

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 68, No. 2

623rd Meeting

October 2018



*You must call
718-341-9811 by
October 3rd if you
plan to attend the
October meeting.*

*We need to know how
many people to order
food for.*

• Guest:
William C. (Jack) Davis
*Inventing Loreta Valesquez:
Confederate Soldier
Impersonator*

• Cost:
Members: \$50
Non-Members: \$60

• Date:
**Wednesday,
October 10th**

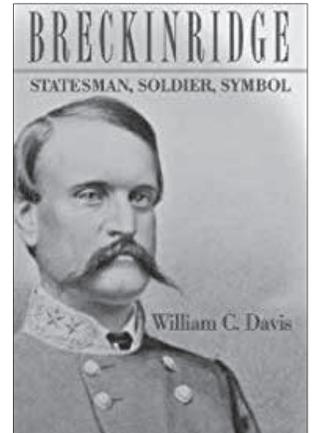
• Place:
**The Three West Club,
3 West 51st Street**

• Time:
**Dinner at 6:00 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm**

William C. (Jack) Davis Inventing Loreta Valesquez: Confederate Soldier Impersonator

Jack Davis was a professor at Virginia Tech (*retired in 2013*) and the former Director of Programs at that school's Virginia Center for Civil War Studies. He has twice been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize (for *Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol*, and *Battle at Bull Run*). He has written more than 40 books on the American Civil War and other aspects

of early Southern U.S. history. He is the only three-time winner of the Jefferson Davis Prize for Confederate history and his book *Lone Star Rising* has been called "The best one-volume history of the Texas revolution yet written."



A Pungent Quote

Williamson Murray, writing in "The Savage War" about the period leading up to Perryville – when Don Carlos Buell was undecided what to do and where to go in reaction to Bragg's incursion into Kentucky (and as always, in no hurry to get there) – he started concentrating his forces around Nashville. Murray quotes John Beatty, a politician and now commander of the Third Ohio Infantry (and author of the postwar book "The Citizen Soldier – or Memoirs of a Volunteer") as follows:

"The whole army is concentrated here, or near here; but nobody knows anything except that the water is bad, whiskey scarce, and the air loaded with the scent and melody of a thousand mules."

Submitted by Paul Weiss

NEW RECRUITS

Richard Capobianco from Staten Island who is interested in battlefield preservation.

Denise Kuzin-Palmeri from Brooklyn who heard about us from a dealer at an antique show.

Ken Kotta, retired USAF has rejoined us.

Susan Axelrod from Brooklyn whose interest is in military strategy.

Edward McLaughlin, a retired judge from Manhattan who is interested in Grant, Longstreet & Vicksburg.

Beth Gorrie from Staten Island, a friend of Margret Echinique.

2018 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2018

• **Monday November 12th** •
Peter Carmichael
*The Common Soldier
in the Civil War*

• **Monday December 10th** •
James I. (Bud) Robertson

• **Monday January 14th** •
Jay Jorgensen
Lee-Jackson Night

President's Message

To the loyal members of the Civil War Round Table of New York:

Welcome to the proper start to the Fall - our October meeting. On a personal note, I'd like to acknowledge that Claude Jarman, Jr., a recent guest on my radio program (*Ask the Lawyer, with Mike Connors*), has a good Civil War connection. He appeared in the film *The Great Locomotive Chase*, which depicts the hijacking of a Confederate train by a group of 24 spies.

Eight men – Wilson W. Brown, Daniel Dorsey, Martin Hawkins, William Knight, John Porter, John Wilson, John Wollam and Mark Wood escaped from the Fulton County Jail in Atlanta, Georgia on October 16, 1862. As members of Andrews' Raiders, they all received the Medal of Honor.

Furthermore, General Ormsby Mitchell (who shares a surname with my wife's family) was the man who dreamed up the scheme. He's buried in New York's own Green-Wood Cemetery, which the Round Table has visited many times. Since my wife and son, Beth and Michael, have their own non-profit film education institution, *The Art of the Silver Screen*, they and the *Civil War Round Table of NY* are most appreciative of Disney's contribution to Civil War history in producing *The Great Locomotive Chase*.

