


# THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 71 No. 2

656th Meeting


November/December 2022



- Guest:  
**Mike Fitzpatrick**  
The Irish Brigade
- Date:  
**TUESDAY,**  
**November 29<sup>th</sup>**
- Time:  
**6:00 pm**

*If you plan to attend our November 29th dinner meeting at Connolly's Pub and Restaurant, 121 W 45th Street, please call Telephone 718-341-9811, no later than November 25th.*

### THE IRISH BRIGADE AT GETTYSBURG



Join Michael Fitzpatrick as he explores the exploits of the Union army's legendary Irish Brigade during the climactic battle of the American Civil War. Along the way, learn of the Brigade's founding and travel with its brave leaders and men in their epic struggles against General Robert E. Lee's vaunted Army of Northern Virginia, culminating in the Brigade's "Last Hurray" on the bloody battlefield of Gettysburg. Michael is the president of the Nassau County Civil War Round Table and also president of the Irish Cultural Society of Garden City.

## PAT FALCI RECEIVES THE GRADY MCWHINEY AWARD FOR MERIT



Three-time past Round Table president Patrick Falci was on a tour of Texas Round Tables in October presenting a program on A.P. Hill at Gettysburg, when the 3rd Round Table, The Civil War Round Table of Dallas, surprised him with the presentation of the Grady McWhiney Award of Merit for significant contributions to the scholarship and preservation of Civil War history. This award has previously gone to noted historian Grady McWhiney himself, Ed Bearss, Jack Waugh and another past Round Table president, Judith Hallock, among others. Pat's other visits were to the North Central Texas CWRT in Granbury and the Fort Worth CWRT. Paxon Glenn, president of the CWRT of Dallas, clarified that the award was given for Patrick's living history portrayal of A.P. Hill.



## 2022 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2023

• December •  
No meeting,  
Happy Holidays

• January 2023 •  
TBD

• February 2023 •  
TBD

## President's Message

Led by the Presidential and Congressional elections, November always presaged major changes in leadership during the war.

In 1861, this was particularly the case as both President Lincoln and President Davis were chosen as the leader of their now separate countries. In other changes, the "Young Napoleon", George McClellan, replaced the legendary, but now old and ailing, Winfield Scott, as the nation's general-in-chief. The popular and politically influential – but sadly incompetent – John C. Fremont – was replaced as Union commander in the West, while the heretofore unknown but quite competent T.J. "Stonewall" Jackson assumed command of Confederate forces in the Shenandoah Valley.



General R.E. Lee, rather unsuccessful running limited operations in Western Virginia, was given command in the lower South, to include South Carolina, Georgia & Florida. Wealthy lawyer Judah Benjamin was named Jeff Davis' new Secretary of War.

In other news, two Confederate envoys traveling to Europe, Mason and Slidell, were seized off a British ship by the USS San Jacinto, captained by Charles Wilkes, nearly precipitating war between the US & UK, which the south really wanted.

In November 1862, developments in the war led to further leadership changes, with President Lincoln finally replacing the star-crossed McClellan with the reluctant Ambrose Burnside. Democrats had significant gains in both the Congressional elections and in state governorships.

Reorganizing battle-proven Army of Northern Virginia, General R.E. Lee named the newly promoted James Longstreet and T.J. Jackson as commanders of his two large Corps. President Davis named James Seddon as his new (and probably most successful) Secretary of War. Davis also, rather reluctantly, named General Joseph Johnston as overall commander of Confederate forces in the "West" – NC, TN, north GA, AL, MS, and east LA.

On November 2, 1863, President Lincoln received an invitation to deliver "a few appropriate remarks" at the dedication of the new National Soldiers Cemetery at Gettysburg, scheduled for November 19. Even that historical occasion was overshadowed at the time by the "Battle of Chattanooga". Later in the month, General U.S. Grant enjoyed forces commanded by Generals W.T. Sherman, George Thomas and Joe Hooker to overwhelm Confederate Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee, causing it to retreat deep into Georgia, and Bragg to soon resign.

1864 saw, of course, the successful reelection of President Lincoln, into small part to General Sherman's capture of Atlanta back in September. Sherman would now embark on his epic, game-changing "March to Sea" across the breadth of Georgia, daring the rather confused, scattered Confederate forces to stop him. His main adversary, General John Bell Hood, chose to continue to move north into Tennessee, in a futile attempt to force Sherman to follow.

