

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLVI, Number 6

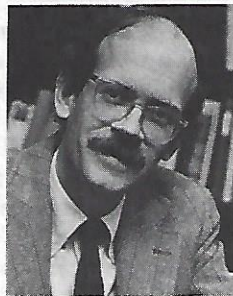
Chicago, Illinois

February, 1986

## Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr. on Lincoln and Douglas: A Relationship to Consider

In all of American history, there is no parallel of public careers like that of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, and their rivalry and accomplishments have been the focus of historical study for over a hundred years. Yet the puzzling aspects and paradoxes about their relationship still mystify historians. On February 14th, Mark E. Neely, Jr., director of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana, will take a broad look at the nature of American politics in the middle of the 19th century and will try to explain these paradoxes and other puzzling aspects of the relationship between these two important and fascinating figures.

Both Lincoln and Douglas were scrupulously honest, although the followers of each denied that the other was very richly blessed in that virtue. Both were strong for the Union, and both were intensely patriotic. Their famous debates of 1858 as they vied for election to the U.S. Senate, often held up as a model of highminded political discourse for modern politicians, were in fact exercises in raw campaign gouging and punching.

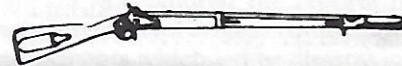


Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.

Lincoln's estimate of Douglas was most generous. He conceded him hardihood, pertinacity and magnetic power. Of all the men he had ever seen, Mr. Lincoln thought Douglas had the most audacity in maintaining an untenable position, which was thus a left-handed compliment. Lincoln always entertained the view that as a lawyer, Douglas was broad, fair and liberal. As Lincoln's political antagonist, Douglas was the most conspicuous Democrat in the country.

For his part, Douglas, who was regarded as an extemporaneous stump speaker without rival, realized that he had a formidable opponent when he first learned of Lincoln's nomination to the Senate, and made this statement: "I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of his party—full of wit, facts, dates—and the best stump speaker, with his droll ways and dry jokes, in the West. He is as honest as he is shrewd, and if I beat him, my victory will be hardly won."

In the debates, Lincoln relied on ludicrous allegations of political conspiracy that, in Dr. Neely's view, would have shamed Joe McCarthy, and Douglas, for his part, stooped to the vilest race-baiting and appealed mainly to negrophobia.



448th Regular Meeting

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Mark E. Neely, Jr.  
on  
Lincoln and Douglas: A Relationship to Consider

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Friday, February 14, 1986

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Quality Inn  
Halsted and Madison  
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
\$13.00 per person  
Entree: Roast Pork Loin, Fish or Fruit Plate



Another puzzle arose out of their respective campaigns for the presidency in 1860. Though both men are touted as master politicians, they appeared not to be in control of affairs at all. Lincoln did almost nothing in the race, while Douglas campaigned mostly in states where he was certain to lose, zigzagging across the country and speaking himself hoarse without any apparent campaign strategy.

A native of Amarillo, Texas, Dr. Neely was awarded a B.A. degree in American studies (Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude) and a Ph.D. in American history from Yale University, and an honorary degree from Lincoln College in 1981. He taught American history at Iowa State University before assuming his duties as head of the Lincoln Library and Museum. His duties include the editing of *Lincoln Lore*, which discusses the acquisitions of the Library and Museum, reviews new books in the Lincoln field, and in general attempts to keep the reader abreast of the latest historical scholarship on America's middle period.

Dr. Neely is the author of several books: *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia* (1982) which won awards from the *Library Journal*, *Choice*, and *The Civil War Round Table* of

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# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



**Founded December 3, 1940**  
 18 East Chestnut Street  
 Chicago, Illinois 60611  
 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, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.



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New York; *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (with G.S. Boritt and Harold Holzer, 1984); and *The Insanity File: The Case of Mary Todd Lincoln* (with R. Gerald McMurtry) which will be published by Southern Illinois University Press this September. He is currently at work on *The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause* (with Harold Holzer and G.S. Boritt) which will be published by the University of North Carolina Press in April, 1987, and *Abraham Lincoln and the Constitution: The Fate of Civil Liberties in a Time of Total War*.

