



# The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

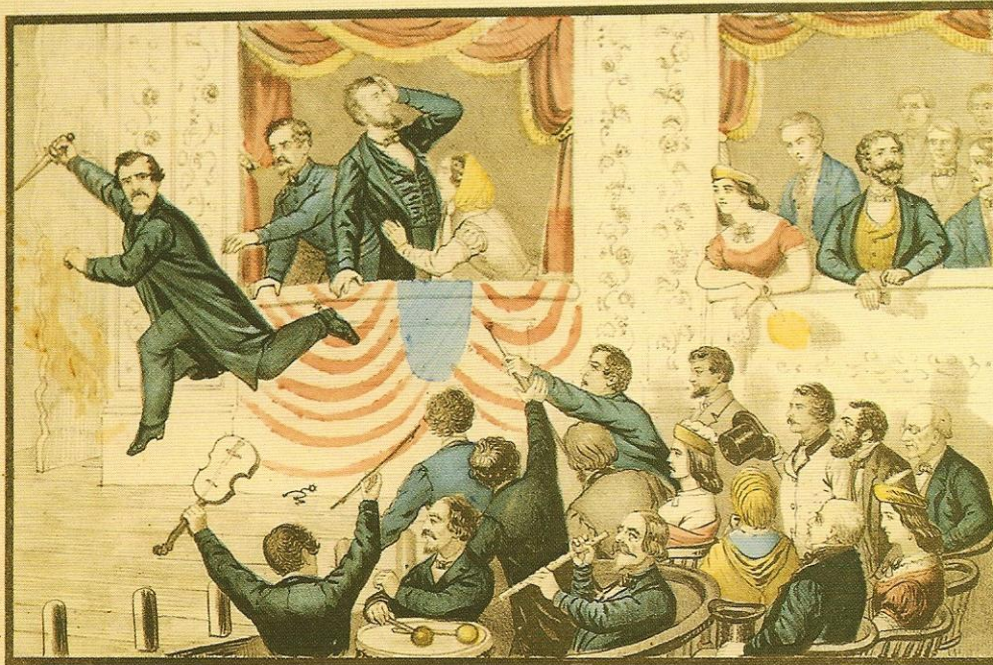
PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212  
[www.AlbanyCivilWar.org](http://www.AlbanyCivilWar.org)



Volume 27, Number 14

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# PRESIDENT LINCOLN ASSASSINATED!



## THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

At Ford's Theatre, Washington, on the night of Friday, April 14, 1865.

PUBLISHED BY A. PHARAZYN, 299 SOUTH ST PHILAD'A

**NOVEMBER MEETING  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2010  
BANQUET  
JOHN WILKES BOOTH & THE  
LINCOLN CONSPIRACIES  
MICHAEL W. KAUFFMAN**

Social Hour	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Dinner	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Presentation	8:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Questions & Answers	9:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Raffle	

**CDCWRT MEETING**

*The November meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be on Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. This will be the FALL BANQUET which will be held at the Best Western Sovereign Motel on Western Ave. in Albany, opposite the entrance to the State University of New York at Albany.*

*Our special guest speaker will be author, Michael Kauffman who will speak about JOHN WILKES BOOTH AND THE LINCOLN CONSPIRACIES. Kauffman's book, American Brutus, was published in 2005 to high acclaim. Kauffman is a political historian and graduate of the University of Virginia. He has studied the Lincoln assassination for more than 30 years. He has appeared on A&E, the History Channel, C-SPAN, and the Learning Channel. He was called to testify as an expert witness in the 1995 Booth exhumation hearings.*

*This will be a fascinating evening with Mr. Kauffman. Quoting him from an interview:*

**I also want to make it clear that the book is called *American Brutus*, but the title was meant to be ironic. Booth may have wanted to be Brutus, but Lincoln was certainly no Caesar. In Booth's world, Brutus was a hero, and he might have been a hero in the founding period as well. But America was no longer that insecure. The country had grown and thrived, and they no longer feared the loss of free government, as**

**earlier generations had. And they were no longer looking to the past for political guidance -- at least, not the way they once did. Booth didn't get that. All he got was that a lot of people hated Lincoln. With his Shakespearean background and his classical education, the word "tyrant" jumped out at him, and he figured there was only one way to deal with such people. It didn't matter that the criticism of Lincoln was overdrawn, or that those controversial war measures were a temporary last resort. And though Booth wouldn't have known it, Lincoln was absolutely sincere in his belief that the nation would someday return to normal with all its freedoms intact.**

