampton Roads, Virginia, on October 25, 1841, packed with 135 blacks destined for the slave markets of New Orleans. Two weeks later, as the ship approached the Bahamas, about 20 of the slaves seized control, wounded the captain and several of the crew, killed another crew member, and “with great coolness and presence of mind,” destroyed the documents proving their enslavement while they ordered the rest of the crew to sail them into port at Nassau. When the ship reached the island, then known as New Providence, the American consul demanded that the slaves be arrested and sent on their way to Louisiana. Instead, the British government freed the slaves, including those who had been identified as “insurrectionists.” The U.S. government responded with outrage, demanding reparations for the “property” improperly confiscated by the English government. Secretary of State Daniel Webster insisted that the slaves were “recognized as property by the Constitution of the United States in those States in which slavery exists.” Webster’s dispatch thus raised the very issue that abolitionists were pressing: Were the rights of property in slaves Constitutional? If so, slave property was protected beyond the borders of the slave states. But if slave property was merely “municipal,” founded in local laws only, wasn’t the property claim in slaves restricted to the locality itself?

From *Freedom National* by James Oakes.

New Recruits

Sara Champion from Connecticut.

Ron and Carol Fish. Sherlockians from Circleville, N.Y.

Larry Ferguson, who is interested in battles and politics.

Thomas Thorne from Queens: same interests.

NEW SLATE – 2013-2014

Here’s the new slate of officers:

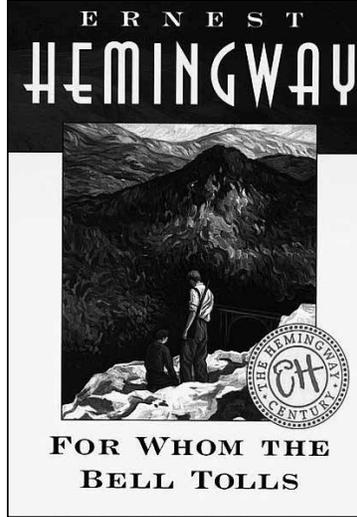
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A COMPARISON TO SPANISH CIVIL WAR GUERRILLAS

“Pablo nodded, He is engaged in his military studies, I imagine, Robert Jordan thought. Not seeking the bubble reputation in the cannon’s mouth but seeking the solution to the problem in yonder bowl. But you know the bastard must be fairly able to have run this band successfully for as long as he did. Looking at Pablo he wondered what sort of guerrilla leader he would have been in the American Civil War. There were lots of them, he thought. But we know very little about them. Not the Quantrills, nor the Mosbys, not his own grandfather, but the little ones, the Bushwhackers. And about the drinking. Do you suppose Grant really was a drunk? His grandfather



always claimed he was. That he was always a little drunk by four o’clock in the afternoon and that before Vicksburg sometimes during the siege he was very drunk for a couple of days. But grandfather claimed that he functioned perfectly normally no matter how much he drank except that sometimes it was very hard to wake him. But if you could wake him he was normal.

There wasn’t any Grant, nor any Sherman nor any Stonewall Jackson on either side so far in this war. No. Not any Jeb Stuart either. Nor any Sheridan. It was overrun with McClellans though. The fascists had plenty of McClellans, and we had at least three of them.”

For *Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway

| WANTED | WANTED |

A roving reporter who will interview club members. We had fun with this column years ago and we’d like to resurrect it again. If you’re interested, just contact the editor.



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