

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 69, No. 4

635th Meeting

December 2019/January 2020



- Guest:
Jay Jorgensen
General Lee
- Cost:
Members: \$60
Non-Members: \$75
- Date:
Tuesday,
January 14th
- Place:
The Coffee House Club
20 West 44th 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 January 7th if you plan to attend the January meeting. We need to know how many people to order food for.

About

Jay Jorgensen



Jay Jorgensen has written several books about the Battle of Gettysburg. His *Gettysburg's Bloody Wheatfield* received the 2002 Bachelder-Coddington Award for the best new book on Gettysburg that year. A companion book, *The Wheatfield at Gettysburg: A Walking Tour*, is a popular book for visitors to the battlefield. Jay has also published *Gettysburg's Leadership Lessons for Lawyers* (and Non-Lawyers too!) and *Edward Porter Alexander, Confederate Cannoneer*. He is the editor and co-author of *Top Ten at Gettysburg*, which was released in March 2017. Jay received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and his Masters of Arts degree in Military History, with honors in Civil War Studies, from American Military University. He earned his Juris Doctorate degree from Villanova University School of Law.

How the Civil War Changed Christmas in the United States

As a divided nation fought, the holiday became more important than ever.

By **Erin Blakemore**

As the Civil War's first Christmas neared, a pair of young lovers, Nathaniel Dawson and Elodie Todd, a Confederate soldier and his eventual bride, wrote to one another with increasing melancholy. They were separated by hundreds of miles, and their communication was often interrupted by delays in the mail and the desperation of the Civil War.

"I wish I could be with you at Christmas, the festal season, where age is rejuvenated and lives again in the merry carols of youth," Dawson wrote to Todd (sister of Mary Todd Lincoln) on December 22, 1861. On the holiday itself, he wrote to describe his regiment's rowdy celebrations. "Bad whiskey is abundant and pleasure and sorrow drowned in large potatoes," he said.

Dawson and Todd's lives changed dramatically during the war, as the Confederacy crumbled and their personal lives stretched to their limits. But they weren't alone in wishing they could celebrate Christmas together. As the fractured United States fought, the holiday took on new meaning.

By the end of the war in 1865, Christmas had gone from a relatively unimportant holiday to the opposite—a day rooted in an idealized vision of home. The way Americans observed the holiday changed too, setting the stage for the more modern Christmas holiday we know today.

Before the Civil War, Christmas was not an official holiday in the United States. Nor was it celebrated uniformly across the country. In early New England, Christmas was looked down upon by Puritans and Calvinists, who felt the day should be observed for strict fasts and rituals, if it was observed at all. During the 17th century, Massachusetts imposed a fine on colonists who celebrated the holiday, and after it became a state, its businesses and schools did not observe the holiday at all.

continued on page 5

2020 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2020

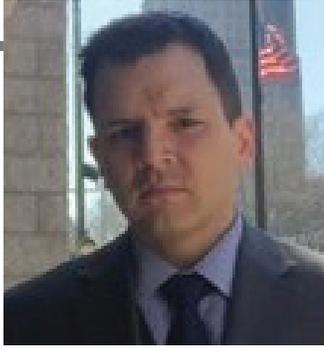
• **Thursday February 13** •
Barondess-Lincoln Award
Joseph A. Fry

• **Tuesday March 10** •
TBD

• **Tuesday April 14** •
TBD

President's Message

As we begin the New Year, we also begin a new chapter for our esteemed Round Table. As many of you already know, beginning in 2020 our meetings will be moved to the Coffee House Club at 20 West 44th Street. The meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month. While I am sad to leave the 3 West Club, I am excited for the opportunity that moving to the Coffee House Club will provide our organization.



First and foremost, our move to the Coffee House Club will allow us to keep our membership dues and dinner prices at the lowest level possible. Simply put, we could not stay at the 3 West Club without further increasing our dues and dinner prices and these increases would certainly be untenable to most of our members.

Furthermore, our move to the Coffee House Club still leaves us in midtown Manhattan. In fact, we are only moving seven blocks south from our current location. After having many discussions with our past guest speakers in my previous role as Vice President of Programs, I can affirmatively state that we attract the very best speakers precisely because of our midtown location. For non-local speakers, midtown Manhattan is what first comes to mind when thinking about the quintessential "New York City" experience. As such, in order to continue to attract premier guest speakers, it was critically important to stay in midtown.

With that being said, as with any changes, I am sure there will be some adjustment period. But I'm confident that this move is, in the long-term, in the best interest of our Round Table.

