

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O.Box 444, Vermilion, Ohio 44089

FEBRUARY 1984

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 1

231st Meeting - SIXTH LINCOLN EDITION

He gotten
Reservation
how 'bout You?
Call Neil
Evans at
621-0150



DATE : TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14
PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB
PROGRAM: Stuart Cramer, "Lincoln and Magic"
TIME: Preliminaries 6:00 P.M., Dinner 7:00 P.M.

*Lincoln and the
great and noble
spirit in this country a new nation
commenced in liberty and dedicated to the
proposition that all men are created equal.
We are now engaged in a great civil war testing
whether this nation or any nation so conceived
and so dedicated can long endure. We are met
on a great battle-field of that war. We have
come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final
resting place for those who here gave their lives
that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting
and proper that we should do this. But even so, war
cannot be avoided. We can not dedicate - we can not
consecrate - we can not hallow this ground. The brave men,
living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it
far above our poor power to add or detract. The
world will little note, nor long remember, what we
say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the
living, rather to be dedicated here to the
unfinished work which they who fought
here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is
rather to be here dedicated to the
great task remaining before us - that
from these honored dead we take
increased devotion to that cause for
which they gave us last full measure
of devotion - that we here highly resolve that
these dead shall not have died in vain -
that this nation under God shall have a new birth
of freedom - and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not
perish from the earth.*
Abraham Lincoln

This composite of Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address was used for many years by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company.

Rather than use this space for the usual statistics about your February speaker, I'm taking the liberty of telling you how Abraham Lincoln came to figure in my life, thoughts and reading, to these past umsteen years.

This is in the hope that some of you will sit down and write a similar piece of how he may have influenced you - for publication in future Chargers.

When I was seven, our family moved up to Cleveland Heights from a small town in Florida to a house on Lincoln Blvd. I recall asking my father who Lincoln was, and he replied, "The greatest man who ever lived." This peaked a curiosity that has never ended. There has always been a picture of Lincoln in our home, then and now.

A study of Lincoln's life is a study of the history of the United States. His letters and speeches define more clearly than any others what democracy is and means to the individual. The ideals by which he lived set a very steep example for anyone to follow.

Innumerable biographers have painted him as a semi-god, which is the last thing in the world he would have condoned. He was a very human person, of the earth-

earthly and showed many times that his emotions and reactions were those of ordinary people. He was known best as a "man of the people," and I presume that this means he understood human nature a little better than you or I. To present a talk on Lincoln before many of you who are better qualified than I am is pretty presumptuous. So my talk will be confined to a very small and insignificant part of Old Abe's life that I know more about than any of you. S.C.



CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

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Dues: \$20 Sept. to Sept.—
 Non-resident members \$10

ON BOOK SALE AND QUIZ CONTEST

"He was a major in the War of 1812 and rose to Brevet Major General serving in Mexico under Taylor and Scott. For a short time in 1861 he was the ranking general of the Confederacy. He died in 1862. Which one of these ten was he?"

How did you do on that one? Quizmaster George Vourlojianis and Scorekeeper Tim Beatty are to be complimented for concocting that and 99 other tough ones for the two quizkid teams that joined in battle at the December meeting.

Bill Schlesinger led a brilliant attack by his Blue team of Bill Kostic and George Skoch and sent the Grays of Marty Graham, Don Hamill and Frank Gillen down to a resounding defeat.

Don Heckaman and Bernie Drews did their usual smooth job of handling the Annual Book and Artifact Sale at the same meeting.

THIRD ANNUAL MIDWEST CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Hosted by the Indianapolis CWRT and supported by the CWRTs of Detroit, Ft. Wayne, and Kalamazoo and other organizations, The Third Annual Midwest CWRT Conference will be held April 28th in Indianapolis. Such speakers as James "Bud" Robertson, Wiley Sword and Mark Neely will spark the interesting programs arranged. It will take place at the Holiday Inn. Brochures giving details are available through the Charger. A Civil War Sight and Sound Show and a conducted tour are a part of the plans.

