



# The Dispatch

*Newspaper of the*

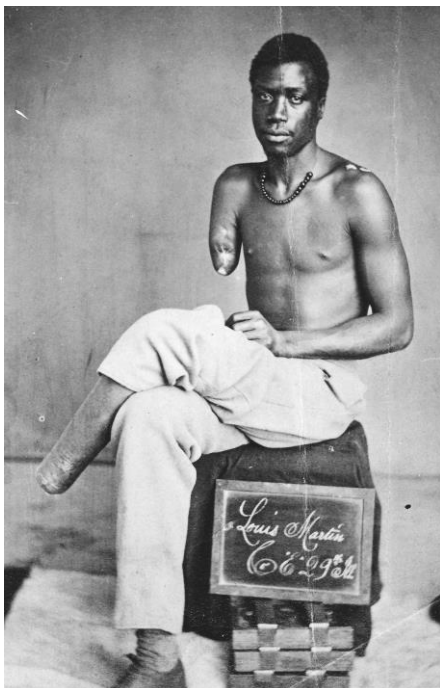
## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212  
www.cdcwrt.net



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June 2014



### CERTIFICATE OF DISABILITY FOR DISCHARGE

I certify, that I have carefully examined the said Lewis (Louis) Martin, and find him incapable of performing the duties of a soldier because of “loss of right-arm and left-leg by amputation for shell and gunshot wounds received in battle at Petersburg Va July 30<sup>th</sup> 1864 in charging the enemies works. In consequence of which he is totally disabled for military service and for civil occupation wholly.”

**R. B. Bontecou**  
Commanding the Harewood Hospital  
Bvt Lt-Col and Surg US Vols

### ENLISTMENT 29<sup>th</sup> U.S.C.T. Co. E

**When:** Feb 9 1864  
**Where:** Upper Alton, Ills  
**By whom:** W. H. Flint; term 3 y’rs.  
**Remarks:** Engaged in b\Battle near Petersburg Va.  
July 30 / 64  
Present with Co. during the  
Appomattox Campaign in the month of April 65

### DESCRIPTION

**Age** 24 years; **height** 6 feet 2 inches.  
**Complexion** Dark  
**Eyes** Blk; **hair** Blk  
**Where born:** Independence Ark  
**Occupation:** Farmer  
**Remarks:** Free before April 19 1861

**JUNE MEETING  
FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2014**

**ROGER BACON HALL  
SIENA COLLEGE  
NEW LOUDON RD -ROUTE 9  
LATHAM, NY**

**African American Faces of the  
Civil War: An Album**

**Ron Coddington**

**Presentation at 6:00 p.m.**

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE  
IN LOCATION AND  
TIME!!!!**

### **CDCWRT MEETING**

*The June meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will occur on Friday, June 13, 2014 at Roger Bacon Hall, connected to the Morrel Science Building on the Quadrangle of Siena College. Our 2012 Civil War sesquicentennial conference and a movie in December 2013 were held at Siena. Parking is located behind the Hall, accessed best from Fiddler's Lane.*

*Our very special guest speaker will be historian and author, Ron Coddington. His presentation is entitled, "African American Faces of the Civil War: An Album."*

*200,000 men of color served in the Union army and navy during the Civil War. Their contributions are little remembered, and their likenesses lost in time. Historian and author Ron Coddington unearthed a number of original, identified, wartime portraits of these men, and researched their lives and military service. He'll talk about where he discovered the rare photographs, what he found out about the men pictured, and portrait photography in America during the war.*

*Ron believes that the history of the Civil War is the stories of its soldiers, and has written three books on the subject. He also writes the column "Faces of War" in the Civil War News, and is a contributing author to the New York Times series Disunion. Last year, he became the editor and publisher of Military Images magazine.*

*This presentation is co-sponsored by the Underground Railroad Workshop.*

### **AUBURN TRIP IN MAY**

The CDCWRT overnight trip to Auburn on Saturday and Sunday, May 17-18, 2014 will visit the Seward house, Tubman house and the Women's Rights Hall of Fame. The cost is \$75 per person, and will cover a room for two at the Days Inn, tours, tolls and gas for drivers. Attendees will buy their own lunch and dinner. Call Matt George or Rosemary Nichols.

**DEADLINE DATE FOR THIS TRIP IS FRIDAY, MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>.**

### **CORRECTION!**

**SUE KNOST MEMORIAL CON-  
FERENCE: NEW YORK AND THE  
CIVIL WAR – 1864  
NOVEMBER 7-9, 2014  
SAVE THE DATE!**

## **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. Other events have a Civil War connection and are sponsored by other groups. Details of Sesquicentennial Civil War events can be found on the web-site: [www.nycivilwar150.org](http://www.nycivilwar150.org).*

On July 26, 2014, Saturday, at the NYS Military Museum, at 1:00 p.m. there will be a talk by Dr. Donald Wyman, a former Army and Central Intelligence Agency Officer. He is the author of The Chosen Path, based on the life of Elizabeth Van Lew, one of our nation's best spies. During the Civil War, Elizabeth Van Lew left Richmond society to spy for the Union Army and earn the title, Grant's spy.