Among Dr. Neely's many articles are: "Abraham Lincoln's Nationalism Reconsidered," *Lincoln Herald* (1974); "Lincoln and the Mexican War: An Argument by Analogy," *Civil War History* (1978); "War and Partisanship: What Lincoln Learned from James K. Polk," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1981); "Lincoln and the Constitution," *Bulletin of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin* (1983); and "Our Second Declaration of Independence: An Interpretation of the Emancipation Proclamation," *Blue & Gray Magazine* (1984).

Dr. Neely is a past president of the Society of Indiana Archivists, and serves on the editorial board of the Ulysses S. Grant Association, the board of directors of the Abraham Lincoln Association, the advisory board of the Indiana Historical Bureau, and the Indiana Advisory Board, National Historical Publications and Records. He last spoke to The Civil War Round Table in 1979 on "Lincoln's Image: Photos, Prints and Cartoons of the 1860s." He also spoke in 1977 on "Lincoln and the Mexican War."

**Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith**, great-grandson of Abraham Lincoln and an Honorary Award Life Member of The Civil War Round Table, died December 24 in Hartfield, Virginia at the age of 81. Mr. Beckwith, the last descendent of Abraham Lincoln, was the son of Robert Todd Lincoln's daughter Jessie and Warren Beckwith. He is survived by his wife Margaret Fristoe Beckwith, to whom we extend sincere condolences.

We also report with sadness the death, on November 2, of long time member Frank A. Palumbo. Frank was the author of *George Henry Thomas, Major General, U.S.A.*, published in 1983.

**Richmond National Battlefield Park** will celebrate its 50th anniversary on March 2 at Chimborazo Park in Richmond. The ceremony will recognize the individuals and organizations who were instrumental in making the Park a reality, and especially members of the Battlefield Markers Association Incorporated and the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation who, in the 1920s and 30s helped get the battlefields properly located and marked, and raised funds to acquire the property. Among those individuals were Douglas Southall Freeman and J. Ambler Johnston.

**The Civil War Round Table of New York** reports that the marble steps to the gravesite of Union General George H. Thomas in Troy, New York, have been cleaned and straightened, new fence gates have been installed, and sandblasting of the fence has begun. However, there is still much work to be done on the monument itself. Tax-deductible contributions to this effort can be sent to: Thomas Gravesite Fund, The Civil War Round Table of New York, c/o 83-12 St. James Street, Elmhurst, New York 11373.

### January meeting

On January 10, 1986, 105 members and guests met at the 447th Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table to hear fellow members Wayne Anderson, Marshall Krolick, Bill Sullivan, Karl Sundstrom, and James Vlazny discuss "Our Ethnic Ancestors in the Civil War."

In his presentation, Wayne noted that several thousand Scandinavians served in the Union army. When the war began, Scandinavian-Americans recruited all-Scandinavian companies as part of regiments, such as the 3rd Wisconsin and 82nd Illinois. However, the 15th Wisconsin had the distinction of being the Union army's only all-Scandinavian regiment.

The 15th Wisconsin was organized in February, 1862. Its first colonel was Hans C. Heg, who was the former Wisconsin Commissioner of Prisons. Enroute to the war, it stopped briefly in Chicago, where a Norwegian-American society presented its regimental colors. For three years, the 15th was part of the Army of the Cumberland. It participated in the battles of Perryville, Stones River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and the Atlanta Campaign. Of 899 men who served, it had a fatality rate from all causes of 38 per cent. Wayne summarized the 15th's battlefield performance as steady and reliable, it was the kind of unit that soldiers want on their side when the shooting starts.

Marshall Krolick discussed the participation of the Jews in the Civil War. In August, 1862, a meeting was held at the Concordia Club in Chicago in response to President Lincoln's call for additional volunteers for the Union army. The unique aspect of this meeting was that all in attendance were members of Chicago's Jewish community. As a result of the meeting, 96 men enlisted in Company C, 82nd Illinois, and \$11,000 was pledged to provide bounties for the soldiers.

Marshall noted that the soldiers came from blue-collar occupations. All were immigrants from Germany and few spoke English; orders and commands were given in German and Yiddish. Marshall also discussed the controversial 1861 Volunteer Act. The law stated that "chaplains had to be regularly ordained ministers of some Christian denomination." In the spring of 1862, the law was changed so that Jews could be appointed chaplains. In summary, Marshall said that approximately 6,500 Jews served in the Union army and 1,500 in the Confederate army, and that six Jewish soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor.

