

The Civil War Reporter

McHenry County Civil War Round Table Newsletter



P.O. Box 1865, McHenry, Illinois 60051-9031
www.mchenrycivilwar.com



"The Bubble of the Present is Hardened into the Flint of the Past" Ralph Waldo Emerson

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

McHenry County, Illinois

MARCH 2009

ATTENTION! MCCWRT MEMBERS:

As of January 1, 2009
Membership Dues Are Expired!
Please Forward All Monies Due
To
Paymaster James Keefe
1256 Mitchell Street
Woodstock, Ill. 60098

NOTICE:

**MCCWRT WILL HOLD THEIR FIRST
MEETING/PRESENTATION FOR THE
LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL YEAR OF 2009,
MARCH 10, 2009**

**DONALD PURN PRESENTS:
RED RIVER NAVAL OPERATIONS**

**SATURDAY DISCUSSION AT BORDERS:
Saturday March 28, 2009, 10 to NOON
BORDERS BOOK STORE IN CRYSTAL LAKE**
This Month's Discussion topic will cover
NAVAL OPERATIONS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

Join us for a cup of coffee
and some friendly conversation
about the American Civil War.

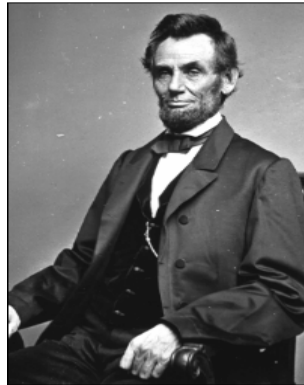
Join in, or just listen to the great debates every
Fourth Saturday of the Month
Borders Books and Music in Crystal Lake.
**ALL ARE WELCOME,
AND
ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!**

**ATTENTION
ALL LINCOLN ENTHUSIASTS**

Doc Wilt's Web is back on line:
<http://linconrails-doc2blogspot>

OTHER WEB SITES of INTEREST:

MCCWRT: www.mchenrycivilwar.com
MCHS: www.mchsonline.org
IRM: www.irm.org
NICWRT: www.freehostia.com
CCWRT: www.thecivilwarroundtable.org
MCWCC: www.midwestcvcivilian.com



A Morning with Mr. Lincoln

On Monday February 2, 2009, Montini Catholic Primary School in McHenry, students and teachers, were treated to a presentation by The Ladies of the MCCWRT in honor of Abraham Lincoln.

One special teacher who was so impressed with the presentation and the message that the MCCWRT tries to educate the public about the American Civil War, that she graciously presented the Ladies of the Round Table with a generous donation to be used toward The Dr. Edward Wilt Jr. Scholarship Fund.

On behalf of the MCCWRT, I would like to personally thank Ms. Bev Blundell, for making her generous and most appreciated donation toward our organization.

K.M. Fisher Editor

AS OF JANUARY 1st 2009

All items submitted for publication in the next month's newsletter, must be sent in one week prior to the 20th day of the previous month.

This is deemed necessary to allow our staff adequate time to prepare, and distribute the newsletter in the timeliest manner.

If you cannot submit your news item/s in this time frame, they will then be considered for the next month's publication.

K.M. Fisher Editor

First Meeting/Presentation for 2009 March 10, 2009

The Seventy-Six Day Red River Campaign

Union General Nathaniel Banks equipped with 45,000 troops, 32 naval vessels, 8 marine brigade vessels, & 48 army transports planned to travel up the Red River at Shreveport. Generals Grant and Sherman believed the campaign would take about 20 days, and placed General Banks in charge.

The Union's opposition was 11,000 troops under the command of Confederate Generals Kirby Smith and Richard Taylor proved to be too much for the Union General. Mostly due to several tactical blunders on Banks' part, and some well executed Confederate defensive maneuvers would result in the last major victory for the Confederacy of the Civil War.

The twenty day campaign soon turned into a 76 day disaster for Banks' army and Admiral Porter's fleet of river monitors and transports which were moved up the Red River. Admiral Porter had once bragged that he could take his fleet anywhere there was wet sand. Confederate ingenuity would almost cost Porter the loss of his entire fleet on the Red River. However, the innovative genius of one Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey saved the Union retreat from total catastrophe by engineering and building of a dam at Alexandria to save Porter's fleet.

