

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.cdcwrt.org



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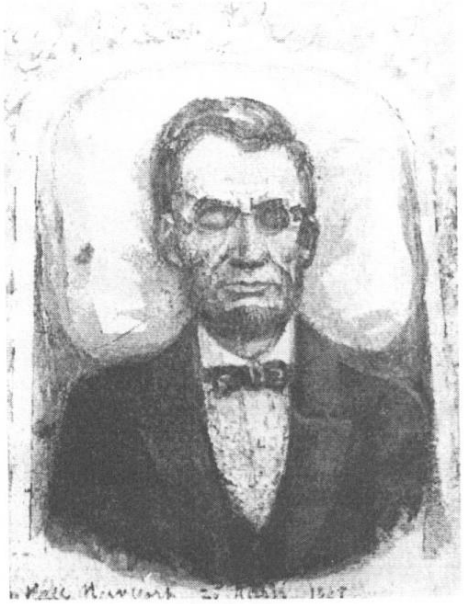
PRESIDENT LINCOLN DIES APRIL 15, 1865

THOUSANDS MOURN AND VIEW THE PRESIDENT'S BODY AT THE CAPITOL



Lincoln lying in state in his coffin at City Hall, New York City, April 27, 1865. Sketch was done by Pierre Morand.

After Lincoln was assassinated and his remains began the journey back to Springfield for burial, Secretary Edwin Stanton did not allow photographs of Lincoln's body. Several were taken but the plates were confiscated by Stanton and were destroyed. One photo of Lincoln in his coffin was spared and was in the safe-keeping of one of his secretaries. Years later the photo was discovered. The President's orbits became discolored due to hematoma. Read more about his funeral inside.



America's first mourning stamp was issued one year after Lincoln's death. It was a 15-cent stamp and the President's image was based on an 1861 photograph of Lincoln taken when he was president-elect. A little more than two million stamps were issued. A used stamp was listed as $200 in value in 2007. A stamp in mint condition is listed as $4000 in value in 2007. You might want to check that box of old letters from your great-great aunt that is in an old trunk in the attic!

APRIL MEETING
Friday April 11, 2008
Guilderland Library
2228 Western Ave.

PAPER, PATRIOTISM, & THE CIVIL WAR

SOCIAL HOUR	**6:00-7:00 PM**
BUSINESS	**7:00-7:30 PM**
PRESENTATION	**7:30-8:30 PM**
DISCUSSION	**8:30 – 9:00 PM**

CDCWRT MEETING

***The monthly meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Guilderland Public Library on Friday evening, April 11, 2008. Our special guest speaker will be Elwyn Doubleday, and his talk is entitled* "Paper, Patriotism, and the Civil War."**

In this month's presentation, long time RT supporter Elwyn Doubleday (aka Dub) will share insights into the images of the era from his personal collection of items produced for patriotic purposes, including some unusual song sheets, and Civil War envelopes and covers. Patriotism is reflected in the popular items in everyday use, and Dub will explain what the items are, and how they reflected and influenced popular thought at the time. This is a not to be missed presentation, as collectors and buffs will want to hear what to look for in theme and condition when adding pieces to personal collections.

Elwyn and his wife, Anne, will bring selections for show and tell. If you have Civil War envelopes that you would like to share with the group or show to Dub, please bring them along.

Elwyn Doubleday has been in the stamp, cover, and philatelic business for over 35 years, and a staunch supporter of the CDCWRT for the last 12 years. For those of you who have one of our signature CW Baseball T-shirts, the image on the shirt is from Dub's personal family collection. In 1995, Dub agreed to let the CDCWRT use that image for our shirts, and was the support person behind our stamp cachet program, getting us started in raising funds for battlefield preservation. Through his encouragement and advice, the CDWRT has raised over $300,000 which we can directly credit to his help with our very first cover and subsequent success. Elwyn is one of our distance members, and is an ancillary relative of Civil War general, Abner Doubleday.

