



The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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



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NAST AND HOMER JOIN STAFF OF HARPER'S WEEKLY



THE WAR FOR THE UNION – A BAYONET CHARGE by Winslow Homer

**SEPTEMBER MEETING
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2010**

**THE CIVIL WAR ART OF
THOMAS NAST & WINSLOW
HOMER**

**GUILDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
ROUTE 20 WESTERN AVE
GUILDERLAND, NY**

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 Social	9:00 – 9:30 p.m.

1967-72 he was Associate Professor of Slavic and Eastern Languages at Boston College. He then changed his career and became an Episcopalian Priest for thirty years in Florida. He retired in 2002 and reverse migrated to New York. He has had a longtime interest in the Civil War and was a member of the Palm Beach CWRT. He is also a re-enactor. He was with the 7th Conn. VI in Florida, and now is with the 125th NYVI of Troy. We are proud to have him as a member of the CDCWRT in addition.



CDCWRT MEETING

The October meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be on Friday, October 8th at the Guilderland Public Library on Western Ave. in Guilderland, NY. Our special guest speaker will be Chris Kelly. His presentation is entitled “The Civil War Art of Thomas Nast and Winslow Homer.”

Although the camera and the photograph were in use at the time of the Civil War, time exposures were necessary. Action could not be photographed; but the illustrator could portray what he saw, or was told. All of us have looked through newspapers of the times, such as Harper’s Weekly or Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper. German-born Nast started working for Leslie in 1855 and then for Harper’s in 1859. Pictured to the right is Christmas 1863. Our visual impressions of Santa Claus were greatly influenced by Nast. Homer was born in America and was largely self-taught. He started as a commercial illustrator. Harper’s sent him to sketch the camps and the campaigns of McClellan. He expanded from illustrator to painter.

Chris Kelly will present a power point presentation of the war art of these prolific artists. Chris was born in Sydney, Australia, grew up in Chappaqua, NY, and graduated from Princeton University in 1963. From

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.

On Saturday, October 9th and Sunday, October 10th the CDCWRT will have a tent at the Schoharie Stone Fort Civil War Weekend. Volunteers are needed to man the tent both days. This is a good local event for new volunteers to ‘cut their teeth on.’ The booth will have T-shirts, cachets and books for sale, as well as information about the round table and its programs.

On Friday, November 12, 2010 there will be a BANQUET as the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our special guest speaker will be author Michael Kaufman who will speak about John Wilkes Booth and the Lincoln Conspiracy. This will be a banquet meeting at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel. Raffle tickets and reservations are included in this newsletter. The prizes include a print and books. The purchase of raffle tickets is a means for ALL members to support your Round Table.

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.

BOARD MEETING

A board meeting was held on July 19th. The results of the 148th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg cancellation were discussed. The Round Table grossed just over \$2500 in sales of cachets, books and T-shirts. The treasurer’s report indicated \$2208.91 in the general account and \$5427.65 in the preservation account. Up-coming events at Schuyler Flatts and the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie were discussed. The schedule of meeting for the remainder of the calendar year were presented. The September meeting will be at the Rensselaer County Historical Society where the Dr. Bontecou collection which the Round Table donated, will be displayed.

A board meeting was held on August 23rd. The treasurer reported \$1691.58 in the general account and \$8183.80 in the preservation account. The picnic at Schuyler Flatts was a success. The scheduled meetings for the rest of the year were confirmed. The Round Table made a donation of \$1028.16 to CWPT

for the purchase of 12 acres of battlefield at Brandy Station. A large portion of the field has become available, and now the lion’s share of the battlefield will be preserved in a state that is very similar to the condition at the time of the battle. This was a 116:1 match, so our donation was leveraged to more than \$120,000. The website address of the Round Table may be changed. The board felt that it is very important that the website be up to date for the sesquicentennial.

A board meeting was held on September 20th. Matt George reported that \$439 was made from sales of T-shirts and books at the Saratoga Civil War Days. A new supply of shirts has been received.

