



The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

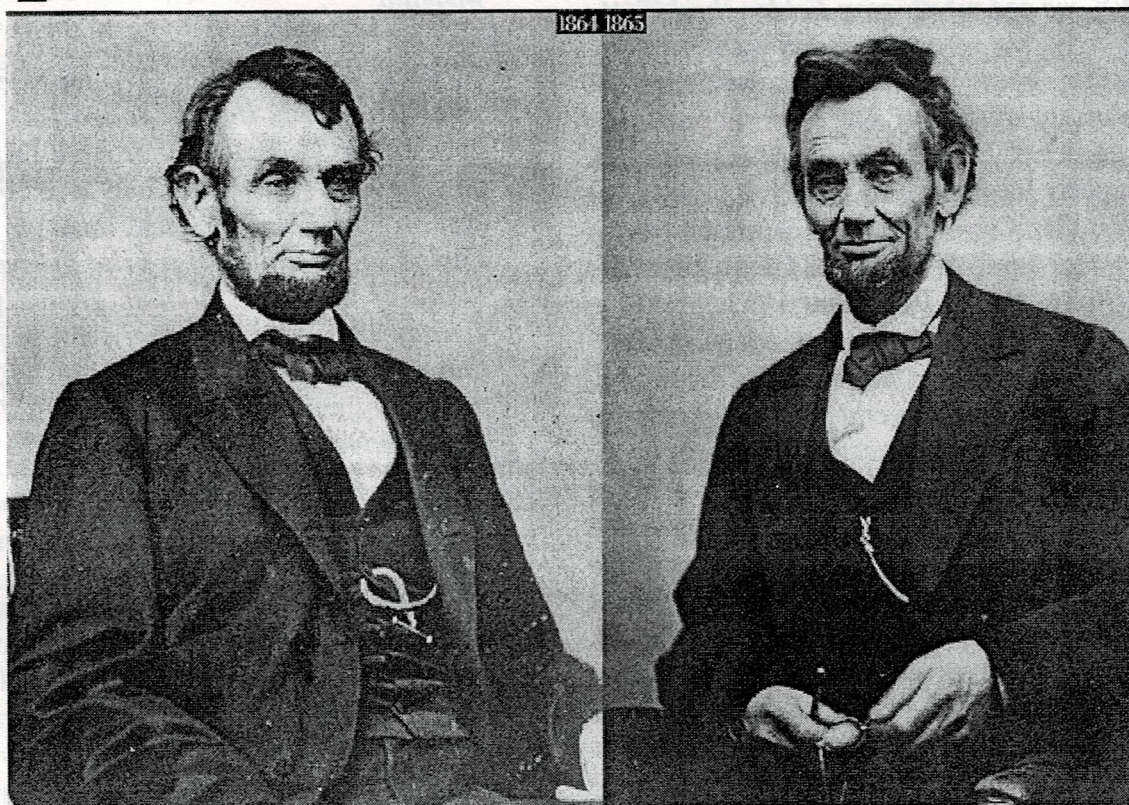
Capital District Civil War Round Table

P.O. Box 14871, Albany, NY 12212-4871

CDCWRT's web site: timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

FEBRUARY 12, 1809 TO APRIL 15, 1865

The stress caused by the Civil War shows in Lincoln's face, even in the period from the left image in 1864 to the rightward image in 1865. By February 1865, it was inevitable that the Union Army would win, but the cost of victory weighed heavily.

February Meeting

Friday 2/13/04

Guilderland Public Library

Route 20 Western Ave.

Guilderland, NY

SOCIAL HOUR	6:00PM
BUSINESS MEETING	7:00PM
PROGRAM	7:30PM

CDCWRT MEETING

The February meeting of the CDCWRT will be held in the Guilderland Public Library on Friday 13, 2004 at 7:30pm. YES, we are meeting on Friday the 13th!!!

*Our guest speaker will be Mark W. Johnson, author of the recently published book, **That Body of Brave Men: The U.S. Regular Infantry and the Civil War in the West** (Da Capo Press, 2003). His topic for our meeting will be, "The Capital District at Stones River, December 1862."*

Mark, a major in the U.S. Army, will talk about the December 1862 Battle of Stones River in Tennessee, focusing on the experience of three Regular Army officers with strong ties to the Albany area: Lieutenant Colonel Oliver Shepard, a native of Clifton Park and an 1840 West Point graduate, Major Frederick Townsend, a graduate of Union College, who twice served as the Adjutant General of New York State, and Lieutenant Frederick Phisterer, who would earn the Medal of Honor during this battle and would later be dubbed "the father of the New York State National Guard."

Major Johnson, a combat veteran and graduate of the United States Military Academy, is currently serving as an ROTC instructor at Siena College in Loudonville. He is also a doctoral student in history at the State University at Albany.

