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The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

2007-08 OCCWRT Officers

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December Meeting

This month we will meet on Thursday, December 13th - one week early - to avoid the Christmas rush. **We ask that you bring your favorite Christmas dessert to pass.** There will be plenty of hot coffee, an interesting raffle and General Robert E. Lee in person at our spacious new meeting site.

What does it take to portray such an esteemed notable as Confederate General Robert E. Lee? At this month's meeting, you can find out more about the beloved military leader of the South as Dick Crozier, historian, actor and OCCWRT member, presents *Becoming Robert E. Lee*.

Dick has performed as Lee at Arlington National Cemetery and the United States Capitol in Washington, DC. He has also appeared as General Lee in over 11 states including appearances at Washington and Lee College in Lexington, VA and at sites in Richmond, VA.

Dick has also been the guest of the Gettysburg Culp Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans as he marched at the head of the Confederate Division of the Gettysburg Remembrance Day Parade for the past 3 years. The parade is held in Gettysburg each November on the weekend anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.



Dick Crozier aka General Lee

At our meeting, Dick will perform excerpts from the second act of his one-man-play on the life of Robert E. Lee with a focus on Lee's tenure as President of Washington College in Lexington, VA. The play recently debuted in Georgia before a sold out audience. Dick will also reveal the many different "obligations" of portraying the man that former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill described as "one of the noblest Americans who ever lived." This will be an memorable evening with a master historian and entertainer. Dick's web site is located at www.Geocities/DickCrozier.

President's Message

We have listened to the membership and have found a new place to hold our meetings. The North Central Assembly of God Church at 7463 Buckley Rd in North Syracuse has offered the Round Table the use of its meeting room at no charge for the remainder of our season. I think this location will address many of the concerns that have been brought forth by the membership.

We will have ample free parking next to the entrance, and we will also have a large room with plenty of seating and tables for displays. The room has a high ceiling and will feel more open. There is also a corner set-up for coffee and refreshments.

The location is easy to find from all directions and is in a safe and secure area. Please join us at our December 13th meeting and enjoy an evening with Robert E. Lee with a holiday dessert party to follow.

Any comments positive or negative on our new location will be appreciated.

On behalf of my self and the Board of Directors, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jim Dromgoole



New Meeting Site

**North Central
Assembly of God**

**7463 Buckley Road
North Syracuse, NY**
(ample parking)

Holiday Dessert Party

**Robert E. Lee:
After the War**

with
Living Historian Dick Crozier

**Thursday, December 13, 2007
7 PM**

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.

Where's Our Support?

Our organization has just begun its 14th year of operation. Though not specified in the constitution or in the by-laws, it's been customary to begin each fiscal year on September 1st. The reason for our concern is that at this point (3 months into the new fiscal year) we have only 14 paid members!

In order to continue scheduling quality speakers, we need the financial support of our membership. We save a great deal of postal expenses by sending out almost 100 copies of *The Battlefield* via e-mail, and of course, our meetings are free, but paying an annual dues is a positive and constructive way to support our purpose. As stated in the constitution, "The purpose of the OCCWRT shall be to stimulate and encourage interest in the American Civil War. ...by membership participation, strive to assist in community service to enhance our study, understand and provide educational and historic research and preservation whenever possible."

So, we invite all the fine folks who attend our meetings, support our goals, and enjoy our monthly newsletter to become PAID MEMBERS of our worthy and prestigious round table.

Thank you for your support.

Darothy De Angelo
Charter Member
Past President
Program Chairman

Directions to Our New Meeting Site

From I-81 take the 7TH NORTH ST exit - EXIT 25. Turn right or west onto 7TH NORTH ST. At the next major intersection, turn right or north onto BUCKLEY ROAD and continue to follow BUCKLEY ROAD (it will cross W. Taft Road at Hafner's Garden Center) for 3.04 miles until you reach the North Central Assembly of God at 7463 Buckley Road. Turn left into the spacious, well-lighted parking lot.

Living Past Presidents During the Civil War

With our Jeopardy meeting planned for January, a list of the 5 living Presidents during the Civil War is in order. But what did each past President do during the Civil War? The information below was gathered from an interesting Civil War blog site: <http://madnessmike.blog.com>. Indeed, the war created differences all the way up to the top office.

