

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 69, No. 1

632nd Meeting

September 2019



- Guest:
Jake Wynn
Discovering Clara Barton's Missing Soldiers Office
- Cost:
Members: \$60
Non-Members: \$75
- Date:
Wednesday,
September 11th
- 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 September 4th if you plan to attend the September meeting. We need to know how many people to order food for.

Jake Wynn

Discovering Clara Barton's Missing Soldiers Office

In the aftermath of the Civil War, relief organizer and volunteer nurse Clara Barton opened the Missing Soldiers Office to search for missing Union soldiers. From her boardinghouse in Washington, she launched an operation that scoured the nation for information about soldiers who had disappeared during the conflict. In three years, Barton and her team discovered the fate of more than 22,000 missing men. Yet, her work with the Missing Soldiers Office has largely been overshadowed by Barton's role with the American Red Cross. The boardinghouse in Washington fell into disrepair and by the 1990s, was likely to be torn down. In 1996, a government employee named Richard Lyons made a surprising discovery and uncovered the story of Barton's Missing Soldiers Office and preserved the historic structure to be developed into a museum that is now operated by the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.



Jake Wynn is the Director of Interpretation at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine and the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum.

He is a 2015 graduate of Hood College in Frederick, MD where he focused on public history and communications. Previously, Wynn has worked with the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, the Tourism Council of Frederick County (MD), and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

He writes independently on the history of Pennsylvania's Anthracite Coal Region on his blog, Wynning History. He is also a founding contributor to a new project focused on highlighting Pennsylvania's Civil War history - PennCivilWar.

In Memoriam

It's with great sorrow that we announce the passing of longtime member Jerry Lieberman on July 27th. Jerry had been on the Board and served as VP of Operations for the club. He was known for his unfailing good humor, his kindness, and his ability to make everyone smile – he was someone you were always glad to see. He came to meetings as long as he could, until his health no longer permitted his making the trip, and he clearly enjoyed seeing his old friends. He will be greatly missed by his wife Betty, his family and his many friends from the CWRTNY, the North Shore Round Table, and the Oliver Tilden Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans.



2019 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2019

• **Thursday** October 17th •
Michael Falco

• **Wednesday** November 13th •
Wednesday

• **December** •
TBD

President's Message

From the outset, I wanted to use my first President's Message to give my thanks to the many members of our round table and especially those who have assisted me in the past couple of months. As you may know, we have had to make some very difficult decisions regarding raising our yearly membership dues and the prices for our dinners. I want to reiterate that these decisions were not made lightly, but were only implemented as a last option in order to keep up with the increasing costs of hosting our dinner events.

We are, of course, an organization of volunteers, and have been since our origins. Many of our members contribute additional financial support beyond basic dues, which allows us to do more than just publish a monthly newsletter and have dinner meetings with outstanding speakers. Board members keep the wheels turning, and volunteers are the backbone of our group. I appreciate the opportunity to serve, and am especially grateful for the chance to work with some truly generous people who give freely of their time, talent, and financial support to make our club and the community better.

To that end, our September speaker, Jack Wynn, will discuss the great volunteer nurse Clara Barton, and her efforts in opening the Missing Soldiers Office to search for missing Union Soldiers. We will be meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 and I hope that you will be able to join us. Thank you.

KRIS KASNICKI

21st Century Newsletter

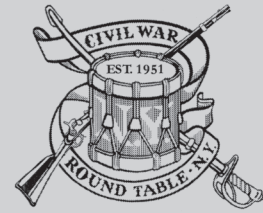
Just wanted to let you know that as of September, we will be switching to an all-electronic Dispatch. There are several reasons for this – the main one is that will save us over \$1000 in printing costs. But it will also give us freedom to make the newsletter longer at times, add more photos, be more timely, and give you more information about Civil War events. To that end, if you know of any Civil War talks, displays, performances, etc., please send the info to the RT email.

If we don't have your email address, please send it to us at the RT email address, and if you don't have an email or access to a computer, please let us know by phone or by dropping a note to the RT address (all of these are available on the newsletter masthead).

We hope you'll welcome these changes – we have thought long and hard about them.



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MEET KRIS KASNICKI

As we begin our 2019-2020 season, we once again look forward to reuniting with old friends, eating good food and listening to great speakers. But this year we also have a new president, Kris Kasnicki. Kris is young and exciting, so we thought you might like to know a little about who he is and his plans for the CWRTNY.