Mark's new book is a unit history of four Regular Army regiments, the 15th, 16th, 18th and 19th U.S. Infantry Regiments, that campaigned in the Civil War's Western Theater. They formed the celebrated "Regular Brigade" in the Army of the Cumberland. The book is the product of more than 14 years of extensive research, and breaks new ground on the pivotal role played by Regular Army units in the Civil War. Copies of the book will be available for sale and signing after the meeting.

There will be several Civil War items for sale. These will include magazines (\$0.50 apiece), books, and some framed prints. If you have a favorite Civil War general (Union or Confederate), talk to Matt Farina to determine if a print is available. Many of the more famous generals have already been sold, but there are scores of these one-of-a-kind prints still left. All proceeds support you Round Table's preservation activities.

JANUARY MEETING

A crowd of about 60 attendees braved a cold and blustery night to hear an excellent presentation by Rosemary Nichols on Benjamin Butler. Much of the information she presented was new to many of us since Rosemary concentrated on his non-military life. Likewise, Kathy Sheehan from the Rensselaer County Historical Society gave an entertaining and informative presentation on Samuel Wilson, on "Uncle Sam." We were surprised to learn that there is no

painted or photographic picture of this well-known Trojan. Perhaps Michael Barrett might know of an image somewhere?

BOARD MEETING

At the December 29th meeting, the Board unanimously voted to make the following preservation donations:

\$500 to the Friends of the Gettysburg Battlefield reforestation program in honor of Scott Hartwick, guide for our GB tours;

\$500 to the NYS Military Heritage Museum;
\$500 to the Rensselaer County Historical Society in honor of deceased CDCWRT member, Jim Coleman;

\$500 to the South Mountain Battlefield in honor of retiring long-time board member, Cindy Schechter;

\$589 to the Civil War Preservation Trust for matching funds to preserve Bristol Station;

\$500 to Save Historic Antietam Foundation;
\$500 to the Friends of the Fredericksburg Battlefield;

\$500 to the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust;

\$500 to Ellwood Plantation in Virginia;
and, a contribution to the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway for some specific items to be determined.

(Ed. Note: These funds were raised by the sale of cachets, prints, books, and other items to the membership and the public. This is how your dollars are put to use in preservation activities. Thank you.)

UP-COMING EVENTS

The Annual Cover Show will be held in Albany on Saturday and Sunday, February 21st & 22nd. This stamp show features 60-80 dealers of stamps, cachets, postcards and other ephemera from the Northeast. The CDCWRT is a supporter of

the show, and generally has an information table set up along with cachets and other Civil War items. We need volunteers to help man the tables. No experience is necessary other than an interest in the Civil War, and an interest in talking to others about that interest. Volunteers should contact Joe Stracuzzi or Sue Knost.

The March Meeting of the Round Table is scheduled for Friday, March 12th, 2004 at the Guilderland Library.

Our Spring Muster will be a 3-day weekend starting on Friday, April 23, 2004. The trip will cover the Wilderness and Spotsylvania battles. We will fly Friday morning to Baltimore and bus to Virginia. Those who do not wish to fly, would leave by bus from Albany on Thursday, the 22nd. The bus would stop for several hours in Gettysburg and would stop overnight outside of Baltimore. The bus travelers would meet the air travelers Friday morning in Baltimore. **Deposits of \$150 per person will be due in January.** Deposits are refundable if the trip is cancelled. Part or all of the deposit may be **non-refundable for late individual cancellation.**

The May meeting of the Round Table will be on Friday, May 14th, 2004. Dana Shoaf from the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust will speak on a Pennsylvania volunteer whom he has been researching.

The June meeting will be on Friday, June 11th, and our speaker will be Ray Wemple. Ray will talk about the Confederate Signal Corps.

The annual picnic is scheduled for Sunday, July 11th, at Peeble's Island.

Other up-coming events in which you Round Table is involved, are listed below:
April – Vermont Full Duty Banquet
May - Open House at Peeble’s Island
June 12-13th Peterboro Civil War Days
June 21st – Cooperstown – Game Day
July 1-5th -Gettysburg 141st Re-enactment

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

The newest edition of *The Gettysburg Magazine, volume 30*, will be available at the February meeting for the price of \$5.00. This is another great issue with articles on intelligence operations during the campaign, Meade’s initiation as army commander, and the 124th NYVI (the Orange Blossoms) on July 2, 1863. The lead article evaluates the failure of **Union cavalry** in addition to Stuart’s failures. Another article discusses a monument controversy that involves the 111th NYVI, also in Willard’s Brigade. Finally, there is an article on a solved Rose farm mystery that involve four Confederate dead soldiers whose bodies had been photographed by Gardner on July 5-6, 1863.

