

THE CHARGER

April, 2000

378 Meeting

Vol.21 #8



Mary Todd & Abraham Lincoln
had four children. All were boys:

◆ **Robert Todd Lincoln**

The only son to reach adulthood. Born 1843 died 1926.

◆ **Edward Baker Lincoln**

Died at the age of four. Born 1846 died 1850.

◆ **William Wallace Lincoln "Willie"**

Died in the White House. Born 1850 died 1862.

◆ **Thomas Lincoln "Tad"**

Grew up in the White House. Died at 18.
Born 1853 died 1871.

Tonight's Speaker:

DAVID WOOD

David is a forty year member of the Cleveland CWRT. He is best remembered in a presentation in costume on Edwin Stanton.

David has long been more interested in the personalities of the Civil War rather than its battles.

In discussing the Lincoln children, David will be dealing with a family filled with tragedy and controversy. The Lincoln Family suffered with the early death of three sons and the committing of the mother, Mary Todd Lincoln, to a mental hospital.

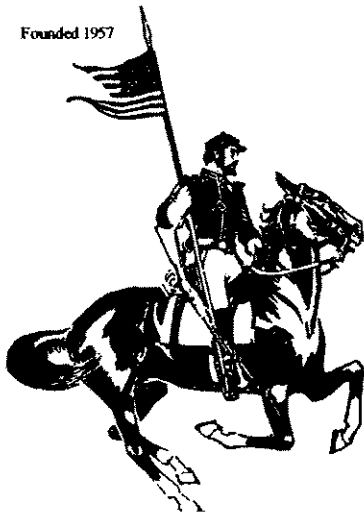
Date: April 12, 2000

Place: The Hermit Club

Time: Drinks 6 PM
Dinner 7 PM

Reservations: Please Call
JAC Communications
at (216) 861-5588

Founded 1957



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable PO Box 1890 Cleveland, Ohio 44118
(800)800-8310 email R.Crews5369@aol.com

About the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

The 127 men and women of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable reflect the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of Greater Cleveland. Members range in age from 16 to 93 years old. The common bond is the belief that the American Civil War was the *defining* event in United States history.

Dinner meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May. The Roundtable meets at a historic private club in the Playhouse Square area of downtown Cleveland. Dinner is \$20.00. Club dues are \$40.00 per year.

PAST CLEVELAND C.W.R.T. PRESIDENTS

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1999 Dick Crews | 1977 James Chapman |
| 1998 John Moore | 1976 Milton Holmes |
| 1997 Dan Zeiser | 1975 Thomas Gretter |
| 1996 John Sutula | 1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh |
| 1995 Norton London | 1973 Arthur Jordan |
| 1994 Robert E. Battisti | 1972 Bernard Drews |
| 1993 Kevin Callahan | 1971 Kenneth Callahan |
| 1992 Bob Baucher | 1970 Frank Schuhle |
| 1991 Joe Tirpak | 1969 Donald Heckaman |
| 1990 Ken Callahan Jr. | 1968 Frank Moran |
| 1989 Neil Glaser | 1967 William Schlesinger |
| 1988 Martin Graham | 1966 Donald Hamill |
| 1987 George Vourlojianis | 1965 Lester L. Swift |
| 1986 Tim Beatty | 1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr. |
| 1985 Brian Kowell | 1963 Paul Guenther |
| 1984 Neil Evans | 1962 Edward Downer |
| 1983 William Victory | 1961 Charles Clarke |
| 1982 John Harkness | 1960 Howard Preston |
| 1981 Thomas Geschke | 1959 John Cullen, Jr |
| 1980 Charles Spiegle | 1958 George Farr, Jr. |
| 1979 William Bates | 1957 Kenneth Grant |
| 1978 Richard McCrae | |

April 12, 2000



THE SONS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN DAVE WOOD

MAY 10, 2000

"GUEST NIGHT"



