

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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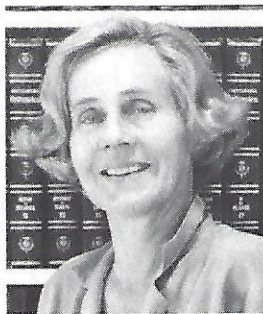
June 1991

Jean H. Baker on "Parallel Lives: The Marriage of Abraham and Mary Lincoln"

by Barbara Hughett

Many historians in recent years have shifted their focus from political history and the recounting of who beat whom in American elections to social history and the study of previously invisible groups—such as women, the foreign-born, and African-Americans. As a result of this, there has been a decided redirection in even the stories of great men; now historians investigate their psychological and personal lives and are often able to make possible a much broader understanding of history. Thus the new social history of the Civil War, including Lincoln studies, is quite different—and much more comprehensive—than that of the past.

Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln were married on November 4, 1842 in the home of the bride's sister and brother-in-law in Springfield, Illinois. A week after the wedding, Lincoln ended a business letter to Samuel D. Marshall by saying, "Nothing new here, except my marrying, which to me, is a matter of profound wonder." Despite theories to the contrary espoused by Lincoln's former law partner, William Herndon, and others, many Lincoln scholars today believe that the relationship of Mary and Abraham was basically a good one.



Jean H. Baker

Mary Todd was considerably more educated than were most American women of her day. The daughter of a prominent Whig family in Lexington, Kentucky, she was interested in and knowledgeable about world events and politics. This was one of the reasons that Lincoln was attracted to her, and this shared interest helped form the basis of their successful partnership. As his career advanced, he relied on her as a political counselor and sounding-board for his ideas.

There is ample evidence that their affection for one another was genuine and enduring. Mary Lincoln said her mate was her "lover—husband—father, *all*." Devastated by his assassination in 1865, she wrote in a letter that she had lost her "best and dearest friend." At a White House reception during his presidency, Abraham Lincoln remarked to a guest that "my wife is as handsome as when she was a girl and I, a poor nobody then, fell in love with her and once more, have never fallen out."

Jean H. Baker, author of the highly-acclaimed *Mary*



502nd Regular Meeting

Jean H. Baker

on

"Parallel Lives: The Marriage of Abraham and Mary Lincoln"

Friday, June 14, 1991

Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 North Orleans Street
Buttons—15th floor

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$17.50 per person
Entree: Roast Sirloin, Fish, or Fruit Plate



Parking

If you are driving and coming from the south, turn left into the Mart Plaza lot just after crossing the river on Orleans. From the north, turn right from Orleans on Hubbard, left on Kingsbury, right on Kinzie, and left into the Mart Plaza lot. Parking is free. Have your ticket validated at The Round Table registration table.

Todd Lincoln: A Biography (1987) will address The Civil War Round Table on June 14. Her topic will be "Parallel Lives: The Marriage of Abraham and Mary Lincoln." Baker's address will tell the story of the Lincoln's marriage from the perspective of social history. She will emphasize, using the approach of recent studies in women's history, the Lincolns' courtship, their lives in Springfield, and then their years in the White House.

Like most couples—then and now—the Lincolns led parallel lives that sometimes diverged and that sometimes were very close. Examining the Lincoln's marriage is one

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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357 West Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60610
Phone: (312) 944-3085

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The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Dan Weinberg, 357 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.



John Y. Simon, The Round Table's 1985 Nevins-Freeman honoree, delivered an address on May 19 in Spencer County, Indiana to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the cornerstone laying of the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial, now the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial. His topic was "The Significance of Lincoln's Boyhood in Indiana."

The Civil War Round Tables of Greater Boston and Central Massachusetts have announced that Ken Burns, producer of the PBS series, "The Civil War," will be the recipient of their 1991 Captain Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Award. The award will be presented to Burns at a dinner in Northboro, Massachusetts on September 28.