MONTHLY MEETING 03/14/08

With the 146th anniversary of the Monitor's battle with the Merrimack just a few days before, 50 CDCWRT members turned out to hear Steve Muller's informative presentation *The Ironclad USS Monitor: Cutting Edge Technology.* John Ericsson's innovative design and technology produced the first oceangoing armored warship and the first rotating gun turret. Signers of the contract to build the Monitor risked huge financial loss with nonpayment the penalty if the proposed armored ship failed to perform. Fortunately the four men each made a profit of $20,000 when the ship was completed only a few days after the 100 day deadline at $80,000 under the contract price of $275,000.

Ordered by Ericsson from reliable, known suppliers, the components were manufactured off site, and then delivered to the Continental Iron Works in Brooklyn for final assembly. Armaments were provided by the Navy.

The Monitor's design was actually a combination of two structures consisting of a shallow hull with a wider raft placed on top, held together by rivets, a weakness when out on the open ocean. The deck, only 18" above the water's surface, made taking on water a serious problem. One inch deck plates and ½" hull plates protected the 172' long ship. Wood backing for the iron plates armoring the ship helped to absorb the impact of shots fired in battle. Ericsson ignored the contract's specification for a mast and sails, designing a vessel powered exclusively by steam. Coal capacity was 100 tons, an eight day supply. On deck were two smoke outlets and a hatch to remove ash from the boiler. Also on deck was a small lookout for the pilot.

The 9' rotating turret, armored with 8" of iron plating, was placed on the ship after launching. The turret, 20' in diameter, was designed to be raised and lowered, though in the end it was kept raised. Because of limitations of space for recoil, special friction gun slides for the two 11" smoothbore cannons were installed. During combat 19 men were in action there,

a very tight fit. A great disadvantage was the inability to elevate the cannons to fire at coastal targets.

Ventilation had to be provided on what was a sealed ship. Two ventilator shafts opened to the top deck. In summer when it became extremely hot, the crew named it the "Thermonitor," claiming temperatures reached as high as 150 degrees. Spending as much time as possible out on deck was their solution.

Another marvel of technology was that the Monitor probably had the first pump flush toilet on a ship.

Even though taking on water was a problem, the government was more that satisfied with it performance and ordered 35 of the Monitor class of ships during the war. The Monitor class, enlarged with bigger cannon, continued to be commissioned for use in coastal defense, the last of them serving until 1935.

As always, with their curiosity piqued, members asked our speaker many questions.
This excellent summary of the presentation was filed by our secretary, Mary Ellen Johnson.

BOARD MEETING

A Board Meeting was held on March 13, 2008. The treasurer reported $1,547.57 in the regular account, and $4,457.51 in the preservation account. Book sales at the meeting amounted to $74.50. Upcoming events were discussed. A $300 donation was made to the Guilderland Library Foundation in honor of the 50th anniversary of the library. The library has been very supportive of the Round Table and we appreciate the excellent facility where he hold our meetings.

It was announced that Matt George will participate in the Association for Public Historians of NYS's spring conference, and will represent the CDCWRT.

UP-COMING EVENTS

The following list of up-coming events is provided to help Round Table members plan their long term calendars. These are events that involve our Round Table, especially events that provide opportunities to raise funds for our preservation activities. Some events may change as the year progresses, so members should check the list monthly.

April 14th, 2008, Monday, marks the preliminary or 'soft' opening of the new Visitor Center at Gettysburg. At this time it appears that the CDCWRT will be doing a special commemorative cancellation for the event.

On May 2nd-4th, 2008, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the 145th anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville will be celebrated in Virginia. The CDCWRT will NOT be present at this event, but a special postal cancellation will occur.

On Sunday, May 4th, 2008, there will be a living history event at the Ten Broeck Mansion in Albany. Several members of the CDCWRT will be present as Civil War re-enactors. At last year's event, a number of groups were present with demonstrations of 19th-Century life, both military and civilian. The weather was a perfect sunny May day, but the crowds were sparse. We would strongly encourage the membership to grab your families and friends and support this **FREE** local event.

