

February 2008
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The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

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NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Meeting Site

The Warehouse

Syracuse University
School of Architecture

350 West Fayette St
Syracuse, NY
Auditorium 1st Floor

*Baldwinsville's
Battery B
Goes To Washington*

With Stephen Dreher

Thursday, February 21, 2008
7:15 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.

February Meeting

Baldwinsville's Stephen Dreher is undoubtedly an expert on the First New York Light Artillery, Battery B. He has spent years researching this battery recruited by Captain Rufus D. Pettit, a Baldwinsville area native. Battery B was composed chiefly of Onondaga County men and mustered into service in August 1861 serving in twenty-two engagements, including Gettysburg, with the Army of the Potomac until mustered out and honorably discharged in June 1865. Mr. Dreher will focus on the Battery's arrival in Washington, DC in November 1861, one of the first to arrive in Washington fully mounted and soon to become famous for its accurate firing. Join us on February 21st for Stephen Dreher's presentation *Battery B Goes To Washington*.

January Jeopardy Challenge

Five teams competed for the top spot in our Jeopardy Challenge. The top team included Beth Greenfield, Gilles Roy, Gordon Cruickshank, Darohty DeAngelo, and Ted Jones. This year's categories focused on Losing Commanders in the Eastern Theater, Specific Terms, Famous Names, Info from the Newsletter, What Ever Became Of, and Potpourri. The final Jeopardy category was Military Terms and stated: *This military term means the art of maneuvering troops in order to achieve victory in combat*. Two teams correctly answered with the term "tactics", each team carefully planning its final wager. Congratulations to all the teams and we'll do it all again next January.

To keep you all thinking about the Civil War, here's another challenge for you. The general's identity will be revealed at our February meeting.

This forgotten general was born in NY state. He not only helped win the CW, but also aided in our victory in WWII - this is not a typo. He fought in all three theaters of the CW, commanded the entire US Army in the late 80's, and was the superintendent of West Point - AND - realizing that Hawaii was vital in the defense of the US, he proposed in 1872 that Pearl Harbor be used as a naval base. It might help to know that he was A. Johnson's Secretary of War, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1892 for Wilson's Creek, retired as Lt. General, and was buried in Arlington in 1906.

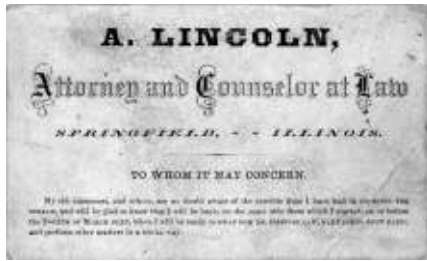
Remembering Lincoln



In 1832 as Lincoln prepared to run for a seat in the Illinois General Assembly, an election he lost, he issued his first political announcement. He ended by saying "...I have no other [ambition] so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem." Not to worry Mr. President.

There are 27 states, some 52 towns, 23 counties and 6 mountains in the US that bear the name of Lincoln. He is additionally honored by having his name affixed to innumerable schools, banks, public buildings and roads. A submarine, an aircraft carrier, a tunnel and a center have been named for him, and the Ford Motor Company used his name to connote superior quality for its Lincoln town car. On Feb. 12th, his 199th birthday, the Mountain Creek ski area in Vernon, NJ will issue a free lift ticket to anyone who can recite the Gettysburg Address. Two of our most circulated monetary units, the penny and the five dollar bill, display his graven likeness. Children still play with Lincoln logs. Artist Wendy Allen has spent the last 25 years painting Lincoln's face exclusively and says she has yet to exhaust the inspiration she finds in his face. This past week a cottage on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home, Lincoln's retreat outside of Washington, DC, opened to the public following a \$15 million restoration. As the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial approaches, interest in Lincoln seems insatiable. Indeed, Mr. President, you are "truly esteemed."

Lincoln's Business Card?



Library of Congress

Though this appears to be Lincoln's business card, it actually is a clever anti-Lincoln political broadside most likely printed by the Springfield, IL Democratic committee in 1864. It reads as follows:

To Whom It May Concern: My old customers, and others, are no doubt aware of the terrible time I have had in crossing the stream, and will be glad to know that I will be back, on the same side from which I started, on or before the Fourth of March Next, when I will be ready to Swap Horses, Dispense Law, Make Jokes, Split Rails, and perform other matters in a Small Way.

The Fourth of March refers to the date General George McClellan, Lincoln's opponent in the 1864 Presidential race, would have been inaugurated. The message implies that when Lincoln returns to Springfield he will continue his inconsequential daily life. What better way to berate one's opponent than to say he or she is of no significance. The Illinois' Democrats certainly got this candidate wrong. In the 1864 Presidential race, Lincoln won the state with 189,512 votes to McClellan's 158,734. So much for negative political ads.

