



The Dispatch
Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.AlbanyCivilWar.org

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December 2010

PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND FALL GEN. A.P. HILL KILLED NEAR BOYDTON ROAD



Size

“Richmond and Petersburg have fallen; they have gone down in a blaze of glory, and with a record unstained by one blot of shame. All that the enemy have gained, has been purchased at a terrible price in blood, while our own army, although suffering severely, is still strong, intact, and ready for its future work. General A.P. Hill is said to have been killed or mortally wounded. He was passing through the woods and came upon two Yankees, whose surrender he demanded, but instead of yielding one of them drew sight and shot him through the body. Whether he was killed outright or not we don’t know. It is thought by some that he is in the hands of the enemy and probably still alive. General Gordon is reported mortally wounded. He was one of the lions of the day. General Pickett is said to have been killed. These reports may all prove premature, and I recommend that they be received with caution. Our total losses are estimated at from eight to fifteen thousand, of whom a considerable portion are prisoners. That of the enemy can only be guessed at; but officers who were engaged at the front and saw something of the slaughter, state it cannot be less than from forty to fifty thousand. The scene in Richmond beggars all description.” *Danville, Va. April 5, 1865 The Evacuation of Richmond, Confederate newspaper account*

**DECEMBER MEETING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2010
WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY**

**MEET LT. GEN. A.P. HILL
& HOLIDAY PARTY**

Social Hour	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	7:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Presentation	7:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Questions & Answers	8:30 – 9:00 p.m.
More Socializing	9:00 – 10:00 p.m.

CDCWRT MEETING

The December meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be on Friday, December 10th. This will be the first meeting at a trial new location at the Watervliet Senior Center, 1541 Broadway in Watervliet. Our special guest presenter will be living historian, Patrick Falci, who will do a first person presentation at General Ambrose Powell Hill.

Patrick gained fame in his role as A.P. Hill in the movie, Gettysburg. Patrick was also historical advisor to director, Ron Maxwell, for the movie, Gods and Generals. On set, he provided the director, actors, costume department, set dressers, props and other departments with historical information.

Patrick has appeared as actor and historian in documentaries including Lincoln and Lee at Antietam, 135th and 140th Antietam Anniversaries, Gettysburg: 3 Days of Destiny, and Gettysburg 135th Anniversary.

He was a Civil War re-enactor for 15 years with the 14th Tennessee --- Archer's Brigade, Hill's Light Division, and had been immersed in the history of the Civil War for even longer. For the movie, Gettysburg, he played the role of Hill, and for the past 15 years he has been enlightening the public about "Lee's Forgotten General."

Patrick is a three-time president of the Civil War Round Table of New York (City), and he has travelled the country speaking to round tables, historical organizations, schools and preservation groups

He is the recipient of numerous awards including the FT. A.P. Hill Commander's Award for Excellence; the U.S. Army M.D. of Washington, DC Commanding General's Award; the U.D.C. Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal; the S.U.V. Commander's Award for Excellence; the North Carolina Old State Award; the S.C.V. Distinguished Honorary Member A.N.V. and the U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute Commendation.

In his life-long commitment to preservation, he has a lifetime membership in the Civil War Preservation Trust and he has helped raise \$10,000 to restore Hill's 13th Virginia Regimental Flag. Hill's wife, Dolly, made the flag in part from her own wedding dress.

Patrick will speak on the life of Lt. Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill.

PATRICK FALCI AS LT. GEN. A.P. HILL



DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO THE WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

From the south: Take Interstate 787 north from Albany to exit 8 (Watervliet & Green Island). Turn left at the light on the exit ramp onto 23rd Street. Go 2 blocks to second traffic light and turn left onto Broadway. Go 0.4 miles and arrive at the Center on your right.

From the north: Take Interstate 787 south from Cohoes to exit 8. Turn right onto 23rd Street, In one block at light, turn left onto Broadway as listed above.