By 1861 our eighth President, Martin Van Buren, was the oldest surviving President. Van Buren had powerful anti-slavery views. His term ended in 1841 though he tried again for the Presidency in 1848 and was defeated. He strongly supported Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation but did not live to see it take effect. He died at age 79 in 1862

President John Tyler, our 10th President, was a native Southerner and an advocate of state rights. After his term ended in 1845, Tyler lived a quiet life until the Civil War began. In 1861 he helped lead a compromise movement. When that failed he supported his native Virginia and became a member of the Confederate House of

Representatives and voted for Virginia to secede. He died at his post in January 1862. He may be forgotten now, but he is remembered for his many "firsts". He had more children (15) than any other President and became the first to be President without being elected. He was President Harry Truman's great-grand uncle as well. He is most remembered for being part of a memorable Presidential election phrase, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too".

Millard Fillmore, our 13th President, like Lincoln was a member of the Whig party though he left the party after his Presidency ended in 1853 and joined the Know Nothing Party. His 1856 attempt at another term failed, and he was sent into retirement. During the Civil War he lived in Buffalo NY, was active in civic affairs, and opposed most of Lincoln's policies. He founded the Millard Fillmore Hospital in Buffalo. In his later years he became the president of the Historical Society in Buffalo and chancellor of the University of Buffalo. After Lincoln's death, Fillmore supported the reconstruction policies of Andrew Johnson. He died in 1874 and was buried in Buffalo. Perhaps he spoke for himself and other Presidents before and after him who are forgotten by the public when he said, "It is a national disgrace that our Presidents after having occupied the highest position in the country, should be cast adrift, and, perhaps, be compelled to keep a corner grocery for subsistence."

President Franklin Pierce, our 14th President, held office during the most crucial time period before the onset of the Civil War. He is ranked among the least-effective chief executives. Jefferson Davis served as his secretary of war. Despite being a native of New Hampshire, Pierce supported many pro-slavery legislations. He believed the Constitution supported state rights issues and slavery itself. Like Fillmore he was deeply opposed to Lincoln and his administration. He was greatly disliked in the North for his displeasure with the Union cause. Calling the war a failure, he felt that it was a "butchery of white men" for the sake of "inflicting" freedom on the black race who didn't want it. His last public speech voiced his displeasure with the Emancipation Proclamation. This speech was his greatest error because he gave it just after the Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg with Northern moral at an all-time high. Afterwards his friend Nathaniel Hawthorne never spoke to him again. After recovering from alcoholism, he died October 8, 1869. President Grant called for a national day of mourning for Pierce.

James Buchanan, our 15th President, is remembered as the man who failed to keep the Union together during his Presidency. After leaving office his parting words to Congress were to amend the Constitution on the subject of slavery before it caused a national conflict. During the war he supported Lincoln's policies while living in retirement in Lancaster, PA. He published a book defending his actions during his administration. He died on June 1, 1868 remembered as a Unionist who tried to maintain the balance and peace between the North and South though he failed to take any action on South Carolina's secession in 1860.

Evidence of Sectional Differences

Historians have stated that the Civil War was inevitable because by 1860 compromise was no longer possible. The loudest voices were heard from sectional partisans who promoted hate and distrust. What follows are examples of the bitterness that divided the country.

from the Milwaukee Sentinel (April 15, 1861)

“The state of society in the South and their legislation, exhibits a growing tendency to lapse back into barbarism. There are but few schools, and the masses are growing up in ignorance and vice. Men resort to violence and bloodshed, rather than to calm discussion and courts of justice to settle their disputes and difficulties. All classes are impatient of restraint, and indulge in a reckless and lawless disregard and contempt of all institutions of society or religion which obstruct the free exercise of their passions and their prejudices...”

The Christian world rose up through just such a state of things to its present mild, moral, peaceable, humane, Christian and enlightened stand-point, and the South has already sunk three centuries back toward the age of barbarism.”

from Muscogee, Georgia Herald (September 10, 1856)

Free Society! we sicken at the name. What is it but a conglomeration of greasy mechanics, filthy operatives, small-fisted farmers, and moon-struck theorists? All the

northern, an especially the New England States, are devoid of society fitted for well-bred gentlemen. The prevailing class one meets with is that of mechanics struggling to be genteel, and small farmers who do their own drudgery, and yet are hardly fit for association with a southern gentleman’s body servant.”

from the New York Tribune (January 17, 1861)

There never was such a set of arrogant and imperious rulers as the slave-driving captains of the Republic, since the world began. Such men cannot be created except by Slavery. It is the institution that makes them, and nothing else could do it. Of all men, they most need the discipline of reverses and the humiliation of defeat. It is their insolence of temper that forbids them to submit to being fairly beaten in a presidential election. They will not take the position of a defeated party. They will rule or they will ruin. They will govern the country or they will destroy it if they can. They will remain in control of the Government, or they will drag it down about our ears, and bury all in a common destruction.



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 \$10.00

_____ 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: Richard Walker, Treasurer

307 Sherbrooke Rd

Manlius, NY 13104

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.

Onondaga County
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