Lincoln, Illinois Historic Marker

On the corner of Pulaski St in front of the Rustic Tavern in Lincoln, Illinois stands a historic marker that would turn any tourist's head. It reads as follows:

In the spring of 1876 a gang of counterfeiters plotted to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln from the Tomb in Springfield, Illinois, hoping to be paid a ransom of \$200,000 and the release of one of their gang, Ben Boyd, their engraver, who was in the penitentiary. This was the location of their headquarters in Central Illinois. Here a part of the conspiracy was plotted. Through the efforts of a man named W. D. Longnecker, a detective, the plot was uncovered and for awhile the plot was foiled here in Mr. Lincoln's namesake city. In the fall of 1876 an unsuccessful attempt was made to steal the body of the martyred President and later the counterfeiters were prosecuted.

This marker must have caught the attention of Thomas J. Craughwell whose book, *Stealing Lincoln's Body*, details this plot and the fine detective work of the then young Secret Service whose primary purpose then and today is to deter counterfeiters from polluting the US money supply.

Because there were no grave robbing laws in Illinois at the time of this plot, the "thieves" were charged only with trying to steal the coffin valued at \$75 and sentenced to a year at Joliet Penitentiary. But Big Jim Kinealy, the two-bit counterfeiter who was running out of funny money and needed his engraver Ben Boyd, had an airtight alibi and was never charged. A fascinating tale.

A Slice Of Lake Ontario CW History

From the *Daily Democrat* (Rochester, NY) Nov. 7, 1864:

Since Saturday a good deal of excitement has prevailed in the city, owing to a belief that the authorities had reason to expect an attack from rebel refugees harbored in Canada. Mayor Brackett received information from an agent of the United States government on the other side, that...evil disposed persons would probably make an attempt to burn the city.

Rochester officials had good reason to fear armed invasion. During the War of 1812, at least 13 British warships appeared in the lake close to Rochester. In 1864, fears were that Confederate agents and sympathizers would cross the lake from Canada and attack Rochester, similar to the raid in St. Albans, VT only a month earlier. A company of local militia and two cannons were dispatched to the lakefront. A schooner did appear. The cannons fired their shots and one did cross the bow of the schooner. When schooner was stopped, officials learned it was a peaceful trading vessel. No other threats appeared; however, the city of Rochester was prepared for a rebel attack.

US Grant Remembered

Stephen Cushman, professor of English from the University of VA, has written an unusual study of the Battle of the Wilderness in which he "examines the history of verbal and visual images" of that battle. From *Bloody Promenade: Reflections on a CW Battle* (1999) comes Cushman's memorable reflection on US Grant.

Whenever I Smoke A Cigar

Whenever I smoke a cigar I think
of Grant in the Wilderness writing
orders out in fatless prose without revision,
then chewing on a burnt-out stub and weeping
as numbers flooded in and names piled up
on lists the Northern papers printed
along with the outcry *Butcher, Butcher*,
but by the time he hooded himself
in a shawl on the porch to finish a book
that provided the wife he couldn't stand
to part from with nearly half a million,
before the sore throat he'd nursed for four months,
the thirty pounds gone, and the vomited blood
finished him, everybody up there loved Grant,
and yet whenever I smoke a cigar I wonder
what it takes to be happy in marriage
and march through the woods making widows.

OHA History Mystery

The final performance of *The Sinister Secret of the Sand in the Salt Shaker* will be Saturday, Feb. 16th at 7 PM at the Onondaga Historical Association. This "hysterical, hilarious, and historical" history mystery, written and directed by Scott Peal, will be performed by the OHA History Upstagers which includes the talents of OCCWRT member, Darothy DeAngelo. The drama centers around the contents of a mysterious chest discovered in a secret room of a 19th century James Street salt baron's mansion. The cream of Syracuse high society, historical experts, the media, and a Hollywood superstar gather for the opening of the chest. The secrets and revelations from the chest take those present on a suspenseful journey into the past to solve a mystery of today. For more information call 315.428.1864 extension 313.