To that end, I hope to see all of you at our next meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at the Coffee House Club. It's our Lee/Jackson night, and this year we have our great friend from the Robert E. Lee Round Table in New Jersey, Jay Jorgensen, giving us a wonderful presentation about ole Bobby Lee himself.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

KRIS J. KASNICKI

ABOUT OUR NEW MEETING PLACE

We thought you might want to know a little something about where we'll be meeting come January. The Coffee House Club has been around since 1915 (even longer than the RT!) and at their current location, 20 W. 44th St., since 2006. The Club itself began as an offshoot of the Knickerbocker Club and was begun to accommodate a more democratic (small d) crowd – less rich and socially prominent than that organization. Their membership has included Robert Benchley, Jerome Kern, Childe Hassam, Gene Tunney, and a wide variety of folks. Their main purpose is to foster conversation over lunches and dinners.

The walls of the dining room are lined with fascinating photos of past members and interesting pictures. As you enter the club on the 6th floor, you'll be able to check out the bar in the comfortable anteroom, then proceed later to dinner at a long table (still one round table, for traditionalists, which we can use as a dais), where you'll get a multi-course dinner (choice of 2 entrees; in January, salmon or chicken) and complimentary wine. It's a very pleasant atmosphere with a friendly staff.

We think you'll enjoy our new place. They are accommodating to any dietary restrictions, such as allergies or vegetarian needs – just let us know in advance so we can notify them.



THE DISPATCH



Founded January 24, 1951

The Dispatch is published monthly, except July and August, by

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

139-33 250th Street,
Rosedale, N.Y. 11422
Telephone CWRT/NY at (718) 341-9811

During business hours.

OFFICERS

President Kris Kasnicki
V.P. Programs Margaret Echanique
V.P. Operations Joan McDonough
Secretary Pat Holohan
Treasurer Michael Connors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Term Expiring 2020

Paul Weiss
Dan McCarthy

Term Expiring 2021

Beth Connors
Carolyn Roxon

Term Expiring 2022

William Finlayson
John Allen

Dave Licalzi:
Member at large

Editor Pat Holohan

Copy Editor/

Club Liaison Joan McDonough

P.R. Martin Smith

Merchandise Paul Weiss

Email: cwrtnyc1@gmail.com

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

SPOTLIGHT: PAT FALCI

Pat Falci, our resident AP Hill, has led this round table in one capacity or another through many transformations. Now, as we begin our new year in a new location, we look forward to Pat helping to lead our round table forward. As he was the first recipient of the club's Distinguished Service Award, we thought it would be a good time to get to know a little bit about this dynamic Civil War reenactor and historian.

Dispatch: Pat when were you president and did you hold any other positions?

PF: I was the only 3-time president – 1990 – 1992, 1995 – 1997, and 2007 – 2009. I've also been VP of Programs, Secretary, on the Board of Directors, Chair of the 40th, 50th and 60th Anniversary Committees, 10-time Tour Chair, Past Chair of the Bell I. Wiley Award Committee, and current Chair of the Fletcher Pratt Award Committee. I also received the club's first Distinguished Service Award.

Dispatch: Pat, can you give us some information about your background?

PF: My heroes have always been cowboys! Not to mention Robert E. Lee, John Wayne and A.J. Foyt. I worked for years at NY Telephone (and its many name changes) while belonging to all 3 acting unions.

Dispatch: When did you first become interested in the Civil War?

PF: When I was 8 years old, my parents gave me the *Golden Book of the Civil War*. I was hooked.

2 years later, they took me to Gettysburg. Solidified.

Dispatch: Why did you choose AP Hill to impersonate? Why not Lee or Longstreet or even Grant?

PF: For one thing, A.P. Hill was very theatrical, with his red shirt and tendency to make an entrance (Up Came Hill!) Plus – I do resemble him.

Dispatch: Which battle do you think is one of the most important of the CW?

PF: All roads lead to *Gettysburg*. And I've led tours there, on foot, by bus and on horseback.

Dispatch: Which movie do you think portrays the Civil War best?

PF: *Gettysburg*, of course. It was filmed on location – as Dennis Frye would say, "terrain, terrain, terrain." And Ed Bearss told me that it was the best movie he ever saw! (Also – for obvious reasons, if you know me at all.)

Dispatch: Any last thoughts you would like to share with our readers?

PF: Read the books, go to the battlefields, re-read the books, then share the knowledge.