Dr. Wyman will reveal many of the clandestine sources, methods and the professional trade craft that Ms. Van Lew employed while accomplishing her patriotic and dangerous mission as spymaster in the Confederate capital.

The program is a joint effort on behalf of the NYS Military Museum and Grant Cottage.

On September 12, 2014, the CDCWRT will meet at the Watervliet Senior Center. Our presenter will be David Dziewulski. He is a historian and a member of the U.S. Naval Landing Party. He will talk about black Americans in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War.

## **Peterboro's 22<sup>nd</sup> Civil War Weekend**

Peterboro community organizations are finalizing program plans for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend on Saturday, June 14 from 10 am to 5 pm and on Sunday, June 15 from 10am to 4 pm. The educational event is also a fundraiser for the Smithfield Community Association, a not-for-profit that preserves and promotes historic sites in the Town of Smithfield. The Peterboro Area Museum is open both days and its president Beth Spokowsky and her sister Donna Burdick, Smithfield Town Historian, will be guiding the popular walking tour of the Hamlet of Peterboro at 12:30 both days.

The building sites at the Gerrit Smith Estate National Historic Landmark will be open with exhibits on the Underground Railroad, African-Americans in Peterboro and Gerrit Smith, an introductory video, and photo collections of the last two decades of Civil War Weekend. Exhibit panels from the NYS Museum exhibit *The Irrepressible Conflict: The Empire State in the Civil War* arrived in Peterboro this week in time to join other exhibits at the Abolition Museum. John Brown's great great great granddaughter Alice Keesey Mecoy will speak at the museum at 11:30 on Saturday and Sunday, followed by Harriet Tubman's great great grandniece reading about her Aunt Harriet during the Civil War.

The 12th Rgt. United States Infantry Company A, and the Civil War Heritage Foundation will once again host the encampment on the green. These re-enactors live at the encampment for the entire weekend providing, and encouraging observations and questions as they go about their military and civilian days, scheduled programs, and a two o'clock skirmish.

The 2014 Civil War Weekend programs pay particular attention to the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War highlighting Peterboro connections to 1864 war events. The Saturday Opening Ceremony brings attention to the beginning of Andersonville prison in 1864 and of the Battle of the Crater in July of that year. The action of local unit the 157<sup>th</sup> at Honey Hill will be described, as

will the action of the 146<sup>th</sup> NYS Zoaves at the Battle of the Wilderness and the Siege at Petersburg.

Demonstrations, exhibits, and sales by historical organizations, Civil War Round Tables, crafters, sutlers and vendors provide more activities in a full day for adult admission of \$8, child 6-12 \$3, and free for under six. For more information: [civilwarweekend.sca-peterboro.org](http://civilwarweekend.sca-peterboro.org), [mail@sca-peterboro.org](mailto:mail@sca-peterboro.org), 315-280-8828.

## SO WHAT HAPPENED?

This is the story of Lewis Martin who is pictured on the front cover of this newsletter.

In 1998 'Budge' Weidman, project manager, National Archives Volunteers, gave me a "backroom" tour of the National Archives in Washington, D.C. She and her volunteers were compiling disability records of Civil War soldiers for microfilm. They were working on the black regiments. Knowing my interest in Civil War medicine, she showed me five unpublished photographs of black soldiers which were discovered in the disability records. She provided me with copies of the photos and the certificates of disability for discharge. The brief histories have been extracted from these records.

These photos were authorized by Lt. Col. Reed Brockway Bontecou, Surgeon, U.S. Army at Harewood Hospital in Washington. He realized the medical educational value of documenting the spectrum of war wounds for future generations of surgeons. Dr. Bontecou, who lived and practiced in Troy, NY, also was an amateur photographer.

Private Louis (Lewis) Martin of Company E, 29<sup>th</sup> USCT, was enlisted at Alton Illinois, February 9, 1864. Five months later he fought in the Battle of the Crater. Shell

fragments and bullets so mangled his left leg and right arm that they were amputated. Buckshot wounds in the head and left shoulder resulted in painful scars. After field hospital treatment, he convalesced at Harewood Hospital in Washington, D.C.