Civil War Smiles by STU CRAMER



As I see it from here
 Lee would be afraid to

BOOK REVIEW

By the late Clemens Frank.

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Ed. Note: Clem Frank was a well-known Cleveland attorney, a friend of several of our members; reader of the Charger, noted as a raconteur and intimate of many noted Ohio political figures. He was a lifelong student of Abraham Lincoln. Several years ago I sent him this little book and have saved his response for inclusion in a "Lincoln Edition".

Sumner, G. Lynn. Meet Abraham Lincoln: Profiles of the Prairie President, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946.

This book is a concise biographical review of Lincoln's life. I am pleased that you sent it to me; reading it was a rewarding experience. The last paragraph on page 49 is a treasure, and sums up Sumner's profiles, and expresses the ageless philosophy of Lincoln:

"A chain of circumstances? Perhaps! But, if so, a chain whose links were joined by unseen hands. For possibly - just possibly - One with a vision beyond the realm of mortal man had looked long, long into a Kentucky cabin, and had chosen a child of destiny. Perhaps the knowing spirit had followed that frontier boy along the river and forest trails, had watched while he struggled through years of hardship and discouragement and despair, until at last it called him for the supreme task, surrounding him with strange yet heroic figures, and endowed him with the power to win their support in his great purpose - the saving of the Union."

In this book I found very few instances which I believe to be legend rather than history (other than the Ann Rutledge episode). Lincoln is described as a (politically) despondent and financially discouraged 50-year-old lawyer (1859). Between the years 1849 and 1859 he gained state-wide recognition as a leader in his profession. He bought an attractive residence, 160 acres of land, and paid his partnership debts. He became an attorney for the Illinois Central R.R.. The McCormick Reaper case and the Rock Island Bridge case brought national recognition to his ability as a lawyer. On June 23, 1857, he was awarded \$4,800 for one lawsuit. I conclude that the picture of Lincoln as an indigent, discouraged lawyer is erroneous.

However, Sumner's description of Lincoln as a backwoods attorney with meager financial resources received national attention because it was the political image desired and promoted by the (Whig) Republican Party of Illinois, and adopted by the National Republican Committee. It proved to be successful propaganda for the election of our 16th President.

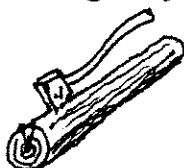
Lincoln was not at all enthusiastic about the backwoods "Rail Splitter" appellation which Sumner idolizes. It was a political slogan adopted and promoted by the Illinois Republican Party meeting of May 9-10, 1860, at Decatur, Illinois, and vociferously endorsed at the National Republican meeting at Chicago May 16, 1860.

Surely Lincoln's conduct during these events fail to portray an awkward, perplexed rail-splitter backwoodsman. He was a vigorous, adroit, confident campaigner in the field which he loved -- politics. For Lincoln, politics demanded absolute integrity (Honest Abe), courage, patience and dedication -- "to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with his God."

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Ed. Note again:

Fred Gill's Popular Pithy Book Reviews will be resumed next month. We are in receipt of his latest effusion and it is a sockdalager you are bound to enjoy.



LINCOLN LORE

4

In 1847 Mrs. Lincoln and her two boys accompanied her husband to Washington when he was elected to Congress. The family stayed at Mrs. Sprigg's boarding house, but life in the nation's capital quickly palled on Mary Lincoln; so after three months she took her family home to Lexington, Kty., leaving her husband settled into a quasi-bachelorhood. Lincoln was soon enjoying himself. He made a lively member of Mrs. Sprigg's household, often going bowling with his fellow boarders; was as usual the center of attention as a jokester at the dinner table, and attending band concerts Wednesdays and Sunday evenings held on the White House lawn.