Battlefield Preservation Report

by Mary Munsell Abroe

The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement/General Management Plan for Antietam National Battlefield has been in process of development for the past two years. A period of public comment on the document ends June 30, 1991; after consideration of this body of opinion and additional deliberation, the National Park Service will decide on one of three possible courses of action for the battlefield's future management and use.

The first of these three, "Alternative A," proposes continuation of existing management and interpretive policies at Antietam. Alternative B aims to fulfill the 1960 congressional mandate "to provide for the maintenance of the site... in, or its restoration to, substantially the condition in which it was at the time of the battle." This option is the one preferred by the Park Service, the Maryland Historical Trust, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. It would return the landscape to its approximate appearance in September 1862; actions undertaken would include restoration of historic fence lines, roads, and the exteriors of some structures, and reestablishment of vegetation patterns existing when the battle occurred (e.g. the East, West and North Woods and the Piper orchard). In keeping with the goal of historical accuracy, no new monuments would be permitted; the Park Service would continue to care for the 103 existing monuments, and a memorial to the Irish Brigade would be incorporated in the proposed, new interpretive plaza at Bloody Lane. Alternative C also aims to restore much of the 1862 landscape. Since it proposes as well to focus on the long commemorative period that began during the 1890s, it would retain the tour roads built by the War Department at that time—many of which were constructed on the historic road traces; these roads which were in use at the time of the battle, therefore, would not be restored under Alternative C. Finally, this alternative would allow future construction of monuments on the battlefield if the groups proposing same established perpetual care trust funds.

The battlefield at Antietam is at a crossroads in its existence. Although it currently is one of the most pristine landscapes in the Park Service's system of historic sites, it is threatened by intrusive development creeping into the Sharpsburg area from Washington, D.C. The crux of the problem is that a significant segment of the historic field remains in private hands. (Of the 3200-plus acres inside the battlefield's borders, nearly nine hundred are privately owned with no governmental easements; another 1400-plus are privately owned with the government holding easements that restrict the levels and kinds of permissible development.) Alternatives B and C call for the government's fee acquisition of about two hundred acres to provide for the new interpretive program and scenic easements on the majority of the remaining properties within the battlefield's boundaries—all on a willing-seller basis. The goal of this proposed course of action is to ensure continuation of existing farming operations, for these are compatible with the historic scene restoration. Alternative A would take no new, active approach to land protection; the "status quo" would prevail with potential consequences, according to the draft document, as follows: "Private lands within the battlefield *might be developed for other than agricultural uses.*" For those of us concerned with the battlefield's integrity, that simple statement has an ominous ring.

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May Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

President Abraham Lincoln was asked in June of 1862 what he considered to be, at that point, the war's most important strategic objectives. "What must be done," he concluded, "is to hold what we have in the West, open the Mississippi, and take Chattanooga and East Tennessee." Although the first Union operations began as early as June of 1862, the decisive struggle for Chattanooga took place seventeen months later. "The Chattanooga Campaign of November 1863" was the topic of historian Michael A. Hughes on May 10, when he addressed 73 members and guests at the 501st regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table.

The Chattanooga campaign culminated in the Battle of Chattanooga on November 23-25. Logistical problems which prevented food and supplies from reaching Confederate troops and poor generalship on behalf of Braxton Bragg aided the cause of Federal forces. "The clearest indication of the declining morale of Bragg's army," Hughes observed, "was a steady stream of deserters." He said that "by the final day of battle at Chattanooga, there would be many cold and hungry Confederates who felt they were being asked to die by an unworthy leader whose siege had already failed."

Contributing to this low morale was the predominance in the area of Southern Unionists who, Hughes believes, played a more important role in the Chickamauga and Chattanooga campaigns than in any of the other campaigns of the Civil War. "The Confederacy," he remarked, "had the ill fortune to have its last foothold in Tennessee in an area where many citizens regarded Bragg's forces as an army of occupation." "You're a rebel," a local woman told a Confederate surgeon, "and you'd better go away. There's a Union soldier on the back porch."

