

March 2009
Volume 15 Number 7

The Battlefield

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

March 19th Meeting

Our scheduled speaker who was to discuss Lincoln's law career this month has cancelled her visit with us due to a conflict in her schedule. We will try again in the fall to get her back for she would like to meet with a group who shares her interest in Abraham Lincoln. So we will shift our focus from our most admired president to the "bloodiest man in American history", Missouri bushwhacker, guerilla, and would-be Lincoln assassin, William Clarke Quantrill.

Dick Brown of Frankfort, NY, our March speaker, is a member of both the Abner Doubleday and Dan Butterfield Civil War Round Tables. His interest in the Civil War began with a visit to Gettysburg as a lad. This interest led to his researching his ancestors' participation in the Civil War and has grown into a comprehensive study of the war including the reading of the four formidable volumes of *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Congratulations to him for that accomplishment!

Dick will take us to Kansas and Missouri in the mid and late 1850's through 1865 to witness guerrilla warfare between proslavery men in Missouri and free-staters in Kansas over control of the territory. Though Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1861, partisan border disturbances continued. Enter William Clarke Quantrill (1837-1865), gambler, petty thief and the son of an Ohio school teacher, who used the turmoil in the state to launch his guerrilla operations that attracted other effective partisans such as Bloody Bill Anderson and the Younger and James brothers. Dick's title, *Kill, Kill and Kill and You Will Make No Mistake*, is an indication of the compelling saga from the Trans-Mississippi he will present to us on March 19th. His presentation includes audience participation. Be prepared to be a victim of Quantrill.



Billy Quantrill

February Meeting

Our thanks to living-historian Dick Crozier for sharing his experiences as General Robert E. Lee with us. He is an impressive Lee who has been able to fill his retirement years with performances as Lee throughout the country. The benefits of resembling Lee have allowed him into the room where Lee died on the campus of Washington and Lee. Still the college president's home, it is not open to the public. At Arlington House, Lee's home before the war, Dick was allowed into areas of the house where no tourist dare go. As his calendar fills with dates for more performances, Dick continues his never-ending study of Lee that his audiences know he has mastered.

Directions to Town of DeWitt Community Room

From 481N take Exit 5W to Kirkville Rd West. Merge onto Kirkville Rd and travel 1.2 miles. Turn right onto Kinne St and travel 0.7 miles. Turn right at Sanders Creek Parkway and travel 0.2 miles to 148 Sanders Creek Parkway, the site of the East Syracuse Fire Department and the Town of DeWitt Community Room.

2008-09 OCCWRT Officers

Bill Goodwin, President/Program Co-Chair
315 437-3887

Diane Haller, VP/ Program Co-Chair
315 437-6446
greenfieldsdh@yahoo.com

Dave Osborn, Secretary
315 446-1715

A. Scott Cauger, Treasurer
315 627-0232
ascott.cauger@us.ngrid.com

Sue Greenhagen, Trustee
315 684-3418
greenhsh@morrisville.edu

Elaine Tucker, Trustee
315-683-5510
estucker@peoplepc.com

Darothy DeAngelo, Archivist
315 682-6312
darothy_d@hotmail.com (2 underlines)

Pat Stepanek, Newsletter Editor
315 684-5531
pas1865@verizon.net

Meeting Site

Town of DeWitt Community Room

148 Sanders Creek Parkway
East Syracuse, New York

Dick Brown

presents

William Clarke Quantrill

Thursday, March 19, 2009
7:00 PM

Our 15th Year!

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.

Thank You for Your Dues

2008-09 dues paid as of March 2009: Patricia Arvantides, Lisa radley, Bob & Kathy Brown, Mike Carpenter, Scott Cauger, Marion Chester, Dick Crozier, Gorden Cruickshank, Dave Cuculich, Collyn Conrad and Mom, Darothey DeAngelo, Frank DeGrenier, Jim Dromgoole, Nancy Edwards, David Fedele family, Bill Goodwin, Beth Greenfield, Sue Greenhagen, Diane Haller, Lamont Hahn, Ruth Hotaling, Ted Jones, Martin Joyce, Cheryl LaManche, Kevin Milcarek, John Murray, Steve Nathan, William O'Leary, Jane Maher Proper, M. Kent Russell, Kathy Ryan, Richard Scott, Charles Snyder, Pat Stepanek, Rich & Natalie Trump, Elaine Tucker, Eleanor & James Tyler, Valerie Williams, Marcus & Kristy Lee Witt, Fred Wyker.

