


THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 71 No. 13

667th Meeting

May 2024



- Guest:
Victor Vignola
Fletcher Pratt Winner
Contrasts in Command
- Date:
TUESDAY,
May 28th
- Time:
6:00 pm
- Place:
Villa Mosconi,
69 Macdougall St.,
Greenwich Village

This is an in-person event, to hear him, you must be here. Come join us, have a lovely homey Italian meal, and visit with your fellow Civil War enthusiasts. Just call 718-341-9811 or send an email to make a reservation.

Victor Vignola Fletcher Pratt Winner Contrasts in Command

Victor Vignola is a lifelong student of the Civil War.

His first book *Contrasts in Command: The Battle of Fair Oaks*, May 31 – June 1, 1862, is a recipient of the prestigious Fletcher Pratt Award (2024) – awarded by the Civil War Roundtable of New York. In addition to the Pratt Award, *Contrasts in Command* was named as a finalist for another prestigious award as Best Military History Book (2023), sponsored by the American Battlefield Trust.

His research while developing *Contrasts in Command* directly led to the preservation of a twelve-acre parcel of hallowed ground where the Fair Oaks fighting occurred. That parcel remains the only preserved ground for the entire Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) battlefield. His work continues as he is completing a book on the Battle of Seven Pines.

Vic has also authored magazine articles for Civil War publications. He also conducts Civil War history programs and tours of various sites. He retired from executive level management for New York State's Office of Mental Health. He resides with his family in Orange County, New York, home of the 124th New York "Orange Blossoms" Regiment.



2024 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2024

• Tuesday, May 28th •

Victor Vignola, Fletcher Pratt Winner
Contrasts in Command:
The Battle of Fair Oaks

• June 2024 •

No meeting

• July 2024 •

No meeting

President's Message

As our 2023 – 2024 season draws to a close, I want to express my thanks to you and your CWRTNY officers and board. Without you and your participation in our monthly meetings there would be no club. The board members and officers work to make this organization the best it can be. After COVID and our transition from the 3 West Club, Joan and Paul visited many venues to find a location that would meet our needs-and I think you will agree - they did a darn good job. And of course, Beth and Michael keep the club financially sound. Then there is our great speaker hunter, Pat Falci . Pat not only finds the best speakers but is also a speaker and AP Hill impersonator. As for me, well someone once told me the top guy is only as good as his support system. Your board and officers work so hard to make this Round Table successful and that makes me one lucky lady.



Pat Holohan

The New-York Historical Society is offering free tickets to CWRT members for two upcoming lectures. They are:

Denise and Bernard Schwartz Distinguished Speakers Series
 American Civil Wars: A Continental History, 1850-1873
Wednesday, May 29, 2024 | 6:30–7:30 pm ET
FREE with code CIVILWAR24
Featuring: Alan Taylor, Steven Hahn (moderator)

Alan Taylor and Steven Hahn trace the intertwined histories of the US, Canada, and Mexico, exploring how the US Civil War influenced the political trajectory of all North America.

Denise and Bernard Schwartz Distinguished Speakers Series
 Lincoln and FDR: Commanders-in-Chief at War
Wednesday, June 5, 2024 | 6:30–7:30 pm ET
FREE with code CIVILWAR24
Featuring: Harold Holzer, Craig L. Symonds

Harold Holzer and Craig L. Symonds discuss how Lincoln and FDR guided the nation during wartime, changing the course of our history and the role of the president in the process.

Advance registration is open until 3 pm the day of each program.

Question of the month:

What was the first pitched battle west of the Mississippi?

THE DISPATCH



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During business hours.