Bill Sullivan discussed the role of the Irish. He pointed out that between 1830 and 1860, over two million Irish emigrated to the United States. The majority settled in the cities along the east coast. In 1860 in New York City and Brooklyn, one out of every four residents was an Irish-American. Many of these people were common laborers who had to compete with free blacks for the lowest paying jobs. As a result, Bill said, Irish-Americans looked for advancement as policemen (The Brotherhood of the Badge), firemen (The Brotherhood of the Fire Hose) and as soldiers (The Brotherhood of the Sword).

During the war, 150,000 Irish-Americans joined the Union army. Many joined because they wanted to be a part of their adopted country. Led by such generals as Kearney, Meagher and Corcoran, the Irish units in the Union army won a reputation for courage and valor on the battlefield. Bill also pointed out that 85,000 Irish-Americans joined the Confederate army and that several Confederate units first mustered for active service were largely composed of Irish-Americans.

Karl Sundstrom described the participation of German-Americans in the Civil War, and in particular those who served in the Union army's 11th Corps. Like the Irish-Americans, Germans organized their own regiments when the war started. Many of the German soldiers emigrated to the U.S. after the Revolution of 1848. They were willing to serve and fight for their newly-adopted country, but they did not get respect from the native-born soldiers.

At the Battle of Chancellorsville, the 11th Corps received the nickname "The Flying Dutchmen" because they bore the brunt of Jackson's attack and retreated. Karl pointed out, however, that the 11th Corps was not routed and that it did not deserve its title. Although Jackson's attack caught many Union soldiers by surprise, they were able to organize and put up a good resistance. Karl explained that the 11th Corps organized three lines of battle, and at the third, "The Bushbeck Line," the Confederate attack was halted. In Karl's opinion, it was the high ranking Union generals who ignored the reports from German-American regimental and brigade commanders about Confederate movements which led to disaster at Chancellorsville.

Jim Vlazny discussed the contribution of Blacks in the Union army during the Civil War, stating that that contribution was substantial and that it affected the outcome of the war. Black regiments were first organized in Louisiana and South Carolina, but their primary job was to guard the supply points and towns; they were not looked upon by the Union army as fighting soldiers. As the war progressed and Northern casualties increased, Black soldiers participated in the fighting. In particular, during the Battle of Milliken's Bend and the assault at Petersburg, Black soldiers proved that they were as good soldiers as their white comrades in arms.

The Black soldiers in the Union army were never treated as equals and were discriminated against in many ways—they received less pay, cast-off equipment, poor medical care, and often had poor leadership. However, their service to the Union cause was of major significance. Black soldiers were fighting for their own freedom and that was a motivating influence during the campaigns in which they participated.

**In December we reported on the controversy at Chickamauga National Military Park regarding widening the road there. Now comes word from Civil War Round Table Associates that National Park Service Director William Penn Mott has informed U.S. Representative Buddy Darden of Georgia that the Park Service will not agree to a four-lane highway through the park. Mr. Mott decided that the traffic bottleneck caused by the two-lane stretch of Highway 27 through the park must be solved by building a new highway completely outside the park.**

In announcing his decision, Mott said: "I find it inconceivable that this hallowed place, consecrated by the memory of those who fought, died or were wounded in valiant battle, is unworthy of protection from highway construction and the high volumes of commuter traffic generated from the surrounding communities. A western relocation will certainly be more costly in terms of money, but... the loss of values from encroachment on the park would be a higher cost to the American people."

Local and state officials had agreed in advance to abide by Mr. Mott's decision.

# The New Books

compiled by Dick Clark



Curtis, Orson Blair. *History of the Twenty-fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade*, known as the Detroit and Wayne County Regiment. New introduction by Alan Nolan. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1984. \$35.00. Original of 1891.

Duncan, Louis C. *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the Civil War*. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1985. \$28.50.

Dunkelman, Mark H. and Michael J. Winey. *The Hardtack Regiment*. An Illustrated History of the 154th Regiment, New York State Infantry Volunteers. East Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981. \$19.50.

Fonerden, Clarence Albert. *A Brief History of the Military Career of Carpenter's Battery*, from its organization as a rifle company under the name of the Alleghany Roughts, to the ending of the War between the States. With new introduction and index. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1984. \$15.00.