Civil War Events During the Month of January 1862

January 1	Minister to Great Britain John Slidell and Minister to France James Mason are released from Fort Warren, Boston, Massachusetts and allowed to continue their journey, effectively ending the Trent Affair	January 11	Simon Cameron resigns as Secretary of War
January 1	Stonewall Jackson begins the Romney Campaign from Winchester, Virginia	January 14	Confederates under Stonewall Jackson take Romney
January 4	Jackson takes Bath (now West Virginia)	January 15	Edwin Stanton becomes Secretary of War following the resignation of Simon Cameron
January 6	Stonewall Jackson shells Hancock, MD for 2 days from the West Virginia side of the Potomac	January 19	Battle of Mill Springs
January 10	With McClellan ill, Abraham Lincoln calls a White House meeting with Irvin McDowell, William Franklin, Salmon Chase, Edwin Stanton, and Thomas Scott. Lincoln told them "...if McClellan is not going to use the Army anytime soon, I would like to borrow it."	January 19	General Felix Zollicoffer is shot and killed when he accidentally crosses the Union line and speaks to Col. S. S. Fry [US] at the battle of Mill Springs
January 10	Federal forces under "Old Ben" Kelley withdraw from Romney	January 26	General P. G. T. Beauregard ordered west to become second-in-command to Albert Sidney Johnston
January 10	Battle of Middle Creek	January 30	USS <i>Monitor</i> , the first ship featuring a turreted center gun, is launched. The design changes naval warfare forever

From *Georgia Blue and Grey Trail Presents America's Civil War*

Battle of Mill Springs (Somerset, Kentucky) January 19, 1862

THE UNION VICTORY AT SOMERSET, KENTUCKY.

FULL details have been received of the BATTLE OF SOMERSET, Kentucky. By the strategy of GENERAL BUELL, ZOLLICOFFER'S army was surrounded by the divisions of Generals THOMAS and SCHOEPPF; perceiving which, Zollicoffer made a desperate attack upon the Union camp on Sunday morning, January 19. His force was 10,000 strong, and that of the Union army consisted of five regiments—the Tenth Indiana, the Ninth Ohio, the Second Minnesota, the Fourth Kentucky, and the First Tennessee, the last-named not being engaged in the thickest of the fight. The battle began at four o'clock A.M., and lasted all day. GENERAL ZOLLICOFFER was killed by COLONEL FRY, of Kentucky, and his body found in a wagon. The rebels retreated, and were followed to their intrenchments, which they abandoned during the night. We give, on the preceding page, a picture of the picket of the Tenth Indiana Regiment discovering the approach of the rebels; on pages 88 and 89 a spirited engraving of the battle; and on pages 86 and 87 Maps showing the scene of the conflict.

The Union loss is 39 killed, 127 wounded; that of the rebels is 115 killed, 116 wounded, and 45 taken prisoners. Ten cannon with their ammunition, 100 four-horse wagons, 1200 horses and mules, and several boxes of small-arms were captured by our forces. The rebels crossed the Cumberland River at Oak Springs; and dispersed in every direction. Our forces have also crossed in pursuit, General

Thomas having secured the steamboat and barges used by the rebels. General Thomas has not been heard from since he crossed the river, but he will probably occupy Monticello, which the rebels have deserted. The rebel rout was complete, but the Southern papers profess to doubt the news of the affair. Our new Secretary of War has issued the following stirring General Order in relation to this affair:

WAR DEPARTMENT, January 22, 1862.

The President, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, has received information of a brilliant victory achieved by the United States forces over a large body of armed traitors and rebels, at Mill Spring, in the State of Kentucky. He returns thanks to the gallant officers and soldiers who won that victory; and when the official reports shall be received, the military skill and personal valor displayed in battle will be acknowledged and rewarded in a fitting manner. The courage that encountered and vanquished the greatly superior numbers of the rebel force, pursued and attacked them in their intrenchments, and paused not until the enemy was completely routed, merits and receives commendation. The purpose of this war is to pursue and destroy a rebellious enemy, and to deliver the country from danger. Menaced by traitors, alacrity, daring, courageous spirit, and patriotic zeal, on all occasions and under every circumstance, are expected from the army of the United States. In the prompt and spirited movements and daring at the battle of Mill Spring the nation will realize its hopes; and the people of the United States will rejoice to honor every soldier and officer who proves his courage by charging with the bayonet, and storming intrenchments, or in the blaze of the enemy's fire. By order of the President.

Harper's Weekly, February 8, 1862

From: Son of the South website

TOP 10 CIVIL WAR BOOKS FOR 2019

- Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*, by Henry Louis Gates Jr., Penguin Press \$30
- The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*, by Eric Foner, Norton & Company \$26.95
- Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War*, by Elizabeth R. Varon, University of North Carolina Press \$34.95
- Lincoln's Spies: Their Secret War to Save a Nation*, by Douglas Waller, Simon & Schuster \$35.00
- The Great Partnership: Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and the Fate of the Confederacy*, by Christian B. Keller, Pegasus Books \$28.95
- Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the America Civil War*, by Stephanie McCurry, Belknap Press \$26.95
- Gettysburg's Peach Orchard: Longstreet, Sickles, and the Bloody Fight for the "Commanding Ground" Along the Emmitsburg Road*, by James A. Hessler and Britt C. Isenberg, Savas Beatie \$34.95
- Conquered: Why the Army of Tennessee Failed*, by Larry J. Daniel, University of North Carolina Press \$ 35.00
- Yank and Rebel Rangers: Special Operations in the American Civil War*, by Robert W. Black, Pen and Sword Military \$32.95
- Let Us Die Like Men: The Battle of Franklin, November 30, 1864*, by William Lee White, Savas Beatie \$14.95

