

# *THE CHARGER*

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE  
P.O. BOX 18900, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44118

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FEBRUARY 1995

331ST MEETING

VOL. 16 #6

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**DATE:** Wednesday, February 8, 1995

**PLACE:** The Hermit Club

**SUBJECT:** The Battle of Fort Fisher

**SPEAKER:** Michael Dory

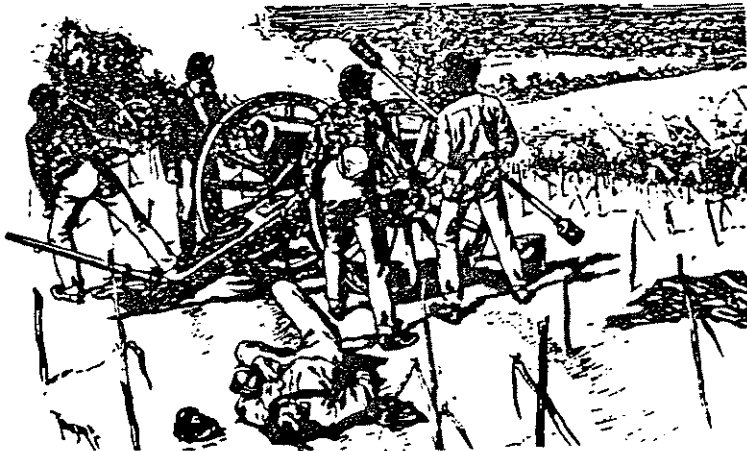
**TIME:** Drinks 6PM Dinner 7PM

**RESERVATIONS:** Please call JAC Business Communications  
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# CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

1957 \* 1995



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Editor of the Charger -  
Brian Kowell

## Editorial Office

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## THIS YEAR'S SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

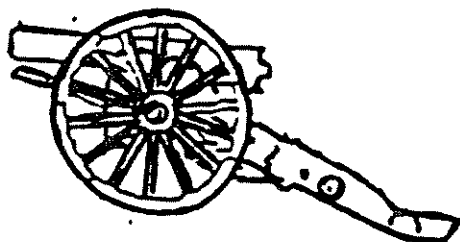
Feb.	Michael Dory TBA
March	Kevin Casey Battle of Monococy
April	Robert Krick TBA
May	TBA

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING

What Brigade was the best during the Civil War? The idea of a debate to answer this question was the brainchild of past-President Neil Evans. Four of our members argued the merits of their chosen units. The chosen units and their advocates were: the Iron Brigade - Bob Baucher, the Stonewall Brigade - Dan Zeiser, the Irish Brigade - Tim Moran, and Hood's Texas Brigade - Dick Crews. After their presentations and heated debate, the audience asked questions and voted for who they thought was the best brigade. The winner was decided by a one vote margin. Narrowly edging out the Iron Brigade was the Stonewall Brigade. Congratulations and thanks go to each of the "Brigadiers" for all their hard work on such short notice.



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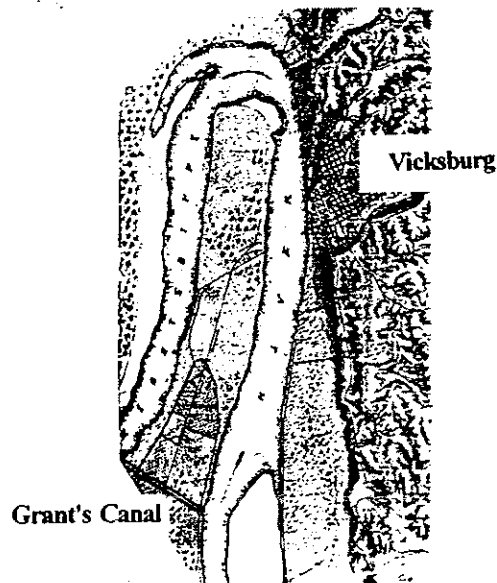
# Grant's Canal

In the winter of 1862-1863 General U. S. Grant ordered the completion of the canal across DeSoto Point began the previous summer by General Williams. The project seemed on paper a good idea, since it would by-pass Vicksburg's fortifications and give Grant access to more open terrain south of the town. Engineers thought that all the old canal needed was a little widening and deepening.