In anticipation of the sesquicentennial, the Round Table is investigating a Civil War blog on the *Times Union* website beginning with Lincoln’s election in November of 1860. The NYS Archives Partnership Trust will honor actor, Richard Dreyfus, at the Egg on September 28th. The Round Table is a sponsor of the event and last year received a great deal of publicity and recognition for our support. The website for the CDCWRT is being updated and will be managed by Mike Affinito. Thanks to Mike, a number of members are now receiving their newsletters by email about one week before the hard copy is mailed. As numbers increase, the Round Table will save on mailing costs. Approximately 25-30 organizations have expressed interest in the Round Table’s desire to establish a Civil War bulletin board when organizations can list their Civil War activities for all. There are a number of activities that occur that do not seem to be well advertised. This bulletin board would allow enthusiasts in the region to support the many activities.

The board voted to let J.J. Jennings present 2 checks to CWPT at their fall conference in Franklin, TN. First, \$500 is donated for Spring Hill, TN for a 20:1 match. Secondly, \$1000 is donated for Franklin for a 2:1 match. Both are for land purchases. With this matching amount of \$12,000, our total of actual and matching funds to **\$808,441.66 !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

SEPTEMBER MEETING

CDCWRT members convened at the Headquarters of the Rensselaer County Historical Society for our September meeting to enable them to view a special

display of photographs and materials relating to Dr. Bontecou, a Civil War surgeon with local ties.

Matt Farina's introduction to Civil War medicine was followed by Bob Mulligan, who took on the persona of Rice C. Bull as he would have been as a GAR member reminiscing about his experiences. Bull, a local soldier of the 123rd New York, survived to write about his wounding and subsequent suffering at Chancellorsville, his story tying in with the evening's medical theme.

In the fierce fighting along the Orange Plank Road as the 123rd was trying to hold back Ramseur's onslaught, Bull felt a sting in his face followed by a gush of blood. As he headed back to find a surgeon, a second shot penetrated his left side above the hip causing him to collapse in a heap, unable to rise. As the battle raged around him Bull's situation became desperate. Finally two stretcher bearers carried him along to a shallow depression along a stream where Bull and the other wounded placed there would be safe from enemy fire.

When the fighting ceased and the smoke cleared, the Yankees had withdrawn, allowing the Confederates to come through. As they crossed the small stream the well disciplined men stepped carefully around the wounded so as not to make their agonies worse. Two men of the 123rd, one of them a musician, remained behind to alleviate their misery. Lying there in pain and great discomfort, Bull's blood encrusted face was cleansed, his jaw stiff and swollen. Fortunately for Bull neither his facial nor his side wound had broken any bones. The musician went back to the site of the firing line to recover knapsacks, hiding them from the Johnnies who were returning to gather up abandoned supplies. Early the next morning from supplies in the hidden knapsacks the musician made coffee for the men who had survived the harrowing night. Shortly after, the Confederates returned to bury the dead and move the wounded to a new location. Bull could barely walk and gratefully accepted a cane cut from a laurel bush by a compassionate Johnnie, a cane Bull still owned a half century later and that is now on display at the Rensselaer County Historical Society.

The wounded were taken to the area around the tavern where more than 500 wounded were gathered, many succumbing to their injuries during the next

eight days. A Third Corps surgeon and a 12th New Hampshire chaplain who remained behind to tend the wounded placed Bull and some others on a level spot, put up tents and filled canteens to give them some comfort. No food, no medicine, no nursing, no blankets, wounds sore and infected, awful stench from the dead being hastily buried in shallow graves; all had to be endured by Bull and his fellow wounded. A distraction came from the Johnnie who had cut Bull's cane, an Irishman who told Bull and the men nearby his life story as he shared coffee with them. He had worked in the South and having no ties in the North, ended up in the Confederate army and had been fighting for two years.