*The social hour begins at 6:00 p.m. There will be a cash bar. A sit down dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. and the talk will follow at 8:00 p.m. A special raffle will follow. There is a choice of first prizes. Unfortunately, the unframed, signed Don Troiani print entitled "Garry Owen" was damaged and will not be available. For Confederate sympathizers there is a mounted and framed print by famed artist, Keith Rocco, entitled "The 5<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Cavalry in Middleburg." The print alone is out of circulation and is worth approximately \$400. For those who are undeclared in their allegiance or who are being dragged to this banquet by their significant others who are Civil War fanatics, there is a quilt. There will be books for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes and a special Civil War candy jar for 4<sup>th</sup> prize.*

*The quilt is a Civil War Era reproduction with fabric and pattern typical of the era. The top pattern was made by Pat Cunningham of the Flying Geese Quilt Shop in Colonie. Linda Soden performed all the hand quilting. The back is unbleached muslin. The quilt measures 68" x 77" and is valued at \$500-600.*

*Tickets for the raffle are included in this newsletter and more can be obtained at the dinner. They are \$2.00 apiece or 3 for \$5.00. For the quality of these prizes, it would be wonderful if every member of the Round Table (all 108 of you) bought \$5.00 worth. If everyone attending the banquet bought ANOTHER \$5.00 worth of tickets, it would be a miracle!!*

*Dinner choices are listed on the same sheet at the tickets. The DEADLINE for the dinner selection is MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>.*





## CHANGE, CHANGE, CHANGE!

The Board of the CDCWRT has had to make some significant changes in the past several weeks. While these may seem disruptive, circumstances have dictated that change must occur. For some time now, the Round Table website has been out-dated and neglected. It was not possible to use it in any meaningful way. Mike Affinito has organized and updated our membership list. The newsletter now goes out by email to some members at their request. They receive the newsletter 5-7 days earlier than those who wait for a hardcopy in the regular mail. Mike has agreed to become the new web-master. He has a Round Table website up and running on a “closed-circuit” basis. Hopefully we will be able to announce this month that the new website is up and running at the address listed on the front page of this newsletter.

The previous relationship with the Guilderland Public Library has changed recently. Power point equipment will not be provided; we will not be allowed to sell books, cachets or other items; most importantly, we will NOT be able to stay after 9:00 p.m. and must be out of the library at 9:00 sharp. Long-time members may recall we moved from the Bethlehem Public Library for that reason. For the months of December and January we will be trying a new location, the WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER. Please make a note of this change. We will announce it again, with directions, in December. Please pass on to friends, who may attend our meeting but are not yet members, of the change in venue.

## 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, December 10, 2010 is the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. This will also be our holiday meeting. The scheduled speaker is Patrick Falci who will do a living history presentation as Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill. This meeting will be held at the Senior Center in Watervliet.**

**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.**

## BOARD MEETING

The October Board Meeting was held on October 18<sup>th</sup>. The treasurer reported \$1296.51 in the regular account and \$4862.31 in the preservation account after the \$1500 was donated to CWPT at last month’s meeting. The board discussed the upcoming banquet and the desire to find a new meeting place. A number of sites will be investigated including libraries, senior centers, churches and the Watervliet Arsenal. The CDCWRT will NOT participate in the Victorian Stroll in Troy this year since new rules will not allow non-profit groups to sell their merchandise. Other groups have also decided to withdraw. In accordance with by-laws, a slate of candidates for the December board elections will be proposed.

## ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER

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. At the December 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 –  
At-Large –  
President ex-officio – Matt George

## OCTOBER MEETING

At CDCWRT's October 9<sup>th</sup> meeting Chris Kelly's power point presentation of the Civil War art of Winslow Homer and Thomas Nast examined yet another facet of the nation's Civil War experience: how the war was portrayed for the home folks in the widely circulated illustrated news weeklies such as *Frank Leslie's Illustrated* and *Harper's Weekly*, each with a weekly circulation of over 100,000. Neither action photography nor photographic reproduction in a publication was technically possible at the time resulting in the illustrated weeklies depending on artists' sketches which they made into engravings for their pictorial content, supplied by men such as Homer and Nast. To create an engraved illustration, it was necessary for either of them to copy a photograph or to do an original drawing from life, then etch the scene or portrait on either a wood or stone block in reverse from the way it would appear in print.

