


THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 68, No. 10

630th Meeting

May 2019



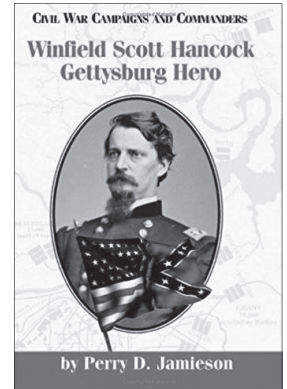
- Guest:
Perry D. Jamieson
Winfield Scott Hancock
- Cost:
Members: \$50
Non-Members: \$60
- Date:
Monday,
May 13th
- Place:
The Three West Club,
3 West 51st Street
- Time:
Dinner at 6:00 pm,
Doors open 5:30 pm,
Cash Bar 5:30 – 7 pm

You must call 718-341-9811 by May 6th if you plan to attend the May meeting.

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

Perry D. Jamieson *Winfield Scott Hancock*

Our May guest earned a PhD at Wayne State University and is a historian who studied under Grady McWhiney with whom he wrote his first book entitled *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Heritage and the Southern Heritage*. In his book *Winfield Scott: Gettysburg Hero*, Jamieson chronicles the exploits of a Union general who gained fame for crucial contributions to the Union's victory at Gettysburg. Although Jamieson focuses primarily on Hancock's role at the famous battle he also discusses Hancock's involvement in the Indian Wars.



AMATEURS GO TO WAR

The Confederate army's support services labored heroically to overcome these deficiencies. But, with the exception of the Ordnance Bureau, their efforts always seemed too little and too late. The South experienced a hothouse industrialization during the war, but the resulting plant was shallow-rooted and poor in yield. Quartermaster General Abraham Myers could never supply the army with enough tents, uniforms, blankets, shoes, or horses and wagons. Consequently, Johnny Reb often had to sleep in the open under a captured blanket, to wear a tattered homespun butternut uniform, and to march and fight barefoot unless he could liberate shoes from a dead or captured Yankee.

Confederate soldiers groused about this in the time-honored manner of all armies. They complained even more about food-or rather the lack of it-for which they

held Commissary-General Lucius B. Northrop responsible. Civilians also damned Northrop for the shortages of food at the front, the rising prices at home, and the transportation nightmare that left produce rotting in warehouses while the army starved. Perhaps because of his peevish, opinionated manner, Northrop became "the most cussed and vilified man in the Confederacy." Nevertheless, Jefferson Davis kept him in office until almost the end of the war, a consequence, it was whispered, of cronyism stemming from their friendship as cadets at West Point. Northrop's unpopularity besmudged Davis when the war began to go badly for the South.

The Ordnance Bureau was the one bright spot of Confederate supply. When Josiah Gorgas accepted appointment as chief of ordnance in April 1861, he faced an apparently more hopeless task than did Myers or Northrop.

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2019 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2019

• **Monday June 10th** •
Dennis Frye
Antietam Shadows

• **Monday September 9th** •
TBD

• **Monday October 14th** •
will advise

President's Message

To our dear members of the Civil War Round Table. I begin this address by recognizing one of this organization's most important and venerable members, E. A. "Bud" Livingston. All students of the Civil War owe a debt of gratitude to Bud for documenting the role Brooklyn had in this great conflict.

It should be noted that Brooklyn was, in Bud's words, President Lincoln's Third Largest City. Although Manhattan's draft riots dominate historic conversations, Brooklyn volunteers and naval yards were far more important to the war effort. The construction of ships that took place in Brooklyn broke the back of the Confederate supply lines, all while supplying the Union. We cannot forget the role the *Monitor* played in advancing naval warfare.

Bud Livingston has also contributed to and edited our newsletter for two decades. We have been proud of and grateful for the professional, erudite, and elegant newsletter produced for the round table each month. As a past president and long-time treasurer, Bud has been an invaluable resource for our new members and a steady voice for us all.

Florida is taking him from us. I will miss a man who shares my love of baseball and Sherlock Holmes, as well as a passion for the Civil War. He has brought honor and distinction to the Civil War Round Table of New York and will always be remembered as our proud Brooklyn bard.

More importantly, I consider Bud Livingston a friend. I remember meeting him the first time at the Montauk Club in Brooklyn as he spoke about Brooklyn in the Civil War. This encouraged me to join our round table, and I have many wonderful memories of Bud at the old armory. I have been fortunate to attend his lectures, and he has very patiently let me share my military miniature collection with him. I am personally grateful for the many sacrifices he has made for our Civil War Round Table of New York. Thank you, Bud.

MICHAEL N. CONNORS

Saddle Up with General Hill

Our own Patrick Falci (Gen. A.P. Hill) will share the lives of famous generals and their war horses at the Nassau County Civil War Round Table on Wednesday, May 15th at 7 p.m. They meet at the Bellmore Memorial Library, 2288 Bedford Ave. (corner of Royal St. and Bellmore Ave.), Bellmore, L.I.

And, as a bonus, he will talk about great Hollywood horses and the actors who rode them.

So mount up!

Election Slate

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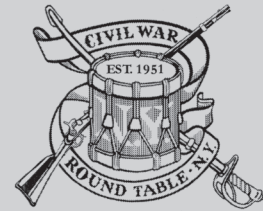
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May During the Civil War

1861

4 – A pro-Union group met in Western Virginia to declare against secession. The new state of West Virginia will soon be born (probably un-Constitutionally).

13 – Without permission, Gen. B.F. Butler moved troops from Relay Station Md. into Baltimore which helped keep down pro-Confederate movement there. Soon all the secessionist government hierarchy will be temporarily imprisoned in Fort McHenry and then transferred to Fort Lafayette in Brooklyn.

