

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 68, No. 9

629th Meeting

April 2019



• Guest:
Fletcher Pratt Award winner
Dr. Timothy Smith
The Real Horse Soldiers

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

• Date:
Monday,
April 8th

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

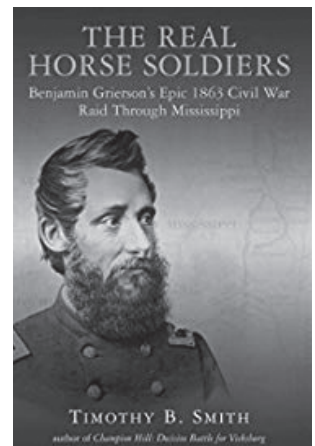
• Time:
Dinner at 6:00 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm

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

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

Fletcher Pratt Award winner **Dr. Timothy Smith** *The Real Horse Soldiers*

Our April guest is a previous Fletcher Pratt Award Winner for his book *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation*. He is a veteran of the National Park Service who gained his PhD from Mississippi State University in 2001 and is the author, editor, or co-editor of eighteen books including *Champion Hill; Decisive Battle for Vicksburg, Shiloh: Conquer or Perish, Mississippi in the Civil War* and many others.



John Pope Becomes a Hero

Congressman Elihu Washburne extolled Grant in a House speech as a general whose “almost superhuman efforts” at Shiloh had “won one of the most brilliant victories” in American history.

Washburne put the case too strongly. Grant made mistakes before the battle that all of his undoubted coolness and indomitable will during the fighting barely redeemed. But in the end the Union armies won a strategic success of great importance at Shiloh. They turned back the Confederacy’s supreme bid to regain the initiative in the Mississippi Valley. From then on it was all downhill for the South in this crucial region. On the very day, April 7, that Beauregard’s battered army began its weary retreat to Corinth, a Union army-navy team won another important and almost bloodless – triumph on the Mississippi.

When the Confederates evacuated their Gibraltar at Columbus in February, they left a garrison of 7,000 men and fifty-two big guns at Island No. 10 fifty miles downriver. This strongpoint blocked northern shipping as completely as Columbus had done. Halleck ordered Andrew Foote’s river fleet to shell the island batteries while John Pope’s newly formed Army of the Mississippi closed in by land from the Missouri side of the river. Foote’s seven ironclads and ten mortar boats (large scows, each mounting a thirteen-inch mortar) bombarded the rebel defenses at long range without much effect. Meanwhile Pope gained control of the Missouri bank below the island and brought several shallow draft transports through a cutoff canal dug by his troops with the aid of contrabands. This penned in the Confederates from three sides, leaving open only a precarious supply line through the swamps on the Tennessee bank of the river. Pope pleaded with Foote

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2019 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2019

• **Monday May 13th** •
Perry Jamieson
Winfield Scott Hancock

• **Monday June 10th** •
Dennis Frye
Antietam Shadows

• **Monday September 9th** •
TBD

President's Message

To our members and compatriots in Civil War history, the officers and the board of our Round Table salute your continuous support. This month, we are pleased to host a meeting that marks the bridging of differences between Hollywood and history. We will be welcoming the author of the book, *The Real Horse Soldiers*, Timothy B. Smith. As Grierson's Raid was one of the Union's most important, if unconventional, strategic victories, this is one of the most interesting topics we cover. Let it not be forgotten that that campaign, executed with minimal casualties, was key to the effort in retaking Vicksburg – as well as ultimately preserving the Union.

Dr. Smith offers in his book a substantive explanation as to where John Ford's classic *The Horse Soldiers* differs from reality. This is a personal matter, as my wife's family were actually scouts for Colonel Benjamin Grierson. The John Wayne movie was a wonderful fantasy play as to what really happened, but the truth was far more interesting. As one of our past speakers, National Parks historian emeritus and Marine World War II veteran Ed Bearss, once pointed out, there are a tremendous number of historical inaccuracies – particularly the idea of a woman riding with a Union cavalry regiment.

The Civil War Round Table of New York is tremendously proud to welcome Dr. Smith as he handles the parsing of fact and fiction. For all his research, and for the topic he chose to investigate, it is an honor to have him. Anyone who takes such a disciplined approach to historiography deserves our thanks. That is the point of organizations like this. We are not and never have been a mere social club; we are bearers of our nation's past, and ergo, heralds of its future.