On November 23, Orchard Knob, a Confederate-held eminence a mile in front of their main position on Missionary Ridge, was captured by Union forces. Federal divisions under General Joseph Hooker continued the success of the previous day by further driving back the Confederates in the Battle of Lookout Mountain on November 24. This cleared the way for the primary and concluding thrust of the campaign the next day in the Battle of Missionary Ridge. Four Federal divisions, under General George Thomas and General Philip Sheridan, stormed up the steep rock-and-brush-incrusted incline and drove back the Confederates who had been holding the top of the ridge. Some observers compared the spectacle of the Union men's ascent to that of numerous "flocks of migrating geese." Apparently, this magnificent charge was an "unordered" one; there is argument to this day whether it was a spontaneous advance or the result of somewhat confusing orders.

Ulysses S. Grant, who assumed command of the trans-Appalachian theatre of war in October, had formulated four different plans of battle during the struggle for Chattanooga. According to Hughes, "Grant was later able to use selected passages from his dispatches to argue that the final, successful operations were carried out in accordance with his plans. The truth is that Grant's four schemes were so varied that no matter *how* the final battle was won, he could have found *some* passage to prove he had won according to an original plan. In reality, changing circumstances called for constant changes in Grant's schemes." The fluctuations in Grant's planning, Hughes emphasized, were actually indications of his outstanding qualities of leadership; they represented his willingness to change and to adjust to

changing circumstances.

This Union victory at Chattanooga was, of course, crucial. In an 1865 interview with a Northerner, former Confederate General William Loring confessed, "Our cause was probably lost, but your temporary victories up to the latter part of 1863 had little to do with it. Not a man in the Southern Confederacy felt that you had really accomplished anything until Chattanooga fell."

An interesting aspect of the Chattanooga campaign was that it brought together men from more states and regions than did any other campaign of the Civil War. "The campaign led men," Hughes related, "some for the first time, to identify themselves as soldiers of a United States. Typical of this process, on December 25, 1863, the first national cemetery was established at Chattanooga. When General Thomas was asked if the internments should take place state by state, as was customary, he was said to have replied, 'No, mix them up; I've had enough of states' rights.'"

Summer Executive Committee Meeting

President-elect Joseph Wisehart has announced that the summer meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Saturday, June 29, beginning at 10:00 a.m., at Buttons, on the 15th floor of the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street. All 1991-1992 officers, committee chairpersons, and past presidents are urged to attend.

1992 Battlefield Tour

The Round Table Executive Committee, at its meeting on May 10, selected Gettysburg as the site for the 1992 battlefield tour. Mark your calendars for April 30-May 3, 1992.

Updated Civil War Round Table Membership Rosters are now available. You may pick up your copy at the June meeting, or have one sent to you by contacting Joan Carlson, 1636 Wadham Place, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, (708)462-0056.

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In supporting Alternative B, this writer is influenced by the alternative's admirable intent of re-creating, as nearly as possible, the historic 1862 landscape; preservation of that selfsame landscape was the goal of those who established Antietam National Battlefield Site over a century ago. Plan B's stance concerning no new monuments makes sense as well. There is no need for additional modern intrusions on the historic scene, well-intentioned though these may be; *the only fitting memorial is the land itself*. We have a responsibility to the men to made their indelible mark on that land in September 1862 to put aside our personal agendas and to work tirelessly for the site's preservation. For a copy of the Draft EIS/GMP, write to Superintendent Richard Rambur, Antietam National Battlefield, P.O. Box 158, Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782; upon informing yourself, please direct your comments to Mr. Rambur at the same address. Every letter received is crucial, and timing is all-important—again, the public comment period ends on June 30. Please act—we own them!

Editor's note: The Round Table Executive Committee, at its meeting on May 10, voted to support Alternative B and directed the president to send a letter affirming that position to Superintendent Rambur.

The New Books compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Bruce, Robert W. *Lincoln and the Tools of War*. University of Illinois Press. 1991. \$32.50; Pbk. \$11.95.

Gallagher, Gary W., ed. *Struggle for the Shenandoah: Essays on the 1864 Valley Campaign*. Kent State University Press. 1991. \$18.50; pbk. \$9.95.