Grant assigned 1,000 troops to dig the canal supported by black slaves from local plantations. Because of the mushy ground, the troops were wet all the time. The men did not enjoy the muddy job, which seemed endless. Their morale was further decreased by a outbreak of small pox.

Work on the canal was speeded up in February when four dredge boats arrive from Louisville. Grant, however began to despair of the canal's usefulness' though he maintained an outward optimism. He realized that the Confederates could post guns to control the southern outlet of the canal. They had also erected strong fortifications at Warrenton, immediately south of Vicksburg.

The work continued for a couple of more weeks using the dredge boats, but these had to cease operations when they came in range of the Confederate batteries at Warrenton. Thus the whole canal project was abandoned as a failure in mid-March, 1862.



The Course of Grant's Canal was visible for a long time after the War and is still traceable today. Curiously, the Desoto Peninsula was later cut by nature when all human efforts to do so failed. In the years after the war, the river's current gradually eroded away the shore of the peninsula. On 27 April 1876, water broke through, taking the main channel of the Mississippi in a new route across what had been the DeSoto Peninsula. As a result, Vicksburg today is no longer sits on the Mississippi River, but on a cut off bend.

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***Vicksburg***  
***Field Trip 1995***

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# The Horse Soldiers

## Grierson's Mississippi Raid ..... 1863

One of the most famous cavalry raids of the Civil War took place in conjunction with the Union Army attack on Vicksburg in the April and May of 1863. John Wayne "the Duke", made a movie about it called *The Horse Soldiers*.

Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant wanted to confuse the confederates about his plan to take Vicksburg. While he was preparing to execute a plan to cross the Mississippi River below Vicksburg, he ordered Colonel Benjamin Grierson with 1700 Cavalry troops to lead a raid through central Mississippi. Grierson seems to be a odd choice as he was a one time music teacher and produce dealer. The Youngstown, Ohio native also didn't care for horses as he was kicked by a horse when he was eight years old.

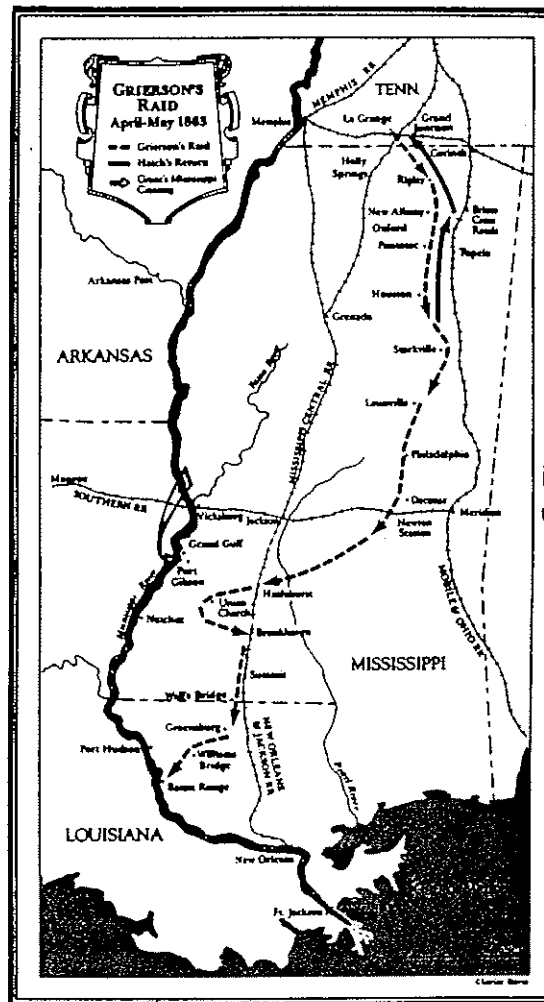
Grant told him to burn confederate supplies, tear up railroad tracks, and cause as much trouble as possible.