From the west: Take any road that intersects 787 (Interstate 90, route 378, route 155, or route 7) and follow the above directions. Or take route 2 (Troy-Schenectady Rd) which become 19th Street into Watervliet, and turn right on Broadway before going over the bridge into Troy.

From the east: look across the river and go

HOLIDAY PARTY

The December meeting is also our Holiday Party. The Round Table will provide a variety of items, but if you would like to bring your favorite party snack to share with others, the Board would be most appreciative

SUE KNOT

Sue died at 3:30 a.m. on Monday, November 29, 2010 after a courageous battle against malignant uterine cancer. A eulogy will appear in the January newsletter. Sue will be missed by all who knew her.

A.P. HILL – A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

A.P. Hill was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, on November 9, 1825. He graduated from West Point with distinction in 1847, and began service with the U.S. 1st Artillery during the Mexican War. In March of 1861 he resigned his commission, and became a colonel of the 13th Virginia Regiment. Hill was commissioned brigadier-general in February 1862, and quickly rose of major-general in May 1862. In 1862 he started Lee's Seven Days Campaign at Mechanicsville, saved Jackson from defeat at Cedar Mountain and probably saved Lee's whole army with his late afternoon attack at Sharpsburg. Hill gave the name "The Light Division" to his force presumably for its speed in executing maneuvers.

Hill was handsome and impetuous. He was extraordinarily affectionate towards his men and was always concerned with their welfare. He dressed with an eye for the picturesque, and sometimes wore a fireman-red wool hunting shirt into battle. When his men saw it, they would pass the word down the line, "Little Powell's got on his battle shirt."

Yet his attitude with superiors was notoriously prickly. Longstreet placed Hill under arrest and the two men were at the point of a duel. Lee assigned Hill to Jackson's Corps. Jackson soon placed Hill under arrest for disregarding marching procedures. Hill sought vindication through a court-martial, but Jackson died first.

After Jackson's death, Lee reorganized his army and gave Ewell Jackson's Corps, but he also formed a new Third Corps under the command of the newly promoted Lt.-Gen. Hill. At thirty-seven he was the youngest of the corps chiefs. He precipitated the Battle of Gettysburg when he gave permission for his division commander, Henry Heth, to march towards Gettysburg in search of supplies on July 1st, 1863. Instead of the Home Guard that had been seen on June 30th, Buford was there with Union Cavalry.

Hill was ill on July 1st, and in fact his overall health was frail. It is unclear from what he may have been suffering, but it probably was the result of complications from advanced stages of gonorrhea, which he had contracted as a cadet at West Point. Hill spent July 2nd with Lee near the Lutheran Seminary. He brought up Anderson's Division to support Longstreet's assault, but communicated poorly with Anderson, who did not commit all of his force in the late afternoon when the Confederate line almost broke the Union line on Cemetery Ridge. On July 3rd, Hill approached Lee with a request to lead his entire corps in the attack. Lee refused. The attack is remembered as Pickett's Charge, even though two-thirds of the forces were from Hill's command.

He continued to lead Third Corps, but was involved in a disastrous ambush at Bristoe Station, and was too ill to command at the Battle of the Wilderness. On March 31, 1865, he returned to duty from sick furlough at the Petersburg front. At 4:40 a.m. Union General Wainwright ordered his Sixth Corps to attack the Confederate line near the Boydton Plank Road, capturing the road. Hill was reconnoitering his lines with Sgt. Tucker, and saw a small group of Union soldiers from

Co. F of the 138th Pennsylvania Infantry. Hill and Tucker rode up to within 10 yards of two of the group and called for them to surrender. Instead the infantrymen fired at the two riders, killing Hill instantly. Tucker escaped and found other officers who rode off to advise Lee of the dreadful news.

Lee said "He is at rest, and we who are left are the ones to suffer." Hill's body was recovered, and he was buried near the Hill homestead across the James River. In 1867 he was moved to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. In 1891 his remains were relocated under a monument to him at Lanburnum Avenue and Hermitage Road in Richmond.