Matthews, Elizabeth. *Lincoln as a Lawyer: An Annotated Bibliography*. Southern Illinois University Press. 1991. \$29.95.

Rhodes, Robert Hunt, ed. *All for the Union: A History of the 2nd Rhode Island Vol. Inf. in the War of the Great Rebellion (Diary & Letters of Elisha Hunt Rhodes)*. Random House. 1991. \$20.00.

Robertson, James I., Jr. *Civil War Virginia: Battleground for a Nation*. University of Virginia Press. 1991. \$18.95.

Robertson, William Glenn. *Back Door to Richmond: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign, April-June, 1864*. LSU Press. 1991. Pbk. \$9.95. Original of 1990.

The history of The Round Table, The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship, by Barbara Hughett, which made its debut at the fiftieth anniversary celebration, is available for \$30 per copy. You may order the book by writing The Round Table (add \$3 for postage and handling), or purchase a copy at the June meeting or at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, 357 West Chicago Avenue.

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way of understanding larger issues relating to human relationships in America from the 1840s through the 1860s. As we attempt to understand the journey that thousands of other Americans took, their special version illustrates important aspects of the history of the period.

Currently Elizabeth Todd Professor of History at Goucher College in Towson, Maryland, Jean Baker was awarded a B.A. degree in history, magna cum laude, from Goucher. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Johns Hopkins University. Baker served on the Pulitzer History Jury in 1988 and was a visiting professor at Harvard University (1987-1988). She is the author of three books on mid-nineteenth century American political history, including *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (1983), winner of the 1984 Berkshire Prize in history. Jean Baker has delivered papers before scholarly groups and historical associations throughout the country and has written numerous articles for professional journals.

Noted Lincoln scholar David Herbert Donald said of Baker's Mary Lincoln biography: "This exciting and important book is a major contribution to Lincolniana. Absorbing and convincing, this is one of the few books that deserve to be called definitive." She is presently engaged in research for a book about the Adlai Stevenson family of Illinois and is also working with David Donald on a revision of the bibliography, *Civil War and Reconstruction*.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans (Buttons, 15th Floor), the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

June 14: Jean H. Baker on "Parallel Lives: The Marriage of Abraham and Mary Lincoln."

June 29: Summer Executive Committee Meeting.

July 13: Annual picnic.

September 13: Blake Magner on "Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade."

October 4-6: Tour of Springfield.

October 11: Gary W. Gallagher, Nevins-Freeman Address.

November 8: Alan T. Nolan on "General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History."

December 13: Mary Munsell Abroe on "Battlefield Preservation: The Early Years, 1863-1890."

January 10: Karen K. Osborne and Virginia Crane on "A Woman's War: Two Perspectives—North and South."

February 14: W. Glenn Robertson on "General Thomas J. Wood at Chickamauga: The Fatal Order Revisited."

March 13: Milton F. Perry on "Jesse James and the Civil War."

April 10: Dennis Frye on "Mosby vs. Sheridan in the Shenandoah."

April 30-May 3: Annual battlefield tour—Gettysburg.

May 10: To be announced.

June 12: To be announced.

New Member

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Changes of Address

Dennis Donnellan, 1257 Ballantree Place, Mundelein, IL 60060

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Clydene and Dale Weitman, 2185 Royal Blvd., Elgin, IL 60123

Schimmelfennig's Boutique

In addition to The Round Table history, the following items are available at each monthly meeting:

Lapel pins	\$ 5.00 each
Mugs	7.00 each
Meeting tapes	7.00 each
Fiftieth Anniversary photos	10.00 each

The Charles L. Dufour Award of the Civil War Round Table of New Orleans was recently bestowed on historian and author Lawrence L. Hewitt. The award is given annually to honor individuals for work and dedication in the field of Civil War history and preservation.

A red jacket was found on one of the buses at the close of the recent battlefield tour to Shiloh. The owner may claim it by calling Joan Carlson at (708)462-0056.