Seldom has a cavalry raid equaled in brilliance of execution or completeness of the result the exploits of the bearded fierce eyed, long nose Ben Grierson and his Illinois horsemen. Rampaging through Mississippi from the 17th of April to the 2nd of May, Grierson's Cavalry covered 600 miles, cut three different railroad lines, destroyed 60 miles of telegraph, and isolated the state capital, Jackson on the North, South, and West.

Intended to confuse, bewilder, and break morale, Grierson's raid spread the blaze of its success across the pages of almost every newspaper in the state.

The Defender of Vicksburg General Pemberton could only moan as most of his cavalry, six thousand horsemen had been sent the previous January to help general Braxton Bragg in Tennessee.

Grierson's raid was disastrous to Pemberton not only for the devastations it wrought within Mississippi, but also for the proof it provided of the schizophrenic character Confederate military operations had acquired in the West. In one breath President Jefferson Davis wanted Vicksburg held at any cost, and in the next he wanted Bragg supported in Tennessee.



In addition to destruction and confusion, Ben Grierson raid was a smashing success in military terms. In three weeks he rode through six hundred miles of enemy territory captured 500 confederate troops and suffered less than 30 casualties.

However, the real success of Grierson mission was on the tenth day of his raid General Grant moved across the Mississippi to start the final battle for Jackson and Vicksburg, Mississippi; as a very confused general Pemberton sat on his hands in Vicksburg confused as to the true objectives of the Federal forces.

**Vicksburg  
Field Trip 1995**

# Emancipation Proclamation on display

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Asked if he understood why his fifth-grade classmates were "oohing" and "aahing" over partially discolored pieces of paper on display at the National Archives, 10-year-old Joseph answered "No."

He was told it was the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by Abraham Lincoln on New Year's Day 1863 and regarded as one of the great documents of human freedom.

The National Archives put the fragile piece of American history on public display for one week, beginning yesterday, to commemorate its signing, and the birth of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr.

"It's a good opportunity for ... [the kids] to learn something," said Preston Monroe, Joseph's stepfather. "I look at this as being not only important for the black Americans, but for all Americans."

The proclamation was written on two large sheets of paper, which were folded to make four leaves, or eight pages. The last three pages are blank.

The National Archives first displayed it to the public for its 130th anniversary in January 1993, and again in January 1994.

Meanwhile, a second historical document that Lincoln wrote, his famous Gettysburg Address, will



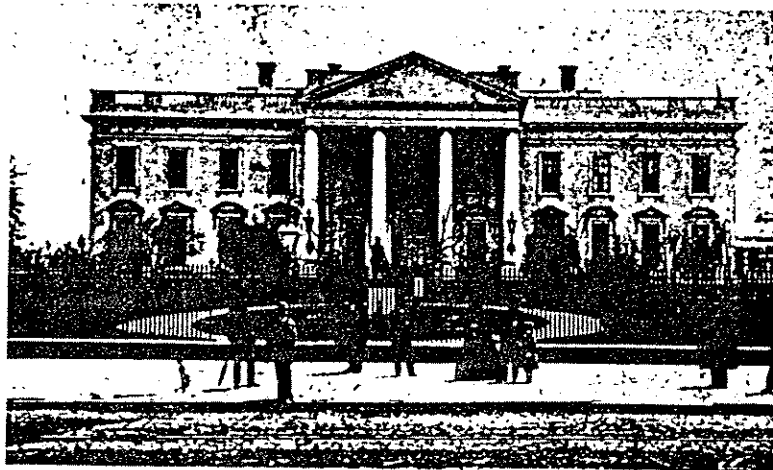
be on display for one week at the Library of Congress, beginning today.

The five pages of the proclamation, each in a protective plastic sleeve, are in a six-foot-tall plexi-glass case, cordoned off by rope and under the watchful eyes of security guards in the rotunda of the National Archives, a grand neoclassical building located between the White House and the Capitol.