Finally some surgeons came in under a truce, and after placing a door on two barrels to make an operating table, began amputating, piling up arms and legs only ten feet from many of the wounded. Worse was to come as the weather changed, bringing in violent thunderstorms pouring torrents of rain, creating a pond where there was a depression in the ground. Some men drowned and all suffered from soaked blankets, clothes and the soggy earth, all adding to the men's misery. The temperatures dropped as the steady rain continued. The storm had destroyed most of the small supplies of coffee and hardtack. When the chaplain made a plea to General Lee for help, especially for food, 50 pounds of corn meal was sent to make thin pudding. More than that Lee couldn't spare and for the next few days this was the only food. The surgeons continued their work, but by now unattended wounds were becoming infected.

Finally a Federal ambulance train arrived, allowed to remove the prisoners after they signed a parole promise that they wouldn't fight again. Throughout this horrid ordeal the Johnnies had been kind to them and helped ready them for removal. Bull was handed his cane and told to keep it as a remembrance!

After adding to their pain and suffering by being transported in wagons over a corduroy road for two hours, a hospital was reached where the wounded were stripped of their filthy clothing, bathed, fed and had their injuries tended. Once his wounds had been attended to, Bull was furloughed home. Amazingly the recovered Bull went back to war with the 20th Corps in the Western Theater. Ironically he encountered the Irish Confederate, now a Union prisoner about to be sent North. Bull went on to Atlanta and was part of the

March to the Sea. His experience of being wounded in battle and its aftermath reflected the experiences of many thousands of soldiers on both sides, except that unlike all too many of them, Bull lived to survive his wounds and the horrors suffered by the casualties at Chancellorsville to return home and reach old age.

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

THE ROAD TO WAR – PART 2

By early September 1860, Lincoln's election to many seemed almost inevitable. In the fall of 1860, white Carolinians felt racial control was especially necessary because of the prospect of Lincoln's election. Vigilance committees patrolled the streets of Charleston at night looking for abolitionists. In October 1860 these groups began to form military bands called "Minute Men" with the aim to sustain Southern constitutionality in the Union, but if they failed in this goal, then they would establish their state's independence out of the Union. Members agreed to wear a blue cockade on the left side of their hats and provide themselves with a musket and a Colt revolver. Samuel Colt was in South Carolina to make many sales of his weapons.

On Oct 5th Gov. William Henry Gist wrote his fellow southern governors that South Carolina would likely secede if Lincoln won the election, and he urged them to join South Carolina in this action. By October 25th he had received no responses, so Gist and the political leaders of South Carolina agreed that if Lincoln won, the state must leave the Union and not wait for the others to decide.

Who was the commander of Fort Moultrie in 1860 at this time?

Col. John Lane Gardner, born in 1793, was 67 years old and lived in a rented house with his wife and daughter outside the fort. He had entered the army during the War of 1812, had performed well in the Mexican War, and served with some distinction against the Seminoles in Florida. But now he was old and tended to shunt off responsibilities. He was not like by any of his officers. Lt. Talbot wrote to his sister in 1860 that Gardner was **"utterly incompetent to command a post under the most favorable of circumstances."**

Meantime army engineer, Capt. Foster had the sand mound dug away from Moultrie's wall, cleared lines of fire to the beach, built a moat, sealed several entrances and built bump-outs to cover the road in front of the fort. In Charleston, people found this upsetting and barely tolerable. On November 3rd a rally was held where citizens wearing blue secessionist cockades marched to the fort and went inside to inspect the work. While his officers were upset about this invasion, Col. Gardner seemed frozen with uncertainty.

Around the same time, Lt. Snyder, in charge of construction at Fort Sumter, took the first action. He had noticed many of his workers were wearing the blue secessionist cockade, and since they were spending nights in Fort Sumter, Snyder asked Headquarters in Washington if he would be permitted to arm a few of the loyal workers. By October 31st the head of Army Ordinance agreed, and Secretary of War, John Floyd, casually approved the idea. In early November, Col. Gardner received a notice authorizing him to procure 40 muskets from the arsenal in Charleston. Gardner responded the day before the national election that he did not trust the loyalty of workers at either site, and instead requested troop reinforcements for both sites. Gardner also ordered Capt. Doubleday to obtain ammunition for Moultrie that had been used in normal practice. This Gardner did on election day, Nov 4th.