This presentation will mostly focus on the Mississippi Squadron and its adventures going up the Red River to Shreveport, and how Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey helped save Porter's Fleet from total destruction at Alexandria. Along with a brief explanation of the roll of the 95th Illinois Volunteers which served on board Admiral Porter's supposed superior river fleet.

Donald Purn



HOW BOOTH SAVED LINCOLN'S LIFE

In the 144 years since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, many myths, legends and some pretty astonishing statements have been circulated about the crime of the century. One of the latter featured the type of clever word game that many Americans have long relished: "Booth Saved Lincoln's Life." The statement is true, but the incident to which it refers does not involve President Abraham Lincoln and his assassin, John Wilkes Booth. Instead it refers to one Edwin Booth, John Wilkes' older brother, and Robert Todd Lincoln, the president's only child to reach maturity.

Robert Todd Lincoln was the eldest of Abraham & Mary Lincoln's four sons. A 17-year-old student at Harvard University when the Civil War began, he spent the majority of the war years at college. Much to the embarrassment of the president, his mother refused to allow him to enlist.

In February of 1865, Robert joined General-in-Chief Ulysses S. Grant's staff as a captain and assistant adjutant general of volunteers. He stayed with Grant until the end of the war, and accompanying him to Washington on April 13, 1865.

The next day Robert spent two hours with his father, telling him of his experiences in the army, which included his witnessing Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. That night, Robert chose not to accompany his parents to Ford's Theatre to watch a production of *Our American Cousin*. This decision was one that he soon came to regret.

Edwin Booth, born in 1833, was the second oldest of Junius Brutus Booth's three sons. Junius was considered by many to be among the finest of all the Shakespearean actors of his day. While John Wilkes was a competent actor who played to good reviews, Edwin was also regarded as one of the 19th century's greatest Shakespearean actors. His most famous part was Hamlet, which he portrayed more often than any other actor before or since, which included a run of 100 consecutive nights. In 1862 Edwin became manager of the Winter Garden Theatre in New York City, where he would present highly acclaimed Shakespearean plays.

Edwin and his brother John were not very close, chiefly because Edwin was a Unionist and a Lincoln supporter while John was a rabid secessionist. Edwin once wrote of his brother: "That he was very much insane on that one point (secession) no one who knew him well can doubt. When I told him that I had voted for Lincoln's reelection he declared his belief that Lincoln would be made king of America; and this, I believe, drove him beyond the limits of reason."

Fate brought Lincoln and Booth together in a train station in Jersey City, N.J., in the midst of the Civil War. At the time Robert was on a holiday from Harvard University, traveling from New York to Washington, D.C., while Booth was on his way to Richmond, Virginia, with his friend John T. Ford (owner of Ford's Theatre in Washington). The exact date is unknown, although Robert consistently would recall it as having occurred in 1863 or 1864.

Robert Lincoln wrote his account of the incident in a 1909 letter to Richard Watson Gilder, editor of *The Century Magazine*, who asked him to verify that The episode actually took place:

Robert Lincoln's Personal Account of the Story

The incident occurred while a group of passengers were late at night purchasing their sleeping car places from the conductor who stood on the station platform at the entrance of the car. The platform was about the height of the car floor, and there was of course a narrow space between the platform and the car body. There was some crowding, and I happened to be pressed by it against the car body while waiting my turn. In this situation the train began to move, and by the motion I was twisted off my feet downward, into the open space, and was personally helpless, when my coat collar was vigorously seized and I was quickly pulled up and out to a secure footing on the platform. Upon returning to thank my rescuer I saw it was Edwin Booth, whose face was of course well known to me, and I expressed my gratitude to him, and doing so, called him by name.

Months after the incident, in 1865, Booth received a letter from a friend, Colonel Adam Badeau, then serving as an officer on General Grant's staff. Lincoln had related the story of the rescue to Badeau while they were stationed at City Point Virginia, and Badeau offered Booth his compliments for having performed such a deed.

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MCCWRT Presidential Address

We hope that you are looking forward to our planned programs & activities for 2009. On March 10, 2009, Don Purn will be talking about the Naval Operations in the Red River. Don's presentation will be the first of many outstanding scheduled speeches arranged by Sarah McDougall.