Winslow Homer, beginning as a lithographer in his teen years, became a war correspondent and artist for *Harper's*. Disliking violence and gore, Homer's war scenes tended to be of a calmer nature...troops gathered around a campfire, women doing war work, an illustration of popular war songs being sung, Christmas boxes being given out in camp. His attitude meshed perfectly with Harper's editorial policy of avoiding the illustration of the bitter reality of war. Homer's engraving of a surgeon who is ministering to men while a battle rages nearby, fails to picture the gruesome scene a regimental surgeon would have actually faced as the wounded were brought in. This antiseptic rendering, and not the brutal reality, was just what *Harper's* wanted and was as much as the folks at home could deal with.

Homer's illustrations were often unsentimental in that sentimental era. The loneliness and boredom often endured by the troops was evinced by his portrayal of a lonely picket standing guard on a snowy morning or that of exhausted Army of the Potomac troops on the ground asleep on their arms. Whenever he drew background trees, they usually seemed ominous and the woods threatening.

Sometimes his illustrations contained many pictorial medallions showing a variety of scenes relating to one theme. An 1862 multiple image of the Army of the Potomac before Yorktown let the viewer see religious services, a ship conveying troops, reconnaissance of rebel works, an assault by Vermont volunteers, Berdan's sharpshooters and the enemy works.

Eventually Homer translated some of his Civil War drawings into oil paintings, now famous. "Prisoners at the Front" features a hard faced aristocratic Confederate with other prisoners obviously not of the slave owning class. "The Veteran in the Wheatfield" harvests grain, but wields a scythe reminding viewers of the death of the men cut down in their prime at the wheat field or peach orchard. Others are "The Scout" and "Skirmish in the Wilderness." He is remembered today not as an illustrator of *Harper's Weekly*, but as a serious and highly esteemed American artist famous for his

watercolors and oils of the sea, the tropics and the Adirondacks. Influenced by European impressionists, he continued to paint until 1910. [NOTE: The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie has a fine collection of Winslow Homer works if anyone is interested in seeing more of his art at [www.arkellmuseum.org](http://www.arkellmuseum.org).

Thomas Nast was essentially a cartoonist whose interpretations of Santa Claus, the elephant as a Republican symbol and Boss Tweed made a permanent impact on American culture. He was also uncomfortable with the violence of the battlefield and preferred drawing political cartoons, so effectively that Lincoln said Nast was the nation's best recruiter. Nast had no problem with being both biased and sentimental. His portrait of war in Virginia was represented by a desolate view of a swamp with a vulture, ruined and burned out houses. An antislavery cartoon stirred emotions with sights of Liberty chasing the slave driver, the inhumanity of a slave auction, punishment by whipping and the pursuit of runaway slaves. One New Year's Day spread showed the people of the North on the left, happy and well dressed while on the right a freshly dug grave, a legless veteran and a weeping woman represented the South.

In addition Nast was very patriotic and often included a secularly religious scene as part of his engraving. A secular altar where Liberty knelt praying was in a spread marking the first official Thanksgiving. Another, a *Harper's* centerfold, was the Union Christmas dinner where the empty chairs each have the name of a rebelling state. An insert medallion of the return of the Prodigal Son was reflected by Lincoln standing there inviting the Southerners to rejoin the nation.

A combination of anti-southern feelings and northern patriotism was evident when Santa was illustrated giving presents to the troops with Jeff Davis represented as a hanging puppet, possibly his future fate. One of his most sentimental was a double portrait, a lonely soldier in the snow thinking of home combined with a wife in earnest prayer while the little ones sleep.

Lincoln's assassination inspired a portrayal of Liberty weeping by Lincoln's casket. Just as Homer painted the returned veteran harvesting after the war, Nast portrayed a family Christmas just after the war. Excited children have their presents while above the fireplace hangs a sword and kepi and a father standing nearby, with one sleeve pinned short. Both images symbolized that the effects of war didn't end with the fighting.

Nast worked for *Harper's* for 45 years where his political cartoons had immense influence on public opinion of the time. His interpretation of Santa Claus created the lovable bearded fellow still with us today and is probably his lasting contribution.

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



**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.*

#### **THE OFFICERS**

President	Matt George	355-2131
Vice-President	Gene Gore	439-4569
Treasurer	Fran McCashion	459-4209
Secretary	Mary Ellen Johnson	861-8582
At-Large	Art Henningson	355-5353
At-Large	Walt Williams	688-2200
At-Large	Bob Mulligan	439-3802

#### **THE NONCOMS**

Newsletter	Matt Farina	439-8583
Program	Sue Knost	852-9888
Education	Matt George	355-2131
Refreshments	Cathy Febraio	330-0868
Membership	Mike Affinito	281-5583
Webmaster	Mike Affinito	
Historian	Fran McCashion	459-4209