



December 2005  
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# The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

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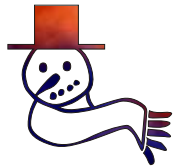
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## Meeting Site

December 15th meeting  
7 PM

Eastwood Baptist Church  
3212 James Street  
Eastwood, NY



## Holiday Fete

Directions: Route 690 East to Midler Ave Exit. North on Midler to James St. Right on James. Church will be two blocks from Midler on the right.

Meetings are held at 7 PM on the third Thursday of the month from September through June and are free and open to the public.

## December 15th Holiday Fete

This is our annual holiday celebration complete with fine desserts, spirited Civil War music, and an interesting silent auction of items our members donate. One never knows what will be displayed on the auction table or what bidding strategy will be successful. Join us for a night of fun and congeniality with your fellow round table members. We ask that you bring your favorite dessert and an item for the auction table.

## Weather Related Meeting Cancellation

For the next few months the possibility exists that a meeting will have to be cancelled due to Lake Ontario's wrath. An email announcing the cancellation will be sent to those who receive the newsletter by email. If you receive your newsletter through the mail, we ask that you call Pat Stepanek (696-5531) or Darothy DeAngelo (682-6312) after 3:30 PM on the day of the meeting to learn if it has been cancelled. Please keep this in mind. It's not fun to be the only one to show up. Been there! Done that. Don't want to do *that* again!

## President's Message

Greetings! I'm hoping that everyone is enjoying the season and the snow. At least it has been manageable. It's hard to believe that another year has passed so quickly.

Last meeting's game night was a success and everyone had a good time trying to win the championship and the round table fame that accompanies such a win. The competition was fierce! We'll have to talk about having a rematch next year. Maybe this should become an annual event? Do you think that Alex would be interested in producing a Civil War Jeopardy??

This month we will be celebrating at our annual fete, and we hope that you will be joining us for some luscious desserts and great auction items. This gathering is always an entertaining evening. It's always nice to just be able to sit around and get to know our members. Some of us may even try to sing along with Neil Mac Millan, our Civil War musician for the evening.

Wishing you a very happy holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Mimi Rudy

## Welcome To Our New Members

Welcome to Nancy McDade of Manlius and Clay B. Smith of LaFayette, new members of our round table. Treasurer Dave Osborn thanks our members who have renewed their memberships and paid their 2005-06 dues.

## November Meeting Congratulations

The team of Ted Jones, Art Benschadel, Richard Walker, Rick Trump, Beth Greenfield, Courtney Tucker, and Darohty DeAngelo won the inaugural *Abraham Lincoln "I Wish I Had Known That" Award* for extraordinary knowledge of the Civil War and the ability to recall it on a moment's notice. Abe would have been proud of all of you. Alexandra Trebek, aka Pat Stepanek, had to keep the quick response of Ted Jones in check because he usually had the answer before the question was completely finished. He's a smart guy!

Two questions did create some controversy. The first query asked for the US rank RE Lee held at the beginning of the war. Dave Collins thought Lee was a lieutenant colonel of the cavalry. Indeed that was his rank until shortly before the war. When he resigned from the US Army on April 25, 1861, he resigned as a colonel, 1st Cavalry, to which he had been promoted on March 16, 1860 and had accepted on March 30th.

The second controversy involved a question based on misinformation from Boatner's *The Civil War Dictionary*; a once-trusted resource. Boatner defines Galvanized Yankees as "Federal prisoners who had taken an oath of allegiance to the Confederate Government and were enlisted in the CSA." Mr. Boatner is mistaken. *The Encyclopedia of the American Civil War* defines Galvanized Yankees as "the name given to captured Confederate soldiers who agreed to enlist in the Union army in exchange for release from prison camp." Boatner caused some confusion for us but not for Ted Jones. Perhaps Boatner needs Ted as an editor.

## Research Notes from Member Courtney Tucker

Many Onondaga County civil war soldiers have descendants who live in the county today. Blanche Rainbow, who turned 75 in November, her children and grandchildren plus many cousins live in Syracuse, Tully, Fabius and LaFayette. They are related to Simeon Rainbow who died in the most famous battle of the war. Simeon enlisted on August 8, 1862, at the age of 40 at Cuyler, New York in Company C, 157<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Regiment for three years. He was mustered into service as a Private on August 20, 1862, at Hamilton, NY. The 157<sup>th</sup> NY regiment was recruited in the counties of Madison and Cortland, but many men crossed the Onondaga County line to join. It was organized at Hamilton and mustered into the U.S. service for three years on September 19, 1862. The 157<sup>th</sup> left the state on September 25th and upon reaching Washington was assigned to the First Brigade, Third Division under General Schurz in the Eleventh Corps, with which it went into winter quarters at Aquia Creek, then Stafford Courthouse, VA, just north of Fredericksburg.<sup>1</sup>

In its first major battle at Chancellorsville in early May 1863, the regiment lost 98 men killed, wounded and missing. At Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the regiment was "heavily engaged on the first two days of the battle and was highly praised for the gallantry" by one account.<sup>2</sup> National Archive records show that Simeon Rainbow was present for duty with the regiment from the summer of 1862 until killed in the line of duty on July 1, 1863. His commanding officer, Captain Frank R. Place, certified that Simeon was killed on the first day at Gettysburg by a musket ball, one of six men killed in battle from Company "C" during the war.<sup>3</sup> Out of 431 men on July 1, the casualties of

the 157<sup>th</sup> NY by the end of the three day battle amounted to six officers and 46 men killed and mortally wounded; six officers and 137 men wounded; six officers and 106 men missing for a total of 307 casualties or 71% lost. Simeon Rainbow's Company "C" had only seven enlisted men left, led by the only officer or non-commissioned officer remaining, Sergeant William Saxton.<sup>4</sup> Simeon was one of the 46 killed in the regiment and is likely one of the 16 unknown soldiers of the 157<sup>th</sup> buried in an unmarked grave at the Gettysburg National Military Cemetery. They fought for the Union and to set other men free.