On April 18, 2009, we will join the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table in taking a joint field trip to the Civil War Museum on Kenosha, Wisconsin. Please be sure to sign up by notifying Keith Fisher and forwarding your payment to him. Also make all checks payable to the McHenry County Civil War Round Table. The cost is \$10.00. Refer to General Information Bulletin No. 1 for further details.

We are continuing to plan for the symposium, details will be provided in the future. Additional information will be forthcoming concerning the 2009 Dr. Edward Wilt Scholarship.

Ed Urban, Charlie Banks, and Maureen Mikyska have agreed to be on the 2009 nominating committee and Ed will be the committee chairman. Their nominations will be presented on April 14, 2009, and the election will be held on May 12, 2009.

Membership fees are now due, and we would appreciate your promptness in paying.

Thank you,
Rick Andresen



Civil War Soldiers in Illinois Censuses By Martin Johnson

Found the following census lists on ancestry.com

1. 1870 Illinois Census – Soldiers & Sailors Home for Children of Veterans, (deceased or disabled??) pages 72 – 79 Normal & McLean Counties, Illinois Census.
2. 1900 Illinois Census – Soldiers Widows Home, Pages 23 & 24, District 152 Wilmington, Will Counties, Illinois Census.
3. 1900 Illinois Census Northern Illinois Asylum, in Elgin, Kane County (at some latter date, some were transferred to Dixon, Illinois Asylum). See pages 1 – 27 of District 166, ward 6, Elgin, Kane Co. Illinois Census.
4. 1900 Illinois Census – Illinois Soldiers & Sailors Home. (From 1903 on wives were admitted) (also see 1880 & 1910). See pages 1 – 9 of District 144, Quincy, Riverside Twp., Adams County, Illinois Census.
5. Other Census years in same locations will have additional information. Some may vary from census to census.
6. Illinois State Archives main databases menu has Illinois Civil War enlistment index & Linked Muster Roll information. Also 1929 Illinois Veterans Burial List for all of Illinois, as well as Illinois Veterans home in Quincy, Illinois, Admissions List 1887 – 1916. Link this to your websites links. None of the Boon Co. Or McHenry Co. Obituary Indexes online are listed in your links section.
7. Other states have similar institutions. Milwaukee, WI. Veterans Home had several Illinois Veterans admitted there. Many Veterans Homesteaded Land in Minnesota & out west. Many of them may be found on ancestry.com Civil War Pension card index & actual images of the pension cards. In 1906, every veteran age 65 got a pension. Previous to 1906, they had to prove a hardship need or a disability. Two Amnesty Laws would also allow deserters to collect a Benefit Package.

I have a list of about 50 databases in an email, which I will forward to you. Put regarding free databases in email sent to me, if you want the list emailed to you. Many of these have Illinois Civil War Veterans information in them.

MARTIN W. JOHNSON
martinjohnson48@msn.com

MCCWRT Calendar of Up-Coming Events

Sunday March 1, 2009 – 1:30pm
Lincoln Reenactment Program
Marengo High School

Sunday March 8, 2009 – 2:00pm
An Afternoon with Mr. Lincoln
Cherry Valley Library, Rockford

Tuesday March 10, 2009 – Presentation
The Red River Naval Operations
By Donald Purn – 7:30pm at Union, Illinois

Saturday March 14, 2009 – 1:00pm
Civil War Fashions & Accessories
Huntley Library

Wednesday March 25, 2009 – 10:30am
Civil War Fashions & Accessories
Reliquarianes Group, Wheaton

Saturday March 28, 2009 – 10am to noon
Borders Discussion Group
The Civil War Navy
Borders Books & Tapes, Crystal Lake, Illinois

Tuesday April 14, 2009 – Presentation
The Average Civil War Soldier
By Jeff Rees – 7:30pm at Union, Illinois

Saturday April 25, 2009 – 10am to noon
Borders Discussion Group
Causes of the Civil War
Borders Books & Tapes, Crystal Lake, Illinois

Local Calendar

Wednesday March 4, 2009
Lake County CWRT – Presentation
Women Soldiers in the Civil War
By Carol Bradbury

Friday March 6, 2009
Northern Illinois CWRT – Presentation
The Kenosha Civil War Museum
By Dave Damman -7:30pm
Arlington Heights Library

Friday March 13, 2009
Chicago CWRT – Presentation
Reinterpreting Gettysburg
By John Latchar – 7:30pm
Holiday Inn – 350 N. Orleans St. Chicago