1862

15 – The *Monitor* and other naval vessels move up the James to be pounded at Drewry's Bluff. As at Fort Donelson, the Navy's guns cannot be elevated enough to sufficiently attack land batteries.

20 – President Lincoln signs the Homestead Act into law which grants a free plot of 40 acres to actual settlers on land in the public domain who would occupy it and improve it for five years.

1863

1 – With few shots and little fighting, F.J. Hooker surrendered the initiative by ordering his main units to withdraw from the advance and concentrate in a five-mile area near Chancellorsville. Disaster follows.

15 – Disaster follows for the Confederates, too, as Stonewall Jackson is wounded by North Carolina soldiers and dies shortly afterwards.

1864

5 – Chancellorsville II – the battle of the Wilderness – same forces and more bloodshed. But this time the Union army does not retreat toward Washington. It heads further South to begin the ending of the war.

15 – New Market, Virginia – 247 students from VMI fight with John Breckinridge and hand Franz Sigel an embarrassing defeat.

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The South already grew plenty of food, and the capacity to produce wagons, harness, shoes, and clothing seemed easier to develop than the industrial base to manufacture gunpowder, cannon, and rifles.

No foundry in the South except the Tredegar Iron Works had the capability to manufacture heavy ordnance. There were no rifle works except small arsenals at Richmond and at Fayetteville, North Carolina, along with the captured machinery from the U.S. Armory at Harper's Ferry, which was transferred to Richmond. The du Pont plants in Delaware produced most of the country's gunpowder; the South had manufactured almost none, and this heavy, bulky product would be difficult to smuggle through the tightening blockade. The principle ingredient of gunpowder, saltpeter (potassium nitrate, or "niter"), was also imported. But Gorgas proved to be a genius at organization and improvisation.

He almost literally turned plowshares into swords. He sent Caleb Huse to Europe to purchase all available arms and ammunition. Huse was as good at this job as James Bulloch was at his task of building Confederate warships in England. The arms and other supplies Huse sent back through the blockade were crucial to Confederate survival during the war's first year. Meanwhile, Gorgas began to establish armories and foundries in several states to manufacture small arms and artillery. He created a Mining and Niter Bureau headed by Isaac M. St. John, who located limestone caves containing saltpeter in the southern Appalachians, and appealed to southern women to save the contents of chamber pots to be leached for niter. The Ordnance Bureau also built a huge gunpowder mill at Augusta, Georgia, which under the superintendency of George W. Rains began production in 1862. Ordnance

officers roamed the South buying or seizing stills for their copper to make rifle percussion caps; they melted down church and plantation bells for bronze to build cannon; they gleaned southern battlefields for lead to remold into bullets and for damaged weapons to repair.

Gorgas, St. John, and Rains were unsung heroes of the Confederate war effort. The South suffered from deficiencies of everything else, but after the summer of 1862 it did not suffer seriously for want of ordnance—though the quality of Confederate artillery and shells was always a problem. Gorgas could write proudly in his diary on the third anniversary of his appointment: "Where three years ago we were not making a gun, a pistol nor a sabre, no shot nor shell (except at the Tredegar Works)—a pound of powder—we now make all these in quantities to meet the demands of our large armies." But in 1861 these achievements still lay in the future. Shortages and administrative chaos seemed to characterize the Ordnance Bureau as much as any other department of the army. In a typical report, a Southern staff officer in the Shenandoah Valley wrote on May 19 that the men were "unprovided, unequipped, unsupplied with ammunition and provisions... The utter confusion and ignorance presiding in the councils of the authorities... is without a parallel." Despite the inability to equip men already in the army, the Confederate Congress in May 1861 authorized the enlistment of up to 400,000 additional volunteers for three-year terms. Recruits came forward in such numbers that the War Department, by its own admission, had to tum away 200,000 for lack of arms and equipment. One reason for this shortage of arms was the hoarding by state governors of muskets seized from federal arsenals when the states seceded. Several governors insisted on retaining these weapons to arm regiments they kept at home (instead of sending them to the main fronts

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in Virginia or Tennessee) to defend state borders and guard against potential slave uprisings. This was an early manifestation of state's-rights sentiment that handicapped centralized efforts. As such it was hardly the Richmond government's fault, but soldiers in frontline armies wanted to blame somebody, and Secretary of War Walker was a natural scapegoat. "The opinion prevails throughout the army," wrote General Beauregard's aide-de-camp at Manassas on June 22, "that there is great imbecility and shameful neglect in the War Department." Although Beauregard's army won the battle of Manassas a month later, criticism of Walker rose to a crescendo. Many southerners believed that the only thing preventing the Confederates from going on to capture Washington after the victory was the lack of supplies and transportation for which the War Department was responsible. Harassed by criticism and overwork, Walker resigned in September and was replaced by Judah P. Benjamin, the second of the five men who eventually served in the revolving-door office of war secretary.

From *Battlecry of Freedom* by James McPherson

As a reminder, we need you to make reservations a week before the meeting - we must notify the 3 West Club at least 48 hours (business days only) before then and since we now meet on Mondays, there is no window if you call us the weekend before. Also, if you don't show up for the meeting after making a reservation and we have called in a certain number, we may have to pay for your dinner anyway. So from now on, we're going to charge the guest rate - \$60 - if you fail to make your reservation and we may ask you to pay for those no-show dinners. It is better for you to pay than the club should suffer the loss... Now we understand emergencies - illness, transportation problems, etc. We just ask that you let us know as soon as possible - that might allow us to fit in a late reservation. A little consideration would eliminate some of the guesswork we're required to make every month.



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