* * * * *

Several regular volunteers are being sought to help Stan Bergman, who handles refreshments. While many have helped out in recent meetings, we are seeking two consistent volunteers to assist Stan at each meeting. If enough apply, we could rotate meetings. See Joe Stracuzzi if interested.

* * * * *

Do you like Civil War movies? A Civil War Film Festival is being planned with the CDCWRT and the Guilderland Public Library, which has a license to show the

films of a number of movie companies. The plan is to show one movie a month, perhaps with a speaker to introduce each movie. The last movie in September would be *Gods and Generals*, with Jeff Shaara as the guest speaker.

The first movie will likely be the TV movie, *Ironclads*, on Thursday, March 11th at 7:00 p.m. This movie was chosen because of the anniversary of the battle between the Monitor and the Virginia on March 9th, 1862.

* * * * *

ATTENTION THESPIANS!!!

Have you ever had the urge to climb upon the stage? Well now is the opportunity to do so, and do it in the Civil War!

The Albany Civic Theater is producing *The Andersonville Trial* on the weekends of May 7-9, 14-16, and 21-23. Carol King will be director. Volunteers are needed for a variety of activities.

Auditions for the play are Monday and Tuesday, March 8th and 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the theater on Sand Street in Albany. There are 15 speaking parts to offer (some with one or two lines) and many non-speaking roles (7 non-speaking judges, 1 prison surgeon, 1 court clerk, 3 soldiers, 3 newspaper men, 1 court reporter, 7-9 courtroom audience members including 2-3 women in Victorian dress). Split weekends may be possible. Non-speaking actors would not need to attend rehearsals on a regular basis until 2 weeks before the play opens.

Volunteers are also being sought to help as dressers. Actors are encouraged to bring their own costumes if they are of the

appropriate period. Property items are also being sought. A 35-star U.S. flag is needed, along with a large picture of Lincoln, quills and inkwells, and Victorian clothing. There is also a role for a drummer boy. Interested parties should contact Fran McCashion at 459-4209.

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The January meeting of the Buffalo CWRT was cancelled due to Cold Mountain, cold lake, cold city, cold air, cold car seats, and cold ear lobes.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By March 1865, America was ending its fourth year of a war that had lasted longer than anyone thought it would. As inauguration day approached on March 4, 1865, the end was finally in sight. Sherman had marched from Savannah into South Carolina with victories in Charleston and the capital of Columbia. Grant had extended his siege lines around Petersburg and had left the stretched Confederate forces with few avenues for re-supply.

Rumors in Washington had shifted from battles to kidnapping of the president or his cabinet members. In addition to the usual capital crowd, there were large numbers of Confederate deserters who roamed the city.

Lincoln was looking forward to four years of peace and rebuilding. He would not be hampered by Congress until it again came into session in December. Although many in the crowd were happy about the inevitable victory, many felt anger or fatigue over a war that had killed one in every eleven men of service age.

Washington had never seen so many citizens come to town for Lincoln's second inauguration. Friday evening brought rain and a dense fog. The streets turned to mud with the rain. Visitors and residents who walked to the Capitol, were greeted with military patrols on horseback at every major intersection. By 10:30 a.m Saturday morning, the clouds were beginning to clear, but ten minutes later, torrential rains reappeared.

Large number of soldiers, many as amputees, were in the crowd along with black soldiers and civilians. A London reporter estimated that "at least half the multitude were colored people." In the inaugural parade there were four companies of members of the 45th Regiment of the United States Colored Troops, a sight never before seen in an inaugural procession.

Lincoln himself was not in the parade, having gone to the Capitol Building to sign some bills. After a festive beginning, the parade bogged down, and Mrs. Lincoln's carriage also left the parade. After noon, the new vice-president, Andrew Johnson was sworn in first. At his first utterance, it was obvious to all, that Johnson was drunk.

When Lincoln was introduced, the crowd roared. After order was restored, Lincoln rose to speak. Many people at the time, and for years after, commented on a celestial phenomenon. A spectator recorded in his diary entry for March 4th, "As soon as Mr. Lincoln came out the wind ceased blowing and the rain ceased raining and the Sun came out and it became clear as it could be and calm." Another recorded, "Just at that moment the sun, which had been obscured all day, burst forth in its unclouded meridian splendor, and flooded the spectacle with glory and with light."

(From a book review by Max Byrd)

At the Second Inaugural, the president spoke not much longer (than at Gettysburg), perhaps no more than six minutes, but this time the camera was ready, though the image is slightly out of focus. In the finished picture, Lincoln stands on a wooden platform above the steps of the Capitol. An imaginative eye may see the former slave Frederick Douglass in the front row. Vice President Andrew Johnson, undoubtedly drunk, who has just disgraced himself in his own inaugural speech, is on the platform, as are the pious and ambitious chief justice of the United States, Salmon P. Chase; the serene and cocky secretary of state, William H. Seward; and a host of other tall-hatted, frock-coated men. Beside a stone buttress, not many feet from the platform, stands the actor John Wilkes Booth.