Question of the month:

Gen. William T. Sherman called this Confederate cavalryman the "most remarkable man our Civil War produced on either side." After the war in 1867, this Confederate hero became the first grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Who is this Confederate general?

continued from page 1

Elsewhere, Christmas was celebrated in a variety of ways, most depending on the country of origin of the immigrants who celebrated it. But by the mid-19th century, the holiday's importance—and distance from religious tradition—was already starting to grow. Songs and carols like “Jingle Bells” (1857) and poems like “A Visit from St. Nicholas” (1823) set the stage for a fun, secular holiday that revolved around gift-giving and celebration with food and drink.

In the antebellum South, plantation owners used the holiday as a way to show off their paternalism toward the people they enslaved, write historians Shauna Bigham and Robert E. May. During lengthy Christmas celebrations, they gave enslaved people passes to marry, provided food and alcohol, and gave gifts.

Though enslaved people managed to create some of their own Christmas traditions, many of which incorporated traditions from Africa, they were also expected to help absolve slaveowners' guilt over the holidays by enthusiastically opening gifts and showing their gratitude. “So far as their owners could tell,” Bigham and May write, “most slaves played their prescribed role to the hilt throughout the holiday.”

But the Civil War disrupted not just the relations between plantation owners and the people they enslaved, but those within families and communities. As both sides shifted their resources to war, the ability to give gifts and celebrate was dramatically curtailed. People cast their decision to have more modest Christmas celebrations as a patriotic one, and children got in on the act, too. Instead of giving and receiving store-bought gifts, they made more humble gifts like popcorn balls or crude homemade toys. And they learned to temper their expectations of Santa.

“A crotchety slave told the Howell-Cobb children not to expect a visit from St. Nick because the Yankees had shot him,” writes historian James Alan Marten, “while other parents offered more sensitive explanations. As a Yankee, Santa would be held up by Confederate pickets or perhaps Union blockading vessels had interrupted his journey.”

Meanwhile, those children's mothers, aunts and sisters experienced Christmas as an agonizing reminder of the danger faced by men who had gone to war. Civil War-era diaries and letters document how many women felt anxiety, grief and depression around Christmas. In 1861, Margaret Cahill wrote to her husband, Thomas, a Union officer, that she felt so “nervous and lonely” that she could not write to him on Christmas. “Will you say? Why did you not write to me on Christmass [sic] Day?” she wrote. “Well to tell you the truth I was not able.” “Never before had so sad a Christmas dawned upon us,” wrote Sallie A. Brook, a Confederate woman from Richmond, of Christmas 1861.



Union soldiers opening Christmas boxes I camp during the US Civil War, circa 1861.

American Stock Archive/Archive Photos/Getty Images

American Stock Archive/Archive Photos/Getty Images

On the battlefield, men on both sides tried to celebrate Christmas by giving gifts, eating and drinking, and taking time off. In his memoir, James A. Wright, a sergeant in the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment, recalls eating beef soup and greeting his fellow soldiers on Christmas in camp. “The men had been allowed as much liberty as consistent with discipline and were ‘circulating around’ among their acquaintances in other regiments,” he recalled. “I was frequently invited to ‘smile,’” or take a drink. In 1863, a Confederate soldier from North Carolina wrote to his mother asking for a bottle of brandy and some sugar so he could make eggnog for his fellow soldiers.

Popular media did its best to increase the morale of both soldiers and their families at home around Christmas. Harper's Weekly, the most popular periodical

at the time, published a variety of Christmas stories and illustrations during the war. The most famous were drawn by illustrator Thomas Nast, who portrayed not just sad wives and husbands but happy Christmas Day traditions. He is credited with solidifying how the nation imagined Santa Claus with illustrations of a jolly, bearded St. Nick who handed out good cheer to soldiers and families alike.

Though individual traditions still varied, the upheaval of the Civil War made the holiday seem more and more important to separated families. “The Christmas season [reminded] mid-19th century Americans of the importance of home and its associations, of invented traditions,” writes historian David Anderson.

When the war ended, the magazines and newspapers that had underlined the importance of the holiday kept promoting it, and reunited families, devastated by the losses of the war, kept cherishing it. In 1870, in the aftermath of the war, Congress passed the first federal holiday law and made Christmas an official holiday. Four years of war had changed the holiday from a loose celebration to an essential one.

From *History online*. Updated January 15, 2019. Original: December 13, 2018.

Answer:

Nathan Bedford Forrest

Civil War Trivia and Fact Book by Webb Garrison