-The Living Lincoln , Angle and Miers

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When he returned from Congress Lincoln stopped to see Niagara Falls, then continued down Lake Erie to Toledo. His law partner Herndon had seen the falls earlier and lost no opportunity to go into great detail about the magnificent sight to anyone who would listen. Back in their Springfield office, Herndon asked Lincoln, "What made the deepest impression upon you when you stood there in the presence of this great natural wonder?" Lincoln answered that he had wondered where in the world all that water came from! - Herndon's Life of Lincoln

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How did Lincoln get around? In 1815 his father Thomas Lincoln listed five horses for taxation, so we know he rode horseback. At 21 when the Lincolns moved to Illinois, Abe drove an ox cart. When he started to practise law he bought a horse on which to ride the circuit. Later he purchased a dilapidated buggy and sometimes had to soak it in a river to tighten the wheels and tires. In Springfield he bought a carriage, but often left "Old Bob" and the carriage for Mary and the boys, and traveled by stagecoach and train. He also used river steamers, and of course, there was his early voyage on a barge down the Mississippi. When President he bought an elegant carriage for \$1400. His final journey was by train.

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From the time he left Springfield in 1861, Lincoln faced the threat of assassination. Many threats were irrational and could be ignored, but others caused much uneasiness among Lincoln's advisors and friends. One writer states categorically that Booth's was the 83rd attempt to kill the President. How true this is no one can tell, but there are two recorded incidents: when bullets were sent his way, one of them knocking his hat off as he rode from the White House to the summer cottage at the Soldier's Home. In each instance he asked that no publicity be released about it.

* * * * *

The most moving of Lincoln's human virtues was his unfailing touch with the common people. Only one possessed of Lincoln's humanity could have extorted Americans, near the end of the bitter fratricidal war, "to bind up the nation's wounds, with malice toward none and with charity for all...." Another of Lincoln's "purest virtues" - one that is often overlooked today - was his seldom equaled skill as a master politician. He appointed good people and gave them freedom to do their jobs. This was

LINCOLN LORE

5

the very opposite quality of Jefferson Davis and was an important factor in the outcome of the war.

-From a talk by "Bud" Robertson before the Kentucky CWRT

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During the Civil War the country was flooded with millions of metal tokens about the size of today's pennies. These were accepted as specie, although not minted or authorized by the government. Several factors were responsible for the wide circulation of these "pennies"; the scarcity of small coins due to the war, the use of them for campaign and advertising purposes, for patriotic purposes and for personal profit. The variety of these tokens was vast; for instance, in 1901 the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society was presented with a collection of Civil War Tokens numbering 5286 pieces. Many of them bore the likeness of Abraham Lincoln, along with slogans referring to him, a small sample of which follows. "The Constitution and Union Forever," "The Railsplitter in 1960," "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor and Eternal Progression," "Abraham Lincoln, An Honest Man, The Crisis Demands His Reelection in 1864."

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The government cured the economy of tokens by issuing millions of Indian Head pennies. In 1909 these were replaced by the head of Lincoln, the centennial year of his birth.

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With the election of Abraham Lincoln, the Republicans occupied the White House for 33 years, until the election of Grover Cleveland.

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On December 9, 1862, when the President of the United States was plainly occupied by weightier matters, Thomas Hill, the President of Harvard College, addressed the following letter to Abraham Lincoln:

Dear Sir: The Faculty last evening voted "that Lincoln, Junior, (Robert) be publicly admonished for smoking in Harvard Square after being privately admonished for the same offense." The word 'publicly' simply makes it my duty to inform you of the admonition, and I trust, Sir, that you will impress upon him the necessity not only of attention to matters of decorum, but of giving heed to the private admonitions of his instructors.