On May 9th, 2008, Friday, the scheduled guest speaker for the May meeting of the CDCWRT will be Wayne Motts. Wayne is the Director of the Adams County Historical Society. The extensive collection is housed in the historical Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg. Wayne will talk about the Seminary and the first day battle that occurred on the Seminary grounds.

June 13th, 2008, Friday, is the date for the June meeting of the CDCWRT. Our guest speaker will be Pat Schroeder, Historian at the National Park at Appomattox.

June 14th and June 15th , Saturday and Sunday, mark the dates for the Peterboro Civil War Weekend. This annual event take place in Peterboro, NY on NYS route 20, near Syracuse. Peterboro was a stop on the Underground Railroad. More details will follow.

July 1st through the 3rd marks the 145th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. There are multiple events taking place on the two weekends that bracket the actual anniversary.

Starting with Friday, June 27th through Sunday,

June 29th, is "At High Tide", a re-enactor event with progressive battle scenarios. All proceeds will go to Adams County land preservation and conservation.

On Monday, June 30th, and Tuesday, July 1st, the Adams County Historical Society is planning a major fund raiser. The CDCWRT would do a commemorative postal cancellation for this event.

On Tuesday, July 1st through Thursday, July 3rd, the National Park Service will commemorate the actual anniversary of the battle. There undoubtedly will be many activities taking place. This would be an excellent time to visit Gettysburg, but you should make reservations NOW.

On Friday, July 4th, through Sunday, July 6th, the 145th anniversary will be celebrated by the 'usual' re-enactor organization. The committee expects 10,000 to 15,000 re-enactors. Information is available on line at www.gettysburgreenactment.com.

The CDCWRT will be organizing to possibly cover multiple events in this time frame. This would be an ideal opportunity to raise significant monies for battlefield preservation. However, volunteers are desperately needed; the more volunteers, the more we can do. If you are planning on being in Gettysburg during this time frame, and would like to volunteer a half-day or more, contact Sue Knost at 428-8948.

On July 26th and 27th, Saturday and Sunday, the Baseball Hall of Fame Induction Day will be celebrated in Cooperstown. The CDCWRT has been present at these events with our popular baseball items such as T-shirts & special postal cancellations.

Friday, September 12th, would be the start of the new 2008-2009 year for the CDCWRT.

On Saturday, September 13th, the Civil War Heritage Day at Albany Rural Cemetery will be celebrated. A number of Civil War groups will be present, including your Round Table.

Saturday and Sunday, September 20-21st, marks the Saratoga Springs Grand Army Event.

On September 26th, Friday, and September 27th, Saturday, the National Park Service will celebrate the Grand Opening of the New Visitor Center and the unveiling of the restored Cyclorama painting at the Visitor Center in Gettysburg. The plans for the center were discussed extensively in a newsletter in 2007. It is our hope that the CDCWRT can be part of this historical event.

October 10-13, 2008, Friday to Monday, Columbus Day Weekend: Possible Fall trip for CDCWRT???

Friday, November 14th, is the date for the November meeting of the CDCWRT.

On Tuesday, November 18th, the David Wills house will open in Gettysburg. Lincoln stayed at the Wills house the day before he delivered the Gettysburg Address. The final touches to the address may have been completed at the house.

On Wednesday, November 19th, guest speaker Ken Burns will talk on the 145th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address on Remembrance Day. The CDCWRT usually has a postal cancellation commemorating the event.

Saturday, November 22nd, marks the Remembrance Day Parade in Gettysburg. This is always a huge re-enactor event, and will be more so on a major anniversary year.

Sunday, December 7th, marks the Troy Victorian Stroll, as well as the 67th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. This is another local event where the CDCWRT is present to promote our organization and raise funds for preservation. Volunteers are always needed.

On Friday, December 12th, the CDCWRT will hold its annual elections and holiday party at the last meeting of the 2008 year.