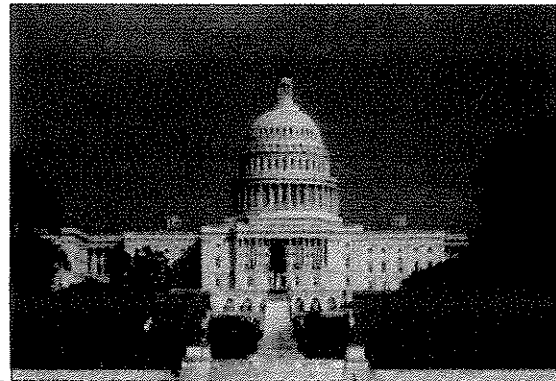
PATRICK CLEBURNE CRAIG SYMONDS

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OFFICERS & TRUSTEES

President: Bob Boyda
Vice President: William Vodrey
Secretary: Bill McGrath
Treasurer: Bill Doty

Executive Committee:

Lou Braman
Dick Crews
John Moore
Ty Somersfield
Dale Thomas
Dan Zeiser



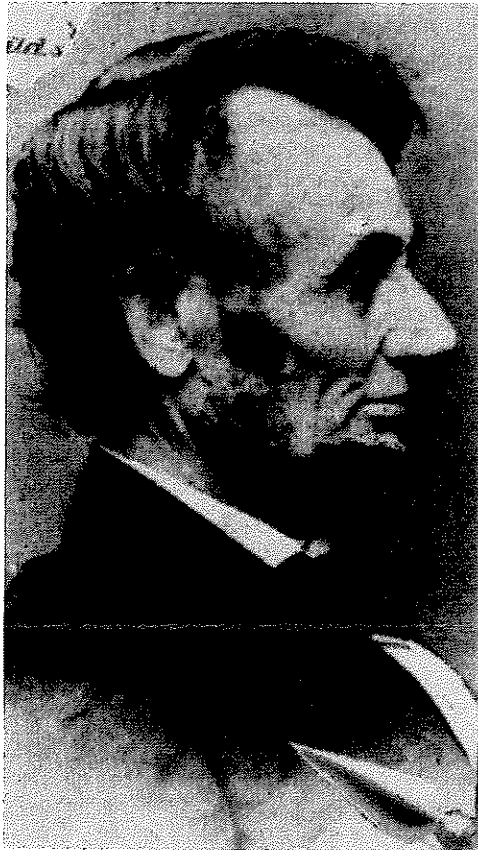
2000 Field Trip

Washington, D.C.

September 28, to Oct. 1, 2000

Lincoln and His Generals

By Matt Slattery



Abraham Lincoln in 1861 faced an enormous task. He had a government to run, a citizenry to be listened to and at the same time be influenced; and now a war on his hands. This was not a war to be won, for there was nothing to be won. It was a war not to be lost, because the losing would mean the fractioning of the nation which on all legal and political grounds he had been elected to govern. No one understood this overruling fact better than he. The war must not be lost. He could put up with libelous and erroneous newspaper articles. He could put up with northern political defeats. He could put up with personal insults, with chicanery, with thievery. But he could not put up with military losses which might all too quickly escalate into the stabilizing of a new Confederate States of America in the western hemisphere.

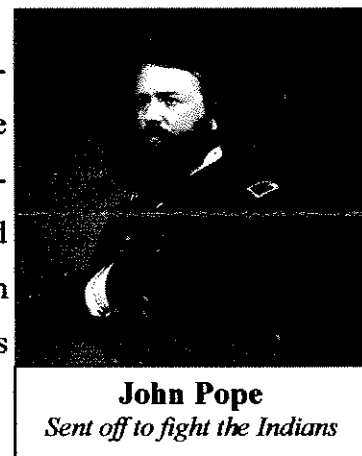
Lincoln was a lawyer and he was a politician. He was not a soldier. But if the war was not to be lost he must become one. The war itself needed leadership as the nation he governed and the army he commanded also had no experience at this. He was not so naïve as to think that he could wave a sword and lead soldiers into battle. He must have military operatives to meet his demand -not to lose the war. And he met this challenge though it took, with his inexperience, a long time; and he met it inflexibly, ruthlessly. Though he was by nature a kindly man, and a patient man, in this task he exercised power without mercy.

