

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 62, No. 2

563rd Meeting

October 2012



• Guest:
John Quarstein
The Battle of the
Ironclads

• Cost:
Members: \$40
Non-Members: \$50

• Date:
Wednesday,
October 10th

• 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

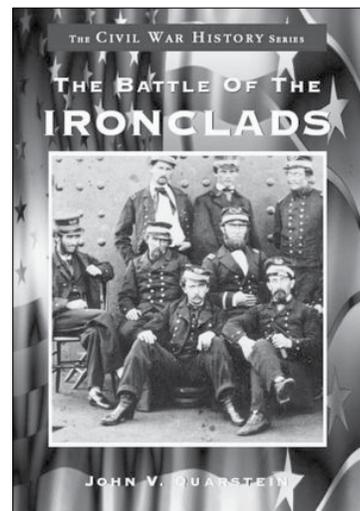
*You must call
718-341-9811 by
October 3rd, if you
plan to attend the
October meeting.*

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

John Quarstein: The Battle of the Ironclads

John V. Quarstein is an award winning historian, preservationist, and author, who has served as the director of the Virginia War Museum since 1978. He also oversees the management of the City of Newport News's historic properties, including Endview Plantation, Lee Hall Mansion, Young's Mill, and the Newsome House, as well as serving as the historical advisor for the Mariner's Museum's U.S.S. *Monitor* Center project. He

has taught at the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia. He is the author of seven books including *Fort Monroe: The Key to the South*, *C.S.S. Virginia: Mistress of Hampton Roads*, *Civil War on the Peninsula* and *The Battle of the Ironclads*.



HOW DID SOUTHERNERS IN SHERMAN'S PATH SURVIVE?

Wherever Sherman's men went, animals were seized or slaughtered, and foodstuffs of all kinds disappeared into the army's capacious maw or were maliciously wasted. With winter near, civilians in the army's trampled wake faced famine. How did they survive?

Seventy-eight years after the Yankees visited her family's Social Circle plantation, Fannie Burton described the means in a memoir for her descendants. Burton's father and older brothers were away in the army, leaving her mother in charge of ten children and the slaves. The Yankees stripped the family's corn cribs and smokehouse and ransacked their house, but kind and considerate soldiers paid for meals and

left a barrel of sorghum. Most important, they suggested the Burtons pick over their campsite, where plenty of partially butchered animals and other useful items had been left behind. Meanwhile, neighbors returned some stray cows, the newly freed blacks agreed to stay and work the plantation, a few bales of cotton were sold to procure necessities, and friends and relatives donated shoats and chickens. That winter the Burtons missed luxuries like coffee and sugar, but they had an abundance of corn bread and dairy products. They never went hungry and "were always very happy." With the help of family and friends, Burton's story emphasized, a determined woman, plucky children, and compliant blacks could endure the hardest of times in good spirits.

From *Marching With Sherman* by Mark H. Dunkelman

2012 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2012

• November 14th •

West Point Night
Antietam
Major Paul N. Belmont III

• December 12th •

Who was George G. Meade?
Allen Guelzo

• January 9th •

Lee/Jackson Night
William C. Davis

President's Message

Tides come in and tides go out. And so it was in 1862. In the Winter and Spring, a seemingly resistless tide of Union victories had very nearly drowned the young Confederacy. Southern ports, cities, and western rivers had all fallen to Federal forces. And in the East, McClellan's huge army had almost taken Richmond. Almost. Then a resurgent Confederate tide had swept in led by Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, and the Northern war effort was brought to a standstill. It was a Confederate Summer as Southern arms rebounded in the East and then in the West. But that high tide would begin to crest in September. First, Lee would be turned back in Maryland at the Battle of Antietam. Then in October, Earl Van Dorn's attack on Corinth, Mississippi would fail, and Bragg's invasion of Kentucky would be stopped at the Battle of Perryville. As both sides now paused, the advantage shifted back to the North, and with it, a new Federal tide of reorganized armies under new commanders would make ready for new campaigns. 1862 had already seen many titanic battles, and there would be more to come in this bloody year. The only sure thing was that those tides would keep coming in and going out. And so it was in 1862.

— *Bill Finlayson*

Book Review

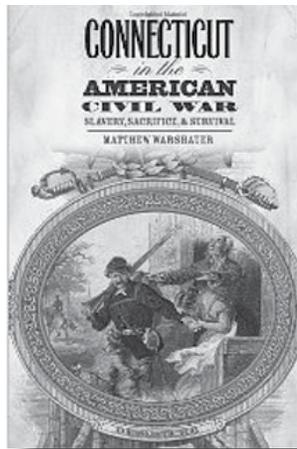
Connecticut in the American Civil War

by *Matthew Warshauer*

Matthew Warshauer is a professor of history at Central Connecticut State University and the author of *Andrew Jackson and the Politics of Martial Law*. He also edits the scholarly journal, *Connecticut History*.

The author has focused on the home front, quoting extensively from Hartford and New Haven newspapers, ranging from abolitionism to racist, from pro-war and anti-war, to show the bitter divisions among factions. His comprehensive research includes many eloquent excerpts of letters from Connecticut soldiers to their families. Many of these men were passionate defenders of the war and racial equality and of candidates such as William A. Buckingham, who narrowly survived annual elections for governor during the war.

