

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 68, No. 5

626th Meeting

December 2018



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

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

• Guest:
Matthew Borowick
*The Court Martial
of Fitz-John Porter*

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

• Date:
**Monday,
December 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**

Matthew Borowick The Court Martial of Fitz-John Porter

Our December guest is a star member of the Robert E. Lee CWRT of New Jersey and a regular columnist for The Civil War News. He holds a B.A. and an M.B.A. from Seton Hall University and is the author of *Round Table Review*, which describes the practices of Civil War Round Tables throughout the country. In 2010 he authored and published *The Civil War Round Table Handbook - The Indispensable Guide to Running Yours Right*, which is available on Kindle at Amazon.com.



Henry Halleck Leaves the West and the Union is Saved

On July 11, out of the blue, Grant received a mysterious summons from Halleck to confer with him in Corinth. When Grant asked whether he should bring his staff, Halleck replied cryptically, “This place will be your Head Quarters. You can judge for yourself.” A major change of military leadership had shaken Washington. After the failure of the Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, Lincoln had wearied of the dilatory tactics and imperious personality of George B. McClellan and made Halleck his military adviser and general-in-chief. McClellan first heard of Halleck’s appointment in the newspapers and told his wife, with his usual contempt, that Lincoln had “acted so as to make the matter as offensive as possible-he has not shown the slightest gentlemanly or friendly feelings and I cannot regard him as in any respect my friend.” In private, McClellan spewed more venom, snarling that

Stanton was “the most depraved hypocrite & villain” he had ever known, and as for Halleck, it would be “grating to have to serve under the orders of a man whom I know by experience to be my inferior.” As Lincoln soon learned to his regret, Halleck had a brilliant theoretical mind, but was a world-class procrastinator on a par with McClellan and no less likely to disparage threatening subordinates.

Advising Halleck to come to Washington posthaste, Lincoln urged him to place the western army under Grant and Buell. When Grant arrived in Corinth, Halleck kept him in the dark, slowly twisting in the wind about his promotion. Then right before he left on July 16, Halleck signed an order placing a huge plot of real estate under Grant’s control. His District of West Tennessee would be bounded by the Mississippi River on the west, the Ohio to the north, and the Tennessee to the east. Now added to Grant’s previous Army of the Tennessee was the sizable Army of the Mississippi that Pope had headed. Six days after Halleck left for Washington, Grant was still guessing

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2019 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2019

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

• **Monday February 11th** •
Barondess Lincoln Award

• **Monday March 10th** •
TBA

President's Message

To all of our members, the Civil War Round Table of New York has added yet another incredible year to our storied history. Our members have had lively experiences both at meetings and on trips, while our speakers have yet to fail us in being both engaging and informative. There is one unfortunate note for this month, as our December speaker, the legendary Dr. Bud Robertson, has fallen ill, and will regretfully be unable to join us. The members of our Round Table extend him our best wishes for a speedy recovery. Our Vice President of Programming, Kristofer Kasnicki, is working on securing a suitable replacement as of this writing.

Our November meeting was a smash hit with Professor Peter S. Carmichael. While we deviated from our usual theme of West Point night, it seemed appropriate to mark Veterans' Day – and the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day – with a slightly different focus, the common soldier in the Civil War. Professor Carmichael has also mentioned that members of our Civil War Round Table will be offered discounts to attend the 2019 Civil War Institute summer conference in Gettysburg. We will remind members of the details closer to the date.

Speaking of Gettysburg, this year marked the 25th anniversary of the release of the film *Gettysburg*. Several members of our Round Table attended the anniversary screening and discussion this year, which featured, among numerous esteemed historians, director Ron Maxwell and actors Stephen Lang and Pat Falci. It was an experience to be remembered.

We are looking forward to our traditional Lee/Jackson night in January, where we will be welcoming author Jay Jorgensen for his take on the legacy left by Confederate leadership. In the meantime, please stay safe, enjoy the holiday season, and we look forward to seeing you in 2019!

MICHAEL N. CONNORS

DRESS CODE

Ladies and gentlemen: PLEASE

No sneakers, no jeans, no tee shirts. Gentlemen, please wear a collared shirt. Let's dress like we are attending a business meeting.

Thanks, The Management

SUGGESTIONS

The Dispatch welcomes articles, book reviews (non-fiction only) and suggestions. Just send them in to our mailing address.



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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December During the Civil War

1861

1 – President Lincoln rips up his Xmas card to G.B.McClellan and writes instead “How long would it require to actually get in motion?”

9 – The Senate creates the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War and the generals now hesitate and continually look over their shoulders.

1862

13 – The Battle of Fredericksburg opens and unmitigated disaster follows.

17 – General Grant issues his infamous Order No. 11 – “The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department ...are hereby expelled from the department [Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi] within 24 hours.”

1863

11 – Confederate Secretary of War Seddon admits serious defeats and reduced military effectiveness because of desertion, straggling and absenteeism. He recommends repeal of the substitute provision of the draft law.