At the beginning he thought as a lawyer and a politician. He himself had named Simon Cameron to be Secretary of War., a man with no military credentials who had helped him gain the

presidency. He inherited old General Winfield Scott, revered head of the army and a wise man, but physically unable to perform. And in the west he had appointed John C. Fremont, the former Republican candidate for president. It took Lincoln a long time, almost too long, to see that with this trio he was losing the war.

So Cameron was shipped off as ambassador to Russia, to be succeeded by Edwin M. Stanton. General Scott was simply put on the shelf. Fremont was demoted to a local command in West Virginia. Lincoln gave General George McClellan the job of leading the army, and Henry W. Halleck the task of reorganizing the west. Two of the three met the demand not to lose and stayed to the end. McClellan defaulted. He failed before Richmond, then failed to help Pope at Second Manassas, then failed almost treasonably in the Antietam campaign. In spite of his public renown and the adulation of his soldiers, Lincoln dismissed him at considerable political cost.

He brought Halleck east to be titular head of the army and designated General John Pope to command a new Army of Virginia while Lee and McClellan were locked in the suburbs of Richmond. Although the loss of second battle of Bull Run can largely be attributed to McClellan's delay in reinforcing him on time, Pope still had an army equal to the Confederates but badly mismanaged it and was sent packing to fight the western Indians.



General Ambrose Burnside was appointed to lead the Army of the Potomac following McClellan's dismissal. And Lincoln divided Halleck's western command by naming General U. S. Grant and General Don Carlos Buell to lead separate armies. This time two of the three failed. Burnside collapsed catastrophically at Fredericksburg and was demoted to a divisional command. Buell botched up the battle of Perryville, then showing lack of initiative was taken out of uniform. Lincoln, a westerner himself could not permit this vast area to simply drift away by inaction.

In Burnside's place the president put General Joseph Hooker who shakily retained his job after being outmaneuvered at Chancellorsville, but then forfeiting it by not aggressively pursuing Lee when the latter drove up into Pennsylvania. He too was summarily demoted to divisional com-

mand. His place was taken by General George Meade who, though no roaring champion, did not lose battles and so survived.

Buell's place was taken by General William S. Rosecrans. Rosey met Lincoln's approval as a battler. He came out ahead at Stone's River, chased the rebels into Georgia, and fought them again at Chickamauga. But he handled that affair badly, his army saved only by General George Thomas, and Lincoln pegged Rosecrans a loser and sent him into retirement. The western armies were consolidated under Grant and, after he was brought east, under General W. I. Sherman.

Lincoln by 1864 had finally placed commanders who were not losers, with two exceptions who had been in command in 1861. Each was of great political value to the president and, though neither distinguished himself, had not looked like a loser. They were General Benjamin Butler who was a darling of the abolitionists and General Franz Sigel who was worshipped by the large German population. They were put in command of the left and right wings of the Army of the Potomac when Grant launched his final drive. Each failed miserably. Butler, with superior forces, failed to move on Petersburg; and Sigel allowed himself to be defeated in the Shenandoah. Both immediately became civilians.

It is an amazing list - in four years time one secretary and ten commanding generals - unequalled in the history of warfare. This lawyer and politician who could persuade, sympathize, and laugh reluctantly became a commander in chief. He grilled Stanton and Halleck daily. He had them send out observers to army headquarters that he might learn the thinking of his generals, not just their official reports. He haunted the telegraph office, some thinking that he was inquisitive, that he was detail-mad. No. With his legal brain, his infinite memory, he was meticulously putting things together that might help him in making a decision. He was as aware as we are today that these men he sacked were not villains, not even incompetent. They had generally the respect of their peers. They were not sacked because they failed to win. They were discharged because Lincoln knew he must not lose. The following first tier generals also left the service, though by agents not of the White House, but Lincoln made no effort to save their shoulder stars. Each of these had successful records, Porter and Warren in the brilliant category.

Matt Slattery



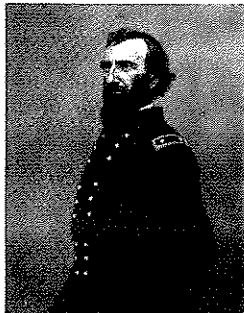
General Irvin McDowell—exiled following Second Bull Run. In 1864 sent to the Pacific coast.