Despite his inconsistent performance on the battlefield, Hill was far from lacking decision. The trouble was just the opposite --- he was too heedless and impetuous by far. His policy was to pitch headlong into whatever lay in his path, with little regard for its strength or position. Hill and his "Light Division" had become the embodiment of the Confederate Army's offensive spirit. One fact bespeaks their mythic pull: both Jackson and Lee would call on Hill and his men in their dying delirium. It is no wonder that the modern U.S. Army tank training facility is Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia.

UP-COMING EVENTS

The following list of up-coming events is provided to help Round Table members plan their long term calendars. These are events that involve our Round Table, especially events that provide opportunities to raise funds for our preservation activities. Some events may change as the year progresses, so members should check the list monthly.

Friday, January 14, 2011 is the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. It will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center, and is the annual Potpourri Meeting. Anyone wishing to do a brief presentation or display Civil War memorabilia, should contact Matt George. Steve Muller will do an update on the USS Monitor. Gene Gore will talk about the 27th Massachusetts VI during the Civil War in North Carolina & Virginia. Dave Getty will talk about the casino fight in Gettysburg.

There will be exhibits by June Howe on Reunions of Upton's 121st NYVI and by Carol Litrides on two letters from a soldier in the 2nd NY Cavalry.

Friday, February 11, 2011 is the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our speakers will be Kate Larson & Scott Christianson and they will talk about Harriet Tubman.

BOARD MEETING

The November Board Meeting was held on November 22nd. A new supply of Irish Brigade t-shirts and sweat shirts were ordered. Remembrance Day at Gettysburg grossed around \$900 for the CDCWRT. 43 people attended the banquet and the quilt was chosen by the first prize winner. The raffle made \$251.

Mike Affinito has a temporary web-site up and running while we await paperwork for transfer of the old web-site from an individual account to the Round Table account. The temporary web-site is <http://capitaldistrictcivilwarroundtable.club.officelive.com>

ELECTIONS IN JANUARY

As stated in our by-laws, the Board will put forth a proposed slate of candidates for the next year. The slate will appear in two newsletters prior to the election. Since the December meeting will be busy with a guest speaker, holiday cheer and a new meeting site, the Board decided to postpone the election until the January 2011 meeting. At that meeting, any member in good standing can be nominated as a candidate for any position. The proposed slate is as follows:

President – Matt Farina
Vice-President – Gene Gore
Secretary – Mary Ellen Johnson
Treasurer – Fran McCashion
At-Large – Bob Mulligan
At-Large – J.J. Jennings
At-Large – Art Henningson
President ex-officio – Matt George

NOVEMBER MEETING

A congenial crowd gathered at our annual banquet to hear Michael Kauffman, author of *American Brutus*, analyze the character and personality of John Wilkes Booth. Noting that "all history is about people and the interactions of personalities," he recounted how his teen age fascination with the Lincoln assassination plot and Booth's role in it led to his determination to write a groundbreaking biography. This turned out to be a 30 year project.

In gathering materials for his book, Kauffman followed Booth's wartime travels and activities by examining contemporary newspapers published wherever he happened to be at the time. Insight about Booth, in his day a celebrity actor, came from what was being written about him and what the attitude of the newspapers' editors was toward the war and government policies. An additional method of gaining insight into the historical

events was to reenact them, something Kauffman did for several incidents in Booth's life. Leaping from a twelve foot ladder to simulate Booth's leap to the stage of Ford's theatre, rowing across the Potomac in the dark and burning down an old tobacco barn were all means by which Kauffman sought a fuller understanding of Booth's actions. In addition he scoured a huge number of documents relating to the conspirators' trial including appeals filed after the convictions that provided information that was inadmissible for the defense under the rules of criminal trials in the 1860s.