FIRST ON THE FIELD

CORTLAND'S 76TH AND OSWEGO'S 147TH NYS VOLUNTEER REGIMENTS AT GETTYSBURG

This is part two of the summary of R. L. Murray's monograph entitled **First on the Field,** which was published in 1998. You may recall from last month's

summary, the First Division of the First Corps was commanded by Gen. James Wadsworth from Genesseo, NY. The First Division consisted of two brigades. The First Brigade was the Iron Brigade commanded by Gen. Solomon Meredith, and the Second Brigade was commanded by Gen. Lysander Cutler. In the Second Brigade were the 76th and 147th regiments, which retired to Cemetery Hill at the end of fighting on July 1, 1863.

Lee's plan of attack for July 2nd was an attempt to turn the Union left flank. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's Corp was to move around to the flank and strike a decisive blow. Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell's Corps was to strike the Union right flank in a coordinated action which was to prevent Meade from shifting forces to meet Longstreet's attack.

The Iron Brigade occupied Culp's Hill on the evening of July 1st, but early on the morning of July 2nd, Cutler's Brigade was ordered to climb Culp's Hill. The men of Wadsworth's depleted division were reinforced by Gen. John Geary's Division from Twelfth Corps. This division consisted of Greene's Brigade (1), Kane's Brigade (2), and Candy's Brigade (3) in reserve. The Union forces dug in all day and fortified their positions.

Longstreet's attack began in the late afternoon, and Meade shifted Candy's and Kane's brigades from Culp's Hill. At 6:00 p.m. Ewell began his attack on Culp's Hill with artillery and at 7:00 p.m. with infantry. The thinned and extended Union line began to crumble, and Gen. Greene requested help. What was left of several regiments (147th NY, 14th Brooklyn and 6th Wisconsin) joined Green's forces and held off repeated Confederate charges until 10:00 p.m. when the fighting died down. The Confederates were now in possession of some of the trenches on Culp's Hill.

The vicious fighting on Culp's Hill has been over-shadowed by the fighting at Little Round Top, but it was just as fierce and just as critical as the actions on the south end of the Union line. The Confederate forces were reinforced during the night and the Union Twelfth Corps returned. Both sides planned early morning assaults on July 3rd. The Confederate attack began at 4:30 a.m. and continued for more than six hours. By then every man in the 147th had fired 200 rounds. (Typically a soldier went into battle with 60 rounds.) In the end, the Union forces finally recaptured the trenches and held onto Culp's Hill.

The 76th NY suffered 234 casualties, a loss of over 62%. The 147th suffered greater losses, 296 of 380, or nearly 78%. A list of Union regiments at Gettysburg that had the highest fatalities include the 111th NY (24.4%), 1st Minnesota (23.9%), 141st Pennsylvania (23%), 24th Michigan (20%) and the 147th NY (19.7%). The 76th NY fatalities were 13.3%.

Next month we will cover some of the New York regiments that fought at Little Round Top.

LINCOLN'S FUNERAL

Many, who have an interest in the Civil War, know about events of April 14, 1865. In recent years two books have been written about John Wilkes Booth and the assassination of Lincoln. Next year will mark the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth and there will be a host of activities related to the anniversary. However here I would like to touch upon a part of Lincoln history that is not well-known, namely his funeral. The following is taken from a book entitled, "**Coffins, Kits, and More!: Stories of the Civil War Embalmers,"** by Lee Ward (2007).

Over 620,000 soldiers died in the Civil War; one-third of deaths were the result of wounds, and two-thirds were the result of disease. Many families wanted their sons', brothers' and husbands' bodies returned home. This resulted in the evolution of modern day embalming. The embalming of a president was a first for the new science.

Corporal James Tanner (portrayed by CDCWRT member Bob Mulligan) was the stenographer in the Petersen House when Lincoln died. "He belongs to the angels now" Tanner recorded. Later, Stanton's words would be changed to "Now he belongs to the ages."