General Fitzjohn Porter -court-martialed by anti-McClellan cabal.
Reinstated after end of war.



General William B. Franklin -publicly condemned by Gen. Burnside after Fredericksburg. Resigned



General John McClelland -relieved of command by Gen. Grant after several costly incidents at Vicksburg.



General Gouverneur Warren — relieved of command by Gen. Sheridan for failure to take action at Petersburg.

> ***Gods and Generals***

> ***Brass Pounders: The Young Telegraphers of the Civil War***

Book Reviews by Gary Norman*

It is interesting how no two men view a similar experience in the exact same way; and, how, technology exists as a underlying force that helps to both form and communicate the experiences of men. This is especially true of the time period that was known by among other names: The Civil War. There are two books that this author would like to introduce to the members and guests of the dining society, which touch upon the issue of the dissimilarity of similar experiences and how technology forms and communicates it. The first volume is titled: ***Gods and Generals***. This highly enjoyable and imaginative work was written by the son of the author who composed the award winning work: ***Killer Angels***. The second volume is titled: ***Brass Pounders: The Young Telegraphers of The Civil War***. It was written by: Alvin F. Harlow. This work was well written. However, this work blurs the threshold between historical fiction and nonfiction.

In ***Gods and Generals***, the author utilizes historical factual material to compose a work that examines the lives of a handful of prominent Civil War leaders from 1858 to the summer of 1863 when the Battle of Gettysburg occurred. The work examined the lives of the following prominent Civil War leaders: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain; Robert E. Lee; Thomas A. Jackson; and Winfield Hancock. In the volume, the reader will follow in its pages what both actually happened at the time and what the author imaginatively pens the various parties' may have thought while experiencing the events in question. In accounting both historical nonfiction and fiction, the author touches upon such events as: John Brown's raid upon the United States arsenal located in Harpers Ferry, Virginia and that controversial figure's execution; and such battles as Chancellorsville. The only concern I had about the volume was the degree to which it was a historical work or a fictional novel. However, the second volume was more difficult to discern in this regard. Otherwise, this author would recommend *Gods and Generals* for either bedtime reading or for a spring junket.

This author recommends the first volume, because it touches upon how similar events can have dissimilar interpretations. The author of ***Gods and Generals*** utilizes the dangerous discretion inherent in historical fiction writing to set forth how the Confederates viewed The Civil War as a conflagration for the survival of their unique and "superior" culture; whereas, those who fought for the United States viewed the Civil War as a conflagration for the survival of the grand union that dated to the signing of The Declaration of Independence. This topic is the most interesting aspect of the volume. One need search no farther than the Impeachment of President Clinton to find a "real world" example of the idea touched upon in this work of literature. Moreover, one need search no farther than the same exact event to ascertain how communication technology both formed and shaped the experiences of men in connection with the second impeachment of a President in American history. In our era, citizens increasingly gather information from the nascent technological medium known as the Internet. The Americans who experienced the Civil War also lived during a time of profound technological advancement and metamorphosis.



During the Battle Of Fredericksburg, army signal Corps teams, drawn by A.R. Waud, scurried about laying telegraph wires to relay news to Washington.

One of the major technological advancements of the pre-Civil War era that had a profound affect upon the conflagration was the telegraph. "It had been clear enough back in 1861 that the electric telegraph was going to revolutionize military communications in this war." In comparison with our own era, the extent to which the telegraph served both the civic and military authorities, this medium of communication was for the Civil War period what the internet is to the humans of the "Information Age". "No sooner was the first telegraph wire put into service by Samuel P. Morris than boy's fingers began to hitch for the feel of the brass..." of the instrumentation that for the first time in history transmitted great quantities of information through wires. That is correct, like today, some of the most proficient operators of the telegraph during the war were youth. At that point in time, telegraphic services were operated through commercial telegraph companies. In the volume, the author accounts how the United States government was under equipped to handle this new form of technology at the beginning stages of the war but quickly remedied that situation by commissioning a U.S. Military Telegraph Bureau that was for all in tense and purposes a civilian organization under the control of the War Department. The author pens an interesting account of the tension between this new branch of the military and the Signal Corps. Conversely, the Confederate States of America never commissioned a telegraph branch of its military forces.