Booth, a Southern sympathizer, was born into a family heritage which lent itself to intensive political attitudes, in his case carried to extremes. With a father whose middle name was Brutus, Booth had been given the middle name of Wilkes, after an 18th century English antigovernment activist. Often in the years just previous to or during the war, by coincidence or design, Booth was often in a location when government related unrest or violence broke out: Harpers Ferry for John Brown's hanging, the 1861 Baltimore riots against Federal troops, New York City during the draft riots, Montreal at the time of the St Albans raid were just four of several. Many of his stage appearances were in dramatic roles where a tyrant was killed. In his despair at the South's fading hopes and anger at the Federal government, Lincoln became the tyrant who was the focus of his rage.

As the South's situation was seriously deteriorating, Booth formed a plan to kidnap Lincoln, whisk him across the Potomac to Richmond where he would be held hostage to force resumption of prisoner exchanges. Under the guise of buying farmland near the river, Booth reconnoitered the area, becoming acquainted with Herold, Surratt and Atzerodt, men he pulled into his plans. Cunningly manipulating them, once Lee surrendered, they became participants along with others in the assassination conspiracy.

According to Kauffman, Booth staged the assassination as you would a play, assigning roles to the conspirators, none of whom were fully aware of the entire scenario, all deceived by Booth. After Lincoln's death, at the same time Booth was dying after being mortally wounded in a burning Virginia tobacco barn, a frantic investigation was going on in Washington. The cunning Booth in the weeks before the plot unfolded, deliberately had contact with a large number of people, including close family members, which would somehow connect them with the crime, obscuring his involvement

and confusing the investigators. Only Booth knew the whole story and being aware that at that time, criminal trials only permitted the prosecution to bring in witnesses or present evidence, it would make defendants unable to mount a defense and implicate him.

Booth, the American Brutus, is despised and infamous, while Lincoln is regarded as one of the greatest Americans of all.

This excellent summary was provided by Mary Ellen Johnson, our secretary.

THE ROAD TO WAR: PART 3

Major Robert Anderson was between a rock and a hard place. He was under orders from Secretary of War Floyd to take no actions that would precipitate a response from the South Carolinians, and at the same time he was to secure the safety of Ft. Moultrie. No reinforcements were to be sent to him, but he was expected to guard Moultrie, Sumter and Castle Pinckney. He was denied access to the U.S. Arsenal in Charleston for muskets and ammunition. He was not to discuss any of his conflicting orders with his officers. He had sent three communications to Floyd requesting guidance.

Secretary Floyd finally responded to Anderson's December 1st letter. Anderson was to turn over to the South Carolina militia the names of his workmen who were eligible to be enrolled in the militia. Floyd ordered him to NOT reduce the height of the sand dunes around Moultrie in the mistaken belief that the dunes were on private property and had houses built on them. Floyd did approve the plan to send 30 workmen to Castle Pinckney who were to be taught how to handle muskets and artillery pieces. At Anderson's request, an addition engineer, Lt. Richard Meade, was sent. He arrived December 10th. Meade was subsequently sent to Pinckney, but he could no longer buy necessary lumber in Charleston, and no muskets could be spared to train the workmen.

Meanwhile, back in Washington Secretary Floyd on December 7th ordered Major Don Carlos Buell from the Adjutant General's Office, to undertake a delicate assignment. He was to review the situation in Charleston, and carry an unwritten, memorized message to Anderson. Buell was to remind Anderson to avoid confrontation, but if one occurred, he was to hold the federal position in the harbor. The exact quote according to Buell was "The duty of maintaining defensively the authority of the

Government was distinctly confirmed.” This implied that Buchanan’s administration expected Anderson to do whatever was necessary to maintain the federal presence there.

Buell arrived on December 9th and did his inspection the next day. He was convinced Moultrie was too vulnerable but Sumter was almost invulnerable. The next day before he left Buell admitted to Anderson, “You ought to have written evidence of these instructions.” He then put Secretary Floyd’s orders into writing, made 2 copies, and took one of them back to Washington with him. In the copies were these points.