-From the Kentucky Civil War Round Table newsletter

* * *



During his summers President Lincoln lived in a "cottage" at Washington's "Soldiers Home" to escape the hot humidity of the city, and the miasma of the swamp that bordered the

White House. Located three miles north of the Capitol building, the complex of buildings that made the Soldier's Home was built in 1851 under the guidance of General Winfield Scott. It was not financed with public funds, but purchased and maintained by the soldiers themselves and from a levy extracted from the officials of Mexico City as a payment in lieu of pillage during the Mexican War. Gen. Scott demanded and received \$150,000 from Mexico City, which he ultimately used to establish the Soldier's Home. The so-called cottage was originally the farmhouse on the 200 acre farm on which the Home was built. The Lincoln's were invited to stay there and found it restful and peaceful.

From The Lincolnian



SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

6



After its reorganization following the disaster at Second Bull Run, the Army of the Potomac set out once again to meet the Confederates. Gibbon's Brigade (part of the Iron Brigade) turned out the night of September 6th, marched across the Long Bridge into Washington and swung along until they reached the White House. While the head of the column was clearing the streets beyond, a halt was called in Gibbon's ranks and the soldiers rested before the Executive Mansion. The night was hot and sultry, and soon the White House lawn was liberally strewn with reclining soldiers, and there the Western men saw a strange and inspiring sight.

Moving among them with a pail and dipper in hand was the shirt-sleeved Abraham Lincoln, his tall form stooping occasionally to give water to a soldier.

To the unself-conscious President, this must have seemed a natural thing to do. Surely at this moment in history he could have repeated to the soldiers what he had said in Indianapolis, "Not with Presidents... but with you, is the question: 'Shall the union...be preserved?' "

- From The Iron Brigade by Alan T. Nolan

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Lincoln would often visit the camps around Washington and wander from group to group of soldiers, asking where they were from, kidding them about the food, and on one occasion showing them how to fry their bacon when he found them eating it uncooked.



LINCOLN LARGESS

7

Dating back to his years as a congressman, Abraham Lincoln had become an admirer of Alexander Stephens. In February 1864, after not seeing each other for 16 years, Stephens met with Lincoln aboard the River Queen at Hampton Roads to discuss a possible peace between the warring factions. Stephens came aboard the steamer wearing a coarse gray woolen overcoat that came down nearly to his feet. Lincoln watched as "Little Aleck" (all 90 pounds of him) stepped out of his huge overcoat, wool muffler, and several shawls. Lincoln moved forward and with a smiling handshake said, "Never have I seen so small a nubbin come out of so much husk."



The negotiations came to naught and when it came time for friendly good-bye handshakes, the President of the United States said to the Vice-President of the Confederacy, "Well, Stephens, there has been nothing we could do for our country. Is there anything I can do for you personally?"

"Nothing," came the reply, "unless you can send me my nephew who has been twenty months a prisoner on Johnson's Island."

Lincoln in Washington sent a telegram to Johnson's Island resulting in an officer's entering the building which held a mass of Confederate prisoners, and calling out: "Lieutenant John A. Stephens of Georgia!" The Lieutenant thought he was called out to be shot. He had been captured at Vicksburg and after five months captivity in New Orleans had been transferred to Ohio. He couldn't imagine why his name had been called except by some mistake they were going to shoot him.

Lieutenant Stephens was pleased to hear at headquarters that President Lincoln wanted to see him. They put him in a sleigh, a cutter, and, to the jingle of merry bells in bitter weather, he was driven across the ice on Lake Erie to Sandusky and put on a train to Washington.

Upon arrival, Lieutenant Stephens called at the White House and was eventually ushered into Lincoln's office, finding him slouching in a chair talking to Sec'y. Seward. Mr. Lincoln rose, shook his hand warmly and with a smile said, "I told your uncle I would send you to him, Lieutenant." The young Stephens was deeply relieved and grateful and was a little dizzy as Lincoln explained the Hampton Roads Conference and ended by saying, "You have the freedom of the city as long as you remain here. When you want to go home, let me know, and I will pass you through the lines."