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BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES/ FAIR OAKS

Almost nothing has been written about Seven Pines/Fair Oaks. Victor Vignola's *Contrasts in The Battle of Fair Oaks, May 31–June 1, 1862*, which focuses primarily on the Fair Oaks portion of the battle, is a major contribution to the historiography of the war. The bloody two-day battle was fought on the doorstep of the Confederate capital. It was the first major combat in the Eastern Theater since Bull Run/Manassas almost a year earlier, left more than 11,000 casualties in its wake, and cost the primary Southern field army its commander. The possession of Richmond hung in its balance. Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan marched his Army of the Potomac up the Virginia Peninsula during the early spring of 1862 and placed his inexperienced IV Corps at the tip of the spear south of the flood-prone Chickahominy River. McClellan's opponent Joe Johnston took the opportunity to strike and crafted an overly complex attack plan for his Virginia army to crush the exposed corps. A series of bungled

marches, piecemeal attacks, and a lack of assertive leadership doomed the Southern plan. One of the wounded late in the day on May 31 was Johnston, whose injury led to the appointment of Robert E. Lee to take his place—a decision that changed the course of the entire Civil War. Vignola's use of primary and archival sources, many of which have never been used, helped craft a wholly original tactical and leadership study that directly challenges conventional accounts. His stunning reassessment has led to renewed interest in Fair Oaks and the acquisition of a significant parcel of land by the American Battlefield Trust. *Contrasts in The Battle of Fair Oaks, May 31–June 1, 1862*, will be hailed as one of the most important tactical studies ever published.



KEARNY AT SEVEN PINES

BY WALT WHITMAN

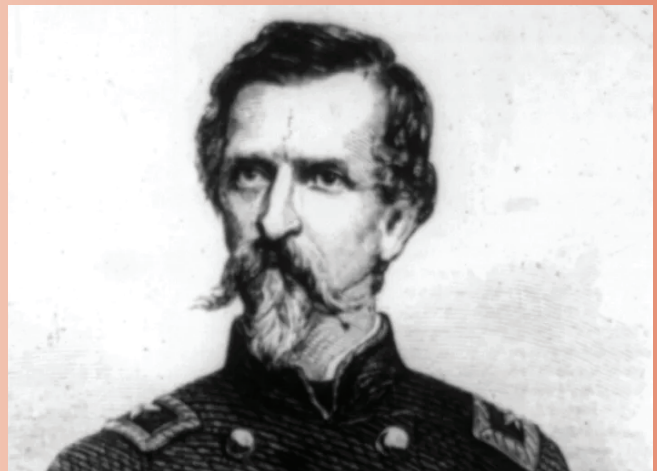
So that soldierly legend is still on its journey,-
That story of Kearny who knew not to yield!
'Twas the day when with Jameson, fierce Berry and Birney,
Against twenty thousand he rallied the field.
Where the red volleys poured, where the clamor rose highest,
Where the dead lay in clumps through the dwarf oak and pine,
Where the aim from the thicket was surest and nighest,-
No charge like Phil Kearny's along the whole line.

When the battle went ill, and the bravest were solemn,
Near the dark Seven Pines, where we still held our ground,
He rode down the length of the withering column,
And his heart at our war-cry lept up with a bound;
He snuffed, like his charger, the wind of the powder,-
His sword waved us on and we answered the sign;
Loud our cheer as we rushed, but his laugh rang the louder.
'There's the devil's own fun, boys, along the whole line!'

How he strode his brown steed! How he saw his blade brighten
In the one hand still left,-and the reins in his teeth!
He laughed like a boy when the holidays heighten,
But a soldier's glance shot from his visor beneath.
Up came the reserves to the mellay infernal,
Asking where to go in-through the clearing or pine?
'O, anywhere! Forward! 'Tis all the same, Colonel:
You'll find lovely fighting along the whole line!'

Oh, evil the black shroud of night at Chantilly,
That hid him from sight of his brave men and tried!
Foul, foul speed the bullet that clipped the white lily,
The flower of our knighthood, the whole army's pride!
Yet we dream that he still,-in that shadowy region
Where the dead form their ranks at the wan drummer's sign,-
Rides on, as of old, down the length of his legion,
And the word is still 'Forward!' along the whole line.

From: emergingcivilwar.com



A print from the Civil War showing Phil Kearny.
His missing sleeve is testament to his injuries at Churubusco. (LOC)

The CRT-NY proudly presents the nominees for 2024 – 2025

List of the Officers and Board up for election May 2024

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Mission Statement:

Our mission is to promote the study, research and social aspects of the American Civil War. People with all levels of interest and knowledge are welcome here.

Answer

**Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), Arkansas
March 7 – 8, 1862**

Civil War Trivia & Fact Book by Webb Garrison