On this day, Lincoln won despite his name not appearing on the ballot in any Deep South state. Gov. Gist urged the legislature to summon a special convention to decide the state's future. He proposed immediately raising an army of 10,000 soldiers, but the legislature was cautious initially and did not follow his recommendation.

On November 5th, Capt Seymour and several men, dressed in civilian clothes, sailed to the arsenal dock. The Charleston vigilante committee arrived as the boat was being loaded with the supplies. Seymour did not want to initiate an ugly incident, so he returned the ammunition to the arsenal.

On Nov 6th Seymour went to the Mayor's office to ask permission to obtain supplies from the arsenal. When Seymour returned to Moultrie with permission, Col Gardner ordered Seymour to not pursue the issue

further. He felt that to accept the mayor's permission would be to sanction the right of a local official to dictate to the federal army. Gardner's officers disagreed since they felt that they had a right to move ammunition from one federal property to another.

Meantime in early November army headquarters in Washington also had finally reacted to the possibility of secession. Fitz-John Porter, an officer in the Adjutant General's Office, was sent to Charleston to analyze the situation and report back. Amazingly, the Secretary of War, Floyd, also signed the order on election day. Porter had arrived the day that Capt. Seymour had been denied the ammunition. Porter inspected facilities, spoke to officers, reviewed Moultrie's records and left; on November 11th he handed the army his scathing report.

He considered Moultrie virtually unguarded; the garrison was too small; he urged the army to send reinforcements; he stated the commander required much prudence and discretion to restore proper security without exciting the community to misconstrue actions; he made it clear that Gardner was not the proper commander.

In the meantime, on November 9th, before Porter's report had been submitted, President James Buchanan held a cabinet meeting. He had heard about the arsenal incident. He was confident war was not in the offing, but was concerned that the hot-blooded Carolinians might over-react and start something. Buchanan asked his cabinet if the garrison should move from Moultrie to Sumter. They discussed it at length and finally Buchanan felt it might be seen as a provocative act and therefore must be avoided. But he also decided that Col. Gardner was not the right person for this tinder-box and he must be replaced.

Secretary of War Floyd issued orders for the same Fitz-John Porter to visit and tell Maj. Anderson at West Point that he was to command at Moultrie and he should immediately go to Washington. In route, Porter and Anderson visited Gen Scott in New York City, who had not been told of the mission. Scott was miffed but advised Anderson that Moultrie should be reinforced, and that if not, he should transfer his command to Ft. Sumter. The next day Anderson met Floyd who reminded him how explosive Charleston was and that **no action should be taken that might light a spark** - - orders that were verbal and not

written.

He arrived at Moultrie on November 19th with the impossible task of strengthening the garrison without riling the civilian population or telling his officers about his orders. Over the next 5 months he shared little with his officers and was isolated.

On November 12th Gov. Gist placed a militia unit of 20 men outside the arsenal. Officially he stated he did this because of concerns about a slave insurrection after the election, but diary entries of people close to the governor indicated there was concern about a white mob arming itself which would indicate the South Carolina government was not in control.

Charleston leaders did not want any change in the status quo at Moultrie and on November 16th informed Col. Gardner the city would not permit him to receive reinforcements because it was feared this would arouse the citizens of the city..

But South Carolinians were already aroused. A Grand Jury was in session at the U.S. District Court in Charleston.. Foreman Robert Gourdin, a wealthy commercial leader of the city, stated that Lincoln's election had swept away the last hope for the permanence of these Sovereign States, and acting as an official of an American court, cut the South's first link to the federal government. Judge Andrew Gordon Magrath became the first paid federal official to resign his position on November 19th. It was on the same day that Anderson arrived in Charleston.

Who was Major Robert Anderson?

Anderson was born and raised in Kentucky. He graduated from West Point in 1825, and first fought in the Black Hawk War. He and another graduate, Jefferson Davis, escorted Chief Black Hawk to authorities. Davis and Anderson remained friends. He later fought in Seminole Wars and then the Mexican War where in the Battle of Molino del Rey, he was wounded 5 times after his command rushed into a courtyard and held out for 2 hours against forces on four sides. As a result he loathed war. "I think that killing people is a very poor way of settling national grievances."