Saturday March 21, 2009 – 10 to noon
Northern Illinois CWRT – Discussion Group
TBA
Barrington Library

Wednesday April 1, 2009 – Presentation
The Lady of Arlington
By Marty Cain – 7pm at the Warren Newport Library

Friday April 3, 2009
Northern Illinois CWRT – Presentation
Red River Campaign & General Taylor
By Art Bergeron – 7:30pm Arlington Hghts Library

Friday April 17, 2009
Chicago CWRT – Presentation
Parris Island Museum
By Stephen Wise – 7:30pm
Holiday Inn – 350 N. Orleans St. Chicago

Saturday April 18, 2009 – 10 to noon
Northern Illinois CWRT – Discussion Group
TBA Barrington Library

How Booth Saved Lincoln's Life

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According to one Booth biographer, Robert's superior, General Ulysses S. Grant, also wrote to Booth to congratulate him on his heroism.

While the rescue clearly seemed significant to Robert at the time, there is no existing evidence that he ever told his parents about it. This may not be too surprising, given that he and his father were not particularly close. The president, Robert may have assumed, had enough worries. Perhaps the eldest son feared his mother's reaction to the story. Mary Lincoln was a fragile, even unstable, woman, especially after the death of the Lincoln's third son, Willie, in 1862.

On the evening of Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Robert was at the White House visiting with his friend John Hay, the president's private secretary. When Robert heard that his father had been shot, he rushed to the Peterson house, where his father had been carried, and remained until the president died.

Robert Lincoln's life was apparently forever darkened by that night, not only by the loss of his father but also by his belief that he might have saved his father's life if he had attended the play. It had been recorded numerous times, that Robert Lincoln never forgave himself for his absence.

As for Edwin Booth, the assassination almost destroyed him. In one foul instant he lost his younger brother, the prestige of his family name and his president. In a letter written the day after the assassination, Edwin Booth wrote Henry C. Jarrett, manager of the Boston Theater, calling that April 15 the most distressing day of his life and added, "*The news of the morning has made me wretched indeed, not only because I have received the unhappy tidings of the suspicions of a brother's crime, but because a good man and a most justly honored and patriotic ruler has fallen in an hour of national joy by the hand of an assassin.*"

By Jason Emerson

A Lincoln family incident during the Civil War became a remarkable snippet of assassination lore.

Civil War @ Smithsonian Timeline

March 4, 1861 – Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the sixteenth President.

April 12 – 13, 1861 – Fort Sumter is bombarded and surrenders to South Carolina State Troops, led by P.G.T. Beauregard.

April 15, 1861 – President Lincoln declares a state of insurrection and calls for 75,000 volunteers to enlist for three months service.

April 17 – May 20, 1861 – Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina secede from the Union.

April 19, 1861 – President Lincoln orders a blockade of all Confederate ports.

April 20, 1861 – Colonel Robert E. Lee resigns his commission in the United States Army.

March 9, 1862 – The ironclads USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia*, battle to a draw at Hampton Roads, Virginia.

April 4, 1862 – General George McClellan leads the Army of the Potomac toward Yorktown, Virginia, beginning the Peninsular Campaign.

April 6-7, 1862 – General Ulysses S. Grant prevails at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee.

April 16, 1862 – Conscription (the draft) is adopted in the Confederacy.

April 25, 1862 – Federal fleet commander Admiral David G. Farragut captures New Orleans.

March 3, 1863 – President Lincoln signs a Federal Draft Act.

April 7, 1863 – In a test of ironclad vessels against land fortifications, Union Admiral Samuel F. DuPont's fleet fails to penetrate the harbor defenses of Charleston.

March 10, 1864 – Newly commissioned to the rank of Lieutenant General, Ulysses S. Grant is given official authority to command all of the Armies of the United States.

March 4, 1865 – Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as President for a second term.

April 2, 1865 – Petersburg Virginia falls, and the Confederate Government evacuates its capitol at Richmond.

April 9, 1865 – Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Grant at Appomattox.

April 14, 1865 – President Lincoln is assassinated at Ford's Theater in Washington.

April 15, 1865 – Abraham Lincoln Dies, and Andrew Johnson is inaugurated as President.

April 26, 1865 – The last of the Confederate Army surrenders in North Carolina; John Wilkes Booth is shot in Virginia and dies.