Dispatch:

Can you give us some information about your background?

Kris:

I grew up in Garden City on Long Island. I went to Garden City High School then received my Bachelor of Arts in History from Binghamton University. After working and working in Manhattan for a few years, I returned upstate for law school at SUNY Buffalo.

Dispatch:

When did you first become interested in the Civil War? And how did you learn about the CWRTNY?

Kris:

I had always been interested in the Civil War since I first learned about it in grammar school. While I was in college, I read James McPherson's "Battle Cry of Freedom" and it grew into a lifelong passion. I first learned about the CWRTNY from Mike Connors who invited me to my first meeting in November of 2014.

Dispatch:

What do you find most interesting about the Civil War and who is your favorite player?

Kris:

What I find most interesting are the stories of the common soldiers on both sides, who travelled hundreds miles through hunger, disease, and death to fight each other. Specifically, I enjoy reading their letters home,



which are so beautifully written yet hauntingly personal. My favorite player has always been the same since age 5; Abe Lincoln.

Dispatch:

What are the challenges and you see facing the CWRTNY?

Kris:

The challenges that face the CWRTNY are the same that are challenging other round tables across the country. Namely, recruiting new members. In today's digital age, where information and entertainment are available from the comfort of one's home and at the touch of a button, it becomes harder to get people to come out for a dinner event. On the other hand, the Internet does allow new opportunities to reach potential new members, so I am confident that with our digital presence on social media we will be able to meet that challenge.

Question of the month:

What communication prompted Lincoln to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation when he did?

SUGGESTIONS

The Dispatch welcomes articles, book reviews (non-fiction only) and suggestions. Just send them in to our mailing address.

DRESS CODE

Ladies and gentlemen: PLEASE
No sneakers, no jeans, no tee shirts. Gentlemen, please wear a collared shirt. Let's dress like we are attending a business meeting.

Thanks, The Management



Past-Presidents Became Hooked On The Bronx Version Of The Civil War

Three CWRT/NY past presidents – Patrick Falci, Bill Finlayson and Mike Virgintino – became interested in history, especially Civil War history, at the same period in time. All of them were influenced by their personal experiences at the history theme park known as Freedomland U.S.A. in The Bronx.

The park lasted five seasons (1960-1964), coinciding with the Civil War centennial commemoration. All three past-presidents vividly recall Freedomland's recreation of the Chicago Fire, the Wild West shoot-outs and the boat ride through the Northwest Passage. Each of them, though, was drawn specifically to the park's Civil War attraction. During their family visits to Freedomland, Patrick, Bill and Mike boarded horse-drawn correspondents' wagons under a flag of truce and then traveled between the lines as rifle and cannon fire, in this first phase of audio-animatronics, soared over their young heads.

The distinct memories of that attraction by Patrick and Bill are featured in Mike's new book, *Freedomland U.S.A.: The Definitive History*.

"At Freedomland, I heard the roar of the cannon and through the smoke, the gleam of the bayonet," recalls Patrick in the book. "This is what it must have looked like between the Blue and the Gray."

The rise and fall of Freedomland, documented through original research, contemporary media, and interviews with employees, character actors and guests, delivers a detailed

history of the park and its attractions. The book touches on Bronx and theme park history before it weaves the tale about Freedomland's creation (by the same executive who built Disneyland) and the planned declared bankruptcy that coincided with land variances that permitted commercial development on the Northeast Bronx marshland. The Co-op City residential housing development and a shopping center have occupied the property for a handful of decades.

Bill experienced the Civil War attraction many times, and it "...became my all-time favorite thing to see in the park." Over the years, he even traced the march of some of the troops to their post-Freedomland assignment in Gettysburg.

A company of the stationary fiberglass soldiers from the attraction bivouacked for years at the museum owned by Charley Weaver. The entertainer and historian also had operated a small museum near the Civil War attraction at Freedomland. Bill's research supported Mike's efforts to document the movement of the Freedomland soldiers to Gettysburg. Following Weaver's death, his Gettysburg museum changed hands. When the museum closed a few years ago, the Freedomland soldiers were sold and transferred to points unknown.

Published by Theme Park Press, Mike's book is available on Amazon, eBay, Goodreads and other online stores.

Answer:

McClellan's mistaken report of victory at Antietam.*

**Civil War Trivia and Fact Book*