31 – The Richmond *Examiner* laments “Today closes the gloomiest year of our struggle,” and adds “But cheer up. Things could be worse.”
So they cheered up and everything got worse.

1864

1 – Schofield’s Federals elude Hood’s forces at Franklin and add to the defensive line around Nashville under George H. Thomas, who never lost a battle when in command, {Per George Craig, 1985}

15-16 – The ice thaws and Thomas’s Army of the Cumberland crushes Hood’s Army of Tennessee, leaving the Rebels “hopelessly broken.” Hook really played Hell in Tennessee.

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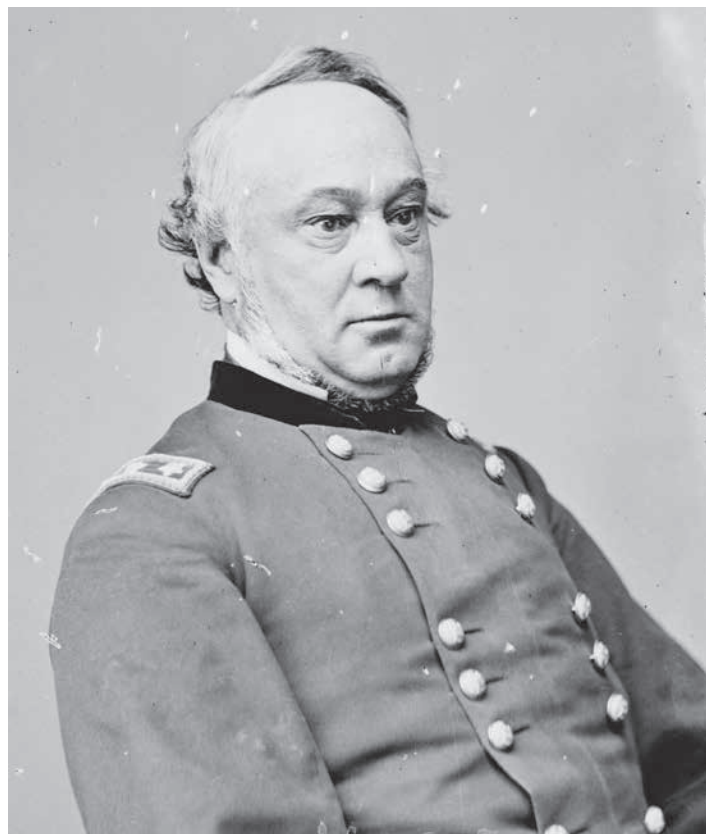
what was afoot with Halleck and what position he might occupy. As shown in a letter to Washburne, Grant repaid Halleck’s condescension and secret betrayals with awed respect: “I do not know the object of calling Gen. H. to Washington but if it is to make him Sec. of War, or Commander-in-Chief, Head Quarters at Washington, a better selection could not be made. He is a man of gigantic intellect and well-studied in the profession of arms. He and I have had several little spats but I like and respect him nevertheless”.

In restoring Grant’s command, Halleck broke up the enormous army he had led to Corinth. Deprived of troops and resources that might have made his new position more significant, Grant was thrown on the defensive amid a hostile population. Cavalry officer Philip H. Sheridan remembered how Grant “plainly showed that he was much hurt at the inconsiderate way in which his command was being depleted.” Nonetheless, as he set up headquarters in Corinth, in a gracious house decorated with fragrant foliage, Grant was at last free of somebody staring over his shoulder and meddling with his decisions. In the fullness of time, Halleck’s departure gave Grant much more room to maneuver. Remote from Washington, he was less ensnared in the backbiting politics and less endangered by any party faction. Unfortunately, he still hovered on the periphery of the nation’s attention, which was riveted on events in Virginia, and this bias in perception would always harm his historic reputation.

Among the military men who disappointed Lincoln was Halleck, whose career went downhill after Second Manassas. He had been recommended for his new job by Pope and their reputations plummeted together. Afflicted by insomnia and hemorrhoids during the late-summer crisis in Virginia-he ingested opium to dull the pain-he fell apart under pressure. Later on Lincoln confided that Halleck “broke down-nerve and pluck all gone-and has ever since evaded all possible responsibility-little more than a

first-rate clerk.” Just how low Halleck sank in Lincoln’s estimation was made apparent that autumn when Attorney General Edward Bates ventured at a cabinet meeting that Halleck should command the army in person. According to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, Lincoln said “that H. would be an indifferent general in the field, that he shirked responsibility in his present position, that he, in short, is a moral coward, worth but little except as a critic and director of operations, though intelligent and educated.”

Excerpted from *Grant* by Ron Chernow



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.

NEW RECRUITS

David LiCalzi from Croton on Hudson, a friend of Kris Kasnicki.

John Steele from Beacon, NY, who is interested in The Army of Northern Virginia.

Aaron LeMasters from 6th Avenue who found us through a Google search.

Kambri Crews from Astoria who is interested in Eastern, TN.



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