Listen to Major Theodore Ellis of Hartford describe Pickett's Charge in his official report: "As far as the eye could reach could be seen the advancing troops, their gay war flags fluttering in the gentle summer breeze, while their sabers and bayonets flashed and glistened in the midday sun. Step by step they came, the music and rhythm of their tread resounding on rock-ribbed earth. Every movement expressed resolution and defiance, the line moving forward like a victorious giant, confident of power and victory. The advance seems as resistless as the incoming tide. It was the last throw of the dice in the supreme moment of the great game of war."



Continued on page 4

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October during the Civil War

1861

3 – Governor Thomas O. Moore (not the Confederate hierarchy) orders an embargo on cotton shipments to Europe. Since cotton is king, England and France will soon beg for their supplies and recognize the Confederacy. It never happened.

24 – On Calyer Street in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, the keel is laid of the future USS *Monitor*. Fireworks will follow in March.

1862

11 – The Confederate Congress passes the “Rich Man’s War But A Poor Man’s Fight” bill, exempting owners of 20 or more slaves from the first conscription law in American history.

24 – Don Carlos Buell, a la George B. McClellan, has the slows in allowing Braxton Bragg’s army to escape from Kentucky and he is replaced by William Rosecrans, who will later behave like a duck hit on the head.

1863

18 – The brand new commander of the Army of the Cumberland, George Thomas, comes close to predicting his outfit’s demise as he promises Grant that he will “hold this town [Chattanooga] until we starve.” And they almost do.

24 – At the Tennessee River near Brown’s Ferry, two Union officers are in full view and within range of Confederate pickets. Fortunately for the United States of America, they hold their fire. Grant and Thomas get a timely reprieve.

1864

25 – Part of J.B. Hood’s army skirmishes with Union troops at Turkeytown in Alabama, across the Duck River near Chickenville.

31 – Nevada joins the Union as its 36th State and black jack tables are set up in Las Vegas.

LINCOLN AT COOPER UNION

Lincoln spent months preparing his New York speech. The loose, frontier, speaking style that had endeared him to Westerners would not play as well with the city’s stiff intellectual audience. So Lincoln focused strictly on the facts. Douglas (Stephen) had argued that the framers of the Constitution would not have wanted the federal government to limit a state’s right to permit slavery. “Our fathers, “ Douglas had declared,” understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now.” Lincoln would take a counter intuitive approach to deconstructing an argument. He would begin by agreeing with his opponent’s declaration, then proceed through rigorous historical examination, that the fathers who understood the question better than we, would have disagreed with Douglas’s answer to it.

So Lincoln dug through archives, slowly documenting the voting records of the 39 men who had signed the Constitution. As historian Harold Holzer points out, in his definitive study of the Cooper Union speech, the extent of Lincoln’s solitary effort was astounding. Later on, two editors, tasked with preparing footnotes for a published version of the speech would need three weeks and the help of several historians, including the esteemed George Bancroft, just to verify the facts. It was quite fitting then, that Peter Cooper had buried beneath his institution (Cooper Union), a copy of the Constitution.

P. 144, *The King’s Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road*. By Eric Jaffe

Dues are due

If you haven’t already paid your dues, please send your checks in now. After October, the price rises 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 2012, you owe only \$15.00. If you joined up in April, May, or June, you get a freebie.

Send dues to Treasurer Bud Livingston
71-16 66th Street, Glendale, NY 11385

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

The introduction illuminates the long history of racial hatred in this supposedly enlightened New England state. In 1833, a young woman, Prudence Crandall, attempted to include black girls in her private school in Canterbury. Her neighbors “threatened her, vandalized the school by breaking windows and throwing manure down its well, and ultimately forced Crandall to flee the state.” Warchauer notes that “Nearly half of Connecticut’s population was steadfastly opposed to fighting the South.” However, 47% of the state’s men between fifteen and fifty fought for the north.

There are just enough brief explanations of military campaigns to guide the neophyte through the four years of war. However, all Connecticut regiments and most of the battles in which they fought are included, with special attention to the 14th and 16th at the Burnside Bridge and in the Cornfield at Antietam. The 14th’s heroic triumph at the Angle at Gettysburg is vividly described.

This book will be of greatest interest to readers seeking further knowledge of Connecticut politics, journalism, regiments and personalities. However, any student of the war will be presented with our nation’s greatest moral crisis.

By Michael Wolf

WHAT THE SOLDIERS THOUGHT OF EARL VAN DORN

The Army of the West also went through a series of changes, which the trans-Mississippi soldiers welcomed. “Van Dorn is not only unpopular with this division, “ Senator (James) Phelan wrote to Davis (Jefferson), “but is the butt of their jeering and ridicule. Phelan gave this example of a jingle often heard in camp: “Who lost the battle of Elkhorn / Van Dorn-Van Dorn- Who do we wish had never been born / Van Dorn- Van Dorn.” Many of the soldiers also blamed him for the debacles of May 9 and 22 at Farmington (Mississippi). Some declared that Van Dorn had been “too drunk to attend to business.”

From *Corinth 1862* by Timothy B. Smith

STRANGE NEWS FROM THE FRONT

September 18, 1862

General McClellan has achieved a glorious victory.
A great battle has been fought, and we are victorious.
The carnage on both sides was awful
General Longstreet was wounded and taken prisoner.

From *The New York Times Complete Civil War*
Edited by Harold Holzer and Craig Symonds



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