At 9:00 a.m. on April 15, 1865 Lincoln's body was returned to the White House guest room to await the autopsy. Nine men were present for the autopsy of the head. The bullet was recovered and the brain was removed and weighed. After the autopsy, the firm of Brown and Alexander provided embalming services. This took place in the guest room, later

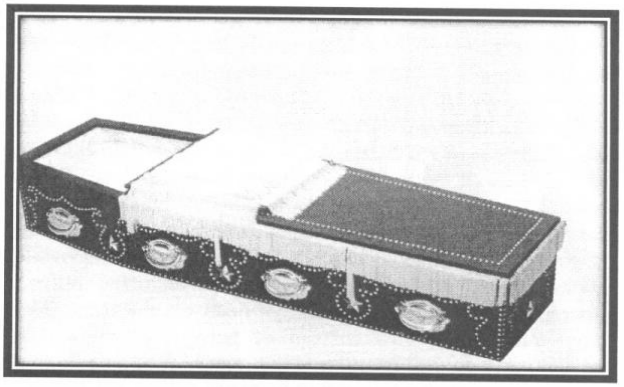
renamed the Lincoln Bedroom. The firm had previously embalmed the body of Willie Lincoln who had died in February 1862. Harry Pratt Cattell from the firm performed the embalming.

In a published interview in 1901 Cattell related he used only the ordinary embalming fluid then in use, named the French preparation. The solution was zinc chloride, made by dissolving sheets of zinc in hydrochloric acid. Soon the President's body hardened to a marble-like state. Stanton supervised the dressing of Lincoln's body. Upon the final examination, Stanton noticed that the black under the President's eyes had spread down his cheeks. This was the result of blood that had seeped into the orbits since orbital bones had been fractured by the bullet. Stanton was asked if the undertaker should use chemicals to erase this, but he replied "No, this is part of the history of the event."

Three persistent rumors have been denied: first, that a preliminary embalming had been performed in the Petersen House; secondly, that a death mask had been made; and thirdly, that a photograph had been taken of the bed in which Lincoln had died, showing a bloody pillow.

Another undertaking firm, Harvey & Co., was responsible for the building of a suitable coffin. Solid walnut was chosen for the wood. It was six feet six inches long on the outside and was lined with lead sheet. The interior was upholstered with tufted white satin. It had sterling silver handles, four to a side, and an engraved sterling silver nameplate.

Abraham Lincoln
Sixteenth President of the United States
Born February 12, 1809
Died April 15, 1865



There was a unique, unexpected feature to the coffin. Between each handle was a shamrock formed by silver tacks. The Irish symbol was not ordered, nor was it ever explained. It may have been the design of an Irish undertaker's artist who had been told to design something beautiful and fit for a president. In the center of each shamrock was a silver star. There was also a star at each end of the coffin. The lid was hinged to fold back a third of the way down to allow viewers to see the President's face and shoulders.

The catafalque upon which the coffin lay was designed by Benjamin French, a 33rd degree Mason. He built the catafalque to resemble the Lodges of Sorrow which were the central feature of Masonic funerals. Four seven-foot-high posts were set ten feet apart along the sides. An arched canopy rose from the tops of the posts to a height of eleven feet from the floor. The upper side of the canopy was made of black alpaca, and the finest black velvet decorated its sides with sweeping garlands of black crepe material. Sixteen huge black satin rosettes were set at the highest point of each festoon. The underside of the canopy was white fluted satin, which reflected a small amount of light on the face of the President.

While the coffin lay in state in the East Room of the White House over 20,000 people filed past in two lines, each pausing a second to gaze upon the face of Lincoln. Robert Lincoln and other close family sat at the foot of the coffin, while Mary Todd Lincoln was locked in her bedroom attended by Elizabeth Keckley.

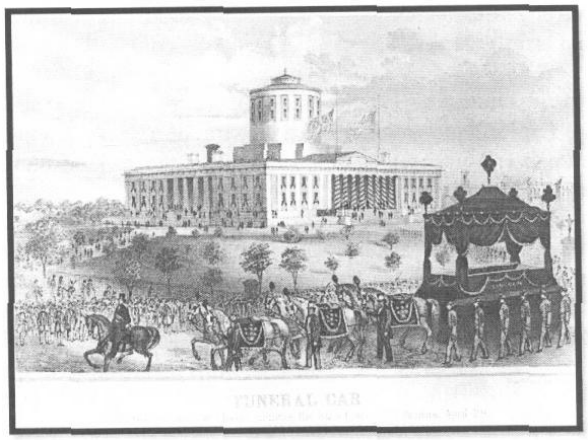
The funeral itself was held shortly after noon on Wednesday, April 19th. About 600 guests came into the East Room. There was a cross of lilies near the head of Mr. Lincoln, beside which Gen. Ulysses S. Grant sat. Robert Lincoln sat at the opposite end of the coffin.

Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church preached the funeral sermon. Twelve Army sergeants carried the coffin to the funeral hearse drawn by six gray horses. A contingent of USCT led the parade. As the hearse proceeded up Pennsylvania Avenue, twenty pallbearers from Congress, the military and civil life preceded it on foot. Thousands of Union soldiers

filed in behind. At the end of the parade behind the dignitaries and soldiers were 40,000 newly-freed blacks.

Over 100,000 lined the route to the Capitol. Yet despite the enormous crowd, the silence was profound. The next day another 25,000 of the general public paid their last respects. Following services in Washington, the President was placed on a special train that began the 1,654 mile trip to Springfield, tracing the route Lincoln had taken in coming to Washington.

Little Willie Lincoln's coffin was also on board. After funeral services for Willie in 1862, temporary entombment was made in the W. T. Carroll family vault in Oak Hill Cemetery at Georgetown. The President had visited the vault twice to have the coffin opened so that he could look at him again. Father and son were reunited for the trip home.



The President was viewed in thirteen cities by more than a million people. In Philadelphia it was discovered that the face had turned black and was no longer in a proper condition to be viewed. The coffin was then closed. In Springfield the coffin was again opened and the face was found to be almost black. The accompanying undertaker procured rouge chalk and amber from a drugstore, and applied a very thick layer to hide the skin discoloration. Public viewing then was again allowed.

The Springfield funeral procession was led by Maj.-Gen. Joseph Hooker to Oak Ridge Cemetery. Mrs. Lincoln remained in mourning in the White House. The President and Willie were placed in a temporary tomb. A much larger tomb was built by 1871; then Lincoln and sons Willie, Eddie (who had died in Springfield) and Tad (who died of pneumonia after returning from Europe in 1871) were placed in the tomb. The President was removed from the walnut casket and was placed in a metal one. In 1874 he was again transferred to a lead-lined red cedar coffin, which was placed in a white marble sarcophagus. Witnesses reported the body was in a good state of preservation.

On November 7, 1876 grave robbers attempted to steal the body and hold it for ransom. Federal agents infiltrated the gang however. Lincoln's coffin was removed from the sarcophagus and was placed in a basement under the tomb. On October 14, 1887 the coffins of the President and the now deceased Mary Todd Lincoln were placed in a specially constructed vault beneath the burial chamber.

The total cost of the Lincoln funeral was a staggering $8,903.15 paid by the Commissioner of Public Buildings, Benjamin French.

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-Embalming & 16 days service for two men - $260
-Coffin, silver, lead lining - $1500
-700 yards of white silk - $2625
-257 yards of black silk - $899.50
-132 yards of white cambric - $132
-90 boxes of fine crepe - $675
-24 yards of white Swiss - $36
-158 pairs of black kid gloves - $474
-126 pairs of white silk gloves - $126
-84 pairs of black silk gloves - $84
-170 boxes of white thread - $552
Removing remains of Willie - $10
-23 days attendance, 3 men - $345
-Drape President's house in mourning - $50
-Upholster catafalque in East Room - $75
-Upholster funeral car - $50
-Upholster Rail Road Car - $85
- Making Hearse & burnishing - $350
- Flowers - $30
-Mourning dress /clothes for Mrs. Lincoln - $142.50
-Silk hats for Robert and Tad - $15.50
-Silk hats for 2 coachmen - $17.00
-2 # ground mustard, 6 oz. tinct. Camphor $2.90

On the bottom of the undertaker's bill was written, **"This was done and well done."**