Carl Sandberg described Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address as "the great American poem." Yet, as must have been evident almost at once to the president's audience, it was not a poem but a sermon.

The Second Inaugural is a sermon on the origins and paradoxes of the Civil War. Its central theme is that "the Almighty has his own purposes." Its central passage is the long paragraph in which Lincoln acknowledges, in an incontrovertible but baffled adverb, that slavery "was somehow the cause of the war" and (he) accepts that the Almighty's purposes may yet require more blood and suffering from both North and South before "this mighty scourge" passes away. The speeches coda is the beautiful paragraph that touches on Lincoln's vision of how "to bind up the nation's wounds," which begins with the famous phrases "With malice toward none; with charity for all."

The grammatical parallelism and balance of the Second Inaugural reflect Lincoln's own precision and balance of mind. The president's repeated use of antithesis --- Charles Sumner said that Lincoln's "ideas moved as the beasts entered Noah's ark, in pairs" --- is a way for him recognize division and still bring North and South together. "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God," Lincoln told his audience, "and each invokes his aid against the other."

"Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish." Up to now 'war' was being described as the direct object, both grammatically and historically, of the principal actors. Now, recounting the complex motivations that led to war, Lincoln was beginning to suggest that neither side was fully in control. 'War' was about to become the subject rather than the object.

"And," in Lincoln's words, "the war came." Contemporary newspapers report that because of the crowd's cheers, he paused a long time before those four short, heartbreaking words.

A literary critic might add that this is Lincoln's famous 'plain' style at its best, the profound simplicity of utterance that he shares with Mark Twain and Ulysses Grant, two other great 19th-century masters of American prose. Recent historians have pointed to Lincoln's fatalistic, impersonal style as evidence of the essential passivity of his nature. (Byrd) thinks otherwise. Lincoln's acknowledgement of his own passivity is his way of pointing to the larger truth of the activity of God.

“Lots of wisdom in that document, I suspect,” Lincoln joked to a friend as he put away a draft of his speech. But he seems to have been very seriously concerned about its effect on his audience. “I saw you in the crowd today, listening to my inaugural address,” Lincoln remarked to Frederick Douglass at the White House reception on the night of March 4th. “How did you like it?”

“Mr. Lincoln,” Douglass answered, “that was a sacred effort.”

TRIVIA

Match the event with the date

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Erie Canal is opened | 1826 |
| 2. US bans importation of slaves | 1848 |
| 3. Black Hawk War | 1825 |
| 4. South Carolina secedes | 1852 |
| 5. Robert Fulton’s steamboat | 1861 |
| 6. World’s 1 st photograph taken | 1860 |
| 7. <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> published | 1807 |
| 8. Gold discovered in California | 1793 |
| 9. 1 st transcontinental telegraph | 1808 |
| 10. Cotton gin invented | 1832 |

TRUE OR FALSE

11. On November 6, 1860, Lincoln received 180 electoral votes and carried every Northern state.

12. By the time Lincoln assumed office, on March 4, 1861, all but Tennessee and Virginia had seceded from the Union.

13. At 4:30 a.m. on April 9, 1861, the first shots of the war were fired at Fort Sumter, in Charleston, SC.

14. It has been confirmed that Abraham Lincoln had the congenital disease called Marfan Syndrome, and would have died in office of a ruptured aorta had he not been assassinated.

DISCOVERING THE LAST LINCOLN PHOTOGRAPH

Brigadier General Edward Townsend had become a confidant of Lincoln when Townsend was Adjutant General of the Army. He later assembled the 128-volume *War of the Rebellion or the Official Records*. His keen sense of history compelled him to give special permission to Jeremiah Gurney, Jr. to photograph Lincoln lying in state in New York City. Various artists sketched the scene, but when the press reported the story of Gurney’s special privilege, Edwin Stanton was besieged by similar requests. Mary Lincoln read a paper account of the dispute and complained to Stanton also.

The Secretary of War ordered all plates, sketches, and engravings to be seized and destroyed. At least one sketch and one photograph escaped the order. Gurney campaigned to save his plates and prints, and Stanton relented, and allowed Gurney to make a single print from the multiple image negative. On April 29th, Gurney sent the albumen print to Stanton who presented it to Robert Todd Lincoln. Aware of his mother’s wishes, Robert ordered the print and plate destroyed. Stanton did not have the heart to destroy the small print, and placed it among his personal papers. His son Lewis sent it to John Nicolay 22 years later. On July 20, 1952, Ronald Rietveld, a Lincoln researcher, was allowed to peruse the papers of Lincoln’s secretaries. With a letter dated January 17, 1887, Lewis Stanton had sent the photograph to Nicolay, who had left his collection to the Illinois State Historical Library. By chance the last photo had come to surface.