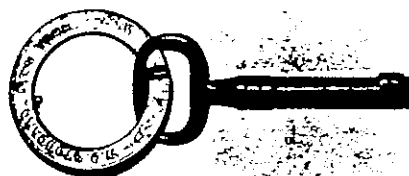
The pages are displayed vertically in the case, which allows visitors to walk around it to see both sides of each page. But reading the pages won't be as easy a task since the first and last pages, exposed to the most handling and light, have faded somewhat.

The proclamation is otherwise kept in a guarded, airtight vault along with other presidential proclamations and treaties. It was readied for public viewing and moved to the rotunda on Wednesday. The exhibit closes Jan. 19.

Lincoln signed it 132 years ago, declaring that "all persons held as slaves" in the rebellious Southern states "are, and henceforward shall be free." Despite the fact that it did not free slaves in parts of the country where it couldn't be enforced, the document signaled to slaves and the confederacy that enslavement would no longer be tolerated.



Before it was finally replaced, there was only one key to the front door of the White House, from the Jefferson era right through Lincoln's administration.



our thanks to Dr. David Wood

## SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN



On June 20, 1864, President Lincoln had left Washington aboard the wooden side-wheeler U.S.S. Baltimore and traveled by water to visit General Grant at his headquarters at City Point, Virginia. During the afternoon of his arrival, Grant suggested that they visit nearby troops. They traveled to Sixth Corps headquarters and conferred with its commander, General Horatio Wright, and General Meade who was also present. The route back to City Point took Lincoln through the camps of some of the black troops. The soldiers "were lounging by the roadside," Sylvanna Cadwallader observed, "and when he approached came rushing by the hundreds screaming, yelling, shouting: 'Hurrah for the Liberator; Hurrah for the President!'", and were wild with excitement and delight". Horace Porter was amazed at the actions of the black soldiers. "They crowded about him and fondled his horse; some of them kissed his hands, while others ran off crying in triumph to their comrades that they touched his clothes....The scene was affecting in the extreme, and no one could have witnessed it unmoved."

from The Last Citadel: Petersburg Virginia, June 1864-  
April 1865 by Noah Andre Trudeau pp 65-66  
illustrated by Stu Cramer

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# Abe Lincoln was a comical guy

By MARTIN D. TULLAI

**H**e was born on Feb. 12, 1809, and grew to manhood under the harshest of circumstances. Nonetheless, Abraham Lincoln became America's best-known and most revered president.

He has been characterized as:

■ "A classic symbol of union, democracy and presidential presence in an hour of supreme crisis."

■ "The grandest figure on the crowded canvas of the drama of the 19th century."

■ "A man of both steel and velvet, who is hard as rock and soft as drifting fog."

■ "The greatest character since Christ."

■ "The common man who was yet uncommon."

In an inaugural address, President Ronald Reagan echoed these views as he observed: "Whoever would understand in his heart the meaning of America will find it in the life of Abraham Lincoln."

Veneration for him is so deep that we sometimes forget that Abraham Lincoln was also the first true humorist in the White House. Carl Sandburg noted that no other president had such a "relish for the comic." And Joseph Gillespie, a fellow legislator, declared that "it was as a humorist that Lincoln towered over all other men."

Actually, he was a strange mingling of sadness and laughter, of mirth and tears, of black despondency and boisterous wit. David R. Locke (Petroleum V. Nasby), Lincoln's favorite humorist, recognized this seeming contradiction.

"Mr. Lincoln's flow of humor," he observed, "was a sparkling spring, gushing out of a rock — the flashing water had a somber background which made it all the brighter."

(For himself, Lincoln found Locke so enjoyable that he once

told him, "For the ability to write these things, I would gladly trade places with you.")

In his usual modest fashion, the unassuming Illinoisan claimed he was not original in his stories. "I remember a good story when I hear it, but I never invented anything original. I am only a retail dealer," he said. But Dennis Hanks, who observed him in many situations over the years, declared he was "so odd, original and humorous and witty" that he always attracted a crowd.

Lincoln used jokes and stories not only to spread laughter, but also as a mechanism to emphasize a point at discussion or to reduce tension. Ofttimes it was a safety valve — an escape and relief from the heavy responsibilities of office. He explained to Rep. Isaac Arnold, "If I could not get momentary respite from the crushing burden I am constantly carrying, my heart would break."