Gaff, Alan. *A Detailed Study of the Iron Brigade at the Battle of Brauner's Farm*. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1985. \$17.50.

Goodhart, Briscoe. *History of the Independent Loudoun Virginia Rangers, U.S. Vol. Cav. (Scouts) 1862-65*. New introduction by Rosalie Goodhart Dietz. Preface by John Divine. Original of 1896. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1984. \$24.50.

Hamilton, Charles and Lloyd Ostendorf. *Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose*. Revised and enlarged edition. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1985. \$50.00; limited edition in full leather and in slipcase, signed: \$150.00.

Smith, Stephen. *Handbook of Surgical Operations*. Towson, MD: The Medical Purveyor, 1981. \$35.00. Ltd 50 copies.

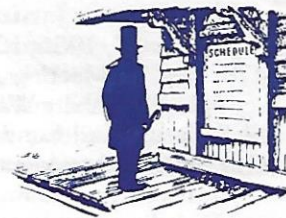
Summersell, Charles G. *CSS Alabama: Building, Captain, and Plans*. University: The University of Alabama Press, 1985. 135 p. \$39.95.

Trump, Fred. *Lincoln's Little Girl*. Salina, Kansas: Heritage Books, 1985. \$7.50. Grace Bedell and Lincoln's beard.

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**The American Civil War Commemorative Committee** is a non-profit organization formed to preserve, honor and educate the public about our heritage through a national series of reenactments during the coming five years of the Civil War's 125th anniversary. The planned events include First Manassas in '86, Antietam in '87, Gettysburg in '88, Wilderness/Spotsylvania/Trevillian Station Campaign in '89, and Saylor's Creek/Appomattox in 1990. The 1986 Bull Run event will run for five days on a battle site of 400+ acres located less than five miles from the original field. Only authentic living-history units will participate, and Henry House, Robinson House and the Stone House will be reconstructed. For more information, write to: ACWCC Info, P.O. Box 19486, Alexandria, Virginia 22320.

## BULLETIN BOARD



### Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

February 14: Mark E. Neely, Jr., on "Lincoln and Douglas: A Relationship to Consider."

March 15: All day (Saturday) assembly on "Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant: The Civil War Years." **Note:** the Assembly will take the place of the usual second Friday of the month meeting.

April 11: Edgar Archer on "Orthopedic Surgery in the Civil War."

May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour: The 1862 Peninsula Campaign.

May 9: Gordon Whitney on "The President Will Now Make a Few Remarks."

June 6: James I. "Bud" Robertson on "Confederate General A. P. Hill." **Note:** This is the first Friday of the month.

### New member

William J. Hupp, 405 Dawn, Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137 (312) 790-3823.

### Change of address

Ronald B. Johnson, 1340 East Indian Trail, Apt. C, Aurora, Illinois 60505.

### Grant Assembly

The date is drawing near—don't forget to get your registration in for the all-day assembly on "Lt. General U.S. Grant: The Civil War Years," to be held on Saturday, March 15, 1986 at the Holiday Inn in Hillside, Illinois. The speakers include: Thomas Arliskas on "Grant at Belmont;" Wiley Sword on "Grant at Shiloh;" Marshall Krolick on "Grant's General Order Number 11;" Edwin C. Bearss on "Grant at Vicksburg;" Gordon Whitney on "Grant at Chattanooga;" Robert K. Krick on "Grant from the Rapidan to the James;" Richard J. Sommers on "Grant at Petersburg;" and John Y. Simon on "Grant as Commander."

The program will be preceded by a reception and book sale on Friday, March 14 from 6-10 p.m. The registration fee for the assembly is only \$35, which includes luncheon. To register, send your check (made payable to The Civil War Round Table) to The Civil War Round Table Assembly, 18 E. Chestnut, Chicago, Illinois 60611. For further information, call (312) 787-1860. **Note:** the Assembly will take the place of the usual second Friday of the month meeting.

**The U.S. Grant Association** will hold its annual meeting and dinner on March 14 at the Holiday Inn in Hillside, Illinois. The speaker at dinner, which begins at 6:30 p.m., will be Dr. Richard Current who will discuss "President Grant and the Carpetbaggers, 1872." The cost of the dinner, to which everyone is invited, is \$15. For further information, or to make a reservation, contact Ralph Newman, 175 E. Delaware, Chicago, Illinois 60611 (312) 787-1860.