Sherman's journey would be wildly successful, Hood's, not so much.

I hope your Thanksgiving plans (as our November 29 meeting will occur after the holiday) will, like Sherman's, be wildly successful. Hope to see you then so you can regale us with your own epic "Tales Of the Turkey".

Thanks for you continuing support!

Paul Weiss

# THE DISPATCH



Founded January 24, 1951

The Dispatch is published monthly, except June, July, August, and December, by

### The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.,

139-33 250th Street,  
Rosedale, N.Y. 11422  
Telephone CWRT/NY at (718) 341-9811

During business hours.

#### OFFICERS

President Paul Weiss  
V.P. Programs Michael N. Connors  
V.P. Operations Joan McDonough  
Secretary Pat Holohan  
Treasurer Michael Connors

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Term Expiring 2022*

John Allen  
William Finlayson

*Term Expiring 2023*

Beth Connors  
Dan McCarthy

*Term Expiring 2024*

Kris Kasnicki  
Carolyn Roxon

Member at large

Dave Licalzi:

Editor Pat Holohan

Copy Editor/

Club Liaison Joan McDonough

P.R. Martin Smith

Merchandise Paul Weiss

Email: [cwrtnyc1@gmail.com](mailto:cwrtnyc1@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.cwrtnyc.org>

## Civil War Events During the Month of November 1864

- |             |  |             |   |
|-------------|--|-------------|---|
| November 2  | Affair at Hazen's Farm near Devalls Bluff, Arkansas                                  | November 28 | Rosser's Raid on New Creek near Keyser, West Virginia                       |
| November 4  | Engagement at Johnsonville, Tennessee  | November 29 | Colonel J.M. Chivington leads Sand Creek Massacre in the Colorado Territory |
| November 8  | Abraham Lincoln is re-elected President of the United States                         | November 29 | Battle of Spring Hill, Tennessee  |
| November 11 | Battle of Bull's Gap, Tennessee  | November 30 | Battle of Franklin, Tennessee   |
| November 15 | William T. Sherman departs Atlanta on the March to the Sea, leaving Atlanta in ruins | November 30 | Engagement at Honey Hill, South Carolina                                    |
| November 24 | Skirmish at Columbia, Tennessee  |             |   |
| November 25 | Confederates fail at attempt to set fire to New York City hotels and Barnum's Museum |             |   |

## Civil War Events During the Month of December 1864

- |                    |  |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| December 1         | Union General John Schofield's army evacuates Franklin and retreats to Nashville | December 17        | Action near Franklin, Tennessee                              |
| December 4         | Engagement at Waynesborough, Georgia   | December 19        | Skirmish at Rutherford Creek, Tennessee                      |
| December 6         | Salmon P. Chase named Chief Justice of the United States                         | December 20        | Confederates evacuate Savannah, Georgia                      |
| December 10        | Federal Army arrives in front of Savannah, Georgia                               | <b>December 24</b> | <b>First attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina</b>           |
| December 13        | Storming of Fort McAlister, Georgia  | December 25        | Federals abandon first attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina |
| <b>December 15</b> | <b>Battle of Nashville, Tennessee begins</b>                                     | December 28        | Engagement at Egypt, Missouri                                |

## DUES FOR 2022 – 2023

Dues for the 2022 – 2023 season are: \$40 single & \$50 family for the year. (contributions above \$50 are welcome and tax-deductible.)

We kindly ask that you send your dues to Connors and Sullivan.

The address is:

Connors and Sullivan, PPLC  
Attn: CWRTNY Membership  
7408 5th Avenue | Brooklyn, NY 11209



## Question of the month:

What was the largest city in the Confederacy, with a population of 168,000 in 1860?

## IT FEELS A SHAME TO BE ALIVE

by *Emily Dickinson*

It feels a shame to be Alive—

When Men so brave—are dead—

One envies the Distinguished Dust—

Permitted—such a Head—

The Stone—that tells defending Whom

This Spartan put away

What little of Him we—possessed

In Pawn for Liberty—

The price is great—Sublimely paid—

Do we deserve—a Thing—

That lives—like Dollars—must be piled

Before we may obtain?

Are we that wait—sufficient worth—

That such Enormous Pearl

As life—dissolved be—for Us—

In Battle's—horrid Bowl?