There is no doubt after reading this volume that the young telegraphers of the U.S. Military Telegraph Bureau were the life and blood of the Union Army. Once again, it should be commented that the men who performed telegraphic services for the Union Army were not men but boys for the most part. The author accounts how the average age of a Union telegrapher was in the latter teenage years. In fact, "a lot of the boys who worked the wires during the war were under voting age when the war ended." Of course, several of those young boys laid down their lives for the survival of the grand Union. Approximately, one hundred of the one thousand two hundred operators who served in the United States Military Telegraph Bureau died. As the author also accounts, the government appreciated the services of the young telegraphers. At the closure of the war, the U.S. government gave ten of the top telegraphers silver watches worth five or ten dollars in memoriam of their service to the American people. Although, several telegraphers received honorary Captaincies for their outstanding service, the young telegraphers of the Union Army were not considered soldiers, thus they could not join veteran's organizations after the war. Therefore, the telegraphers established their own veterans organization.

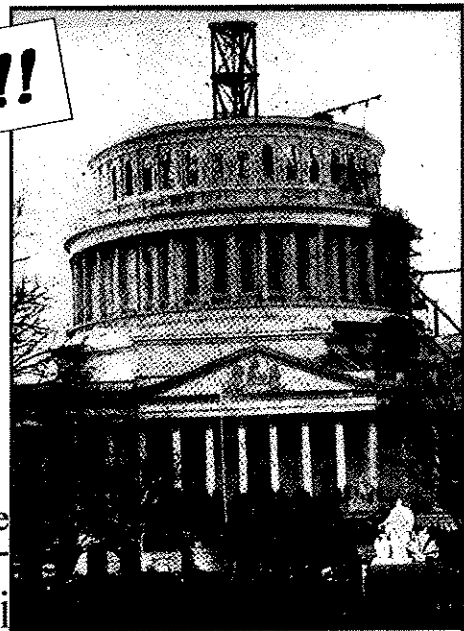
This author recommends the two titles described in the foregoing review.

Gary Norman

On to Washington !!!

Having visited that (former) nest of secessionist vipers known as Richmond last fall, I thought it was high time we visited the capital city - then and now - of the United States, this fall.

I'm already in touch with representatives of the White House Visitors Office, the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Army about our trip to Washington, D.C. We'll leave on the morning of Thursday, Sept. 28 and return on the afternoon of Sunday, Oct. 1, 2000.



Unfinished Capital Building
Lincoln's Inauguration, March 4, 1861

I've requested a tour of the White House's first floor public rooms, as well as some of the rooms on the second floor of the Residence (particularly the Lincoln Bedroom) not usually shown to the public. I'm also optimistic that we'll be able to visit Blair House, including the room where Robert E. Lee turned down command of the Union Army. Due to the unpredictability of the President's schedule this far in advance, and for security reasons, we won't have the specifics of our tour confirmed until about Sept. 14 (two weeks before).

We'll also be visiting other Civil War-related sites in the Washington metropolitan area such as Ft. McNair, Ft. Stevens, Ford's Theatre and the Peterson House, the Navy Yard and Naval Historical Center, the Soldier's Home (President Lincoln's summertime retreat), the Old Patent Office, Clara Barton's recently-opened apartment, Arlington Hall and the National Cemetery, and the Monocacy battlefield. We'll arrange for a bus to comfortably get us around D.C. traffic.

At both the White House and Ft. McNair, we'll need to let the Secret Service know sixty days in advance of our visit who is coming, and provide everyone's Social Security numbers and dates of birth. Everyone visiting Ft. McNair will also need to bring a photo ID.

So save the weekend of Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 2000 in your calendar, and make plans now to join us for this fall's Roundtable field trip.