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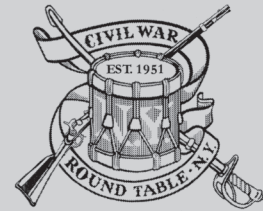
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THE DISPATCH



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April During the Civil War

1861

1 – Secretary of State Seward sends President Lincoln “some thoughts for the president’s consideration,” such as declaring war on Spain and France, feeling that then Secessionists would rejoin the Union. Happy April Fool’s Day.

20 – The Federals botch up evacuating the Gosport Naval Yard and leave the *Merrimac* intact enough to make her a maritime monster.

1862

16 – President Jefferson Davis signs the nation’s first conscription bill which affects all white males from 18 to 35. A lot of muscular specimens head for the hills.

25 – New Orleans gives a blazing welcome to Admiral Farragut’s fleet as the Southerners set fire to the waterfront. The South’s largest city will soon rejoin the Union.



1863

17 – The former music teacher Ben Grierson and 1,700 cavalry head south to Mississippi to confuse John Pemberton at Vicksburg and it works.

30 – Fighting Joe Hooker sets up camp round the Chancellor family home. He will soon have a chance to really hurt R.E.Lee’s army but will not do it.

1864

12 – The Fort Pillow Massacre. Did Forrest order it or did he stop it? The controversy remains to this day.

30 – Five-year-old Joe Davis dies after falling from the veranda of the Confederate White House. Lincoln, too, loses a son in the White House in Washington, D.C.

1865

2 – “I think it is absolutely necessary that we abandon our position tonight.” From General Lee at Petersburg, to Jefferson Davis. After four years of fratricide, the end is near.

6 – Saylor’s Creek – the last engagement between two great armies. Six thousand Confederates surrender

continued from page 1

for a gunboat to run the gauntlet of guns on the island and protect a down-river troop crossing to close this fourth side. The *Carondelet* did so during a spectacular thunderstorm on the night of April 4 and was followed by a second gunboat two nights later during another storm. Spearheaded by the gunboats, Pope’s army crossed the Mississippi, surrounded the garrison, and on April 7 captured its 7,000 men along with guns and equipment the south could ill afford to lose. With only a handful of casualties, Pope achieved what Halleck considered a more brilliant success than Grant at Donelson, and the North acquired a new hero.

From *Battle Cry of Freedom* by James M. McPherson

SUGGESTIONS

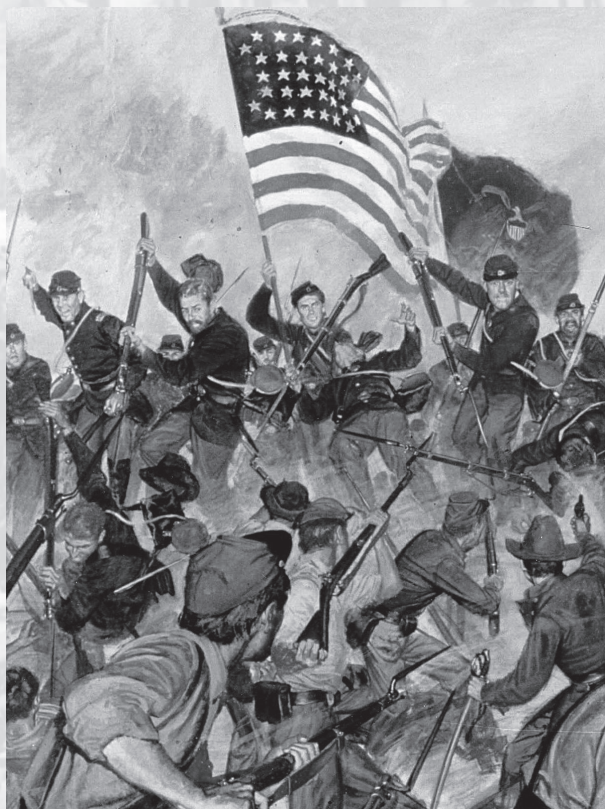
The Dispatch welcomes articles, book reviews (non-fiction only) and suggestions. Just send them in to our mailing address.

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





As a reminder, we need you to make reservations a week before the meeting - we must notify the 3 West Club at least 48 hours (business days only) before then and since we now meet on Mondays, there is no window if you call us the weekend before. Also, if you don't show up for the meeting after making a reservation and we have called in a certain number, we may have to pay for your dinner anyway. So from now on, we're going to charge the guest rate - \$60 - if you fail to make your reservation and we may ask you to pay for those no-show dinners. It is better for you to pay than the club should suffer the loss... Now we understand emergencies - illness, transportation problems, etc. We just ask that you let us know as soon as possible - that might allow us to fit in a late reservation. A little consideration would eliminate some of the guesswork we're required to make every month.



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OF NEW YORK

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