It may be—a Renown to live—

I think the Man who die—

Those unsustained—Saviors—

Present Divinity—

From: *clarabartonmuseum.org*

## Meetings

**Tuesday, November 29;**  
**December no meeting**  
**January 2023**

**Dinner:** \$50 members, \$60 guests

**Meetings to be held at:**  
Connolly's Pub & Restaurant, 121 West 45th  
St. NYC between 6th Avenue & Broadway.

## Answer:

**New Orleans**

*From: Civil War Trivia and Fact Book*  
*by Webb Garrison*



# Sherman's March to the Sea

In the fall of 1864, Gen. James H. Wilson took command of Gen. William T. Sherman's cavalry. Sherman and Wilson met and discussed various operations in Sherman's "March to the Sea" from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia. Wilson's instructions were to prevent Confederate Gen. John B. Hood from operating in Tennessee, to sweep through Alabama and Georgia, and to rejoin Sherman in either the Carolinas or Virginia.

Shortly after that meeting, Wilson and his 17,000 cavalry soldiers joined Gen. George H. Thomas's troops in destroying Hood's army. This letter, written on January 21, a month after the fall of Savannah on December 21, 1864, shows both Sherman and Wilson ready to begin the second phase of their plan: Sherman would march through the Carolinas and Wilson would take Alabama. The colorful General Sherman uses typically brash language to describe how he "knocked daylight through Georgia."

Headquarters, Military Division of the Mississippi,  
In the Field, Savannah, Ga 1865  
January 21,

Dear Wilson,

I got yours of January 5, and am glad to reciprocate your Kind expressions. I remember well our talks at the Camp fire at Gaylesville and think we have Cause of personal Congratulation that we have worked out the calculation of that time. I Knocked daylight through Georgia, and in retreating to s[outh] like a sensible man I gathered up some plunder and walked into this beautiful City, whilst you & Thomas gave Hood & Forest, a taste of what they have to Expect by trying to meddle with in Conquered Territory [2] Kirkpatrick did very well and by Circling round pretty freely he Completely bamboozled Wheeler and so befuddled Hardee that he had no idea what was going on. – It is time for me to be off again for Columbia, but it has been raining hard and the Country is all under water, but I will soon be off. Kirkpatrick will have to keep close to our Infantry as Wheeler has a superior force but Kirkpatrick did whip him fairly at Waynesboro and thinks he can do it [again]. I want Thomas to make the trip to Selma but can only give him general instructions. I know that there is plenty of Forage in Alabama after you get 60 miles south of the Tennessee River all along down the Tombigbee and [3] Black [Rivers] to arrive in large fields of Corn last fall, Also below Talladega on the Coosa. The proper Route is from Decatur & Eastport to Columbia, then Tuscaloosa, Selma, and up the Coosa or Tallapoosa to [text loss] [written in another hand] My route north is well inland and up the Coosa or Tallapoosa to [text loss] [written in another hand]

Signed W. T. Sherman  
Maj

HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI,  
In the Field, Savannah, Ga 1865  
January 21.

Dear Wilson,

I got yours of January 5, and am glad to reciprocate your Kind expressions. I remember well our talks at the Camp fire at Gaylesville and think we have Cause of personal Congratulation that we have worked out the calculation of that time. I Knocked daylight through Georgia, and in retreating to s[outh] like a sensible man I gathered up some plunder and walked into this beautiful City, whilst you & Thomas gave Hood & Forest, a taste of what they have to Expect by trying to meddle with in Conquered Territory.

Notes: 1/3rd center section of page 3 including signature has been removed, and is noted as text loss in the transcript

# First Battle of Fort Fisher

With the Union closure of the port at Mobile in August of 1864, Wilmington became the only major seaport available to blockade runners in the Eastern Confederacy. As the last remaining supply hub of the Confederacy, it became an essential target of the Union as it stood in the way of securing the Federal blockade and represented the Confederacy's last major lifeline to foreign support in the form of munitions and provisions which made their way from Wilmington to the Confederate armies, most notably the Army of Northern Virginia under the command of General Robert E. Lee. (McCaslin 2003, 57) In light of the newfound strategic significance of the port at Wilmington, Fort Fisher became incredibly important as an essential piece to the defense of the port. As such, the capture or destruction of Fort Fisher became a chief goal of the Union, to the extent that Ulysses S. Grant approved the idea of a combined Army and Navy assault designed to neutralize Fort Fisher and close the port at Wilmington. (Robinson 1998, 71)