Editor's Note: Courtney is working with the family to try to get a VA memorial marker for Simeon in the family plot in the LaFayette cemetery.

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<sup>1</sup> Record of Events for the 157<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, September 1862-June 1865, Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Part II-Record of Events, Volume 47, p. 373-382.

<sup>2</sup> The Union Army: A History of Military Affairs in the Loyal States 1861-65; Records of the Regiments in the Union Army--Cyclopedia of Battles --Memoirs of Commanders and Soldiers, 8 vols., Madison, Federal Publishing, 1908; Volume 2, p.162.

<sup>3</sup> Simeon Rainbow Military Service and Pension Records; Widow Application 42979, Certificate 44557; National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> Saxton, William, "A Regiment Remembered: The 157<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers," Diary of Captain William Saxton, Cortland County Historical Society, Publication 22, 1996, p.83.

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## Comments from Congress About The War

***"Money you have expended without limits and blood poured out like water. Defeat, debt, taxation, and sepulchers - these are your only trophies."***

Think this might be a comment from Senator John Kerry? Think again. Outspoken Peace Democrat and Copperhead Clement Vallandigham (1820-1871), a skilled, self-taught lawyer and Congressman from Ohio (1858-1863), sealed his fate with the above statement. Found guilty of treason by a military court, he was sentenced to Federal imprisonment at Fort Warren for the duration of the war. Lincoln commented, "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert?" and then ingeniously banished Vallandigham to the Confederacy on May 25, 1863. The Confederacy did not embrace Vallandigham.

He soon ended up in Windsor, Ontario and campaigned from there for governor of Ohio. He lost that bid. After the war and back in Ohio, he resumed his law practice. During a case in which he was showing the jury how a murder victim might have killed himself, he accidentally shot himself with the pistol and died. Quite a horrifying and dramatic exit!

Despised by his Republican colleagues in the House, Vallandigham was the voice for the other view of the war: peace without victory. Those same passionate echoes are heard in the halls of Congress today. History does repeat itself.

## Syracuse, the Birthplace of ...

Within the pages of the recently published *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin, Syracuse and Central NY are mentioned frequently since William Henry Seward of Auburn, NY was one of three talented Lincoln opponents of national reputation to end up in Lincoln's cabinet. As Seward awaited the news of his anticipated presidential nomination in May 1860 at his Auburn home, Goodwin comments, "Visitors had come by horse and carriage from the surrounding villages, from Seneca Falls and Waterloo to the west, from Skaneateles to the east, from Weedsport to the north." I wonder if Skaneateles and/or Weedsport have ever been mentioned in any Lincoln book before? Though Goodwin considers Auburn, NY to be part of Western NY, we can forgive her for that minor indignity.

The greatest tribute Goodwin pays to our region of NY State relates to two state conventions, one Whig, one Republican that convened simultaneously in Syracuse in September 1855. Seward, a NY Whig senator at the time, was reluctant to abandon the Whig Party. However, with the 1854 passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the possibility of slavery seeping into that territory, 1855 saw the birth of the Republican party in NY State at that dual convention in Syracuse. The new party was committed to preventing the extension of slavery in the territories. In 1856, Lincoln decided that Illinois should follow New York in organizing various anti-Nebraska splinter groups into the Illinois Republican Party.

Goodwin writes, "When Seward was asked by a friend which (Syracuse) convention to attend, he replied that it didn't matter. Delegates would enter through two doors, but exit through one." The New York State Republican Party was born in the Syracuse during that convention 150 years ago.

## Christmas on the Front Lines

"Even with all the sorrow that hangs, and will forever hang over so many households; even while war still rages; even while there are serious questions yet to be settled - ought it not to be and is it not a merry Christmas?"

*Harper's Weekly*, December 26, 1863



Men of the 5th New Hampshire engaged in a greased pig chase as their Christmas entertainment.

*From Frank Leslie's Illustrated History of the Civil War*

## Onondaga County Civil War Round Table New Membership/Renewal Form

Membership dues of the OCCWRT are:

Please Check one of the Following

\_\_\_ \$20.00 a year

\_\_\_ O.H.A. members \$5.00

\_\_\_ Seniors and Students \$15.00

\_\_\_ Family rate (2 or more) \$30.00

Dues may be paid at meetings or sent to:

Onondaga County Civil War Round Table  
ATTN: Dave Osborn, Treasurer  
2 Thistlewood Lane  
Fayetteville, NY 13066

Please find \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed in form of  
Circle One:

Check   M.O.   Cash

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please check if you prefer an emailed newsletter  
and can receive an Acrobat (pdf) file.

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

The Onondaga County Civil War Round Table was organized in 1994 and is now an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month from September through June. The purpose of the OCCWRT is to stimulate and encourage interest in the American Civil War, to assist in community service in order to enhance the study and understanding of the Civil War, to provide educational and historical research of the period, and to promote historic preservation.



General Willian Tecumseh Sherman as host at a celebratory Christmas dinner in Savannah after presenting the captured city to President Lincoln as a holiday gift.

*Onondaga County*  
*Civil War Round Table* 2589 Gardner Road Fabius, NY 13063