A spontaneous humorist, Lincoln could refer to a soprano voice so high it had to be climbed over with a ladder, or a German worried because "somebody tied my dog loose."

Some said it was Lincoln who first told a hotel waiter, "Say, if this is coffee, then please bring me some tea, but if this is tea, please bring me some coffee."

He read the Joe Miller Jokebook, but folks felt his own were better — or at least the embellishments were.

Like his story about politically troublesome New Jersey. Lincoln told the yarn about the shipwrecked sailor finally drifting toward land. Friendly hands flung him a rope. Taking hold of it, he asked where he was. "New Jersey" was the reply. Hearing this, he let go of the rope and moaned, "I guess I'll float down a little further."

Having had all he could take from a critic, Lincoln said: "He's



Called "two-faced," Lincoln joked, "if I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"

the biggest liar in Washington. He reminds me of an old fisherman who had a reputation for stretching the truth. He got a pair of scales and insisted on weighing every fish he caught in front of witnesses. One day a doctor borrowed the scales to weigh a new baby. The infant weighed 47 pounds!"

His story about the man saddled with heavy debts evoked some chuckles. Asked how he could sleep at night the fellow replied, "I



*There's the story of a friend who worked hard for his nomination. Lincoln thanked him for his efforts, but added, 'Colonel, when you spoke for me at the convention, you prevaricated a little.' The colonel replied, 'Prevaricated, Mr. Lincoln? Why I lied like the devil!'*

membered it, "He certainly did."

Then there's the story of a friend who worked hard for his nomination. Lincoln thanked him for his efforts, but added, "Colonel, when you spoke for me at the convention, you prevaricated a little." The colonel replied, "Prevaricated, Mr. Lincoln? Why I lied like the devil!"

While serving his lone term in the U.S. House, Lincoln formed a friendship with Alexander H. Stephens. This diminutive but brilliant Georgia politician later became vice president of the Confederacy. Lincoln told the story about an acrimonious stump debate Stephens had with the massive Robert Toombs. At one point, Toombs exclaimed, "Why, I could button your ears back and swallow you whole." His bantam rival replied coolly, "And if you did, you would have more brains in your stomach than you have in your head!"

Lincoln's unpretentiousness showed itself in many of his stories. One had him meeting an old farmer who was a staunch Democrat:

"So you're Abe Lincoln."

"Yes, that's my name."

"They say you're a self-made man."

"Well, yes, all there is of me is self-made."

"Well, all I've got to say is that it was a damned bad job."

He once received a letter asking for a "sentiment and his autograph." He advised: "Dear Madam, when you ask a stranger for that which is of interest only to yourself, always enclose a stamp."

After a particularly tough politi-

cal defeat he quipped, "I felt," he said, "like the boy who stubbed his toe — it hurt too bad to laugh and he was too big to cry." (Some will recall Adlai Stevenson's appropriation of this jest.)

One day he was out with two of his boys who were especially unruly and raising a ruckus. A neighbor asked what the problem was. "Just what's the matter with the whole world," Lincoln replied, "I've got three walnuts and each wants two."

A favorite story of his had two Quakeresses discussing wartime leaders, Jefferson Davis and Lincoln.

"1st: I think Jefferson will succeed."

"2nd: Why does thee think so?"

"1st: Because Jefferson is a praying man."

"2nd: And so is Abraham a praying man."

"1st: Yes, but the Lord will think Abraham is joking."

Abraham Lincoln's wit and mirth has given him a passport to the thoughts and hearts of millions who would take no interest in the sterner and more practical parts of his character. This remarkable man has also demonstrated well the wisdom of Sen. Tom Corwin's observation: "To keep the machinery of government operating effectively, it must be oiled frequently with fun and laughter; otherwise friction and hate would soon wear it out."

*Tullai is chairman of the history department at St. Paul's School, Brooklandville, Md.*

sleep well, but I wonder how my creditors can."