BYO Cup to the March Meeting

Sound Familiar?

New taxes are coming! They will include taxes on liquor, playing cards, tobacco, luxury items, stamps, manufactured goods and processed meats. Also added are inheritance taxes, gross receipts taxes on corporations, banks, and insurance companies as well as a tax on interest or dividends paid to investors. Let's not forget license taxes on almost every service or profession except the clergy and an income tax. In August 1861, these were the ways the newly created Internal Revenue Bureau within the Treasury decided to gather the adequate monies to pay interest on and market government bonds to finance the Civil War. As a result, nearly every free Union resident now had to pay some form of tax to the federal government. However it took another 140 years for another state official to dream up the sarsaparilla tax!

A Fitting End

March 9th was the 147th anniversary of the 1862 battle between the *USS Monitor* and the *CSS Virginia (Merrimac)*. Swedish naval architect John Ericsson (1803-1899) after convincing the US government to let him build the iron vessel delivered the *Monitor* in slightly over 100 days from New York's Greenpoint shipyard. Though the climactic battle was an inconclusive draw, the blockade of Norfolk was maintained ensuring its eventual capture by Union forces. A new age of naval warfare had begun, and monitors became a standard type of warship. Within a few years, ships like the *Monitor* were being built for navies around the world.

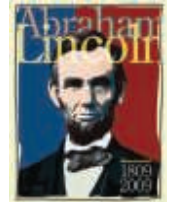
At the time of Ericsson's death in 1899, he was universally hailed as one of the most influential naval architects of the nineteenth century. According to his wishes, Ericsson's remains were returned to Sweden in the hold of an American monitor vessel.

March 10, 1862

In the aftermath of the battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, the captains of both vessels were under medical care for relatively minor wounds suffered in the battle. Lt. Worden, who had been commander of the *Monitor*, had the misfortune to have a damaged eyeball. President Lincoln visited Worden in his hospital room on March 10th to congratulate him on the battle and the victory. Since the results of the battle were in fact inconclusive, victory was in the eye of the beholder.

Mr. Lincoln's Stick

One night in the early summer of 1863 as President Lincoln and I walked back to the White House through the grounds between the War Department buildings and the house, I fancied that I saw in the misty moonlight a man dodging behind one of the trees. My heart for a moment stood still, but, as we passed in safety, I came to the conclusion that the dodging figure was a creature of the imagination. Nevertheless, as I parted from the President at the door of the White House, I could not help saying that I thought his going to and fro in the darkness of the night, as it was usually his custom, often alone and unattended, was dangerously recklessness. That night, in deference to his wife's anxious appeal, he had provided himself with a thick oaken stick. He laughed as he showed me this slight weapon, and said, but with some seriousness: "I long ago made up me mind that if anybody wants to kill me, he will do it. If I wore a shirt of mail, and kept my self surrounded by a body-guard, it would be all the same. There are a thousand ways of getting at a man if it is desired that he should be killed. Besides, in this case, it seems to me the man who would come after me would be just as objectionable to my enemies - if I have any."



1809-2009

The oaken stick to which I have just referred was fashioned from a bit of timber from one of the men-of-war sunk in the fight at Hampton Roads; the ferule was an iron bolt from the rebel ram *Merrimac*, and another bolt from the *Monitor* furnished the head of the cane. After Mr. Lincoln's death, Mrs. Lincoln gave me the stick, which had been presented to the President by an officer of the navy. From: *Washington in Lincoln's Time* by Noah Brooks, New York: The Century Co., 1894.