Reinforcements had not been sent, nor actions taken purposefully that might add to the excited state of the public mind.. Floyd was confident the South Carolina government could restrain acts of popular violence, but if one of the forts was attacked or if Anderson had “tangible evidence of a design to proceed to a hostile act,” then – and only then –he could move the garrison to any of the forts he chose. If he were attacked, Floyd expected him to defend himself to the last extremity. Buell told Anderson that this is all I am authorized to tell you, but my personal advice is that you not allow the opportunity of moving to Sumter escape you.

When Buell returned to Washington he reported to Floyd, and handed him the copy of the orders. Amazingly, Floyd glanced at it and wrote on it, “This is in conformity to my instructions to Major Buell” and he signed and dated it. It is not clear if Floyd realized he had just authorized Anderson’s move to Ft. Sumter. Floyd showed the note to President Buchanan whose only comment was to modify the order of fighting to the death. Floyd wrote Anderson that if his garrison were attacked by so superior a force that resistance would be futile and loss of life useless, it would be his duty to yield and make the best surrender terms possible. Such surrender would be the conduct of an honorable, brave and humane officer. Anderson was ordered to not share this with his officers unless absolutely necessary. This communication was received on December 23rd.

Why did Secretary of War Floyd almost absent-mindedly sign the orders that he originally wanted Major Buell to memorize? He was very distracted at this time. And what about President Buchanan’s comment? In order to understand the situation, I must digress a bit.

In 1860, when most people spoke of the Union, they meant a relatively loose confederation of sovereign states. The office of president was still felt to have little power despite Monroe and Jackson. The traditional interpretation of the constitution was that Congress, not the president, was responsible for domestic policy. Buchanan was a kind man, very religious, and extraordinarily courteous. He had been in government all his adult life. He tried to be friendly to everyone even though he could not be a friend to everyone. In the secession crisis Old Buck’s personality and training led him to avoid doing anything that might lead to war, and in this situation he believed any military action would only make things worse. If everyone would remain calm, the crisis should pass if Congress should discover some legislative mechanism to appease southerners anxious about Lincoln’s possible election. Buchanan considered the concept of secession absurd and unconstitutional, but also felt that South Carolina had the right to argue about it and express its view. In his state of the union address in December 1859 he said he intended to maintain all the property owned by the federal government.

Of the 1500 clerks working for the government, many felt stronger state allegiance than to Washington. Some began to wear the same blue cockades on their coats that those in Charleston wore. Both the army and the navy were riddled with those who would side with their state if it came to war. For example every message from Anderson to Washington went first to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, who would join the Confederacy in 1861. The quartermaster general was Joseph E Johnston, who would become a great Confederate general. The chief of the Washington Naval Yard and most of his subordinates would join the Confederacy.

The matter of allegiance also infected Buchanan’s cabinet. The Secretary of State was Lewis Cass who was a war hero, was experienced and had served as Secretary of War with Jackson during his dealings with South Carolina in 1832. But Cass was old and ill, and during his absences the office was run by his assistant, William Henry Trescot, a South Carolina planter, who was the highest ranking Carolinian in the cabinet during the Sumter crisis. Howell Cobb was Secretary of Treasury, an influential Georgian who owned 1000 slaves and who was the first to resign after Lincoln’s election. Jacob Thompson, Secretary of the Interior, from Mississippi, kept his opinions to himself, but during the war was the Confederacy’s agent in Canada, developing plots to burn northern cities like New York.

John Floyd, Secretary of War, had been governor of Virginia. He opposed secession but sympathized with the South, and was trusted by neither side. The entire war department with its eight bureaus had only 93 employees. Floyd had been involved in some banking scandals as governor. He was frivolous about details and casual about public monies. Senator Jefferson Davis, who had been a good, previous Secretary of War, was critical of Floyd's shoddiness.