It's my pleasure to see you all, and I hope you enjoy our speaker, William C. (Jack) Davis, one of the nation's most significant writers on a defining moment in our history. We're glad to have him with us.

We're all looking forward to a wonderful evening!

MICHAEL N. CONNORS

61st ANNUAL BATTLEFIELD TOUR

Join Us As We Conclude Our Journey With...

The Appomattox Campaign: Lee's Retreat...Grant's Pursuit!

Thursday to Sunday, October 11-14, 2018

This year the Round Table will conclude its four-year Virginia journey as we travel the bloody roads South to RICHMOND, PETERSBURG AND—FINALLY—APPOMATTOX! The Round Table's 61st Annual Tour Guides include MIKE GORMAN from the Richmond National Battlefield and PATRICK SCHROEDER AND ERNIE PRICE from the Appomattox National Battlefield. They will complete the dramatic story of April 1865 as we walk in the actual footsteps of Lincoln, Grant, Lee and the hundred thousand soldiers who fought, died and suffered to bring peace to the greatest conflict in American history.

To Reserve Your Place:

Send your \$100 check (made out to "CWRTNY") and your complete contact information with your home phone number, cell phone, home address and email address to: Martin Smith/CWRTNY Tour, 158 West 81 Street #24, New York, NY 10024.

Dues are due

If you haven't already paid your dues, please send your checks in now. After October, the price rises to \$60. If we don't hear from you by January 1, we will be obliged to drop your name from our mailing lists. Sorry about that.

We now have three yearly dues categories:

	Individual	Family	
Basic	\$60	\$80	
Silver	\$70	\$95	
Gold	\$120	\$170	
Out of Town	\$25	\$35	(75 miles or more)
Student	\$25		

New members please add \$10 initiation fee

You may choose any appropriate amount to send in, but it will be greatly appreciated if you are able to remit the amounts in the second or third categories.

**Send dues to CWRTNY 139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y. 11422
Do not include your dues and dinner payment on the same check.**

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

139-33 250th Street,
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During business hours.

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Email: cwrtnyc1@gmail.com

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

October During the Civil War

1861

4 – The president places his “A. Lincoln” on a contract for ironclad vessels. One will be named the *Monitor*.

21 – Union General Charles P. Stone, reviled in the press as being friendly with the enemy, ineptness in command and downright treason, will be imprisoned at Fort Lafayette for six months without being formally charged. This for the fiasco at Ball’s Bluff and for being a Democrat.

1862

1 – Regarding the Emancipation Proclamation, the Richmond Whig proclaimed “It is a dash of the pen to destroy four thousand millions of our property and is as much a bid for the slave to rise in insurrection with the assurance of aid from the whole military and naval power of the United States.” It never happened.

6 – Irritated by McClellan’s “slows” President Lincoln inquires of him what his horses have done to fatigue anything since the battle of Antietam.

1863

14 – In a campaign of maneuver near Manassas, Lee had no chance to disrupt the Federal army. Meade had a good defensive position but was unable to find an opening for attack. All of this at the engagement at Bristoe Station, Va.

24 – Grant, after a personal inspection, orders a “Cracker Line” to be opened at Brown’s Ferry on the Tennessee River which will soon get food to the starving Feds at Chattanooga.

1864

19 – Little Phil rallies his boys to halt Jubal Early’s incursions at Cedar Creek – the last battle in the Shenandoah.

31 – Our 36th State – Nevada – enters the Union by proclamation of the president. Workers are seen carrying slot machines into the opening casinos.

NECROLOGY

Longtime member Robert Carlock, of Glendale, passed away recently.

Ben Butler’s Contribution To The War Effort

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Franklin Butler arrived at Fortress Monroe only a day ahead of the fugitive slaves, greeted at the esplanade by a 13-gun salute. That morning, Butler sat down to compose an important report. When an adjutant interrupted to inform him of the fugitives, Butler set down his pen. The War Department could wait. The three ragged black men waiting outside were a more pressing matter.