He served on the staff of Gen. Winfield Scott and the two developed a close father-son relationship with Scott.. He later taught in the department of Artillery at

West Point for two years, and among his students who would become his friends, were William Tecumseh Sherman, Braxton Bragg and Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, whom he chose to assist him in teaching. His scholarly work on how to use and maneuver artillery became the bible on the subject.

His wife, Eliza Bayard Clinch or Eba, was a member of a Georgian plantation family. Her father was one of the richest rice plantation owners when he died. She inherited some slaves but sold them before 1860. Eba was a chronic invalid with complaints of headaches, weakness, feet and leg pain that may have indicated a disease process such as fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, rheumatic fever or neurasthenia. However she did bear four children and outlived her husband.

In the fall of 1860, Anderson was 55 and was on a small commission with his friend, Sen. Jefferson Davis, examining the curriculum of West Point. On November 15, 1860 he received this order:

***Major Robert Anderson, First Artillery, will forthwith proceed to Fort Moultrie and immediately relieve Bvt. Col. John Gardner, lieutenant-colonel of First Artillery, in command thereof
By command of Lieutenant-General Scott***

Why was Anderson sent to Moultrie? He had been born in a slave state, married the daughter of a famous Georgian politician, had been previously stationed at Moultrie, was a friend of Sen. Jefferson Davis, Sen. Crittenden of Kentucky and Gen. Scott. He was a gentle sort, well-mannered, a dutiful husband to a sick wife, a good father, a loyal servant of the Army, and a man of deep-rooted principles, very much like Robert E. Lee. He was a military hero and scholar. He hated politics and politicians and was vaguely sympathetic to the south. His position on slavery was ambiguous. He did oppose secession, but was a man of peace.

As Anderson settled into his new command, he knew that men in Charleston were openly making threats about Moultrie, and the fort's vulnerability was an invitation to disaster. There were still two big sand dunes several hundred yards east of the fort that would allow sharpshooters to fire DOWN into the garrison. Pinckney and Sumter were virtually unguarded, but if Pinckney had a small force of soldiers there, a mob from the city would be hesitant to attack Moultrie. On November 24th Anderson requested permission to

send 30 of Foster's workmen with an officer to Pinckney to make repairs and train the workmen to use artillery pieces. He also stated as had Gardner and Porter that Moultrie needed reinforcements immediately, but that it would need to be done secretly.

Communications to the Department of War in Washington went in a sealed bag by boat to Charleston's post office, then by train and wagon to Washington taking at best two days, but often more. Anderson's report brought no response. Four days later on November 28th Anderson wrote a second official report again stating that the south Carolinians had discovered Moultrie's weak points and knew how to attack the fort. He stated that if no reinforcements were to be sent, the best place for his command would be at Sumter. He also asked Secretary Floyd what he ought to do about the demand of a South Carolinian officer for the names of the appropriate workman so that they could be enrolled in militia units.

Anderson's source of information may have been Henry Gourdin, one of the secessionist leaders, who actually befriended Anderson when he arrived in the city. Gourdin probably kept Anderson advised of the mood of the city. Another source was Col. Benjamin Huger, an old friend of Anderson, who had been sent by Secretary Floyd to take over command of the arsenal in Charleston. Huger had visited Anderson on the November 28th to tell him the city was frantic over a rumor that reinforcements were being sent. Huger was ordered back to Washington on December 7th and met with Floyd, Scott and Buchanan urging them to send explicit orders to Anderson about what he was authorized to do in an emergency.

On December 1st Anderson sent a third report after he met with two Charlestonians who informed him that as soon as South Carolina seceded (when their convention met on December 17th) the state would demand the forts in their harbor, and would assault them if they were not handed over. He also reported a rumor that an artillery battery was being built on Sullivan Island to prevent Anderson from receiving additional supplies or men.

END OF PART TWO

(P.S. – save this newsletter so you can keep track of the players in future newsletters)

**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
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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

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