In 1858 Floyd began an arrangement with William Russell, a businessman who supplied the army's western forts. Russell played the stock market and over-extended himself, and he went to Floyd for help. The scatterbrained Secretary was concerned that if Russell went under, the army would have trouble supplying its scattered garrisons. Floyd signed drafts paying for Russell's transport work in advance. The drafts were backed by the U.S., so they were equivalent to money. Russell took them to banks, converted them to cash, and paid off his immediate debts. The ease of all this induced Russell to spend more recklessly. He then went back to Floyd for more drafts, which were supplied. But Floyd was such a poor administrator that he kept no accurate records of these transactions.

Eventually several senators and Buchanan got word of this and ordered Floyd to cease immediately; but despite his promises, Floyd continued to sign drafts. All of this unraveled in late 1860 as the Sumter crisis occurred. On December 22nd Buchanan, being too nice a gentleman, asked his Vice-President, John Breckinridge, a relative of Floyd and also later to become a Confederate officer, to persuade Floyd to resign. Breckinridge grumbled but finally agreed. Buchanan expected the resignation at any moment, but it did not come and Floyd continued to attend critical cabinet meetings with everyone else in the room impatient to see him go. Old Buck did not know how to fire him, and as a result, Floyd continued to make critical decisions in regards to the situation in Charleston

In the meantime, in December the Mercury newspaper in Charleston published a detailed article on Ft. Sumter with pictures. It stated that whoever held Sumter could defy a naval attack. It implied that taking the fort in its present condition would be easily taken by a landing party with scaling ladders placed in its open embrasures. Capt. John Foster, the head U.S. engineer, was also concerned and considered arming the loyal workmen in Sumter. On December 17th he went to the arsenal in Charleston and

asked for 2 muskets to arm the ordnance sergeants in Pinckney and Sumter. At the arsenal, Capt. Humphreys had again replaced Col. Huger and he, ever the bureaucrat, told Foster he could not have 2 muskets, but added matter-of-factly that he could have 40 muskets instead. The rationale was simple and was wrapped in military red tape. Col. Huger had not left any document allowing two muskets for 2 sergeants. But the October request for 40 muskets had been approved by Washington, and that approval had never been rescinded. In fact it had been forgotten about, but the 40 muskets were still sitting there, neatly boxed, waiting to be picked up by someone from the garrison. Foster took the 40 muskets and no one of the militia stationed around the arsenal stopped him. He gave 2 to the sergeants and stored 19 at Pinckney and 19 at Sumter.

The next day the head of the South Carolina militia went to the arsenal and reminded Humphreys that Col. Huger had promised Gov. Gist that the arsenal would not turn over any weaponry to the federal troops. Humphreys sent a note to Foster asking the muskets be returned. Foster went to talk to Anderson about the situation. Anderson, under orders to avoid confrontation, suggested Foster return the muskets. Foster was angry, wrote to his superiors in Washington, but agreed to meet with Humphreys and the head of the militia.

They convinced Foster there was no unruliness in the city, and he promised them he would wire the Ordnance Office in Washington for a decision. In the meantime, someone in Charleston had wired Assistant Secretary of State Trescott in Washington, who by now had resigned his position. He took the telegram to Floyd who said he had not ordered any muskets moved, and demanded they be returned immediately. After midnight 2 telegrams arrived for Foster and Anderson. They were rushed by cutter to the forts. Foster was ordered to immediately return the muskets. Anderson's informed him of Foster's telegram. The muskets were returned that day.

Later that same day Foster sent a longer message to Floyd explaining that he took the Secretary's telegram to mean he was not expected to fight for either Sumter or Pinckney, and that he was merely expected to keep the gates closed. If these were knocked down by Carolinians, he and his men should do nothing. If this was incorrect, he hoped the government would provide him with clear instructions.

END OF PART THREE

**CDCWRT
P.O. BOX 14871
ALBANY, NY 12212-4871**

Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly in various locations in the Capital District. This newsletter is published eleven times per year. Annual dues are \$25. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.

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