Butler was no abolitionist but the three slaves presented a problem. True, the laws of the United States were clear: all fugitives must be returned to their masters. The founding fathers enshrined this in the Constitution; Congress reinforced it in 1850 with the Fugitive Slave Act; and it was still the law of the land- including, as far as the federal government was concerned, within the so-called Confederate states. The war had done nothing to change it. Most important, noninterference with slavery was the very cornerstone of the Union’s war policy. President Abraham Lincoln had begun his inaugural address by making this clear, pointedly and repeatedly. “I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists,” the president said, “I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.”

Yet to Fort Monroe’s new commander, the fugitives who turned up at his own front gate seemed like a novel case. The enemy had been deploying them to construct a battery aimed directly at his fort- and no doubt would put them straight back to work if recaptured, with time off only for a sound beating. They had just offered him some highly useful military intelligence. And Virginia, as of 12 or so hours ago, was officially in rebellion against the federal government, having just ratified the secession ordinance passed a month before. Butler had not invited the fugitives

in or engineered their escape, but here they were, literally at his doorstep; a conundrum with political and military implications, at the very least. He could not have known- not-yet- that his response that day might change the course of the national drama that was then just beginning. Yet, it was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that an unanticipated bureaucratic dilemma would alter the hand of history.

With a few strokes of his pen, Lincoln had made Butler a major general; the president could just as easily unmake him, sending him back to Lowell in disgrace – and with another stroke, for that matter, send the blacks back to their master as slaves.

Whatever Butler’s decision on the three fugitives’ fate, he would have to reach it quickly. He had hardly picked up his pen to finally begin that report before an adjutant interrupted with another message: a rebel officer, under flag of truce, had approached the causeway of Fort Monroe. Virginia wanted their slaves back. Waiting before the front gate was a man on horseback: Maj. John Baytop Cary of the 115th Virginia. With his silver gray whiskers and haughtily tilted chin, he appeared every inch the Southern cavalier.

Butler, also on horseback, went out to meet him. The men rode, side by side, off federal property and into rebel Virginia. They must have seemed an odd pair: The dumpy Yankee, unaccustomed to the saddle, slouching along like a sack of potatoes; the trim, upright Virginian, in perfect control of himself and his mount.

Cary got down to business, “I am informed,” he said, “that three Negroes belonging to Colonel Mallory have escaped within your lines, I am Colonel Mallory’s agent and have charge of his property. What do you mean to do with those Negroes?”

“I intend to hold them,” Butler said,

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continued from page 3

“Do you mean, then, to set aside your constitutional obligation to return them?”

Even the dour Butler must have found it hard to suppress a smile. This was, of course, a question he had expected. And he had prepared what he thought was a fairly clever answer.

“I mean to take Virginia at her word,” he said. “I am under no constitutional obligations to a foreign country, which Virginia now claims to be.”

“But you say we cannot secede” Cary retorted, and so you cannot consistently detain the Negroes.”

“But you say you have seceded,” Butler said, “so you cannot consistently claim them. I shall hold these Negroes as contraband of war, since they are engaged in the construction of your battery and are claimed as your property.”

Ever the diligent litigator, Butler had been reading up on his military law. In time of war, he knew, a commander had a right to seize any enemy property that was being used for hostile purposes. The three fugitive slaves, before their escape, were

helping build a Confederate gun emplacement. Very well, then – if the Southerners insisted on treating blacks as property, this Yankee lawyer would treat them as property, too. Legally speaking, he had as much justification to confiscate Baker, Mallory and Townsend as to intercept a shipment of muskets or swords.

Cary, frustrated, rode back to the Confederate lines. Butler, for his part, returned to Fort Monroe feeling rather pleased with himself. Still he knew that vanquishing the rebel officer was only a minor victory, and perhaps a momentary one if his superiors in Washington frowned on what he had done.

The following day, a Saturday, Butler picked up his pen and resumed a twice-interrupted dispatch to Washington. Certain questions had, he began, “of very considerable importance both in a military and political be aspect...”

From *1861: The Civil War Awakening* by Adam Goodheart



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OF NEW YORK

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