William Vodrey



“We heard all through the war that the army was eager to be led against the enemy. It must have been so, for truthful correspondents said so, and editors confirmed it. But when you came to hunt for this particular itch, it was always the next regiment that had it. The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree trunks and sold shots are cracking skulls like egg-shells, the consuming passion in the breast of the average man is to get out of the way. Between the physical fear of going forward and the moral fear of turning back, there is a predicament of exceptional awkwardness from which a hidden hole in the ground would be a wonderfully welcome outlet.”

Union private, after Antietam

Presidents Letter: *April, 2000*

March Meeting:

Well gang - was Braxton Bragg all that bad. My interpretation of Dave Smith's fine presentation at our March meeting is that - yep - he was that bad and perhaps worse. Many thanks to Dave for his fine presentation. Dave is a leader in the Cincinnati Civil War Roundtable and I very much enjoyed my discussions with Dave both before and after the meeting. In addition to Dave's excellent presentation Dave left me a tape of an Ed Bearss presentation that compared Nathan Bedford Forrest to Jeb Stuart - NBF comes out as a man for the future - well - Jeb had a traveling banjo player and loved grand reviews (Brandy Station) - enough said!

April Meeting:

This month we will have the pleasure of another presentation by one of our own. Dr. David Woods will speak to us - his topic will be "The Sons of Abraham Lincoln". When I started the program for this year Dr. Woods was there from the beginning with a desire to research and present his topic. I am looking forward to hearing his talk.

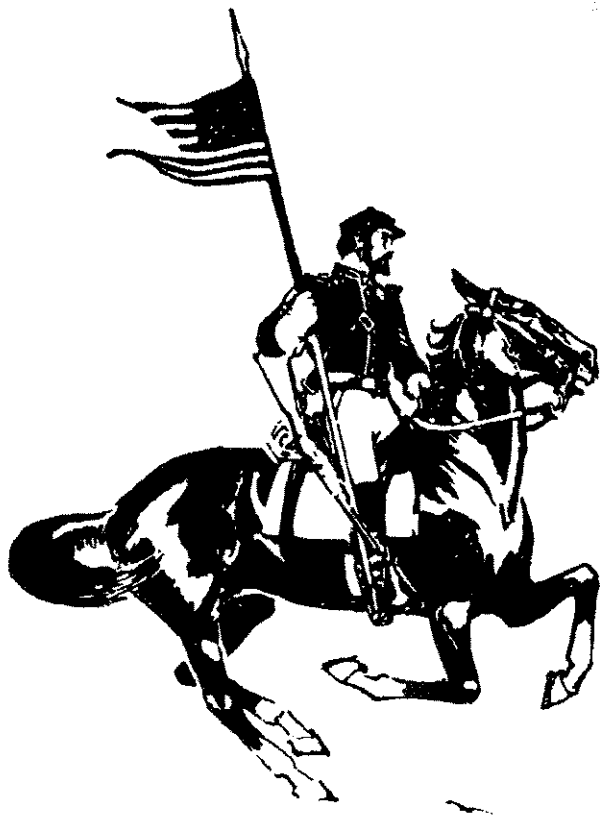
As with every monthly letter I urge everyone to call in reservations to JAC at 216-861-5588 as early as possible. As described below this has become a critical issue to our financial success.

Our Civil War Roundtable:

Over the years the Hermit Club has provided a high quality centrally located site for our meetings. With a minimum disruptions we have enjoyed the Great Hall meeting room. Last month with little notice we were forced to relocate to a smaller room. Fortunately, our attendance was such that we were comfortably accommodated. If we had had a large crowd it would have been a serious problem. In order to avoid such unplanned relocation's William Vodrey has worked to achieve a written confirmation of our dates and our room for next year. As part of this exercise we have been informed that the Hermit Club would like to implement a substantial increase in our dinner costs. Specifically they have asked for a dinner fee of \$27.50 with a fee of \$35.00 for each person above the reservation number. Needless to say this is being negotiated and some flexibility is apparent. In addition, alternate sites are being investigated.

More on this subject will be presented at our April meeting.

Bob Boyda



Cleveland Civil War Roundtable PO Box 18900 Cleveland, OH 44118



Mary Todd Lincoln

Lincoln's Children

**Wednesday
April 12, 2000**