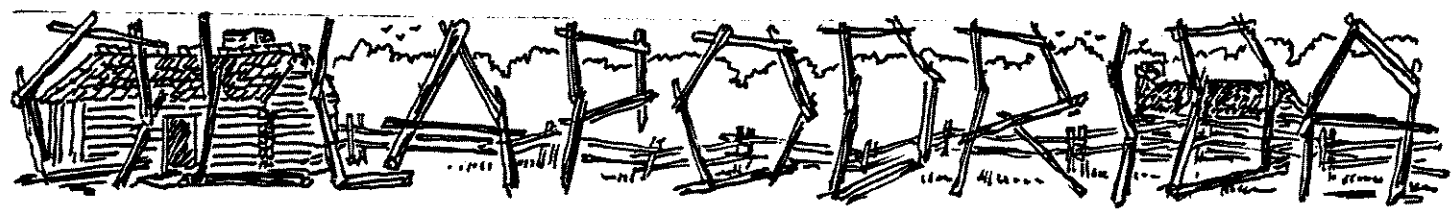
After two weeks of finding old friends of his own and his uncle to entertain him, and after regaining his weight and strength, Lieutenant Stephens went to President Lincoln and told him he was ready to go to Richmond. Lincoln gave him a letter to carry to his uncle reading:

"According to our agreement, your nephew goes to you, bearing this note. Please, in return, to select and send to me that officer of the same rank at Richmond, whose physical condition most urgently requires his release."

Then Lincoln signed the pass and handed the Confederate a photograph of himself with the remark, "You had better take this along. It is considered quite a curiosity down your way, I believe." With that the Lieutenant was escorted to Richmond and Lincoln's promise to Stephens fulfilled.

-From Abraham Lincoln - The War Years Vol.IV. Carl Sandburg
Thanks to Brian Kowell

* * * * *



Here is a grace offered at the table in a Wisconsin Yankee camp:

"Oh thou who blessed the loaves and fishes,
Look down upon these old tin dishes.
By thy great power those dishes smash
Bless each of us and damn this hash."

* * *

Henry Ward Beecher, the famous preacher, abolitionist and advocate of women's rights and brother of moralist Harriet Beecher Stowe was not above exploiting his name to make money. He endorsed lingerie, and, among other things, a soap. One of his most profitable endorsements, which appeared in magazines throughout the country, was for Pears' Soap. He wrote: "If cleanliness is next to Godliness, soap must be considered as a means of grace, and a clergyman who recommends moral things should be willing to recommend soap. I am told that my recommendation of PEARS' Soap has opened for it a large sale in the United States. I stand by every word in favor of it I ever uttered. A man must be fastidious indeed who is not satisfied with it."



- The Culture of Professionalism, Burton Bledstein

* * * *

When the Civil War broke out there were four living former Presidents: John Tyler, Martin Van Buren, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan. Tyler, a Whig, lived in Richmond, Virginia. Each of the other three was a Democrat according to his own definition, and each declared in favor of the Union cause.

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Oliver Wendell Holmes returned the following message when asked to deliver a lecture: "I have at hand your kind invitation. However, I am far from being in good physical health. I am satisfied that if I were offered a \$50 bill after my lecture, I would not have strength enough to refuse it."

* * * *

"Baldy," General George G. Meade's horse, left for dead on the battlefield at Antietam Creek, was later found grazing on the field and suffering from a deep neck wound. "Baldy" outlived General Meade in spite of having other wounds received in combat.

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During their long association as law partners, Lincoln and Herndon were exact opposites in the use of liquor. By his own confession, the latter had a well-developed and growing weakness for the habit. His conduct on more than one occasion was an embarrassment to Lincoln, and yet through the years Lincoln never censured or criticized the younger man, in fact never alluded to it except once. In their last meeting in their Springfield office after tying up certain legal loose-ends before the President-elect was to leave for Washington, Lincoln said, "Billy, there is one thing I have, for some time, wanted you to tell me, but I reckon I ought to apologize for my nerve and curiosity in asking it even now." "What is it?" Herndon replied. "How many times have you been drunk?"

Weik, The Real Lincoln