With Grant's authorization to assault Fort Fisher in place, the operation was organized with Major General Benjamin Butler acting as the overall commander of the expedition and Rear Admiral David Porter in command of the Navy forces. The Union assault force, consisting of sixty-one warships under the command of Porter carrying 6,500 of General Butler's troops arrived at the rendezvous point twenty miles east of New Inlet on December 18, 1864 (Item 26). However, a severe storm arrived and Admiral Porter was forced to ride out the weather, delaying the attack a number of days). Once the storm passed, the Union attack on Fort Fisher began on the night of December 23 when an iron-hulled Union steamship loaded with 215 tons of black powder was exploded near the fort in an unsuccessful attempt to breach the Confederate defenses. (McCaslin 2003, 58) The unsuccessful attempt to

damage the fort with the explosion meant that the Union force would have to attack Fort Fisher via a naval artillery bombardment, which began at 11:30am on Christmas Eve. The Union pounded the Confederate fort with artillery fire for five hours on the first day, firing more than 10,000 rounds from 635 guns. (McCaslin 2003, 59) While Admiral Porter believed that the first day's assault had substantially damaged the fort, exclaiming "the firing of the monitors was excellent, and when their shells struck great damage was done," Fort Fisher emerged largely unscathed from the first day's assault. Indeed, the artillery bombardment simply resulted in the destruction of Colonel Lamb's headquarters building and half of the fort's garrison quarters while the majority of the Confederate guns were kept intact and only twenty three soldiers were seriously injured in the assault (McCaslin 2003, 61) prompting Lamb to state "never since the invention of gun powder was there so much harmlessly expended as in the first day's attack on Fort Fisher." (Robinson 1998, 128)

On December 25, Admiral Porter and General Butler devised a plan for battle which consisted of the Navy resuming their heavy artillery bombardment with the Army forces landing on the beach amidst the cover provided by the assault. (Item 26) In keeping with this plan, the Union Navy resumed their massive shelling on Christmas Day, firing over ten thousand rounds while the Confederates launched only six hundred. (McCaslin 2003, 62) While the Union force took the lack of Confederate return fire as a sign that Fort Fisher's guns had been effectively silenced, with Admiral Porter believing that "there was not a blade of grass or a piece of stick in that fort that was not burned up" (Gragg 1991, 73), Colonel Lamb, concerned by a pervasive lack of ammunition had ordered that the guns only be fired every half hour unless the fort came under a direct land assault. (Robinson 1998, 124)

However, the Union strategy still prevailed in that, under cover of the intense naval bombardment, the Union troops were easily able to land on the beach to the north of the fortification. While the troops landed with little difficulty, upon a thorough reconnaissance of the fort General Butler came to believe that it was left “substantially uninjured as a defensive work” and that it would be butchery to order a land assault against the Confederate bastion. (Item 26) The lessons learned from the brutal and bloody Union assault on Battery Wagner, in which a small contingent of Confederate soldiers were able to inflict a massive amount of casualties on a superior Union force from the shelter of their fortification featured prominently in the mind of General Butler who viewed the possibility of a similar disaster occurring at Fort Fisher as four times more likely. (Gragg 1991, 87) In light of his concerns that assaulting the fort in its undamaged condition would result in a bloody defeat and reports from Admiral Porter that the Union fleet was running low on ammunition,

General Butler decided to abandon the assault and signaled the retreat from Fort Fisher on December 25, 1864, much to Admiral Porter’s chagrin.

Due to what Admiral Porter deemed as General Butler’s incompetence, the first battle of Fort Fisher resulted in a Confederate victory and a Union defeat. While the Union assault had succeeded in neutralizing a few of the fort’s many guns, the defensive works of Fort Fisher remained largely intact.) With the failure of the Union assault, Fort Fisher was left in place to guard the Cape Fear and thus protect Wilmington. (Gragg 1991, 99) With Fort Fisher still standing, Wilmington remained open to blockade runners, rendering the Union blockade of the Confederacy useless and ensuring that the Confederacy was still able to procure vital supplies, enabling the Confederate armies to continue in their fight against the Union.

From: [cwnc.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu](http://cwnc.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu)

