Fletcher Pratt Award Winner
Amanda Foreman
for A World on Fire

Our Fletcher Pratt Award winner is a Visiting Research Fellow at Queen Mary, University of London. She won the Whitbread Prize for Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire, which was adapted for the screen as The Duchess. Educated as an undergraduate at Sarah Lawrence College and with master’s and doctorate degrees in history from Oxford University, she is now married, with five children, and lives in New York.

Her prize-winning book is the fascinating story of the American Civil War and the major role played by Britain and its citizens. A World on Fire is a complex and ground-breaking work that should entice all Civil War buffs into learning all about a wonderful, different, world some 3,000 miles from our shores.

55th Annual Battlefield Tour
October 12th–14th, 2012
Fredericksburg/Chancellorsville

Last year we used our sabers to cut our way out of Mosby’s Confederacy. We now ride to join the main armies at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville October 12th–14th. Our guide will be park historian Frank O’Reilly, giving us a special sesquicentennial tour of the Battle of Fredericksburg, followed by General Lee’s greatest victory—Chancellorsville. (The park has acquired new land, so you will be walking on fields you’ve never been on before).

So whether you wear the blue or the grey, it’s time to enlist with a $100 deposit. You can bring it to the meeting or mail it to our HQ at 139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y. 11422. For details call 718-341-9811.
President’s Message

The winter and spring of 1862 had seen many extraordinary victories by Northern arms: Mill Springs, Forts Henry and Donelson, Kernstown, Glorietta Pass, Shiloh, Island No. 10, Fort Pulaski, and the fall of New Orleans. The dreaded ironclad Virginia had been neutralized by the little Monitor, and McClellan’s mighty host was besieging Yorktown on the Virginia Peninsula. It seemed everywhere the South was in retreat, and Lincoln’s dream of Northern success would soon be realized. But May was the month that one man seemingly changed the fortunes of the Confederacy. With aggressive action, Stonewall Jackson would turn everything around out in the Shenandoah Valley, and all the momentum of the North’s triumphs seemed to fizzle out. First, he headed west into the mountains to defeat one army, then returned to the Valley and moved north, driving the forces of “Commissary” Banks right out of Virginia. By fast marching and aggressive action, he had cleared the Valley of all Federals, and Washington was now threatened. Lincoln reacted by ordering McDowell, on his way to reinforce McClellan, to pull back and to move to the Valley, and for Fremont, out in West Virginia, to head east to the Shenandoah. They would trap Jackson in a pincer movement, or so they thought. And while McClellan would fume down on the Peninsula for a “lack” of troops, the aura of Stonewall Jackson and his “foot cavalry” would thrill the South at a time when things looked otherwise very bleak. And if one man could do this much, maybe, just maybe, there was still hope for them.... As we look back 150 years later, the legend of Stonewall and the Valley Campaign still resounds, and we still remember.

— Bill Finlayson

Book Review

WHO IS HE?

He enlisted in the Union army in 1861, a week after the Civil War began. He was not quite 19 years old, and ended up serving for four years, during which he saw action at Shiloh and Chickamauga. The stories he wrote about the conflict form the larger, and more interesting part of his collection, Tales of Soldiers and Civilians, which was published in 1892. The experience of battle clearly had a profound impression on him; he continued writing about it for the rest of his life. But the way he wrote about war was, characteristically, peculiar. In story after story, he begins with minutely detailed descriptions of the hostile landscapes his soldiers- often sentries or scouts- find themselves in; terrain that must be attended to closely, and with sleepless vigilance, for signs of an enemy’s movements. Each of these tales is, in its first couple of pages, marvelous. He is a master of apprehension, always alert to threat. It’s as if every charged moment of his military service were still etched in his memory, persisting as only the most disturbing sensations can. Fear is indelible.

Excerpted from the N.Y. Times book Review by Terrence Rafferty 10/20/11

See answer on page 4
May during the Civil War

1861
- The Arkansas legislature votes 69-1 to secede. A one-way ticket north is given to the guy who was the One.
- A plantation owner quotes the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 to Ben Butler at Fortress Monroe and demands his fugitive slaves returned. Butler retorts that the law applies only to citizens of states that are still in the Union. Ben’s description of escaped slaves as contraband will be used throughout the war.

1862
- Although greatly outnumbered (sure), Little Mac’s siege works and undefended Yorktown falls to the huge Army of the Potomac.
- The great emancipator, David Hunter, frees all the slaves in his department of South Carolina, Florida and Georgia. Lincoln rescinds the order.

1863
- At dusk, panicky Southern soldiers hit the wrong man at Chancellorsville, mortally wounding Stonewall Jackson and figuratively, Lee loses his right arm.
- John Pemberton (his grandson was one of our founding fathers) sees red at the Big Black River in Ole Miss as his troops fail to stop Grant’s juggernaut heading for Vicksburg.