When Sen. Sumner visited Lincoln and found him polishing his boots, he said, "Why Mr. President, do you black your own boots?" Lincoln responded, "Whose boots did you think I blacked, Senator?"

He chuckled over the story regarding his first meeting with Mary Todd. "Miss Todd," he offered, "I want to dance with you in the worst way." And as Mary re-

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## PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND THE MOLLY MAGUIRES

When the first army draft was made in Pennsylvania in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln was faced with the possibility of having two open rebellions on his hands. The conscription law was not very popular anywhere in the country but in Cass Township, Schuylkill County, the opposition came from a lawless band known as the "Molly Maguires." These men were as disloyal to the government as they were to its laws. When the draft was made, several of their number were among the chosen, and the situation turned critical. Not only did the Molly Maguire men refuse to report to the appointed place of assembly, but they violently drove off all the men who did. Something had to be done, but the question was what it should be.

When Secretary Stanton received a report of what had transpired, he ordered that the draft be enforced at every hazard. He placed a Philadelphia regiment and one regiment at Harrisburg under the orders of the Governor, with instructions to move at once on the scene of the revolt. Governor Curtin feared the results of a conflict between the military and civilian population, and he sent another telegram to Stanton asking him to more fully consider the ramifications of the action he had taken. Stanton remained adamant. The military must move at once and enforce the law at the point of the bayonet, if necessary.

The regiments received their marching orders and had reached a town near the scene of the revolt the following day. Curtin was sure that any type of confrontation between the soldiers and his citizens would destroy all support for the cause in his state. Therefore, he had one of his aides, Col. A.K. McClure, send a coded message to Lincoln, asking for his intercession in the matter. The message was sent in the early part of the day, and Curtin was surprised when the day passed without a response from the President.

The next morning the aide went to breakfast in one of the hotels in Harrisburg, where he happened to see Assistant Adjutant Gen. Townsend waiting for him. Townsend explained his reason for being in town was to deliver a message from Lincoln, "Say to McClure that I am very desirous to have the laws fully executed, but it might be well, in an extreme emergency, to be content with the appearance of executing the laws; I think McClure will understand." McClure did not wait for his breakfast.

Summoning the draft commissioner for Schuylkill County to Harrisburg, McClure explained Lincoln's instructions in confidence. The commissioner could not understand how the confrontation could be avoided and asked how the laws could even appear to have been executed. McClure pointed out that if it could be shown that enough men had enlisted from the township, the order for the draft would be revoked, and the arrest of conscripted men could be avoided.

The commissioner immediately understood the gravity of the situation and took the first train home. The next evening he came back to Harrisburg, bringing a number of affidavits from citizens of Cass Township which, if unchallenged, would show that the township's quota had been filled by volunteers. McClure did not ask about the validity of the statements, or how the commissioner had obtained them. He merely endorsed them as fact. In the meantime, Governor Curtin ordered the regiments back to their respective camps, and disaster was averted.

No one in Lincoln's administration was informed of the President's intervention, as far as they were concerned, the laws had been judiciously executed. Only Lincoln, Curtin, McClure and the draft commissioner were party to the secret, but between them they had averted a situation which could have proved more disastrous to the Union cause than the secession of the Southern states.



## OLLAPODRIDA

Ever the irresponsible bon vivant and raconteur, Daniel Edgar Sickles told the following story on himself. Lincoln was visiting Sickles' headquarters. Noting the President's melancholy, Sickles suggested that all the women present should line up and kiss old Abe. They agreed but none would go first. Sickles addressed Princess Salm-Salm (the wife of one officer) and told her that as she was the youngest and most courageous woman present, she should start the parade. The princess objected that she was too short to kiss so tall a man, but Sickles told her that if she would reach up, Lincoln would surely meet her halfway - and so he did. That evening, when Abe told his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, she was not amused, and at a later dinner she snubbed Sickles in spite of the President's attempt to make peace. Lincoln turned to Sickles and remarked, "I am told, General, that you are an extremely religious man." Sickles avowed that he deserved no such credit. Lincoln continued, "I believe that you are not only a great Psalmist, but a Salm-Salmist."