On December 6, 1865, he was discharged as totally disabled and was given a pension of \$20 per month, which was increased to \$24 in 1872. He later claimed an increase because of shoulder pain, but in spite of the scar clearly visible in the photograph, the existence of such a wound was denied. In 1869 he was wed to Mary Jones. In 1895 he was dropped from the pension rolls for failure to claim his checks since 1892. No widow's claim was ever filed.

Please note that from the records we know that Martin was wounded multiple times at the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg on July 30, 1864. However he was present with his company during the Appomattox campaign in April of 1865. That can only mean that Martin rejoined his regiment after the crater fight and his double amputation. By this time Bontecou was at Harewood Hospital in Washington, and he personally took the photograph. Martin was discharged in December 1865, about the same time Bontecou was discharged.

Martin's picture was one of some 1200 photos that Bontecou took. The only known complete collection of the photos was sold in 1971 for \$27,000 to a collector in New York City. The photo found in the pension records and the abstract of Martin's service was published in *Military Images* in the late 1990s, along with the other four photos.

## **AN EARLY CALL TO RECRUIT BLACK TROOPS**

This is another item from Harold Holzer's book, *The Civil War in 50 Objects*. Item #24, owned by the New York Historical Society, is the lengthiest and most impressive petition created during the War. It is a massive scroll some twenty-five feet long, containing the names of more than eight hundred New Yorkers, urging the recruitment of African Americans for military service in the summer of 1862.

At the start of the War, a number of free black patriots attempted to enlist, but the Lincoln administration refused to accept them, in fear of triggering secession movements in the Border States. But Lincoln's policies were changing. Slavery was abolished in the District of Columbia in April of 1862. Lincoln urged gradual compensated emancipation in the loyal slave states. There was the potential of a large, new pool of manpower for an army whose needs were expanding faster than white recruitments alone could satisfy.

Congress officially authorized the president to admit black recruits, but Lincoln resisted. Unofficially he offered no objections to black recruits in Kansas, and occupied sections of South Carolina and Louisiana. With the failure of McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, Lincoln had begun considering the emancipation of slaves in the Confederacy as a military move. On July 20, 1862, New Yorkers began signing their names to a pre-printed petition, organized by J.E. Gardner.

***"TO HIS EXCELLENCY, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States"***

***"The undersigned citizens of the State of New York, being aware that there are thousands of colored persons in the State of New York, whose attachment to the cause of the Union is as great as our own, and who are anxiously awaiting an opportunity to serve their country on the***

***battle field, earnestly request that the Governor of the State of New York be authorized to raise a number of regiments, composed wholly or partly of colored persons."***

James Wells was the first to sign it, but the final list of names included the cultural and ethnic diversity of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Westchester. Local royalty names were also included, like Whitney, Vanderbilt, Pettigrew, Dodge, and Doubleday. The most intriguing name on the petition belonged to a crank who signed himself "John Brown of Harper's Ferry." Organizers struck it from the list.

It was never explained why this massive petition was in the form of a scroll. Historians have also not been able to explain why it was never sent to the president, as intended. Instead, the White House received a single sheet of paper, similarly worded, with only seven signatures on it. The list included:

- Theodore Tilton, antislavery leader
- Rev. Henry Ward Beecher
- Fred Perkins, Independent newspaper

On the final petition, the respectful title "His Excellency" was omitted.

Frederick Douglass complained that "instead of (Lincoln) calling the blacks to arms and to liberty, he merely authorized the military commanders to use them as laborers, without even promising them their freedom at the end of their term of service to the government, and thus destroyed virtually the very object of the measure."

Unbeknowst to these critics, two days after the date on the mega-petition (July 20, 1862), Lincoln announced to his Cabinet a plan for an emancipation proclamation in the rebellious states. But at their advice, he tabled it to await a Union military victory.

Georgia's Howell Cobb predicted that the idea of black recruitment was destined to fail. "If slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong," he warned.

By war's end, the 200,000 African American men in arms proved Cobb's point.

*(The above summary is from Holzer's book.)*

## **The President's Proclamation The New York Times Jan. 3, 1863**

President Lincoln's proclamation, which we publish this morning, marks an era in the history, not only of this war, but of this country and the world. It is not necessary to assume that it will set free instantly the enslaved blacks of the South, in order to ascribe to it the greatest and most permanent importance. Whatever may be its immediate results, it changes entirely the relations of the National Government to the institution of Slavery.

Hitherto Slavery has been under the protection of the Government; henceforth it is under its ban. The power of the Army and Navy, hitherto employed in hunting and returning to bondage the fugitive from service, are to be employed in maintaining his freedom whenever and wherever he may choose to assert it. This change of attitude is itself a revolution.

President LINCOLN takes care, by great precision in his language, to define the basis on which this action rests. He issues the Proclamation "as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing the rebellion." While he sincerely believes it to be an "act of justice warranted by the Constitution," he issues it "upon military necessity." In our judgment it is only upon that ground and for that purpose that he has any right to issue it at all.