1864
- Ben Butler bottles up himself and 40,000 troops at the Bermuda Triangle in Virginia.
- Quote Horace Greeley of the Tribune: Our own conviction is...that it is advisable for the Union Party to nominate for President some other among its able and true men than Mr. Lincoln.” Thanks, Horace.

CONFEDERATE GRAVE DISCOVERED IN LONG ISLAND

Confederate Lt. Mortimer Bainbridge Ruggles was one of three returning soldiers who crossed the Rappahannock River in Virginia with John Wilkes Booth and Davie Herold and directed the fugitives to the home of the Garrett family.

On May 9, 1902, the New York Times noted the death of Ruggles with the following notice:

Mortimer Bainbridge Ruggles, a son of the late Gen. Daniel Ruggles of the Confederate Army, died at St. Luke’s Hospital yesterday, where he submitted on Monday to an operation. Mr. Ruggles, who was suffering from dropsy, lived at 271 West One Hundred and Fortieth Street and was 58 years of age. When sixteen years old he had an appointment as a cadet at Annapolis but ran away, and with the Civil War breaking out, accepted a position as an aide de camp on his father’s staff.

After the assassination of President Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth, young Ruggles and two friends met the assassin and furnished him with a fresh horse to assist him in his attempted escape. For this offense they were arrested and committed to the Capitol Prison in Washington, but were subsequently released under the general amnesty declared.

Mortimer Ruggles came to this city in 1865 and obtained employment with a prominent dry goods firm, where he remained until last Fall, when incapacitated by illness. Following his passing, Lt. Ruggles’ remains were laid to rest in Long Island, and there they remained unmarked and largely forgotten for over a hundred years until Civil War historian Seward Osborne-researching a book on the Lincoln assassination, attempted to locate Lt. Ruggles’s grave. It proved no easy task.

“After much research, getting a copy of Lt. Ruggles’s death certificate and calling numerous cemeteries, I finally located his unmarked grave in Oakwood Cemetery, 3 Moffit Boulevard, Bay Shore, N.Y.,” related Osborne who applied to the U.S. Veterans Administration for a headstone, and just over 108 years after the lieutenant’s passing the stone was laid in place.

From the Surratt Courier reprinted from the online newsletter of the Archibald Gracie Camp, sons of Confederate Veterans, N.Y., N.Y.

Editor’s note, This tale is similar to the one concerning Robert Selph Garnett, who was killed early in the war in Western Virginia. He, too, was buried in an unmarked grave in Green-Wood Cemetery until historian Jeff Richman got him an official tombstone from the federal government.

NEW SLATE – 2012-2013

Here’s the new slate of officers:

President   William Finlayson
VP Programs   Martin Smith
VP Operations   Paul Weiss
Secretary   Pat Holohan
Treasurer  Bud Livingston

Board of Directors
Term exp. 2013    Michael Connors, Judith Hallock
(replacing Len Rehner)
Term exp. 2014    Charlie Mander, Terry McCarthy
Term exp. 2015    Alan Florin, Cindy Sostchen-Hochman

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GENERAL LEE IS ANXIOUS AND RUFFLED

The fact of the matter seems to be that Robert E. Lee was deeply angered. At midday, talking to General Anderson and to Ewell’s aide Campbell Brown, he had made no effort to conceal his anger at Jeb Stuart for failing to obey instructions. Lee was surely displeased with Harry Heth for disobeying his instructions, to not bring on a general engagement, and equally displeased with corps commander Powell Hill for letting it happen. Under questioning, Dick Ewell (along with his lieutenants) had displayed, first, strong reluctance to move against the enemy’s right, then strong reluctance to shift forces around to the enemy’s left, as Lee proposed. Longstreet was being stubbornly and outspokenly contrary to the whole plan of battle. Lee was without Jeb Stuart’s eyes, on which he had grown utterly dependent. He was entangled in a battle he had not wanted in a place he knew little about against a foe he could not describe. It was not any wonder that he seemed anxious and ruffled.”

From Gettysburg by Stephen W. Sears

THE OVERUSE OF TIRELESSLY

“I realize that Geoff Dyer’s essay on the overuse of “tirelessly” concerned books – and those in most cases by otherwise good writers. But I can’t resist pointing out in the election season – which seems endless if not tireless – that Michele Bachmann attracted unwanted attention by asserting that the founding fathers “worked tirelessly” to end slavery. This exercise in unintended irony adds new meanings to the word “tirelessly” since the founding fathers, many of whom were slave owners, protected slavery in the Constitution and worked, perhaps even when they were tired, to maintain slavery as “the law of the land.”

Letter to the N.Y. Times from a professor of English at Colgate University 3/4/12

Answer from page 2

Ambrose Bierce, author of The Devil’s Dictionary

THE DISPATCH

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF NEW YORK

139-33 250th Street, Rosedale, N.Y. 11422