--- The Story the Soldiers Wouldn't Tell: Sex in the Civil War  
by Thomas P. Lowry, M.D. pp 150-151

In 1861 James Madison Cutts, Jr., received a commission by President Lincoln. Lincoln wrote to Cutts' Corps commander: "Because of his relationship to the late Senator Stephen Douglas, I wish James Madison Cutts, Jr., to be a Captain in some part of this new Corps." Cutts next surfaced in the public record two years later while serving as acting judge advocate general for the Department of the Ohio. On October 10, 1862, while occupying room 79 at the Burnet House in Cincinnati, Cutts was struck by the singular beauty of the woman in room 80. That afternoon he was caught peeping through the keyhole at her and her husband. His embarrassment was not sufficient to prevent a second attempt at voyeurism. That night, around half past eleven, Cutts noted that the object of his fascination had retired to her room and that her husband was in the corridor below. Taking a suitcase from his room, Cutts moved quietly into the hallway, set his improvised stepladder against the door of room 80, and climbed gingerly up. As his eyes rose to the height of the transome window, he found his quarry "partly undressed, previous to retiring." His eyes met hers. Her husband appeared in the hallway. "This to the great outrage of the feelings of the lady and her husband and to the great scandal and injury of the service." Soon after having an audience with the Swedish minister to the United States - one Count Piper - Lincoln was shown by John Hay his secretary the transcript of Cutts' trial. Lincoln remarked to Hay that Cutts "should be elevated to the peerage ...with the title of Count Peeper", a remarkable double pun.

---The Story the Soldiers Wouldn't Tell: Sex in the Civil War  
by Thomas P. Lowry, M.D. pp 140-141

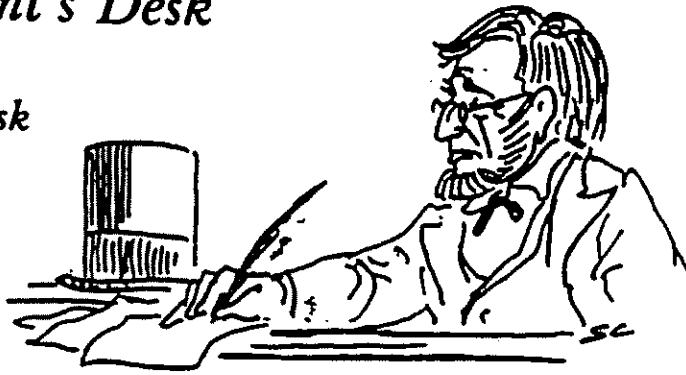
# *From The President's Desk*

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## Voting Results of Constitutional Changes

At the January 1995 meeting all members present voted on four constitutional changes. The constitution requires a two thirds affirmative vote for passage of any issue. Following are the results of the voting. (See previous mailing for wording on each issue.)

There were 40 ballots cast on each issue.

ISSUE NO. 1 -- 15 Affirmative 24 Negative

ISSUE NO. 2 -- 37 Affirmative 3 Negative

ISSUE NO. 3 -- 34 Affirmative 1 Negative 1 Abstained

ISSUE NO. 4 -- 38 Affirmative 2 Negative

Issues 2, 3 and 4 passed overwhelmingly and Issue No. 1 failed. As I am sure you know, Issue No. 1 deals with allowing women to be members of the Civil War Round Table. With the failure of Issue 1, the makeup of the organization will remain the same. Women will not be allowed as members.

After speaking to several members, both before and after the voting, many members felt it was important to keep the size of our organization around 100 members and meeting attendance averaging 40 members. This makes our meetings and field trips intimate, with most members knowing other members on a first-name basis. Many members felt other round tables with open membership, having over 100 members attend each meeting, was getting away from the intimate feeling of our organization. I sincerely hope that all current members continue their membership and support the wishes of the entire organization.

I want to thank all of the members who participated in the effort to modernize our constitution. If we continue the lines of open communication in the future, as we have in the last six months, the desires of all members will continue to be heard.



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