**New York State
Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission**

The creation of the 15-member NY State Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission was announced on Feb. 19, 2006. It's job is to plan events and activities within NY State for the commemoration in 2009 and to coordinate its activities with the federal Bicentennial Commission that has been established for similar purpose. Governor Pataki appointed William F. Howard as chair and Harold Holzer as vice-chair. Howard who served as First Deputy Secretary to Gov. Pataki is a military historian. Holzer serves as the Senior Vice President for External Affairs for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is Co-Chairman of the US Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. He is regarded as one the nation's leading Lincoln scholars and has authored or edited 25 books. His most recent book, *Lincoln at Cooper Union: the Speech That Made Abraham Lincoln President* (2004) was one of 3 books nominated for the 2005 Lincoln Prize, the most prestigious award in the field. Other undertakings of the Commission will include cataloging Lincoln-related holdings of public and private collectors, coordinating exhibitions, offering seminars to schools about Lincoln's legacy, and creating traveling exhibits.

The NY Commission will also advise the Heritage NY program on the creation of the NY State Lincoln Commemorative Marker Program that will trace Lincoln's legacy in NY State. Lincoln visited NY State several times. He visited Niagara Falls in 1857. In February 1860, he delivered one of his most eloquent speeches at Cooper Union in NY City. That speech propelled him onto the national stage by giving him "the forum to win Eastern support for his presidency." Once again he traveled to our state as he made his way to Washington to his

inauguration, stopping along the way for whistle stops and /or more lengthy speeches and remarks. Lincoln visited West Point in June of 1862 to meet with Union General Winfield Scott to discuss the disappointment of McClellan's Peninsula Campaign and to tour the Cold Spring Foundry where the famed Parrott cannon was made. His funeral train crossed NY state, retracing the inaugural route four years earlier. Over 1 million people viewed the funeral train.

The commemorative activities have begun with the *Lincoln in New York* exhibit now located on the first floor of the State Capitol in Albany. The exhibit consists of four large panels and two display cases of Lincoln memorabilia, including a bust sculpture titled "Meet Mr. Lincoln" by artist Robert Berks. The display will remain at the Capitol through February 2009.

Lincoln's Sanctuary

This President's Day, Feb. 18th, marks the official opening of President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home, 3 miles north of the White House. This was the Camp David of its day, a retreat from the summer heat and the constant trail of office seekers wandering into the halls of the White House. This is where Lincoln lived for a quarter of his presidency. Called a "hidden historic treasure", this is the most significant historic site directly associated with Lincoln's presidency aside from the White House. Here he developed his policy on emancipation, his war strategies, decided to include the 13th Amendment in the 1864 Republican platform, and enjoyed his family. Check the website www.lincolncottage.org for more details. Reservations for a tour can be made online. If you're lucky, you might find OCCWRT's own John Rudy as your tour guide. If you prefer to learn more from your own reading chair, Matthew Pinsker's *Lincoln's Sanctuary, Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers' Home* (Oxford University Press) is an outstanding alternative.

**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 _____

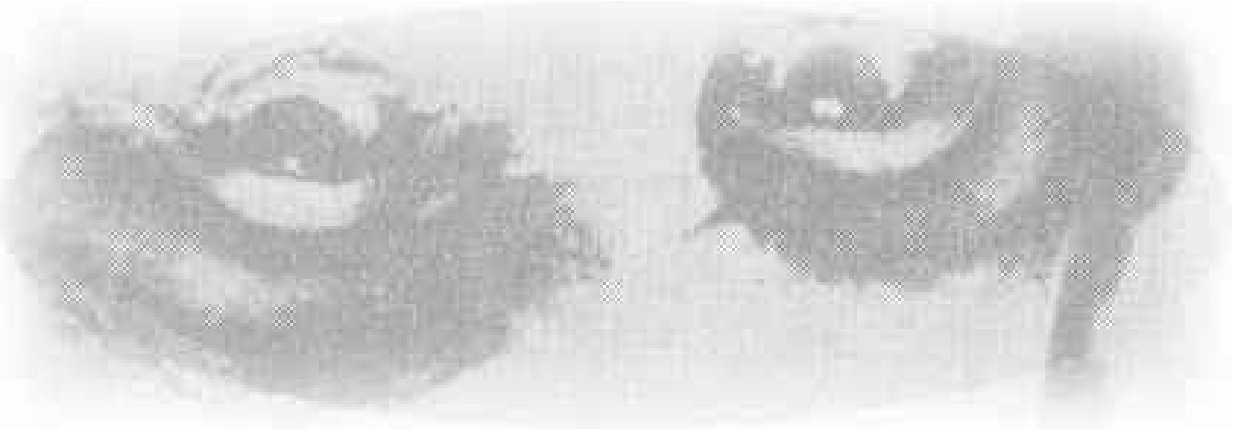
Telephone _____

*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.

February 12, 1809 - April 15, 1865



Onondaga County
Civil War Round Table PO Box 175 Tully, NY 13159-0175