The Master of War You Might Not Know

If you are an avid reader of Civil War history, you most likely have read a biography or two or more of the famous generals: Grant, Lee, Meade, Sheridan, Hancock and perhaps even Sickles. Bet you haven't read a biography of the most successful general of the Civil War: a soldier who never lost a battle, who destroyed two Confederate Armies, and who saved both Grant and Sherman from defeat. Because he didn't live to write his memoirs, his reputation has been largely shaped by others, namely Grant and Sherman, who diminished his successes in their own favor in their memoirs.

Historian Benson Bobrick reveals the career and character of Virginia-born Union General George H. Thomas, aka The Rock of Chickamauga, in the first full-scale biography of Thomas in decades. In *Master of War; The Life of General H. Thomas*, Bobrick unabashedly contends Thomas was the greatest general of the Civil War who never captured the public's imagination. His lucid biography should correct any historical inequities made to Thomas' military reputation.

Poetic Justice on March 11, 1865

Marching through the Carolinas, Gen. Sherman practiced the same rules he had used while marching through Georgia, anything that could be of use to the Confederacy that came into his path was put to the torch. Buildings, public property and particularly machinery was considered to fall into this category. One burning was particularly satisfying: the equipment at the Fayetteville, NC Arsenal. It had originally been stolen from the US Arsenal at Harpers Ferry at the beginning of the war and shipped South to the Fayetteville Arsenal.

George McCellan's St. Patrick's Day



On St. Patrick's Day 1862, General McCellan was probably too busy to participate in the Irish holiday that had been celebrated in the US since 1762. He was busy in Alexandria, VA getting the Army of the Potomac ready for a long trip to the vicinity of the James and York Rivers. He had strict orders to leave sufficient forces to guard the capital, which he very nearly did not do. The entire excursion would come to be known as the Peninsula Campaign.

Vandalism at Gettysburg, Again

Vandalism reared its ugly head at Gettysburg. The towering Peace Light Memorial was seriously defaced with spray painted profanities and obscene images in early January. Offensive obscenities also cover the parking signs in the nearby parking lot. So offensive were the language and symbols that the Park Service covered parts of at least three sides of the monument with plywood until warmer weather arrives allowing an attempt by the Park Service to power wash the monument.

The \$60,000 monument was dedicated July 3, 1939 by President Franklin Roosevelt on the 75th anniversary of the battle. The Peace Light shines 24/7 as a symbol of national unity between the North and South. The flame has burned continuously aside from the energy crisis in the 1970's and another period when it was electrified. Dark-colored granite from Maine was used to construct the base of the monument, while the lighter colored shaft was made of Alabama limestone.

2009 Lincoln Prize

GETTYSBURG, Pa. - Two books that re-define Abraham Lincoln's command of the largest army and navy of the 19th century will share the 2009 Lincoln Prize, which is endowed by Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman and administered by Gettysburg College.

The winners are James McPherson for **Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief** and Craig Symonds for **Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Navy, and the Civil War**. Each author will receive \$25,000 and a bronze replica of Augustus Saint-Gaudens life-size bust, "Lincoln the Man." McPherson, who won the prize in 1998, is the George Henry Davis Professor of American History Emeritus at Princeton University. Symonds, who was a finalist in 1993, is Professor of American History Emeritus at the United States Naval Academy. A formal ceremony will take place April 7 in New York City. The Lincoln Prize is one of the nation's most generous awards in the field of American history.

"Lincoln was not only the first modern commander-in-chief, he moreover grasped strategy and tactics with an intuitive understanding that even his trained officers sometimes lacked," said Gilder and Lehrman in announcing the prize on Lincoln's 200th birthday, Feb. 12. "During a presidency entirely circumscribed by war, he embraced new technologies, created a modern chain of command, took prescient advantage of improved means of communication and transportation, made sure to visit troops and the wounded personally to boost morale, advocated joint operations between land and sea forces, and once, briefly, even directed an expedition himself."

Honorable mention will go to three other books selected from the record-breaking 172 submissions: Jacqueline Jones, **Saving Savannah: The City and the Civil War**; Fred Kaplan, **Lincoln: The Biography of a Writer**; and William Lee Miller, **President Lincoln: The Duty of a Statesman**.

Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

New Member/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: A. Scott Cauger Treasurer

216 Windebank Lane

Minoa, NY 13116

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