In his civil capacity as President, he has not the faintest shadow of authority to decree the emancipation of a single slave, either as an "act of justice" or for any other purpose whatever. As Commander-in-Chief of the army he has undoubtedly the right to deprive the rebels of the aid of their slaves. -

just as he has the right to take their horses, and to arrest all persons who may be giving them aid and comfort, -- "as a war measure" and upon grounds of military necessity.

It may seem at first sight a matter of small importance in what capacity the act is done. But its validity may, in the end, depend upon that very point. Sooner or later his action in this matter will come up for review before the Supreme Court; and it is a matter of the utmost importance to the President, to the slaves, and to the country, that it should come in a form to be sustained. It must be a legal and a constitutional act, in form as well as in substance.

We wish that for this reason the President had given it the form of a Military Order, -- addressed to his subordinate Generals, enjoining upon them specific acts in the performance of their military duties, -- instead of a Proclamation addressed to the world at large, and embodying declarations and averments instead of commands.

What effect the Proclamation will have remains to be seen. We do not think that it will at once set free any considerable number of slaves beyond the actual and effective jurisdiction of our armies. It will lead to no immediate insurrections, and involve no massacres, except such as the rebels in the blindness of their wrath may themselves set on foot.

The slaves have no arms, are without organization, and in dread of the armed and watchful whites. Besides, they evince no disposition to fight for themselves so long as they see that we are fighting for them. They understand, beyond all question, that the tendency of this war is to give them freedom, and that the Union armies, whatever may be their motive, are actually and practically fighting for their liberty.

If the war should suddenly end, -- if they should see the fighting stop, and the Constitution which protects Slavery restored to full vigor in the

Slave States, their disappointment would vent itself in the wrathful explosion of insurrection and violence. But so long as the war continues, we look for nothing of that kind. Whenever our armies reach their immediate vicinity, they will doubtless assert their freedom, and call upon us to "recognize and maintain" it. Until then, they will work for their masters and wait for deliverance.

President LINCOLN "recommends" the enfranchised slaves, "in all cases, when allowed, to labor faithfully for reasonable wages." That great question, before the end is reached, will demand other treatment than this.

If the President supposes that millions of men, who never made a bargain in their lives, who were never consulted on any subject affecting their own interest, who never made provision for their own support, or had the slightest charge connected with the maintenance of wives or children, and who have worked all their lives under the pressure of force and fear, can pass suddenly to the condition of free men, -- recognizing at once all its responsibilities and performing all its duties, -- he must believe that the age of miracles is not yet past.

If the Proclamation makes the slaves actually free, there will come the further duty of making them work. That the whole negro race is to remain idle if it should choose so to do, being free, no one can seriously propose. If the slaves choose to "labor faithfully for reasonable wages" -- very well: -- they will establish their claim to freedom by the highest of titles, the ability to use and enjoy it.

But if they do not, they must be compelled to do it, -- not by brute force, nor by being owned like cattle, and denied every human right, but by just and equal laws, -- such laws as in every community control and forbid vagrancy, mendicancy and all the

shapes by which idle vagabondage preys upon industry and thrift. But all this opens a vast and most difficult subject, with which we do not propose now to deal. In time, however, it will challenge universal attention, and demand for the solution of the problems which it involves the ablest and most patient statesmanship of the land.

## LAST CHANCE BASEBALL

Baseball Hall of Fame Weekend will take place in Cooperstown Saturday and Sunday, July 26 and 27, 2014. Induction Day will be Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. This is also the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

The CDCWRT will have a tent at the event to sell Civil War baseball t-shirts and the remaining stock of baseball postal cachets. The envelopes remaining represent past baseball events. As is appropriate, the largest selection of cachets deals with the NEW YORK YANKEES. Stuff it Red Sox fans! If you want to boast about other teams, the editorship of this newsletter is available.

Since supplies are very limited, we are offering them to our memberships first. Items include:

- Mets/Yankees Subway World Series #10 envelope cancelled 10/21/2000 in Bronx
- Yankee team #10 envelope cancelled in Bronx 10/30/2001, World Series after 9/11
- #10 silk screened, 1<sup>st</sup> day of issue of Mickey Mantle stamp
- #6 envelopes, legendary baseball fields
- Full sets of 20 stamp set of Legends of Baseball, first day of issue.

Manager Joe Torre of the Yankees is being inducted this year. He was manager for the subway series and the post 9/11 series. These would be unique envelopes for Torre to autograph. If you are interested, email Matt Farina at [mafarina@aol.com](mailto:mafarina@aol.com) for prices and availability. All proceeds go to the CDCWRT preservation fund.

**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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